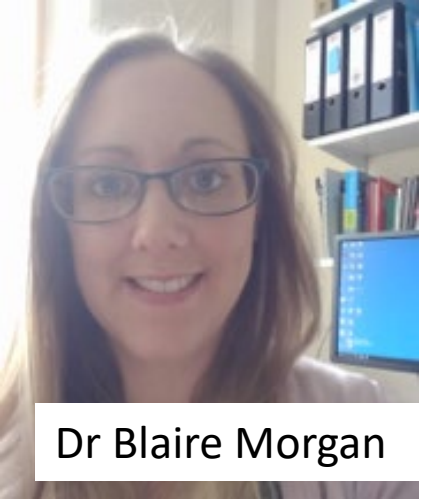


Promoting Wellbeing at Work



A 'Wellbeing For Life' talk presented by the
University of Worcester and University of Leicester

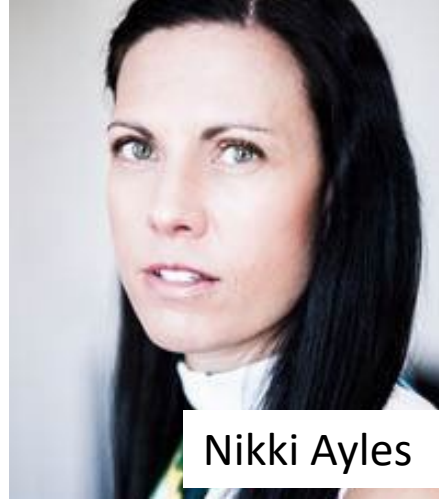




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Meet our
team...

*Researchers and practitioners from Universities
of Worcester and Leicester with an interest in
wellbeing in occupational settings*

About the talk

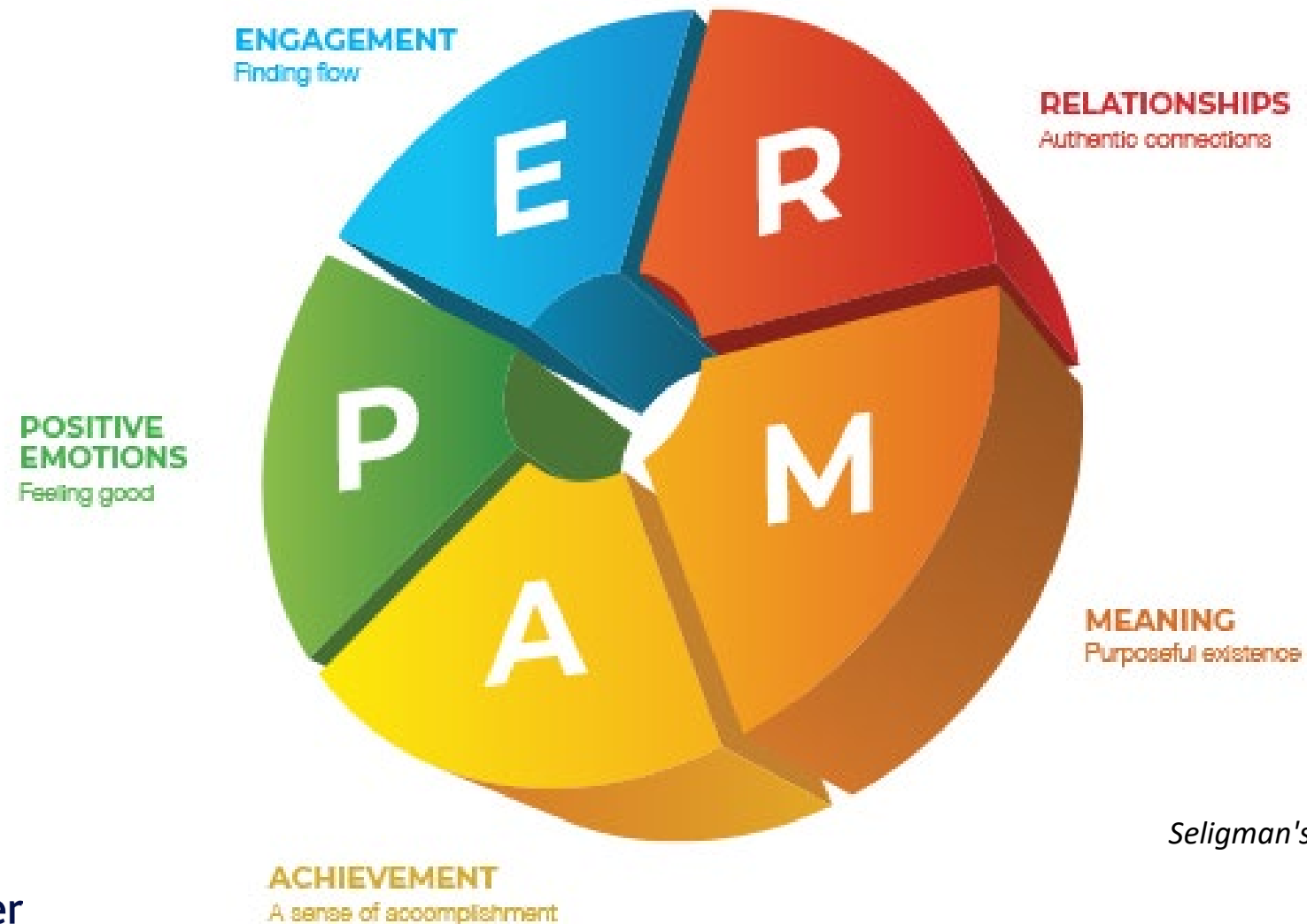
- Introduce an academic model of wellbeing
- Talk about the findings from our wellbeing@work project & recommendations for workplace practices
- Hear your views on wellbeing in your workplace and what you think about our findings
- Share some practical strategies with you based on real life case studies
- An opportunity to (continue) networking – with us!



