

Workplace wellbeing.

Simple ways for you and your pharmacy team to prioritise your wellbeing.



PHARMACIST
SUPPORT

#ACTNOW

The last 18 months have been tough. As frontline workers, you have remained committed to serving and supporting the Great British public through an extraordinarily challenging time.

As we now take steps towards a new way of everyday life, you may have mixed emotions – excitement and a renewed sense of hope, pride in what you and your team have achieved, nervousness and even some anxiety or fear of what the future holds, and sadness over what you may have personally experienced during the pandemic.

At Pharmacist Support, we're encouraging you to pause and give yourself time to reflect. Processing change is hugely important. It allows us to untangle the chaos, understand our experiences, and determine how we can learn and develop through challenging times.

This wellbeing pack aims to give you some useful tips and tools as you move through these changes, and to be a source of guidance on coping with challenges you might encounter when in the pharmacy. We will also explore ways to look after your wellbeing and mental health through prioritising self-care, building resilience, managing stress and avoiding burnout.

We hope you enjoy this pack and find it useful on your journey to good and sustained wellbeing.



Ever wonder which wellbeing practices are worth doing?

Our mission is to champion the wellbeing of our pharmacy family. As part of this commitment, we are launching a free Wellbeing Learning Platform.

Sign up to the platform, for access to a range of wellbeing workshops to complete alone at a time that suits you.

In our latest workshop, The Science Behind Wellbeing, you'll be able to explore what happens to your body and mind when you are stressed, and the things you can do to prevent it.

We will introduce you to evidence-based ways of reducing risk of stress and burnout, so that you can get more out of life.

The full set of free wellbeing workshops available to you at this time are:

- The Science Behind Wellbeing
- Introduction to Wellbeing
- Stress Management and Building Resilience
- Time Management
- Introduction to Assertiveness

To sign up today, please visit pharmacistsupport.clcmoodle.org.

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Who is Pharmacist Support?

Pharmacist Support is an independent charity providing a variety of free and confidential support to those working and studying in pharmacy. We're dedicated to championing the wellbeing of our pharmacy family and that's why we're encouraging pharmacists to #ACTNow.

What is #ACTNow?

We are encouraging pharmacists to:

Allow time for wellbeing **Consider the needs of others** **Take action.**

At Pharmacist Support, we're keen advocates of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing. Evidence suggests that our mental health and wellbeing can improve through following 5 simple steps: connecting with others, being active, learning new skills, giving to others and taking notice of the present moment. The ACTNow campaign is designed around the 5 Ways to Wellbeing, helping you to become familiar with the concept and supporting you to prioritise wellbeing in your everyday life.

What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing is the state of having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and the ability to manage stress. It's important to realise that wellbeing is a much deeper concept than moment-to-moment happiness, and we must actively invest in it if we want to have sustained happiness, control of our emotions, higher productivity, and good physical health.

-  [PharmacistSupport.org](https://www.PharmacistSupport.org)
-  [PharmacistSupport](https://www.instagram.com/PharmacistSupport)
-  [PharmacistSupport](https://www.facebook.com/PharmacistSupport)
-  [PharmaSupport](https://twitter.com/PharmaSupport)
-  [Pharmacist-Support](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Pharmacist-Support)

Balance your work life and rest time.

Taking time out to look after yourself is about eating and sleeping well, exercising and knowing your worth.

If we don't manage our time, it might lead to feelings of stress, which can have a profound effect on our thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

Recognise your own personal warning signs

Stress can cause us to feel anxious, out of control and unable to cope. We might start to feel irritable, withdraw from others, notice increased worrying or a negative impact on our self-esteem.

When feelings of stress become too intense and prolonged, it can lead to more serious symptoms and problems such as anxiety, depression, headaches, weight gain/loss, sleep disturbance, sweating, abdominal pain, chest pain and panic attacks.

So how can you prevent feelings of stress when you're at work?

Learn to prioritise and manage your time

If you are feeling overwhelmed with your workload or responsibilities and cannot see a solution, try listing all the things you need to do and then prioritise them.

Ask yourself, is there anything you can remove from your list? Identify what tasks you might be able to push back to a later date.

Maintain a work/life balance

Let's face it, work is likely to take up a significant amount of your time and mental energy. It's important to find a balance between giving your job your undivided attention while you are working, and drawing a line under it when you finish for the day.

At the end of your shift, it may be useful for you to write up a 'to do' list for the next day so you can leave work feeling reassured that nothing will be forgotten and you can fully switch off.

