



Practical Business Toolkit

Purpose of this Toolkit

This toolkit exists to help businesses move from *commitment* to *action* with confidence. It is designed for real workplaces, limited time, and varying levels of internal expertise.

You do not need to be a mental health expert.

You do not need HR.

You need clarity, compassion, and a willingness to act.

SECTION 1: Q&A / Troubleshooting Guide

“What if I don’t have HR?”

That’s completely normal — especially for micro and small businesses.

What matters most is not titles, it’s responsibility.

- Nominate one clear point of contact (owner, director, manager)
- Make it known who employees can speak to
- Keep conversations human and supportive, not procedural
- Use external support where needed (Chamber resources, charities, GP signposting)

You are not expected to diagnose, counsel, or fix problems — only to respond appropriately and signpost.

“What if someone discloses something serious?”

You are not expected to handle this alone.

- Listen without judgement
 - Thank them for speaking up
 - Do not rush to solutions
- Acknowledge the seriousness
 - “I’m really glad you told me”
 - “That sounds very difficult”
- Establish immediate safety
 - If there is risk of harm, seek urgent professional help
- Signpost support
 - GP
 - NHS Talking Therapies



- Employee support services (where available)
- Follow up appropriately
 - Agree next steps
 - Respect confidentiality

🚫 What not to do:

- Promise secrecy you can't keep
- Try to act as a therapist
- Ignore it and hope it resolves itself

“What’s reasonable for a small business?”

Reasonable = proportional and genuine.

For a small business, this may mean:

- One conversation starter initiative
- One short training or awareness session
- One clear signpost to support
- Regular check-ins rather than formal programmes

“What if someone doesn’t want to talk or engage?”

That’s okay. Support cannot be forced.

- Respect their choice and autonomy
- Keep the door open: “If you change your mind, I’m here”
- Ensure they know where support can be accessed
- Continue to treat them fairly and consistently

Creating safety is often a slow process — silence does not mean refusal forever.

“What if a performance issue and mental health are tangled together?”

This is very common.

- Separate the person from the issue
- Ask open questions: “Is anything impacting your work right now?”
- Explore reasonable adjustments where possible
- Document discussions respectfully and fairly
- Seek professional HR or Legal advice



❌ Avoid framing it as:

- “Your mental health is the problem”
- An all-or-nothing conversation

“What if I say the wrong thing?”

You will not be perfect — and that’s expected.

What helps more than perfect words:

- Being genuine
- Listening more than talking
- Being willing to apologise and learn

Simple phrases that work:

- “Thank you for telling me”
- “I might not have the answers, but I want to help”
- “Let’s look at this together”

Silence, avoidance, or over-policing language does far more harm than honest humanity.

“What if I’m personally struggling too?”

Leaders are human as well.

- Seek your own support — you role-model healthy behaviour
- Set clear boundaries about what you can hold
- Avoid carrying everyone else’s emotional load alone

“What if employees expect more than we can realistically offer?”

Be honest and transparent.

- Clearly explain what support is available — and what isn’t
- Focus on signposting and flexibility, not fixing
- Review support regularly as capacity changes

“What if nothing seems to be changing?”

Cultural change is gradual, not instant.



Signs of progress include:

- More conversations happening
- Greater awareness and confidence
- Earlier disclosure of issues
- Fewer crises over time

Key Reminder

You are not being asked to be:

- A counsellor
- A clinician
- Perfect

You are being asked to be:

- Approachable
- Responsive
- Compassionate
- Consistent

That is enough to make a real difference.



Mental Health Wellbeing Awareness Flowchart

“Someone Raises a Mental Health Concern — What Do I Do Next?”

Concern Raised

(Person discloses, behaviour changes noticed, or concern reported)



Create Safe Space

- Ensure privacy
- Stay calm & non-judgemental
- Give full attention



Listen & Acknowledge

- Active listening
- Validate feelings
- Thank them for speaking up



Assess Immediate Risk

Are they at risk of harm to themselves or others?