Join the Wellbeing For Life mailing
list



'PERMA' Blocks of Wellbeing



Seligman's (2011) Five Pillars of Wellbeing

PERMA in Workplaces

Pillar:	Positive Emotions	Engagement	Relationships	Meaning	Accomplishment
Why is this important within the workplace?	Linked to: self-confidence, problem and conflict solving, higher activity and energy, creativity, job satisfaction...	Linked to: performance, motivation, physical and mental health...	Linked to: vitality, readiness to learn, citizenship, cooperation, trust and innovation...	Linked to: SWB, +ve mental health, +ve self-image, work enjoyment, commitment, performance...	Linked to: work engagement, job/career satisfaction, self-efficacy, motivation, persistence...
How?	Broadening, building and undoing effects of positive emotion; reduce stressors and promote adaptive ways of coping	Removing unnecessary and prohibitive practices creates space for engagement; opportunity for 'flow'; job crafting	Promote meaningful, supportive and productive relationships to enhance sense of achievement and support development	Recognition of own values and supporting the enactment of those values in one's work; regular reflection	Empower colleagues to be innovative and reach their potential; support autonomy; goal setting and pathways; celebrate successes

Wellbeing@work project

- Positively resilient? Examining adjustment to workplace changes after periods of adversity
- Capturing the views and experiences of UK workers as they begin a large-scale return to work