Have some 'me time'

It is important to take some time just for you, to socialise, relax or exercise. Prioritise this time.

Try our self-care planner

Our planner can help you to visualise your routine, map out your work time, and build in time for self-care.

Remember that self-care is not just an optional add-on. It can be essential to maintaining your sense of wellbeing and managing stress.

Fancy making your own self-care planner?

[Download a blank version here.](#)

Self-care ACTION planner.



Monday

Make a plan

Take some time to plan out your priorities for the week. Our [168 Hours resource](#) can help you to prioritise both your work and your wellbeing.

Tuesday

Cook something

Turn up the music and make something delicious. It's great to make extra so you have something quick and healthy to grab when you are busy.

Wednesday

Be mindful

Make a hot drink and notice everything about it. The sound of the kettle as it boils, the look of the steam, the smell and taste of the tea. Savour the moment.

Thursday

Say thank you

Write down three people who have helped you and take the time to thank them, either by email, phone, or in-person.

Friday

Laugh

Whether it's watching your favourite sitcom or calling a friend, engage in an activity that makes you laugh until your belly hurts.

Saturday

Be proactive

Do something you've been putting off, even if it's as small as changing a lightbulb. Completing a task that you've been putting off can give your wellbeing an extra boost.

Sunday

Check out

Leave your phone in another room and do something for pleasure. Have a bath or shower, pull out a (non-academic!) book you've been meaning to read and relax.

How to use this planner

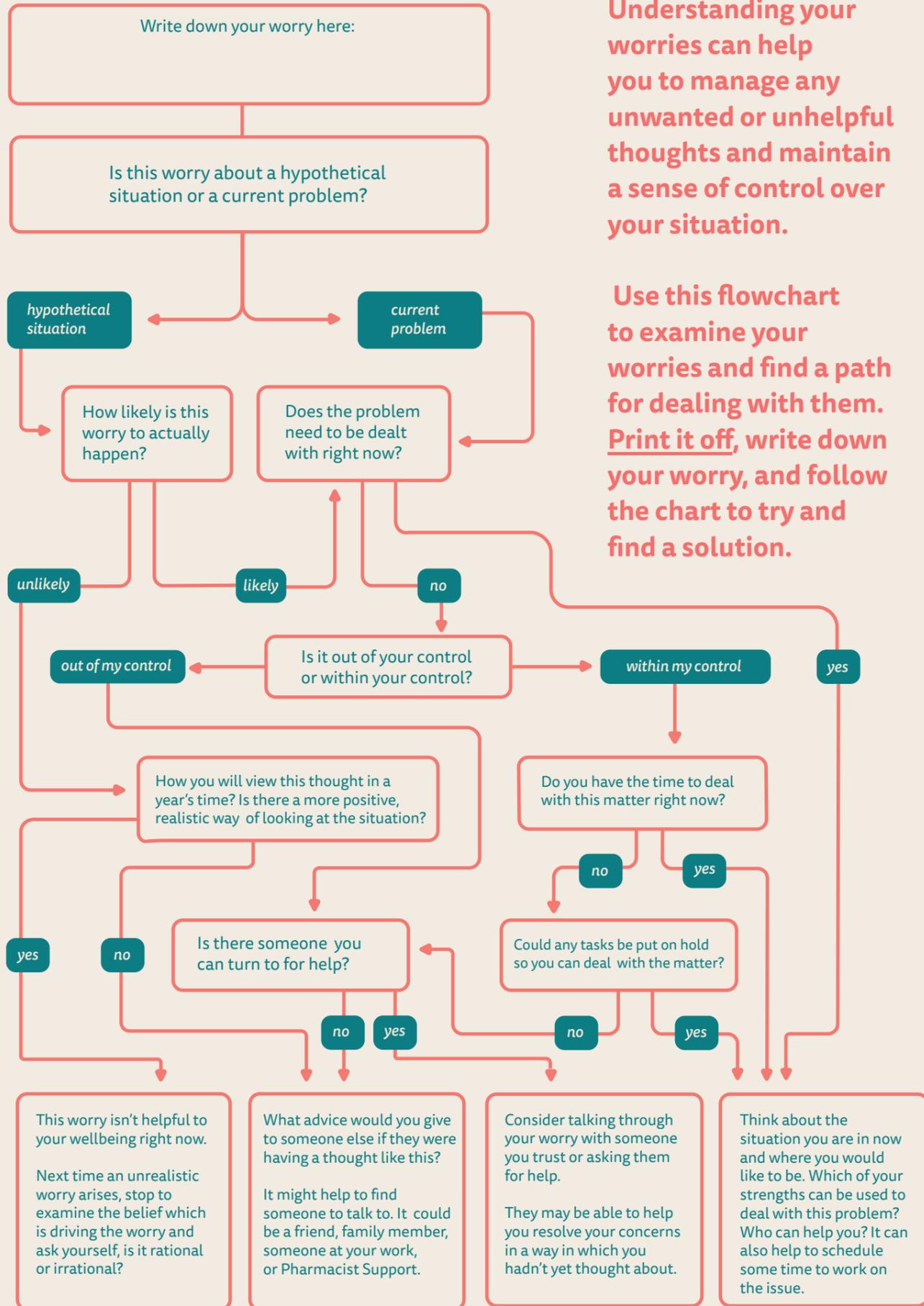
Do one small positive thing for yourself every day. By actively prioritising self-care now, you are investing in sustained wellbeing for your future.

