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# EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF MULTIPLE AND COMPLEX NEEDS (MCN)

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A toolkit for employers



**Fulfilling Lives**

South East Partnership

# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>KEY SUPPORT FROM LEADERS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>THE BENEFITS</b> of Employing People with Lived Experience of Multiple and Complex Needs (MCN) .....	<b>8</b>
<b>UNDERPINNING VALUES</b> Getting the Environment & Culture Right .....	<b>11</b>
<b>GETTING IT RIGHT FROM THE START</b> Recruitment - Applications & Interviews .....	<b>15</b>
<b>STRUCTURED INDUCTION AND PROBATION</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT EMPLOYMENT</b> Supervision and Training .....	<b>22</b>
<b>WELL-BEING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT &amp; WORK GO HAND-IN-HAND</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>FINAL THOUGHTS</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>FURTHER RESOURCES</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
<b>APPENDIX 1: Induction Template</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: Supervision Template</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: Wellness Action Plan Template</b> .....	<b>35</b>

# INTRODUCTION

## OBJECTIVES & AIMS OF THIS RESOURCE:

- To illustrate and evidence the benefits of employing people with experience of MCN for both organisations and individuals.
- To give employers tools, approaches and practices from experience-based research that will help them benefit from employing individuals with experience of MCN.
- For organisations to advertise more job roles and employ more people with lived experience of MCN as an asset/valued criteria.
- For organisations to feel confident that they could successfully recruit, support and develop people with lived experience of MCN as employees and provide an inclusive trauma-informed workplace.
- To provide evidence-based tools and approaches that employers can utilise to successfully employ people with experience of MCN.

## OUR KEY MESSAGES ARE:



Employing people who have experienced MCN is beneficial for organisations that offer services around MCN.



Organisations can make simple changes to their recruitment and working/HR processes to make this accessible to people with MCN.



Workers with MCN (or experience of) can be successful employees and further their careers given the right environment (this not only refers to physical environment but to a psychologically informed one).

## LIVED EXPERIENCE OF MCN – WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

For the purposes of this toolkit, Multiple and Complex Needs (MCN) refers to people who have experienced homelessness, are in recovery from substance use, have experienced mental health challenges, have experienced domestic violence and/or have had experience with the criminal justice system. While recruiting people with experience of MCN may seem daunting to an employer initially, consider that any of these experiences can happen to anyone at any time.



## WHO IS THIS TOOLKIT AIMED AT?

This toolkit is primarily aimed at organisations and employers within the 'support services' sector such as charities and services supporting those experiencing homelessness, drug and alcohol difficulties, domestic violence and mental health difficulties.

However, the principles discussed here would fit any organisation wishing to better understand how to recruit and support people with lived experience of MCN within their workplace.

## KEY SUPPORT FROM LEADERS

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*“Employing people with lived experience is invaluable for the insight and knowledge this brings. It is, however, far more than this – actively employing people with lived experience, for their lived experience, and supporting people to bring their lived experience into their work has far reaching impact.”*

*“Our Fulfilling Lives project has had an employment programme as a key element from the very beginning. The learning from this, the tools developed, the support embedded, and the culture created will help BHT Sussex to take a really proactive approach to ensuring the benefits both for the organisation and for the individual.”*

**Nikki Homewood - Director, Advice and Support Services - BHT Sussex**



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*“Involving people with lived experience of multiple and complex needs is one of the cornerstones of the national Fulfilling lives programme and a golden thread that has run throughout our work over the last eight years.”*

*“Working alongside colleagues with lived experience has given us a more well-rounded team; providing positive challenge to assumptions and careless use of language, actively challenging stigma and discrimination and helping us all to remain strongly connected with the purpose of our project. It has certainly improved my practice as a manager.”*

*“Reflecting on the experience with Fulfilling Lives, lived experience roles ought to be the norm in projects and services throughout the health and social care sector and I welcome a continued growth in numbers of such roles.”*

*“I’d like to thank all of the individuals that have participated in the programme and wish them all the best in their future career paths.”*

**Jo Rogers – Senior Manager, BHT Fulfilling Lives South East**

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*“Employing people with lived experience is not a ‘nice to do’ but an essential part of ensuring that BHT Sussex is a forward-looking resilient organisation that can draw on expertise of the widest range of people to support our vision. Following the ideas and guidance in the toolkit means that we can ensure we are doing so consistently and to a high standard everywhere in the organisation. It is also invaluable in helping us evidence our commitment to the Mental Health at Work Scheme.”*

**Rachael Kenny - Director of Mental Health and Support Services - BHT Sussex**

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*“Our business has had over 20 people who have experienced MCN, and in our case, people in recovery from addiction and ex-offenders. The challenges that we have overcome together have benefitted each individual we have worked with and helped us to evolve as an organization. The empathy, compassion and understanding that we have now make us a better business both to work for and work with. We have revealed talents in individuals that have seen demonstrable benefits to all involved and I am so pleased to work with Fulfilling Lives and BHT to help other companies gain confidence within the workplace which will enable them to build policies that promote openness and progressiveness. We at Citrus Ornge are committed to helping carry the message and lead the path for other companies to have more progressive recruitment, employment and occupational health strategy.”*

**Jason Baker – CEO - Citrus Ornge Performance Marketing, Tech and Publishing**

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*“It’s been a great privilege to have been involved in the early set-up of Fulfilling Lives and it’s been fantastic to see this amazing project go from strength to strength as it makes real and lasting change to service provision for our most vulnerable and excluded members of society. The employer toolkit is but one strand of an important and enduring legacy of Fulfilling Lives, drawing on deep experiential expertise, the toolkit will be an indispensable resource for any employer who is serious about improving workplace well-being.”*

**Rob Robinson - Principal Investigator and Senior Employment Specialist, Change Grow Live**



# BACKGROUND

## The BHT Fulfilling Lives South East project and Employment programme 2014 – 2021

**BHT Fulfilling Lives South East** is one of 12 partnerships of local organisations, funded by the **National Lottery Community Fund**, working together to **improve services for people with multiple and complex needs** across the country. The Project is funded to (i) provide intensive support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage (ii) involve people with lived experience of MCN at all levels (iii) challenge and change systems that negatively affect people facing multiple disadvantage. BHT Fulfilling Lives SE operates in Brighton and Hove, Eastbourne, and Hastings.

As well as supporting people directly, we advocate for more effective and efficient ways for designing, commissioning, and delivering support services for people experiencing MCN.

The purpose of this initiative is to bring about lasting change in how services work with people with multiple and complex needs and we collaborate with partners to work towards this objective. We are committed to putting co-production into practice and value the voices of experience. We also recognise the value of trauma-informed approaches in our work and the work of others.

For more information on our project please visit:

[Fulfilling Lives South East website](#)

[Fulfilling Lives blog](#)

One of the key parts of the project has been employing people with lived experience. This was achieved through an extensive programme where people with lived experience of MCN were employed in the project on fixed term contracts.