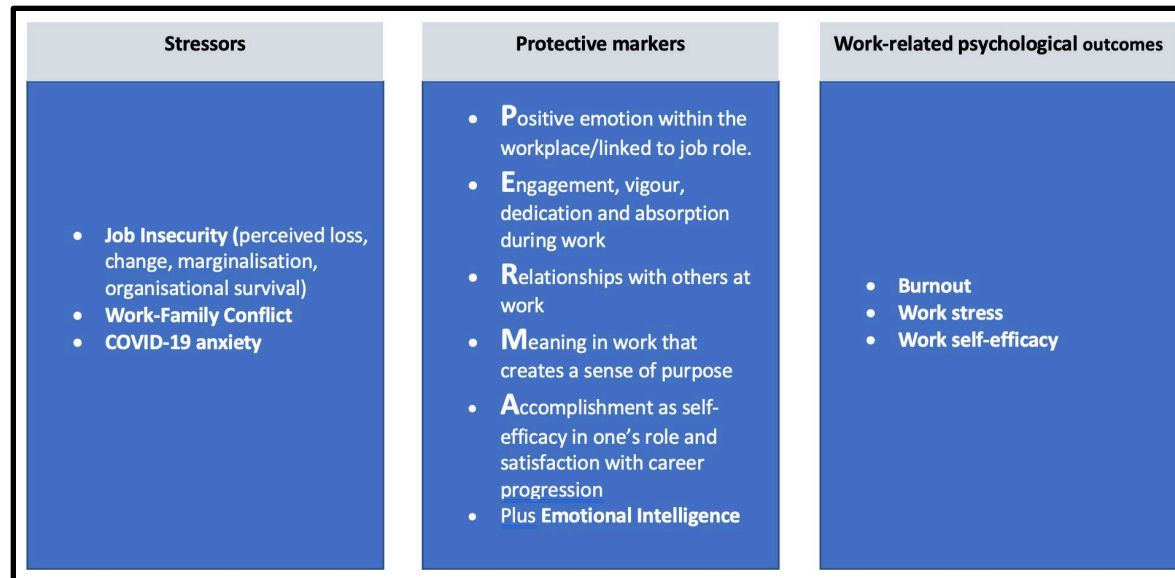
Aims and approach

1. To explore predictors of 'professional' resilience in workers who have experienced change in working practices as a result of the global pandemic

How?
Survey (n = 357) August 2020-March 2021

2. To explore the experiences of workers who are adapting to workplace change, with a focus on barriers and facilitators of professional resilience.

