



Wellbeing Assessment Guide

For prospective adopters

Introduction

What affects one person's mental wellbeing won't necessarily affect others in the same way. Key life events, such as loss (including infertility and miscarriage) or bereavement, issues at work, financial worries, starting a new job, college or university and relationship problems can all impact on our mental wellbeing. Sometimes there is no clear reason why we feel the way we do and sometimes, when it comes to the way we feel emotionally, it can be hard to recognise or admit that we're not feeling good.

We all have issues that affect our mental health in one way or another, but that doesn't mean we need to struggle. There are steps you can take to improve and maintain your mental wellbeing and these can be seen [here](#).

This guide has been created as a starting point for a routine discussion between prospective adopters and their recruitment and assessment (RA&) Social Worker about mental health and wellbeing. It is designed to assist you to take stock of your mental, as well as physical wellbeing.

Key principles:

- It recognises the adoption process can be stressful and intrusive and it may have an impact on the individual's mental wellbeing.
- It recognises that issues discussed within the assessment and preparation process could trigger emotions that individuals may need support to deal with.
- It is designed to provide pointers for review and assistance in identifying means of providing you with support and to work with you to source appropriate support to address identified issues.
- It is not designed to be a 'one off' discussion, but a regular review incorporated into the assessment, preparation and adoption support processes.
- The guide and the mental health wellbeing assessment tool is not intended to replace a consultation with a GP if you are struggling.
- This guide seeks to make the regular, but not onerously frequent, assessment of your mental wellbeing a routine part of the assessment and support mechanisms, and is not for use only when an individual expresses that they are feeling 'down' or struggling.
- Information shared that may be of concern for a safeguarding reason will be shared as per the organisation's safeguarding policy.
- This guide should be used in conjunction with the guide to having difficult conversations.

The guide makes the following assumptions:

- That as a prospective adopter, you will discuss your mental wellbeing with your R&A Social Worker in an open and honest way.
- That the R&A Social Worker will enter into any discussion with you about your wellbeing and document these in an open and honest way.
- That the R&A Social Worker will provide support and signposting for further sources of support for you.
- That the R&A Social Worker will review the wellbeing in a relationship (cohabiting or not/civil partnership/marriage etc.) as a unit.

Process

- You will be introduced to the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) [wellbeing assessment tool](#) as part of the R&A discussions at Stage 1 of the adoption preparation and assessment process, and again at the beginning of stage 2 and regularly thereafter.
- In working through the assessment tool, you will be able to identify, if not already aware, your mental wellbeing state and what actions may be of benefit if your score is on the low side.
- You are **not** expected to share your results from the SAMH wellbeing tool, it is a tool for you to proactively assess your current wellbeing and respond accordingly (see Appendix 1).
- The R&A Social Worker should not ask you what your SAMH assessment score was, but you can share this if you wish to.
- As part of the assessment and preparation process, the R&A Social Worker will discuss your mental wellbeing, with reference to the assessment tool; this should be in a supportive manner.
- Whether the assessment tool has been used or not, if a discussion identifies that a you are struggling or experiencing difficulties, the R&A Social Worker will assist you to make a plan to address the identified areas of stress/concern (See Appendix 1) this may include:
 - ◇ Recommending you make use of their current support network
 - ◇ Recommending you develop a support network
 - ◇ Recommending you seek a consultation with their GP
 - ◇ Recommending you discuss the issue identified with an existing support provider (mentor/counsellor/support group/support organisation etc.)
 - ◇ Recommending you seek professional support
 - ◇ Signposting relevant support groups/organisations



Using the guide as an early permanence foster carer

- The Social Worker will discuss this wellbeing assessment at the beginning of the placement and thereafter.
- The supervision of the early permanence foster carer, will usually be delegated to your R&A Social Worker, and it is anticipated that the discussion of your mental health wellbeing will be incorporated into the regular supervision discussions and documented as part of that.
- The fostering Social Worker will be aware, through shared visits and scrutiny of the supervision records, of discussions regarding your mental wellbeing.
- The fostering Social Worker must be included in discussions regarding any identified provision of support.
- The Child's Social Worker retains responsibility for the looked after child and should be involved in any discussions regarding mental wellbeing that may impact upon the your ability as a foster carer, to care for the child.



Using the guide in Recruitment & assessment of prospective adopters

- Your Social Worker will discuss this at the beginning of your assessment process and thereafter.

Using the guide and the adoption support plan

- Identified issues will be incorporate into the adoption support plan, with regular review.

Further resources

[Mind, the mental health support charity](#)

[NHS 5 steps to mental wellbeing](#)

[Five ways to wellbeing: New applications, new ways of thinking | New Economics Foundation](#)

Appendix 1: Steps to support mental wellbeing

YouGov research shows that around one quarter of us never take the time to look after our mental health.

Evidence suggests there are 5 steps you can take to improve your mental health and wellbeing. Trying these things could help you feel more positive and able to get the most out of life.

Connect

Staying in touch with loved ones can make us feel happier and more secure; and often just having a chat can help to lift our mood.

- Put five minutes aside to ask someone how they are
- Arrange to meet up with friends that you haven't seen in a while
- Join a local group or club and meet new people in your community

Be Active

Being active isn't just good for our physical health; it's also proven to have a positive effect on our mental health and wellbeing.

- Go for a short walk at lunchtime
- Discover a physical activity you enjoy and one that suits you
- Try the NHS's [couch to 5K](#)



Take Notice

Whether you're spending time with friends or taking a moment for yourself, try to stop to take notice and be aware of the present.

- Set aside time to practise mindfulness or take up yoga
- Take notice of how your friends or colleagues are feeling
- Spend time outdoors, enjoy the fresh air and notice what's around you

Learn

Learning enhances your self-esteem and confidence, and can be a great way to meet new people.

- Sign up for a class and learn something new
- Rediscover an old interest,
- Take on a new challenge to make or fix something

Give

Giving can be very rewarding; in fact those who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

- Volunteer your time for a cause you are passionate about
- Spend time with someone who you know has been having a difficult time
- Fundraise for a charity

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Alexandra Lucas, Project Lead