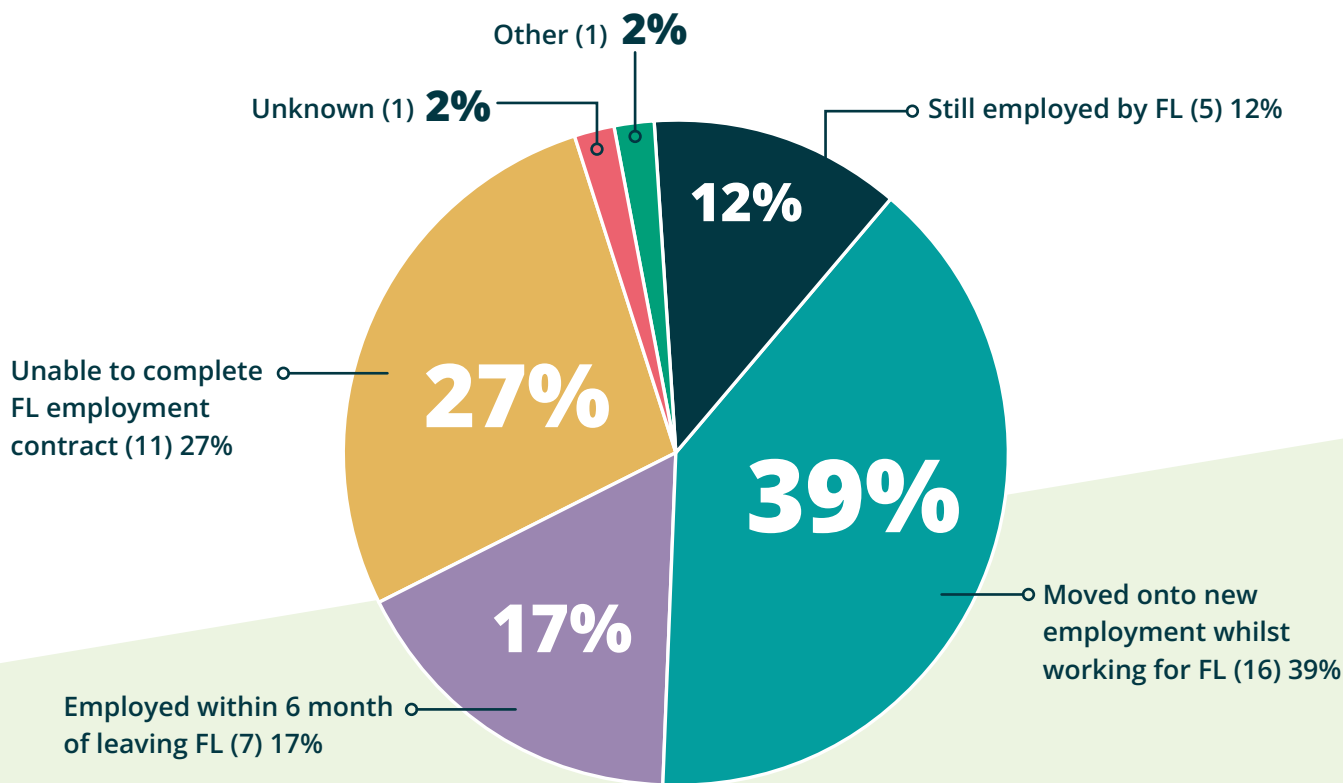
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*“Involving service users and people with lived experience of multiple and complex needs is one of the main pillars of the Fulfilling Lives project. During the design phase, a ‘Go-To Group’ made up of BHT service users strongly advocated for employing people with experience of MCN. The Fulfilling Lives Partnership acknowledged that employing people with experience of MCN was essential for:*

- ~ Bridging the gap between the current service users to act as engagement workers
- ~ Ensuring lived experiences is at the heart of everything the project does, bringing personal experiences and knowledge of services when necessary
- ~ Contributing to changing the lives of people with MCN
- ~ Tackling the stigma and discrimination experienced by people with MCN”

**Nelida Senoran-Martin, FL Service User Engagement Co-ordinator**





Fulfilling Lives South East Project has employed a total of **41 people with lived experience of MCN** over the course of the project. This team has been crucial in the development, implementation and success of our engagement and co-production objectives.

Throughout our employment program we sought to learn what it takes to successfully recruit and employ people with lived experience of MCN. We have adapted and tested systems and processes and reflected continuously throughout our journey. Sometimes we got it wrong, and after seven years we have gathered a wealth of information and evidence of what works, how organisations and employers can effectively recruit, support and develop people. Fulfilling Lives has benefitted hugely from employing people with MCN who bring their commitment and unique engagement qualities and skills.

This period of intense learning has led to a total of 56% of former project consultants having successfully moved on from the project into new employment. Five people are still working in the project and three of them have already secured jobs to move on to when the project finishes in June 2022.



This toolkit for employers is the culmination of our learning, tools and guidelines and illustrates with practical examples and real-life experiences, what organisations and managers need to consider to successfully involve people with lived experience of MCN in employment.

# THE BENEFITS

## of employing people with lived experience of MCN



There are many benefits to employing people with lived experience of MCN, both for the employee themselves and for the organisation or business that employs them.

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*“Here at Hastings Young People’s Service, we recognise the importance of lived experience when working with clients with a range of complex needs, which is why we actively recruit new staff and volunteers who have this experience to call upon.*

**“COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE LIVED EXPERIENCE OPERATE WITH A GREATER DEGREE OF EMPATHY, ENTHUSIASM AND MOTIVATION.”**

*“They are able to pick up on the subtle nuances of behaviour that can lead to earlier intervention of vital support. To date we have 6 members of the team who have lived experience across a range of complex needs including homelessness, mental health issues and substance misuse. All of them are valued and crucial to the success of the service.”*

**Simon Treen - Operational Manager,  
Hastings Young Peoples Service, BHT Sussex**



## BENEFITS FOR THE ORGANISATION

### Gaining a unique insight into service user experience - a knowledge of the system/ services as experienced from the inside

An employee with lived experience of MCN can bring a unique insight into service user experience that cannot be taught. They know the system or the services first hand - how it feels to be in the system or lost and trying to navigate it. They can also help other team members understand that.

### Clients may trust a service that employs people with lived experience more easily

By employing people with lived experience, it can create a sense for the client that the service is ‘on their side’ and really understands them.

### Providing a bridge between the client and the service

Employees with lived experience can become a bridge between the client and the service – being able to meet the client where they are, taking into account their language, behaviour and how they are expressing themselves. They are then able to relay that to the service in a way that both parties can feel heard and understood, like having a mediator that can understand both ‘languages’.





*“Working in busy residential services, with people who have differing and complex needs. The diverse and varied experiences, skills and knowledge that staff bring to the team, benefits us all. We learn from one another; we discover and remind ourselves of one another’s individual skills and abilities and we build on these to create a skilled and (mutually) complementary work force / team. Having staff who have lived experience is at the heart of our services. Sharing their first-hand experience of our projects enriches our understanding. Working with staff who have lived experience is an integral part of building more sensitive, relevant and dynamic services.”*

**Bernadette Lynch**  
Project Manager, BHT Sussex

## EMPLOYEES WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF MCN:

**Have often carried out a lot of self-reflection and work on themselves and their relationships with others to become ready for employment**

They have often had to be very honest with themselves about where they are at and what they need to work through, they will have good self-care and emotional intelligence in relation to work, they will have learnt how to be assertive and how to look after themselves.