How?
Virtual interviews (n= 20) at two timepoints: Aug-Oct 2020; April-June 2022

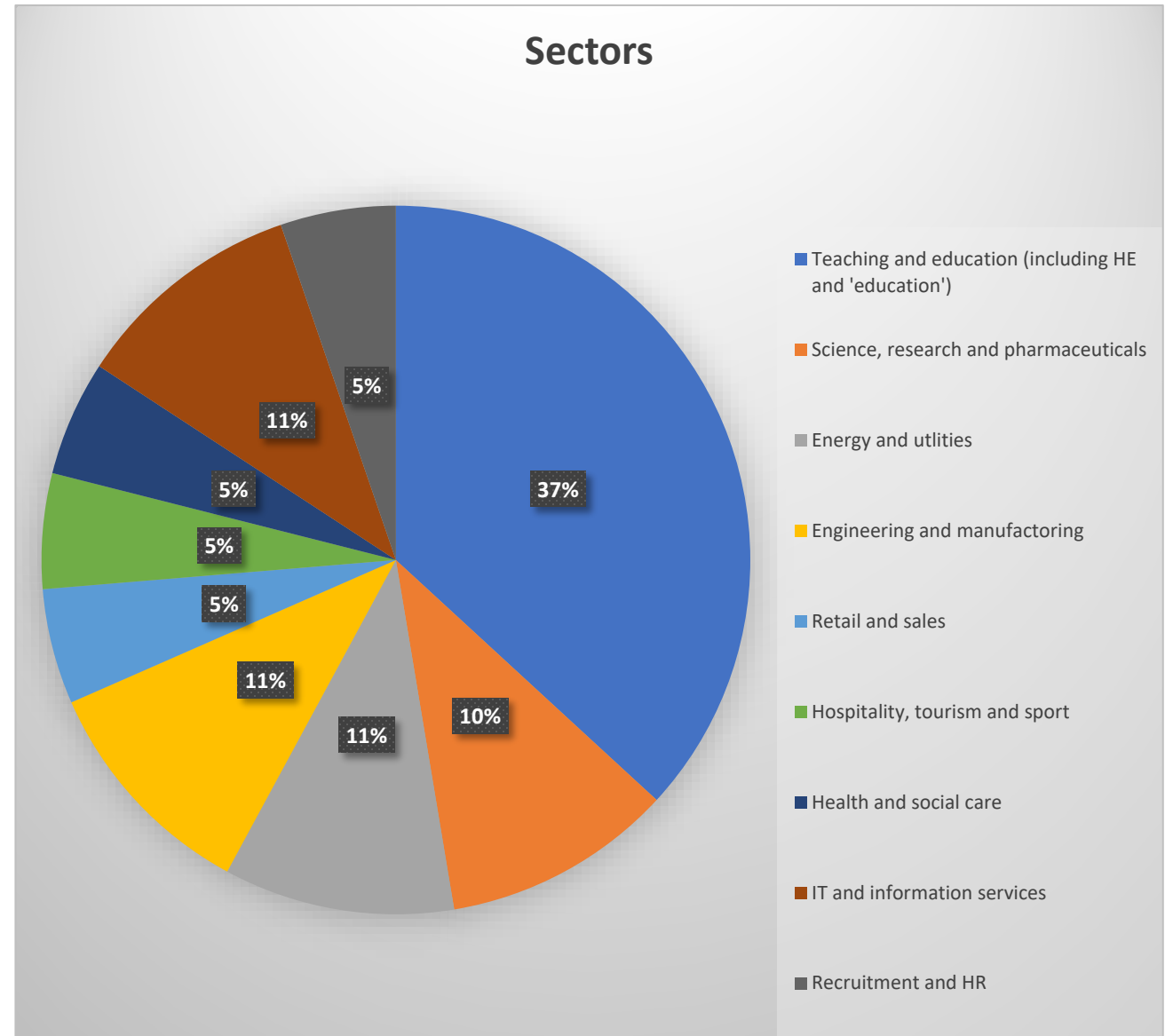


Example questions

- Has the current situation had any impact on your happiness or contentment at work? If so, how?
- Does your workplace have any support mechanisms or wellbeing interventions available to employees?
- Have any aspects of your role at work changed? If so, how?
- Has there been any impact on the work you are usually able to accomplish? (*e.g. motivation, time, volume, commitment?*)
- Has the current situation had any impact on how engaged you feel at work?
- Have there been any impact on your working relationships (i.e. has the situation impacted the ways in which you would normally socially interact with colleagues in your usual place of work)?
- Would you say the covid-19 pandemic has had any impact on your career overall? If so how?
- Time two: experience of working and has your role changed? Working arrangements, expectations, benefits etc.

Our interviewees

- 20 UK workers, aged 35-64
- 12 female, 6 male (3 did not specify)



Findings and recommendations




Develop Relationships with Colleagues

- Importance of opportunities for social connection (online and/or in-person)
 - 'Social Snacking'
- Offering and receiving social support
 - Different types of social support: Emotional, informational, tangible, esteem
- Informal and formal forms of social support
 - Empathic responding
 - Supporting new colleagues
 - Mentorship and development
 - Provision of training and advice

"Humans are social animals. If you put us in isolation, doesn't matter how happy you are with college, where you're living, who you're with. If you're if you're isolated, you're going to start running into trouble"

"Our manager encouraged a buddy system, [and asked] if you could just check on this person on a regular basis, doesn't need to be about work. It can be a phone call, texting, having video calls. But just knowing that we're looking after each other sort of mentality was really good."



Flexibility and Work-life Balance

"I do prefer working from home. There's less distractions, I'm enjoying the solitude and in an ideal world, for me, everybody would work from home full time, no travelling so like from an environmental point of view, I think it's much better for society to do that"

"I've always ended up at work at seven thirty in the morning, you know, train timetables and things like that. What's happening now is I don't have to get out of bed until seven o'clock. I can still do my exercise. So I'm doing all my good mental health stuff and then coming to work when I'm taking a break... So for me, it gives me more flexibility"

- Flexibility at work and work-life balance can help employees to meet certain needs.
- Flexible working makes it easier for people with key responsibilities, commitments, physical and mental health concerns, as well as other personal circumstances and interests, to have recognition for and attend to those needs outside of work in addition to carrying out their job effectively.