Passive, aggressive or assertive?

How do you usually respond to other people's ideas, opinions, concerns and criticisms?

By identifying your communication style, you can start taking steps to being more assertive in your responses. Being assertive means that you can make yourself heard clearly, openly and honestly. It can help lower stress and anxiety, and demonstrate that you understand everyone's needs and personal values are equal.





Understanding your worries can help you to manage any unwanted or unhelpful thoughts and maintain a sense of control over your situation.

Use this flowchart to examine your worries and find a path for dealing with them. Print it off, write down your worry, and follow the chart to try and find a solution.

Keep calm.

Anxiety can be about a wide range of situations and issues, or about just one specific event. It's common to experience feelings of anxiety when stressful events occur in your life.

The responsibility that comes with being a fully qualified pharmacist is, for many, overwhelming, and for some, it can be hard to control their worries on a daily basis.

Talking to others can help
Anxiety is a condition that can cause some of us to self-isolate and close off to others, but talking to people really can help. You may be surprised to find how many pharmacists share your concerns and how eager family, friends and colleagues are to help.

Educate yourself
You may find that reading about anxiety can help you to understand what is happening and manage your triggers. [View our Anxiety self-study module on our wellbeing hub.](#)

Get active
Exercise can help manage physical and mental stress by reducing levels of stress hormones. Exercise also releases endorphins, which create feelings of happiness and euphoria.

Studies have shown that exercise can even alleviate symptoms of clinical depression and anxiety.

Listening Friends
Our Listening Friends service provides callers the opportunity to talk anonymously and in confidence to a pharmacist about any pharmacy-related stresses they are facing in their work. [Visit our website for more information about our Listening Friends service.](#)

Challenge your worries
Understanding your worries can help you to manage any unwanted or unhelpful thoughts. In turn, this can help you to focus your energy on other priorities or relax.

Try our flowchart on the opposite page to have a go at challenging your worries. Counselling can also be a great help. If you are struggling to access counselling, we can help. [Find out more here.](#)



Running for our pharmacy family.

Huge congratulations on completing the London Marathon, Mohammed! What motivated you to start running in the first place?

In my early 30s, I tried to do a 10km run after a few weeks of training but felt I simply could not do it, so I quit and didn't do another run for a decade! In my early 40s, I started running again and managed to complete a few 10km runs. When lockdown hit, I decided to run 5km every day to get out of the house and stretch my legs. I did it through Ramadan and it felt good, so I started to increase the distance. For the first time ever, I started to consider myself a runner and started following a training plan.

How does being active support your own sense of wellbeing when you are in the pharmacy?

Although I'm not a sporty or active person ordinarily, during lockdown I wasn't going out every day for work and I missed a brisk walk and fresh air. I noticed my mental health was taking a hit from the same four walls and working

Meet Mohammed, a pharmacist of 20 years who ran the London Marathon 2021 to raise money for Pharmacist Support.

In this interview, Mohammed shares his motivations for running and reasons for giving.

in a hectic pharmacy, so I needed some decompression time out.

Do you have any tips for those who want to start running or are taking their first steps to becoming more active?

My biggest tip is that if you run, you're a runner. It doesn't matter what pace, distance or intensity. Just keep moving and don't put too many expectations on yourself. It's also great to find a friend or community to be active with together.

How did you get yourself mentally prepared for the challenge of running the London Marathon?

When I quit my 10km race all those years ago, it was the mental side that had let me down. This time, I developed mental strategies to keep optimistic and not let negative thoughts intrude and to learn to trust all the hard work I was doing.

Why did you choose to use the marathon as an opportunity to fundraise for Pharmacist Support?