**Tend to have an enhanced ability to connect with clients**

Employees with lived experience of MCN are often able to connect in a professional and bounded way, with empathetic mannerisms and approach, without being clinical and have an awareness of not speaking in abbreviations or acronyms.

**Have patience and belief in clients, including when they are struggling**

Employees with lived experience of MCN know what it’s like to be in the client’s shoes and that change is possible.

**Can empathise from a unique perspective**

There is a shared understanding and knowing that cannot be gained through training or research.

**Bring Hope**

In the ‘bad times’ of MCN it can feel like you’ll never get anywhere and moving forward is impossible. In those times it’s important to meet people with lived experience who are in a good place, who have been where you are and come out of the other side and not only that, can guide you to do the same and support you on that journey.



*“Working with colleagues who have lived experience is beneficial to me as I can ‘pick their brains’ on matters which may arise for our clients, making me feel better equipped and more confident in the support I offer and having gleaned the perspective of someone who knows first-hand how it was / is for them. Seeing the challenges that our clients face and the support they need to learn to cope, it only adds to the respect and admiration I have for my colleagues who have faced the same challenges and now offer their support to others as well.”*

Employee working with colleagues with lived experience of MCN

## BENEFITS FOR THE EMPLOYEE

### A chance to make something out of a negative experience

Employment is an opportunity for people with lived experience of MCN to use their often negative and traumatic experiences in a positive way.

### Being invested in their work

They care because it can have a very personal meaning to them.

### Growing professionally in a structured and supportive environment

People with lived experience of MCN have worked hard to get where they are and are often keen to continue that development and growth, taking full advantage of any opportunities provided in a structured and supportive working environment.

### An opportunity to develop confidence and new skills

Often people with lived experience of MCN have lost confidence in themselves and their skills and abilities. Being employed in a supportive and trauma-informed environment can help people develop confidence and reconnect with their strengths.



*“It’s important to be realistic and change can take time - but I will always believe people can harness their strengths and make positive changes in their lives.”*

Service User Involvement Team Member

*“Working with someone as a peer really gives us a unique point of contact. Everyone is an individual on their unique path, and we may have different experiences and feelings about those experiences, but we both know what it can be like to experience and work to overcome complex issues in our lives.”*

Service User Involvement Team Member

*“When I started volunteering with Fulfilling Lives (FL) I had been unemployed for 13yrs and found that nobody wanted to give me a chance in a working environment. To begin with I volunteered for 2hrs a week in the Service User Group (as it was called then). Being part of that group and speaking about my past issues with mental health, drug and alcohol issues, I realised that my experiences could be used to help other people. This made me feel differently about myself and my past life (which I previously felt I had wasted). After being part of the group for about 6 months I applied for and was successful in getting a job with FL where I worked for approximately 3yrs. At the end of the 3yrs I felt more confident in my skills to hold down a job in another organisation. I have now been happily working at Hastings Voluntary Action for 3yrs and I can honestly say that without the support of Fulfilling Lives, I would not have come as far as I have today.”*

Service User Involvement Team Member

# UNDERPINNING VALUES

## Getting The Environment & The Culture Right



Organisations and employers should adopt a culture that values Co-production, Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) and Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) and that those principles form the basis of our work.

At Fulfilling Lives South East there are **three values** or concepts that **underpin our work** in order for it to be **authentic and genuine** and not just a 'tick box' activity. These are Psychologically Informed Environments, Trauma-Informed Practice and Co-production. These principles should extend to everyone and become the standard way of working.

### PSYCHOLOGICALLY INFORMED ENVIRONMENTS



A Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) is a space where organisations and services understand needs of clients and staff in a thoughtful way and consider 'the psychological make up – the thinking, emotions, personalities and past experience – of its participants in the way that it operates' (Johnson et al., 2012 in No One Left Out: Solutions Ltd, 2015).

### CO-PRODUCTION



Co-production is a way of working that offers an alternative to the traditional, hierarchical top-down flow of power. It involves sharing control with those using a service, and ensures they have equal influence over the design, delivery and commissioning of any service which affects them. This is more than consultation but includes it.

### TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE



Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) is a way of working that accounts for the impact that trauma may have had in people's lives. A key goal of TIP is to raise awareness among staff and services about the impact of trauma, to prevent re-traumatisation of clients in service settings that are meant to provide support, and to develop policies and practices that assist healing from trauma. At Fulfilling Lives, we created a set of TIP principles that we work within – these are Safety, Trust, Collaboration, Choice and Voice.

# KEY LEARNING

## FROM THE FL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

What it means in practice to be an organisation that works with the values of trauma-informed practice, psychologically informed environments and co-production.

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*“Working within these frames is not more difficult, challenging or time-consuming than within any other approach, it just requires a particular approach from decision-makers.*

*“When we advocate for asset-based and person-centred approaches, being psychologically and trauma-informed in our work with service users, we should be doing the same within our teams.*

*“Organisations expect their front line to work in a way that empowers people, that brings the best out of each individual and that is holistic; we should start role modelling this throughout our organisations.*

**“TO GET THE BEST SYSTEMS AND SERVICES,  
WE NEED TO ROLE MODEL HUMANE  
ORGANISATIONS THAT CARE FOR ALL”.**

Nelida Senoran-Martin, FL Service User Engagement Co-ordinator



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*“When I got the role of managing a team of people who had experienced multiple complex needs, this seemed a great responsibility, particularly as we didn't seem to have any specific resources or guidelines as to what these employees needed from me.*

**“FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN  
SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES AND MAKING SURE THEY  
REACHED THEIR JOB OBJECTIVES HAS BEEN AN  
ONGOING SOURCE OF REFLECTION.”**

*“Using PIE and TIP meant that we could discuss any problems that were affecting work in a reflective, supportive and accountable way.”*

Nelida Senoran-Martin, FL Service User Engagement Co-ordinator

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*“It’s not always possible to make physical changes to workplace but looking at spaces through a PIE lens has raised my awareness of how the environment surrounding me affects my sense of safety and security at work and given me insights into how it may affect the people I work with.*

*“Knowledge of PIE has also been valuable when adapting to home working during the pandemic and setting up a workspace for myself. It has given me new insights into what I need to work most productively.*

**“WE HAVE A MORAL OBLIGATION TO MAKE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DIVERSE PEOPLE, FOR EXAMPLE, THOSE WITH SENSORY SENSITIVITY”.**

Service User Involvement Team Member

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*“Recovering from trauma is a journey, not a destination. Working in a trauma-informed culture has helped me gain a deeper understanding of my journey and to sharpen the tools I have, to survive and thrive after trauma. I’ve been supported to apply my skills in new situations and take on new challenges.*