— YES —



Immediate Risk Identified

- Suicidal thoughts
- Self-harm risk
- Severe distress
- Psychosis / crisis



Seek Urgent Help

- Contact GP / NHS 111
- Mental Health Crisis Team
- Emergency Services (999)
- Do not leave person alone



Ensure Safety & Support



Unclear Risk

- Ask gentle clarifying questions
- Stay with the person
- Seek advice from safeguarding lead



If NO Immediate Risk



Explore Needs & Concerns

- What support would help?
- Work/study/home pressures?
- Physical health factors?
- Social or financial stressors?



Discuss Support Options

- Internal wellbeing services
- Occupational Health / HR / Student Support
- Counselling or therapy
- GP referral
- Peer or community support
- Self-help resources



Agree Next Steps Together (Co-produce plan)

- Reasonable adjustments
- Flexible workload or deadlines
- Time off / phased return
- Wellbeing plan



Signpost Clearly

Provide written information:

- NHS Talking Therapies
- Charities & helplines
- Local wellbeing services



Record Appropriately

- Respect confidentiality
- Share only when necessary for safety



Follow-Up & Review

- Check-in meeting agreed
- Monitor wellbeing
- Adjust support if needed



Quick Start Guides

Action Plan After Signing the Charter

These guides are designed to be practical, proportionate, and realistic. Each phase builds on the last — no stage is about perfection, only progress.

1 - 3 Months Start the Conversation

This phase is about making your commitment visible and believable, not rolling out complex programmes.

- Confirm wellbeing ownership
 - Decide who holds responsibility (owner, director, manager)
 - Be explicit — ambiguity creates silence
- Share why the Charter has been signed
 - Explain *why it matters to your organisation*
 - Keep the message personal and values-led
- Signpost at least one external support route
 - e.g. GP, NHS Talking Therapies, trusted charities
 - Ensure people know where to go beyond work
- Encourage open conversation at team level
 - Mention wellbeing in team meetings
 - Use simple prompts: “How are things feeling at the moment?”

What “Good” Looks Like at 3 months

- People know the Charter exists
- People know who to talk to
- People feel permission to raise concerns early

Suggested Outputs

- One short written or verbal communication explaining the Charter
- One clearly named wellbeing contact
- One visible support or signposting option shared with staff



3 – 6 Months Build Confidence

This phase is about helping leaders and teams feel more confident having conversations.

- Provide basic awareness or conversation training
 - This can be light-touch (workshop, webinar, briefing)
 - Focus on listening, not diagnosing
- Introduce regular wellbeing check-ins
 - Build into existing meetings where possible
 - Short, informal, consistent
- Identify informal champions or supporters
 - These do not need titles
 - Trusted colleagues often work best
- Gather simple feedback
 - Ask: “What’s helping?” and “What else would help?”
 - Keep it anonymous if appropriate

What “Good” Looks Like at 6 months

- Leaders feel more confident initiating conversations
- Employees know support exists *before* crisis
- Wellbeing is mentioned consistently, not just once

Suggested Outputs

- Leaders who feel briefed, trained, or supported
- Clear conversation routes across teams
- Early signs of engagement (questions, feedback, uptake)

6 - 12 Months Embed & Review

This phase shifts wellbeing from a *moment* to a *practice*.

- Review what actions have been taken
 - What have we actually done?
 - What has worked — and what hasn’t?
- Agree what to strengthen next
 - Choose one or two priorities only
 - Avoid over-committing
- Refresh support signposting
 - Check information is still accurate and visible
- Communicate progress openly



- Share what you've learned
- Be honest about next steps

What “Good” Looks Like at 12 months

- Wellbeing feels normal to talk about
- Support is easier to find
- Leaders are more comfortable responding early
- People trust the commitment is real

Suggested Outputs

- Short internal review or summary (even bullet points)
- Clear next actions agreed
- Renewed, visible commitment to the Charter