What does flexible working practice look like?

- working part-time
- working outside of traditional 9-5 hours
- working compressed hours
- working from home / hybrid working

Find 'meaning' in work

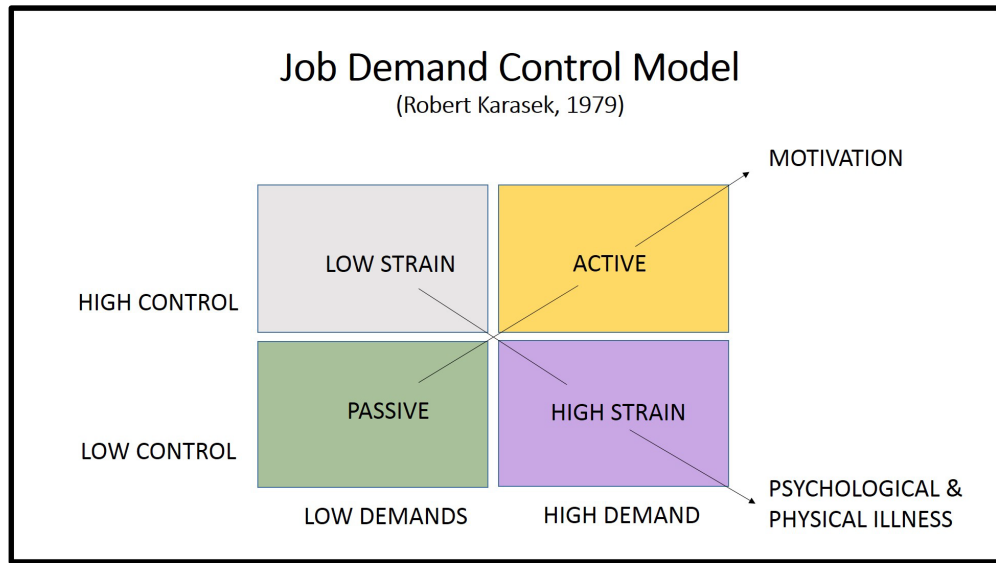
"I work with people who have cancer and other long term health conditions and said the fact that they're getting support that I can give. You get some amazing comments. So, yes, but it is very much fulfilment that comes from the contact with the service users"

"[I've been] less engaged with the organisation, because I've seen that they're not as professional as I would want them to be. And there have been occasions when I feel that integrity has been lacking for me, that integrity is a big thing."

- A sense of meaning can be facilitated through:
 - Recognising one's identity within the organisation
 - Identifying one's contributions
 - Feeling connected to others
- Requires regular reflection on one's role and contributions
- Opportunities to feel fulfilled and to support others
- A strengths-based approach: person-job-organisation fit



Autonomy, safety & trust



"It's just great to be in a job where you feel trusted to actually do the job rather than micro-managed"

When employees can make choices, set goals, and control their methods and pace of work, they experience lower levels of stress – use skills, negotiate

'Safety' often related to COVID-19 context

- 'Psychological' safety important and encompasses *trust* (freedom to voice, thoughts, ideas, concerns) – collaborative environment and growth/learning – 'a collective intelligence'
- How? Communication, manage power dynamics, reassurance that there is no fear of repercussions ('relationships' and empathy)

Communicate Effectively, Set Expectations, Support Needs

"I think the companies that have done well have communicated a lot"

"The video conferencing has actually allowed a more 1-to-1 personalised communication for people within the team."

"We've had to kind of adjust all that, the expectations for [colleagues] and how long it's going to take them in their diaries to achieve certain things."