*“Working in a trauma-informed way can result in a sense of empowerment for individuals and create a trauma-informed culture within an organisation. Having regular space for reflective practice, focusing on growth and learning has really accelerated my development.”*

Service User Involvement Team Member



## KEY LEARNING

### FROM THE FL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

How Fulfilling Lives has introduced Trauma-Informed Practices, Psychologically Informed Environments and Co-production into our project:

- Having a Reflective practice 'ideas' box in each office
- Holding cross-team Reflective Practice sessions where relevant
- Continually reflecting and learning on practice all the time - not blaming anyone, just learning
- Professionally being able to share lived experience
- Creating project groups for our work that include managers, team members, volunteers and external partners (where appropriate) to work in a co-productive way



For more detail on how these key values have underpinned our work and how to do that for your organisation, please have a look at our other resources via our website here: <https://www.bht.org.uk/fulfilling-lives>

## QUESTIONS & CONSIDERATIONS

### FOR YOUR ORGANISATION



- How could you introduce reflective practice into your organisation and workplace?
- Could you provide training in trauma and trauma-informed practice to raise awareness?
- How could you improve the environments your employees and clients/customers use each day to make them more psychologically informed?

# GETTING IT RIGHT FROM THE START

## Recruitment - Applications & Interviews



Organisations and employers can make simple changes to their recruitment and application processes that will make the process much more accessible to people with lived experience of MCN.

**GOOD SUPPORT STARTS EVEN BEFORE SOMEONE IS A MEMBER OF STAFF DURING THEIR RECRUITMENT.**

### RECRUITMENT

Recruitment sets the initial tone for the relationship between employer and future employee. It is a chance to start a relationship of trust, where the employee feels supported by their employer to do their best and confident that they can be honest about any challenges arising in the future. A trauma-informed recruitment process can be the start of a positive working relationship with mutual understanding, rather than one based on fear and pressure.

**A CHANCE  
TO START A  
RELATIONSHIP  
OF TRUST**

There are various small changes that can make the recruitment and interview process more accessible. This is particularly relevant for people who are new to employment (entry-level roles) and those who have had gaps in their career (due to health and well-being issues).

It's about putting people at ease as much as possible and for people who have lived experience of MCN, this can make all the difference.

People with lived experience of MCN may have never experienced the working environment and have lived a life of survival or they may have been out of the working environment for some time. For this reason, it can be difficult for someone to be able to provide two employer references for example.

Similarly, the process around DBS checks or health checks can take some time to complete. This can be re-traumatising for the person applying for the job and a trauma-informed approach with good communication, creativity and flexibility can make all the difference.

As an employer recruiting people with lived experience of MCN, it's important to be aware of the potential need to be flexible around the recruitment process, specifically HR processes such as references and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

**A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH  
WITH GOOD COMMUNICATION,  
CREATIVITY AND FLEXIBILITY CAN  
MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.**

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*“During interviews I could appreciate how nervous people got, how difficult they found it ‘selling themselves’ and experienced some cases when the person had a brilliant application, but they were too ‘scared’ at the interview... In time, we learned that those who were being successful in the job were the ones that had a set of psychological and emotional aptitudes (they welcomed feedback, they got on well with colleagues, they had a solution focused approach, etc.) and that more technical skills associated to the role (group facilitation, training, etc.) was secondary.*

*“The application asks for volunteering and employment history, both being valuable, so that people with no work experience or with gaps in employment do not feel discouraged.”*

**Nelida Senoran-Martin, FL Service User Engagement Co-ordinator**

## KEY LEARNING FROM THE FL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

In collaboration with our HR Team, changes we made included:

- Creating a simpler application form with tips and guidance on how to complete the form.
- Valuing volunteering experience alongside work experience.
- Not expecting people to justify gaps in employment.
- Creating interview questions that are focused more on emotional intelligence and psychological aspects rather than just technical skills.
- Printing off the Interview Questions and giving them to the candidate during the interview.
- Allowing plenty of time for candidates to answer questions including breaks if needed.
- Really considering each time how we could put people at ease as much as possible.



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*“One candidate particularly struggled at interview, and after following up they were unable to process a series of questions been directed towards them and it affected their performance in the entire interview. After discussing the needs of this candidate, it was agreed that for any future applications they would be offered the following support: assistance with their written application and coaching for successful interviews and interview practice.*

*“The candidate was asked how we could improve on this situation occurring again and they recommended that we change our ‘invitation to interview’ letter for all interviews to include acknowledgement of specific arrangements and adjustments.”*

**Joan Riddell - Human Resources Manager  
- BHT Sussex**



# QUESTIONS & CONSIDERATIONS

## FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

- Look at your application form and application process. How easy would it be to complete if someone didn't have a straightforward work history? Do you offer advice and instructions to help potential applicants? Could you make it better?

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- Can you offer potential interviewees some sample interview questions before the interview to help them prepare and do their best on the day? Or perhaps let them know three key areas you will be asking them about?

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- Could you give out the actual Interview questions during or just before the interview?

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- Are your interview questions focused more on emotional intelligence rather than exclusively technical skills?

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- How could you ensure that you allow plenty of time for candidates to settle and be able to answer the questions to the best of their ability?

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- Can you offer breaks to interviewees if they are feeling nervous or overwhelmed? What space could you offer for that?

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- How can you offer equity of opportunity throughout the process?

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- Have you made it clear that you welcome applicants with lived experience of MCN? Do they know in advance if they will be asked to share any of this in an interview?

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- How can you involve other employees or volunteers with lived experience in the process? Writing some of the questions? Sitting on the interview panel?

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- Feedback is really important. How will you feed back in a supportive way, to those who didn't succeed at interview as well as those who did?

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- Could you consider adding an Emotional Intelligence Assessment to the interview process?

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- How could you let interviewees know what they can do during the interview e.g. taking notes during the interview, taking a break if they need to, asking questions, bringing notes in... Could this be part of your interview invitation letter or phone call?

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- Could your organisation accept references from a support worker, key worker, voluntary work or someone else who could speak accurately about the person in question?

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## KEY LEARNING

### FROM THE FL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

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*“Early on it became clear that of those people who didn’t succeed in the role, it wasn’t about technical skills to do the job; it was about psychological factors and well-being factors. It became important to be able to identify and address this as early as possible both for the project and people applying for the role.”*

NSM, FL Service User Engagement Co-Ordinator



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**“HAVING COMPLEX NEEDS CREATES AN ADDED LAYER OF CHALLENGES FOR A PERSON APPLYING FOR A JOB.”**

*“I was filled with self-doubt and low self-esteem. Being in a position where you’re going to be assessed is scary. I lacked confidence and was extremely anxious about the recruitment process as I had been out of work for the past 2-3 years. Prior to the interview, I had the opportunity to ask questions about the recruitment process and what to expect during the interview. I explained how I was feeling and the recruiting staff at FLSE put me at ease by identifying the areas I should focus on while preparing. During the interview I was given plenty of time to answer the questions and refer to my notes. I was given scenarios to demonstrate my skills rather than being asked daunting questions like ‘what are your strengths/weaknesses’. After the interview was over and before the decision was made, I received feedback on what I had done right and what I could improve on, which I found very useful and reassuring regardless of the outcome.”*

Service User Involvement Team Member



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*“It had been decades since my last proper interview. As interviews go, it was as painless as it could possibly be. I was given plenty of time to answer the questions, which were printed out for me to refer to. The two interviewers were very friendly and easy going. I didn’t feel pressured by them. I was encouraged to take my time and was told I could come back to a question if there was something I wanted to add later. It was nerve-wracking, but any interview would have been. I ended up not being suitable for the role but was told why on the phone. I went on to apply and be accepted for the Project Consultant role.”*

Service user Involvement Team Member

# STRUCTURED INDUCTION AND PROBATION



It is beneficial and time saving to provide a well thought-out and detailed induction and probation package for both new employees and the teams they will be working in.