Pharmacist Support are the only charity uniquely for the pharmacy profession and have been helping pharmacists, pharmacy students and their families for 180 years. With the impact of covid-19, we are going to need to rebuild the lives impacted, and that's where charities like Pharmacist Support come in.

You do a lot for others, such as fundraising and sharing your pharmacy expertise. How do these acts of giving boost your own wellbeing?

It gives a sense of perspective and recognises my privilege to be able to help

others. It also provides me with a purpose and goal outside of work, and that really provides a mental boost.

Finally and most importantly, how did you celebrate crossing the finish line?!

In the last kilometre, I needed a motivation boost to keep going. So, I checked the donations and saw that we had crossed the £4,000 mark and that was astonishing. Thank you to the online supporters who kept promoting the race. I punched the air across the line, grabbed my drop-bag and devoured some snacks! After a nap in the afternoon, I treated myself to a trip to the cinema to watch the new James Bond film.

If you would like to support Mohammed's incredible marathon fundraiser, you can still do so by [donating today.](#)



Build resilience.

The great news is that resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone.

Let's explore some areas we can strengthen in our lives in order to increase our resilience.

- We are more resilient to stress when we do things that we love. You can think of this as your daily dose of pleasure.

- Good relationships and accepting help and support from others can help us to be more resilient.

- Mindset helps too, so try to see crises as challenges that can be figured out and overcome. Try to visualise what you want instead of worrying about what you fear.

- Keep moving towards goals, even in a small way. You may ask yourself, "What's one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?"

To be resilient is to adapt well in the face of adversity.

We can think of it as being able to "bounce back" from difficult experiences.

- Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.

- Keep things in perspective. Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective.

It is worth remembering that stress is not always bad. When we perceive stressful situations as a challenge rather than a threat, stress can lead to excitement, positive motivation and better performance, and can help build resilience.

In order to gain resilience, we need to have experienced some adversity in our lifetimes, so it can help to embrace stressors and see them as opportunities to grow!

You can use the resource opposite to help you to build resilience into your life.

Monday

Establish goals.

Think about some goals you may want to set yourself. What steps do you need to take to achieve your goals and what support might you need to achieve them?

Tuesday

Be optimistic.

Develop a positive mantra to use to change the way you currently think and feel this week.

Wednesday

Feel inspired by the success of others.

Ask a colleague who you look up to for advice.

My weekly resilience planner

This weekly planner outlines seven key characteristics of resilience. Introduce one small action each day to nurture your self-confidence and make small but simple positive changes to the way you respond to stressful situations.

Thursday

Know your strengths and have confidence in them.

Write down three of your strengths.

Friday

View feedback as constructive. Ask a colleague to tell you one thing you could improve.

Saturday

Make time for yourself. Do an activity you enjoy.

Sunday

Connect with others.

How can you build on and improve your social networks?



Managing your time is not only about completing all of your tasks, but also **making time for you.**

Some of us may be more organised by nature but managing our time is a skill that can be learnt with a few simple strategies.

Be intentional.

Keeping a to-do list is one of the easiest and most powerful ways to become more productive and efficient with your time.

Be disciplined.

The golden rule is to do the thing you least want to do first. Then throughout the day, identify potential distractions and manage them before they arise.

Be refreshed.

A series of short breaks throughout the day can help give your brain that well needed rest and improve accuracy. Breaks allow you to achieve more than if you try and work all day.

Be assertive.

Managing your time well isn't so you can take on more (and other people's) work. Saying 'no' is an important part of managing your time.

It isn't selfish or rude. It helps manage expectations and is considerate to yourself and your valuable time.

Be smart with your time.

Be realistic

If you don't have time for a task, reach out to another team member who can support you with it.

Allow time for wellbeing.

Looking after your wellbeing is as important as all of the goals you have to achieve.

Allowing yourself time to switch off and relax, connect with people, engage in conversation, take notice of the world around you and learn something new can help manage your stress and boost your self-esteem.

This is an excerpt from our [Time Management self study module on our Wardley Wellbeing Hub.](#)



Manage stress and prevent burn out.

Making yourself aware of stress management and the risks of burn out ahead of time can help you to feel prepared.

It can also prevent you from feeling overwhelmed and finding yourself in a place of burnout.

It's important to be aware of stress and burn out, and looking at stress management is key. On an individual level one thing we can focus on is ensuring we have adequate space during the day for rest and recovery, both during work and after work.