Effective communication;	What does it look like?	What are the benefits?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- creates transparency- involves employees in decision-making and initiatives- reinforces values- creates a sense of ownership and belonging in the future of the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 'consulting' with employees, rather than 'instructing'- Clarify expectations- Informing (of challenge/change) in advance- Giving support/guidance- Showing compassion- Creating informal spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Better engagement- Increased morale- Increased productivity- Reduced turnover- Greater loyalty + motivation- Collaboration- Remedy for workplace conflict

Recognising achievements & offering reassurance after setbacks

- Reassurance after (perceived) setbacks, OR changes in role = new goal setting/monitoring
- Links to developing '*psychological safety*'
- (Bespoke) systems for progression and recognizing achievement = *engagement*, satisfaction and performance
 - fairness, transparency, and personalisation in recognition practices
 - clear criteria for recognition
 - multiple channels for recognition (e.g., verbal praise, awards, promotions),
 - opportunities for peer-to-peer recognition, and ongoing feedback and communication about performance.

"I'd actually been asking to be trained in doing this before lockdown, so it was discussions with my manager about wanting to do something else. You know and move on... my personal development ...just wasn't happening"

"Although I've learned a lot more, I don't feel that I've moved on"

Impact of Good Recognition Program on Engagement



Improves Employee Happiness & Satisfaction Levels



Increases the Overall Retention Rate



Builds a Culture of Self-improvement



Boost Workforce Morale



Fills Employees with Sense of Purpose

Adopt a holistic approach to wellbeing

- Wellbeing is multifaceted and this should be reflected in workplace support for wellbeing
- One size does not fit all – a range of opportunities will be needed
- Tailor your approach to your needs
- Identify possible barriers so these can be negotiated more effectively and consider routes for facilitating engagement
- Voluntary participation is key

"I hope businesses just embrace it more, the things around wellbeing, and embed that into the culture"

"I gave up, it didn't work for me because it was things like asking about how well I'd slept and then, if you're not sleeping well, it'll get flagged on a dashboard and somebody'll get in touch. I never sleep well, I just don't want reminding of that again"



Applying the
recommendations
in practice

Develop supportive & diverse relationships with colleagues

Setting	How?	What?
<p>2022: UK animal charity wanted to improve working relationships amongst frontline staff, since wellbeing at work had been negatively impacted by a greater number of, often distressing, animal rehoming cases following the pandemic</p>	<p>Training took place within small groups to allow for a 'safe space' to explore ideas and emotions - iterative approach to ensure whole frontline team were trained in the same content within a 3 month window</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building greater Emotional Awareness (self and others) and Emotional Agility as a basis for empathic responding to each other's needs and problems (Emotional Literacy; Emotion Regulation tools and techniques; ACR; Managing emotional conversations and handling difficult feedback sensitively)• Recognizing, understanding and appreciating diverse communication preferences and needs across team members and flexing own approach accordingly for more constructive conversations• Celebrating each other's successes and expressing gratitude for one another regularly to strengthen bonds between team members and as a whole team

A holistic and tailored approach to supporting wellbeing at work

SETTING

Q1 2021: A UK Council wanted to build a holistic and comprehensive Wellbeing Strategy and provision for staff which felt like 'their own' (i.e. not the same as for other organisations)

HOW?

Initial audit of current wellbeing practices within the council revealed some activities which could be mapped to PERMA, but also opportunities for further provision
Initial consultancy, in collaboration with a project team from within the Council, led to the creation of a bespoke Wellbeing Framework based upon the 5 Pathways of PERMA:
(Bespoke names for the Pathways; bespoke Visual Identity created by a Graphic Designer; integration with the Council's Values)

WHAT?

- A programme of bi-monthly 'opt-in', online training sessions/webinars was created, each mapped to one of the 5 Pathways :This launched in 2021 and is still running currently (and will do into 2024 and beyond)
- A central Wellbeing Hub was created on an internal portal, structured around the 5 Pathways , to allow users to self-select supporting resources for each Pathway: e.g. book recommendations, TED talks, web resources etc.
- 6 x Wellbeing Champions (volunteers from within the Council), were also trained to provide support and signposting to fellow colleagues in regard to the 6 Pathways



Get in touch