The induction period is a chance for the new member of staff to become familiar with their work environment, colleagues and job role. It is a time of learning and integrating into the organisation. Having clear goals and a chance to sit down and review progress made towards achieving them at a set time can be reassuring, increase confidence, increase motivation and commitment. It also ensures the new employee is adequately prepared for their job.



## KEY LEARNING FROM THE FL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

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*“At Fulfilling Lives, it quickly became clear how key this time period, just after starting, was in the development of a new employee’s skills and confidence in performing the activities of their role.*

*“We created a bespoke induction pack for new starters in the team. For the first 6-8 weeks they had a handbook covering everything they needed to know in detail. It was laid out as a series of steps that could be worked through, with specific activities at each stage to build knowledge and confidence. Weekly check-ins were provided to discuss and review progress for this period.*

*“After completing the induction period, employees moved onto their probation period which was also accompanied by a bespoke workbook where they could reflect on all the aspects of their role. They could review their progress towards being competent and any aspects of the probation process they needed to be aware of. During this period there were monthly meetings to discuss and review progress against the required activities of the role. By the time a new member of staff reached their probation review at six months, they were much more prepared for it and if development was still needed, they were clear and knew how to achieve what was expected.”*

**Andree Ralph, FL Engagement and Development Worker**

## INDUCTION PACK: EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS

- Think about what aspects of the job you already feel confident about and which ones you might need extra support with. What might this support look like? Discuss this with your manager or supervisor.
- What will you do if you don't know how to do something? Who will you ask? How will you resolve the issue?
- Make yourself familiar with the organisation’s policies and procedures that are relevant to you. Specifically, you should read and understand the following: (Give specific examples) Discuss any questions you have with your manager or supervisor.

# WHAT DOES 'GOOD' LOOK LIKE?

## A GOOD INDUCTION WILL INCLUDE:

- **A comprehensive induction plan**

A detailed plan with clear targets that covers everything someone new would need to know to do the job and feel comfortable in those first few weeks.

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- **Activities that build on each other**

Designing the activities of the role so that these 'build up' to being able to perform all the tasks over the first few weeks and months.

---

- **A detailed plan for the probation period and any review process**

Creating a plan for working through everything needed to be successful for any probation period review process and for doing the job which supports people to work up to probation in an informed way. This includes advising what the probation review meeting or process might look like and knowing whether they are on track or not before the review.

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- **Creating an open and supportive environment during Induction**

An environment that encourages people to seek support and be open about what they need and how they could best achieve it, is an environment where employees can thrive and quickly feel that they are valued as part of the organisation.

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- **Carefully considering what people can take on and when during induction**

Being aware that new employees will be 'finding their feet'. Not expecting everything at once and building activities in stages can result in someone becoming confident and comfortable in their role quicker in the long term. Consider giving sections of an induction pack over time rather than the whole thing altogether.

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- **Having a clear staff structure**

Knowing who to go to and what everyone's role is can be helpful to new employees and create a sense of security and knowing where to go for whatever they need.

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Click here for **APPENDIX 1:**  
an example template of an  
Induction Plan.

“

*“I’ve never been in a job where I’ve needed to be so organised, chopping and changing between different tasks, taking different trainings, absorbing so much information. It was very overwhelming having not worked for three and a half years. It was a world I’d never experienced. The induction period was very helpful. I was able to ease into a work routine at a pace that worked for me. I didn’t have to hit the ground running and fill my calendar with meetings. It gave me time to settle in and get used to just being at work. It was low pressure with some guidance to keep me on track and focused on the right things. There were development sessions which kept me on target to learning or re-learning key skills, normal workplace skills that I’d forgotten.*”

**“THINKING BACK, THE INDUCTION PERIOD SERVED AS A SAFE PLACE TO START FROM SCRATCH.”**



*“It really did feel like starting again. My manager and supervisor were like guides who helped me to function in the world.”*

Service user Involvement Team Member

## QUESTIONS & CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

- How many of the elements of a good Induction has your organisation already got?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How can you make your induction process even better?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Which key areas of the job would you want your new employees to be competent and confident at in the first instance?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Could you include some of the example question above into your own Induction pack?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What else would you include?  
\_\_\_\_\_



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT EMPLOYMENT

## Supervision and Training



Investing in the right training and good supervision that considers well-being alongside performance is worthwhile and can enable employees with lived experience of MCN to thrive.

Throughout an employee's time with an organisation there are several ways to ensure that they do their best within the role.

Good practice includes providing regular supervisions, so people have a designated space for discussion with their managers alongside varied, appropriate and targeted training and learning opportunities for development.

Supervision is a valuable opportunity that is often underused and underrated. It is a space for discussion between employer and employee. It should be more than just about workload and provide a safe, confidential space to discuss anything that can affect an employee's performance at work. It should also be a space to reflect, share success and test ideas.

When done well, supervision can help to pick up when things are going wrong early and enable measures to be put in place to support the employee. Supervision is also a space to identify potential in an employee that may not have been considered before.



## KEY LEARNING FROM THE FL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

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*“As well as providing access to all relevant training in order to perform the duties of their role well, we created a bespoke on-going in-house training programme. This included all the key duties of the role to maintain and improve skills, knowledge and performance. For example, at FL our team needed to be able to support volunteers, run effective consultation and engagement groups (Action groups), be organised, work to (often short) deadlines and have a good awareness of emotional intelligence for themselves and the volunteers they mentored. We created a series of one-day training sessions that the whole team participated in around each of these key activities and skills, directly relating the content to the needs of the team and the project.”*

**AR, Engagement and Development Worker**

# WHAT DOES 'GOOD' LOOK LIKE?



## GOOD SUPERVISION INCLUDES:

- **A monthly dedicated one-to-one space** for individuals to discuss their work performance, their professional development, any personal difficulties and their well-being strategies.
- Includes techniques such as **Motivational Interviewing, Solution Focused** planning, **Transactional Analysis, Coaching** techniques and **Reflective Practice** to identify goals and work through any development needs.
- The discussion should **include anything that could affect an employee's working life** and ability to do the job to their full potential, including well-being and personal difficulties.
- **Setting actions and SMART goals** to work through development needs, practice skills and try out techniques and strategies **in a supportive way**, especially where someone may be struggling or having difficulty.
- Include **an Individual Development / Supervision Plan** with relevant and appropriate training, opportunities and regularly reviewing of how things are going.
- **Use coaching techniques**, working with people to move towards being able to evaluate their own performance and identify and address their own development and well-being at work.
- It is **person centred, individualised and assets based** – supportive and focusing on achievement but also realistic and honest, where development or improvement is needed.
- A **two-way conversation between employer/ manager and employee** that is not about micro-managing that person. There should be room to grow and test new skills and opportunities.
- Both manager and employee have **access to supervision notes** as soon as possible after each supervision.
- It should be as much about **development personally and professionally** as it is about performance.