This includes doing enjoyable activities on days off and by taking holidays. It can also mean taking time to do something relaxing and rejuvenating – this is highly individual and could be anything from taking a bath, reading a book for pleasure, or going for a walk to even washing the car!

Sometimes taking breaks during the workday can feel difficult but taking time to decompress during the day can be essential for mental health.

Getting outside and being in natural light has tremendous benefit for reducing stress and improving sleep, as does taking exercise.

If you can get outside for a walk during your breaks, this can do a lot of good.

There are also several great mindfulness apps that can help to bring a sense of calm to your day, and can increase your feelings of control.

Making sure to take part in exercise you enjoy can be hugely beneficial in terms of burnout prevention and has positive knock-on effects for sleep, mental health, fitness, and even social connection if you find ways of exercising with others.

Connecting with others and finding ways to combat feelings of isolation can provide very important benefits to mental health, and this is one area where the workplace can really help by providing a source of support and friendship.

Give back.

To mark the 25th birthday of our Listening Friends service, we caught up with Nina*, a volunteer for ten years, to find out how volunteering impacts her own sense of wellbeing.

Our Listening Friends service offers members of our pharmacy family the opportunity to speak anonymously and in confidence to a trained volunteer pharmacist.

Through this peer support, those working or studying in pharmacy can talk about the pressures they may face so they can try and find clarity and solutions.

Hi Nina, can you tell us a bit more about yourself?
I'm a community pharmacist with a lot of experience in the sector. At present, I am a locum but I have been a manager in the past.

How long have you been a Listening Friend for?
I have been a Listening Friend for ten years now and I love doing it.

What inspired you to become a Listening Friend?
Several years ago, one of my male colleagues committed suicide and it made me realise that the stresses that come with being a pharmacist may have contributed to his death.

I made the decision to become a Listening Friend in the hope that it may help others, even if in only a small way.

What makes you return to the Listening Friend role every year?
The companionship and support of my fellow Listening Friends when we meet. We are a close network of friends who support each other and have a laugh. And of course, the knowledge that many of my callers have clearly valued the service.

Broadly speaking, what type of concerns do callers talk about?
There is no typical caller. I would say that trainee pharmacists need a lot of support and worry about exams and lack a lot of confidence in their ability.

It's an isolating and difficult year for them. Poor relationships with a superior or tutor and disciplinary issues have occasionally led to mental health problems and sick leave.

Just recently I have seen an increase in pharmacy proprietors who have business worries.



Do you have advice for anyone who wants to talk but hasn't taken that step to contact Pharmacist Support?
Please ring us! Every Listening Friend is a pharmacist and trained listener. We will have at least an idea of your concerns as many of us may have experienced something similar at some time in our career.

How does volunteering impact your own wellbeing?
It's rewarding to know you may have helped someone in some way, even if small, to improve their life. It lifts my spirits and I feel good when I finish a case.

What have you learnt since being a Listening Friend?
As I have developed my skills, I've realised that I am capable of empathy but I can step back if I feel I'm getting too emotionally involved. I was always scared I wouldn't be able to do this!

What would you say to someone considering becoming a Listening Friend?
If you have an hour a week to give to someone else, go for it. The satisfaction of knowing you have helped a fellow pharmacist to cope with a difficult period in their life is second to none. You won't regret it.

Why do you think Giving to others is important?
You have to give in order to receive! Giving is important for everyone to boost their wellbeing and self-worth.

We are currently recruiting more Listening Friends!

If you're interested in volunteering for Pharmacist Support, you can [apply via our website](#) or get in touch by emailing volunteers@pharmacistsupport.org.

Come and join the team. We look forward to meeting you.

As a pharmacist, you spend your whole career looking after others and we understand it may be difficult to prioritise yourself and find time for wellbeing. This pack is to help you to become familiar with the concept of wellbeing and show how easy it can be to incorporate simple wellbeing activities into your everyday life.

Your journey to good and sustained wellbeing doesn't need to end here. If you would like more support, guidance, activities and inspiration, head over to our [Wardley Wellbeing Hub](#).

The Wardley Wellbeing Hub is dedicated to your wellbeing needs, providing you with information and practical resources to prioritise and manage your physiological, psychological and emotional health.

As an independent charity, we rely on the generosity of pharmacists and pharmacy organisations to be able to continue our work.

Please help us to ensure no one in our pharmacy family has to face challenging times alone. Thank you.

To donate £5, text **PHARMA20** to **70970**.

To donate £10, text **PHARMA20** to **70191**.

Your journey to wellbeing starts **today**.



Wardley Wellbeing **HUB**