

Exchange	Mental Health & Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	05/05/2026
Location	Microsoft Teams
GMLPN Staff	Charlotte Jones, Hannah Bolsher
Chair	Kate Day – DH Associates
Speakers:	Nicola Fletcher – Damar Training Michelle Edwards 1 st 2 Achieve
Attendees:	Aimie Nelson (DH Associates), Lesley McCormack (MJ Training) David Morley (Damar Training), Allan Milne (Salford City College), Rachael Swift (Race Ahead), Gillies, Julie (Growth Company), Dixon, Amanda J. (Bury Adult Learning Services), Lisa Dyke DH Associates), Julie Jones (Now Skills), Kirstie Battams (DH Associates), Gary Isherwood (1st2Achieve), Sarah Ogden (Rochdale Training), Tina Ratcliffe (Discover Gill Mason (Kids Planet Day Nurseries), James Morgan (DH Associates), Jacquie Allen (DH Associates), Gemma Cretney (3D Training), Charlotte Crabtree (Mantra Learning),
Key Themes / Discussion Points	

Importance of Culture & Leadership

- Wellbeing is most effective when embedded in organisational culture, not delivered as one-off activities.
- Strong leadership behaviours and manager confidence are critical for:
 - Open conversations
 - Psychological safety
 - Ongoing support
- Culture should be people-centred, inclusive, and co-created with staff.

Simple, Consistent Approaches Work Best

- High-impact wellbeing strategies are often:
 - Low-cost
 - Simple
 - Consistent
- Examples shared:
 - Personalised recognition (e.g. cards, small gifts)
 - Regular informal check-ins
 - Wellbeing days and flexible working
 - Encouraging peer connection (e.g. “getting to know you” sessions) / “buddying up”

Inclusion & Wellbeing Are Interconnected

- All learners move in and out of needing support during their journey — not just at the start.
- Inclusion is not about “fixing”, but:
 - Adapting environments
 - Responding to changing needs
- Key risk areas:
 - Over-reliance on self-disclosure
 - Lack of staff confidence in identifying needs
 - Poor recording of support

Learner Challenges

- Common barriers affecting wellbeing and engagement:
 - Balancing work, study, and personal life
 - Financial pressures
 - Confidence and fear of failure
 - Digital skills gaps
 - Health challenges (e.g. menopause, mental health)
- These challenges directly impact:
 - Retention
 - Attendance
 - Engagement

Temporary & Flexible Support (“Graduated Approach”)

- Support should be:
 - Responsive and flexible
 - Not always long-term
- Examples:
 - Short-term extra support for digital skills
 - Flexible off-the-job hours arrangements
 - Increased pastoral support during difficult periods

Staff Wellbeing Drives Learner Outcomes

- Clear link between:
 - Staff wellbeing → learner success and retention
- Ofsted focus areas included:
 - Manageable workloads
 - Flexible working
 - Strong CPD and support systems
- Leadership responsibility to ensure:
 - Staff feel valued and supported
 - Wellbeing is monitored and acted upon

Challenges Identified Across Providers

- Difficulty:
 - Identifying wellbeing needs in group settings (especially ESOL)

- Recording and evidencing support effectively
 - Staff confidence in handling wellbeing issues
- Tension between:
 - Supporting learners holistically
 - Limited time and resources

Breakout Room Feedback Highlights

Key Challenges

- Apprentices balancing multiple responsibilities (work, study, home life)
- Identifying needs in large group settings
- Staff uncertainty about when issues are:
 - Welfare vs safeguarding
- Lack of documentation despite strong practical support
- Time and resource pressures

Good Practice Shared

- Temporary adjustments for learners under pressure
- Welfare vs safeguarding reporting distinction
- Providing learners with:
 - Support directories
 - Safeguarding/welfare contacts from day one
- Creating informal spaces for learners to open up

Practical Ideas

- Develop wellbeing / support leaflets for learners
- Build welfare reporting pathways alongside safeguarding
- Provide staff training on recognising softer wellbeing needs
- Encourage informal conversations and check-ins

Resources / Links Shared

[Mental Health Awareness Week | Mental Health Foundation](#)
[Meaningful May | Action for Happiness](#)

Actions

For Providers

- Embed wellbeing into:
 - Induction and onboarding
 - Regular reviews and sessions
- Train staff to:
 - Identify early warning signs
 - Have sensitive conversations
 - Apply a graduated approach
- Improve:
 - Recording and evidence of support
 - Documentation of adjustments

For Learner Support

- Introduce:
 - Regular check-ins focused on wellbeing (not just progress)
 - Flexible delivery methods
 - Temporary adjustments based on need
- Provide:
 - Clear signposting (e.g. support leaflets, services directory)
 - Opportunities for peer support and connection

For Staff Support

- Maintain:
 - Reasonable caseloads
 - Flexible working arrangements
 - Access to external wellbeing support
- Monitor:
 - Wellbeing through structured 1:1s and feedback loops
- Act on feedback to drive continuous improvement

Next Steps

Further Exchange Topics Identified

- Menopause support across providers
- Practical inclusion strategies

Provider-Level Next Steps

- Review internal wellbeing and inclusion processes
- Run internal audits (e.g. support documentation exercise)
- Identify quick wins for improvement