Click here for **APPENDIX 2:**  
an example template of a  
Supervision structure and agenda

## QUESTIONS & CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

- Do you currently value and invest in supervision and training for your employees?
- What training to managers receive around conducting supervision?
- Do you actively encourage employees to access and participate in training?
- How is supervision used in your organisation?
- How do your employees view supervision?
- Is well-being a part of supervision?
- What could you change or improve in this area?



# WELL-BEING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & WORK GO HAND-IN-HAND



There is a strong connection between well-being and work performance - how this is managed within an organisation can be crucial to the success of the organisation and its employees, including those with lived experience of MCN

Wellness in the workplace is being recognised as a key component to good performance and reduced absenteeism across all sectors. In the context of employing people with lived experience, it's a crucial part of the package and can make the difference to whether an employee is successful and thrives, bringing all the benefits we've already mentioned to your organisation, or not.

Understanding the connection between well-being and work performance and finding the right combination of support, resources, tools and techniques for your organisation will not only benefit employees with lived experience of MCN but also, the organisation and the whole staff team, including management.

“

*“We ALL need to think about our well-being at work, not just people with lived experience of MCN.*

**WELL-BEING AND WORK PERFORMANCE  
GO HAND-IN-HAND.**

*“This is something that is becoming more widely recognised now, especially throughout the COVID Pandemic and lockdown. Having worked alongside and supported a team of people with lived experience of MCN and witnessed how they have continued to learn to manage their own well-being through sometimes difficult and challenging situations, the intrinsic link between well-being and work performance has become very ‘real’ for me - more so than I had previously considered.*

*“As much as I have been able to support colleagues with tools and strategies around well-being at work; I have also come to understand a great deal about my own well-being and have learned enormously from my colleagues with lived experience of MCN too.”*

**AR, FL Engagement and Development Worker**





# WHAT DOES 'GOOD' LOOK LIKE?

## WHEN WE THINK ABOUT WELL-BEING IN THE WORKPLACE, 'GOOD' CAN BE:

- **Anything that enables a person to stay well**

Wellness and well-being activities, both in an employment setting but equally in life in general, includes anything that enables a person to stay well. In a work setting, by 'well' we mean able to perform the tasks of their job role effectively and to the desired standard while also keeping their own physical and mental health as a priority.

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- **Everyone is unique, and this includes how they keep well**

Wellness and well-being are uniquely individual - what works will be different for different people.

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- **Wellness is contained in the work too**

It's important to remember that well-being isn't always about things like time outside, going for a walk or taking a break (although these things are all excellent activities) - wellness is contained in the work too and many people with lived experience of MCN find being employed and actively working towards improving services and systems for others is intrinsically positive to their well-being.

---

- **Trust for the employee and in the employer**

A key aspect of well-being and employment is trust; or the employee to know and actively work on their well-being, and for the employer, to support that process using the underpinning values of TIP, PIE and Coproduction. Well-being should not be seen as something to penalise someone with.

---

- **Well-being can be part of supervision, the same as performance**

These conversations can happen in monthly supervision sessions; you don't have to allocate a separate time to do this. By including wellness and well-being within the supervision process, it also creates the environment where well-being and work are interlinked.

---

- **The use of tools such as Wellness Action Plans (WAPs) or Individual Well-being Plans**

Wellness action plans or individual Well-being plans often referred to as WAP's or WRAP's, are a way of planning for and supporting individual well-being at work. These tools can be a starting point, opening the door to creating an open conversation. They can help an individual to be proactive in identifying and communicating how Managers and colleagues could help. It's also a chance to discuss the boundaries of what the employer can support with and what issues fall beyond that into personal well-being.

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- **Access to and knowledge of all available resources and support**

This could be support and resources provided internally within the organisation such as Employee welfare programmes, well-being sessions, support from managers and colleagues, support from HR, internal training or other activities. It could also be external resources and support where appropriate. It is important to have a good knowledge of what's available locally and be able to signpost if necessary – this could be for example, support for mental health and counselling. An employer doesn't have to do it all themselves.



“

*“When I first started at Citrus Ornge I was still in the throes of active addiction. I felt comfortable opening up about what I was battling after overhearing one of my team members talking about their experiences with addiction and the social mission. The business was incredibly understanding and supportive and in the following weeks provided consistent personal and moral support. When it came time for me to go into residential treatment, I was assured that my place at Citrus Ornge was safe.*

*“Today I'm over half a year clean and sober and am deeply invested in the Brighton 12 step recovery programme. I'm now the social mission coordinator at Citrus and am incredibly excited to deliver that same support and understanding that was shown to me to those onboarded through the social mission.*

**“I'M INTENSELY PROUD TO BE PART OF A  
GROWING RECOVERY CONFIDENT BUSINESS...”**

*...and am excited to see what the future holds and what my experience and hope can provide for the still-suffering addict.”*

**Tristan Weinberg - Telemarketing Executive and Social Mission Coordinator,  
Citrus Ornge**



# WHAT DOES 'GOOD' LOOK LIKE?

## AN EFFECTIVE WELLNESS ACTION PLAN (WAP) SHOULD INCLUDE (BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO):

- Potential situations, circumstances or events that someone may find challenging or may cause a person to become unwell, anxious, stressed or experience uncomfortable feelings and emotions, within their work role or activities.
- Wellness activities that are helpful; known and possible strategies that help the person stay well. This could be anything that has a positive effect on the person's well-being and that can be incorporated into a work setting.
- What the first signs of someone needing well-being support might look like – for the individual and the people around them.
- What the individual needs if this happens – what they can do for themselves and what support their managers and colleagues can give.
- The support available: including internal and external support from the organisation, the management team, other colleagues and the support the person can access for themselves.
- Successfully returning to work if a period of leave is needed.



There are lots of examples of WAP's available.

Click here for **APPENDIX 3**: an example template of a Wellness Action Plan, but you could also download one from organisations such as Mind or create your own.

Often a WAP which has been created specifically for your own organisation will be the most effective as you can tailor it to suit your particular activities and the support available.



“

*“During my development and supervision sessions, I was introduced to the Wellness Action Plan, which I thought could be useful for anyone, whether in recovery or otherwise. While filling it out together, my development worker/supervisor gently asked me to reflect on what makes me feel well at work and whether I was aware of any potential issues that might lead me to feeling unwell.*

*“By asking me to reflect on my sleeping patterns, nutrition, and exercise habits, I gained a new sense of awareness. It's not that my employer was interested in knowing what I eat or what time I wake up, but it made me feel like my employer was really invested in my well-being and helped me realise potential situations that might trigger a relapse.*

*“Through this exercise we found that I needed to ground myself in the morning, so my development worker/supervisor also helped me put in place a meditation and journaling session for me and my peers before we started our workday.”*

**Service user Involvement Team Member**



## KEY LEARNING FROM THE FL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME



A WAP should always be considered a working document; it will grow and change with the employee as they become familiar with their role, face challenges at work, grow and develop in their own resilience and ability to manage their own well-being.

New employees may prefer some time to complete their WAP, because disclosing information about personal difficulties and the ways they manage their well-being requires a level of trust. However, it is good practice to discuss the purpose of the WAP and how it will be used before expecting someone to complete one.

It may also be a new concept and a shift in the way of working from places they have previously been employed – so give them time to reflect on how the WAP can be useful for them. Make sure you think about reviewing the WAP regularly in supervision and/or as needed to keep the plan ‘live’ and of real value.

“

*“Often an individual who completes a WAP early on as part of their Induction will request to review it at around 6-8 weeks as they have become more familiar with the job role and what it entails. They have also become more aware of the potential challenges for them in the role and there are often different from those they had first considered.”*

**Andree Ralph – Engagement and Development Worker**

# FINAL THOUGHTS



Throughout this resource we've been focusing on employing people with lived experience of MCN, the benefits of doing so and how best to support those people once they are your employees, but it's worth reframing it slightly because after all, isn't it about creating **SUPPORTIVE, ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACES** for everyone?

Isn't it about **SUPPORTING ALL EMPLOYEES TO DO THEIR JOBS WELL** so they can succeed and find value in their work – both for themselves and for the organisation they work for?



## KEY LEARNING FROM THE FL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

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*“When we employ people, we do not have the full picture, the array of skills and strengths that the person may bring, we do not know either if there is past experience of trauma. Working to support people to have a better life is challenging and fulfilling in equal measures; this also happens when managing teams. Throughout our Employment Program we have learned that it is impossible to totally ascertain who will be successful and will continue a professional career or for whom the step is too great. Working presents challenges at every corner and there is a symbiotic relationship between the individual abilities to overcome them and the support that an employer (or manager) provides.*



**“WHAT IS CERTAIN IS THAT WHEN YOU GET THE RIGHT SYNERGY, PEOPLE THRIVE AND LIVES ARE FULFILLED; THOSE OF EMPLOYEES AND VICARIOUSLY, THEIR MANAGERS”**

Nelida Senoran-Martin, FL Service User Engagement Co-ordinator

“



*“Being in a position to be able to help people come into a workplace where they feel valued and allowed to express themselves in a work environment has been so rewarding.*

*“While I have not been in recovery myself, I have witnessed first-hand the trauma that people can go through when having problems with addiction, as well as those families that are affected. Losing my father due to battles he had with drugs and alcohol as a kid really changed my outlook on what I want to do to help the world.*

*“I went to university in the world of psychology with a large focus on rehabilitation as that is what my ultimate dream was, so being able to use my passion and skills for helping people across Brighton and Hove is greater than I could ever imagine.*

*“Businesses across the country can learn so much from these programs, and it allows you to see the good in the world.*

**“THERE ARE SO MANY INCREDIBLY TALENTED PEOPLE THAT ARE JUST UNDER-APPRECIATED BECAUSE OF THINGS LIKE ADDICTION.”**

*“If more businesses took on an ethos about helping these people, then it'll help so many people, both directly and indirectly.”*

**Marshall Dare – UK Operations Lead – Citrus Ornge**



## FURTHER RESOURCES

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**MIND** - <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/>

MIND provide support and advice for people experiencing mental health difficulties including finding work and when already employed. The website contains lots of information for employees and employers alongside resources such as Wellness Action Plans and 'in work support'. They have also published reports such as "Supporting people with mental health problems into sustainable employment" which can be found at the link below: <https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/4283/supporting-people-with-mental-health-problems-into-sustainable-employment-2016.pdf>

**REMPLOY** - <https://www.remploy.co.uk/employers>

Remploy provide advice and support for both employers and employees experiencing mental health difficulties, as well as supporting employers to provide accessible workplaces for all their employees.

**Citrus Ornge** is a Performance Marketing, Tech and Publishing company with a social mission to offer employment and work placement opportunities to ex-offenders and people in recovery. Our aim is for 50% of the staff team coming through the social mission. The social mission is incorporated in the memorandum of the business. The company monitors and measures their performance via a continual review (usually every 6 months) of staff records. Read more about their social mission and white paper here: <https://www.citrusornge.com/research-paper-brighton-based-business-citrus-ornge-creates-employment-opportunities-for-ex-offenders-and-those-recovering-from-addiction/>

Citrus Ornge help other businesses support those in addiction and alcohol recovery or just drive change from within to become 'Recovery Confident' and are committed to helping carry the message and lead the path for other companies to have more progressive recruitment, employment and occupational health strategy.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

**The Nelson Trust** is a supportive shared residence for people recovering from alcohol addiction. It has developed residential treatment as part of an integrated service with education and training, family work and supported resettlement housing. In 2004 the trust developed a specialist residential service for women who have experienced trauma or abuse, which is often masked with substance dependency. And in 2010 they opened their first Women's Centre in Gloucester as a "one-stop-shop" approach to the wide range of problems faced by women in the Criminal Justice System. They provide services for more than 1,200 clients each year in their locations across Gloucestershire, Swindon, Wiltshire, Avon and Somerset.

The following link is from their website and is a conversation with members of staff about building an organisation with lived experience at every single level. They discuss what diversity really means, what organisations need to do to support staff with lived experience, creating pathways for service users to become staff, and the trust's priorities looking ahead to do even better.

<https://www.thinknpc.org/putting-lived-experience-at-the-heart-of-your-work/>

**"Involving people with lived experience in the workforce - Workforce development and multiple disadvantage"** – CFE Research and The University of Sheffield, with the Systems Change Action Network – 2021 - <https://www.bht.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Involving-people-with-lived-experience-in-the-workforce-2020-1.pdf>

**"Using personal experiences to support others with similar difficulties - a review of the literature on Peer Support in Mental health services"** - Julie Repper and Tim Carter - Together for mental well-being and The University Of Nottingham 2010 <https://www.together-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2011/11/usingpersexperience.pdf>

**Lived Experience - a valuable asset?** Lucy Watts MBE – Lived Experience Learning 2021 <https://www.lucy-watts.co.uk/2021/08/30/lived-experience-asset/>

**The Fulfilling Lives South East Employment Programme: Learning So Far** - The mid-point review of the Fulfilling Lives South East Employment Programme 2019 - <https://www.bht.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Employment-Programme-Learning-So-Far-2019.pdf>



# APPENDIX 1

## Example Induction Content Template

<b>Name:</b>		
<b>Job role/title:</b>		
<b>Manager/Supervisor:</b>		
<b>Date started:</b>	<b>Date Induction ends:</b>	<b>Date of probation review:</b>
<b>Welcome to the organisation and introduction to this pack</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the first few days will look like</li> </ul>		
<b>Induction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction timeline</li> <li>• Any formal HR Induction checklist / checklist of things that need to be done in the first few days</li> <li>• Introduction to the organisation, brief history (if appropriate) and key values and aims</li> <li>• Introduction to the role and where it fits into the organisation</li> <li>• Staff structure and lines of responsibility</li> <li>• Tips to do the job well</li> <li>• Sections covering the main activities of the role and what is required/how to do these well/advice and support on completing the activities</li> <li>• HR Information and what new employees need to know/do regarding HR processes (sickness, pay, holiday etc)</li> <li>• Important telephone numbers such as managers/supervisors and any other contacts that will be needed in the role</li> <li>• IT Induction and how to use the IT systems such as logging in, setting up emails, sharing calendars, access to shared files and completing any data entry</li> <li>• Mandatory training that is expected and where/how to access other internal or external training</li> <li>• Which policies and procedures a new employee needs to be familiar with and where to find them</li> <li>• Anything else specific to the role they are doing not already mentioned</li> </ul>		
<b>Probation Period and Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly defined standards that people are expected to achieve to pass probation</li> <li>• What the probation process is</li> <li>• How long the probation period is</li> <li>• What happens at the end of the probation period – is there a meeting to review? A form to complete?</li> </ul>		

# APPENDIX 2

## Example Supervision Template and Agenda

<b>Employees Name:</b>		
<b>Manager/ person conducting supervision:</b>		
<b>Date and time:</b>		
<b>Previous actions from last supervision</b> (Add in here any actions agreed last time so that these can be reviewed during this supervision):		
<b>Agenda</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check in</li> <li>• Review actions from last supervision</li> <li>• Any safeguarding, risk or incidents (where appropriate)</li> <li>• Workload/work activities</li> <li>• Achievements and challenges this period (reflective space)</li> <li>• Wellbeing at work (review wellness action plan)</li> <li>• Training or development needs</li> <li>• Leave/TOIL or sickness</li> <li>• AOB:</li> </ul>		
<b>Record of discussion</b> (Use this space to record what was discussed under each of the agenda points above)		
<b>Actions Agreed:</b>	<b>By Who:</b>	<b>Timeframe (by when):</b>

# APPENDIX 3

## Example Wellness Action Plan Template

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date completed:</b>
<b>Manager/Supervisor:</b>	
<b>Content:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where I am at, how I keep myself well</li> <li>• Events and situations that may cause difficulty</li> <li>• Early warning signs</li> <li>• Crisis</li> <li>• Getting back on track after a time of crisis • Reviewing the situation</li> </ul>	
<b>Where I am at. How I look after myself currently:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which areas of my well-being (mental health and physical health) do I need to pay attention to?</li> <li>• What do I do each day to keep myself feeling well? Examples: Relaxation, Phone a friend, Exercise, AA meetings</li> <li>• What can I do at work to keep myself healthy and to maintain my well-being? Examples: Eat regularly, go to bed before 11pm, Keep a to-do list.</li> <li>• What can my line manager (and/or colleagues) do to help me maintain my well-being? Examples: Provide regular feedback/supervision so I know how I am doing, give me clear instructions.</li> </ul>	
<b>Events and situations that may cause me difficulty:</b> <p>There are things that happen to us which knock us off balance and are likely to set off a chain reaction of uncomfortable or unhelpful behaviours, thoughts or feelings (e.g. things that make us feel anxious, miserable, more likely to misuse substances).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the situations or events that may cause me difficulties? Examples: problems at work, anniversary of loss or trauma, ways that others treat you, being over-tired.</li> <li>• What can I do to avoid or limit my exposure to things that cause me difficulty? And what can I do to prevent things from getting worse?</li> <li>• What can I ask my line manager/or colleagues to do (or not to do) to help? Examples: remind myself of the things I have done well, prioritise tasks, talk to my manager about problems at work, ask manager not to give me too many tasks at once.</li> </ul>	
<b>Early warning signs:</b> <p>Early warning signs are the subtle signs of changes in our thoughts, feelings or behaviour, which indicate that you may need to take action to avoid a worsening of your situation or cause you to fall back on old behaviours that are not helpful. In this section, you will be considering such changes and your response to them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are my early warning signs (subtle signs of changes) that all is not well? What do I notice? What might my colleagues notice?</li> <li>• What can I do when I notice my early warning signs? Examples: Go home on time, have a quiet evening, go to the gym, make lists</li> <li>• What can my line manager (and/or colleagues) do to help me if they notice my early warning signs? Examples: don't keep asking me if I am alright, make a point of thanking me for things I have done/ pointing out the things I have done well, signpost me to internal or external support.</li> </ul>	

**The support available to me:**

Your organisation, manager and colleagues can support you in a number of ways. Your manager can discuss these with you here but will likely include support that you can access yourself; support available directly from the manager/supervisor; support available with your team/from colleagues; support available from your HR team and organisation and external support that you can be signposted/referred to. Discuss with your manager/supervisor the support available to you and make a plan that will best suit you and what you need.

- My planned support could include:

**Getting back on track after time off work:**

If you do have time off work it is important that you address it with your manager and they will help you and guide you on a course of action. It's sometimes difficult to ask for help, but it's important to do so - and it's OK to do so.

- What are the signs that I may need time off work? Examples: changes in my thoughts (e.g. racing thoughts), feelings (e.g. feeling that people don't like me) or behaviour (start using/increase use of substances).
- What might my line manager (and/or colleagues) notice?
- What would be right for you to do if you feel like you might need time away from work?
- What would be right for your manager and area lead to do if you feel you might need time away from work?
- In this situation, who are the people that we may be able to contact?

**Back to work plan:**

There may be times when it would be helpful to agree on a plan with your line manager to ensure that your return to work allows you to maintain your well-being after a period of sickness.

- What would help you to return to work more easily after a period of sickness or leave for personal reasons?

**Reviewing the situation after a period of leave:**

**(This section is for completion at a later stage when necessary.)**

If despite your best efforts at caring for yourself and working with others, you still go through a difficult patch – It's not the end of the world, nor does it mean you cannot recover, or the issues can't be helped. Recovery is a process that you can get back to at any time and after any experience, no matter how bad. But to do so it will be very helpful to reflect on what has happened to you and learn from it.

Some can do this alone, most of us are greatly helped by having someone we trust to turn to and talk it over together - but pick your time when you are ready and able to make sense of it and when you have the energy to do so. Then talk about and think through what has happened and compare this with what you have written so far.

- What changes can you make to this plan that may be helpful in the future?

<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Manager/Supervisors signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

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For further project information please visit  
[www.bht.org.uk/fulfilling-lives](http://www.bht.org.uk/fulfilling-lives)



RECOVERY CONFIDENT

