

CWLWM NEWSLETTER – SPRING TERM 2025

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Welcome to the Spring Term Newsletter! In this edition, we focus on the importance of supporting workforce wellbeing in early years, childcare and playwork settings. Just as children thrive with the right care and support, it's important that staff receive the same priority. We'll explore a range of wellbeing initiatives which will help create a more positive working environment. Alongside this, you'll find a wealth of other useful information relevant to the early years, childcare, and playwork sector.



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1. Wellbeing Success Stories

Enhancing Staff Wellbeing at Camau Bach, Garth Olwg and Medra Nurseries

Introduction

At our nurseries we prioritise staff wellbeing to maintain a positive and engaged workforce. To support our staffs' physical and mental health, we have introduced various initiatives that promote environments which are caring, relaxing and supportive.

Annual Wellbeing Day

We organise a dedicated annual wellbeing day for all of our staff. This day provides staff with an opportunity to step away from their usual duties and engage in activities that promote team bonding, relaxation, and general wellbeing. Activities include:

- Beach walks
- Rounders games in the park
- Ten-pin bowling and other recreational activities
- Group meals at local restaurants





Given the operational constraints that make it difficult to allocate a dedicated wellbeing hour for all staff, the annual wellbeing day ensures that every team member can benefit from structured wellbeing support.

Wellbeing-Focused Staff Room

We have transformed the staff rooms within our nurseries into relaxation spaces, featuring:

- Beanbags, cushions, and wellbeing-themed artwork
- Soft lighting and fairy lights
- High-quality personal care items, such as nice soaps and hand lotions
- Background music and a radio to create a soothing atmosphere
- A coffee and hot chocolate machine with a selection of biscuits and treats

These enhancements have been well received, creating a space where staff can recharge, and feel valued within the nurseries. The feedback has been positive, and this has reinforced our commitment to maintaining and further enhancing this initiative.

Promoting Healthy Eating

To promote healthier choices, we provide fresh fruit weekly, reinforcing the importance of good nutrition.

Support for Medical Appointments

We allow up to 2-hours time off for essential health appointments, including screenings and vaccinations, helping staff prioritise their wellbeing without added stress.

Wellbeing Training

All staff have access to a range of wellbeing courses, covering topics such as menopause, mental health, and achieving a healthy work-life balance. Trained Wellbeing Managers also provide confidential support, ensuring a compassionate and inclusive workplace.

Impact & Future Plans

These initiatives have improved morale, productivity, and job satisfaction. Moving forward, we will continue to enhance staff wellbeing based on their evolving needs, reinforcing our commitment to a healthy, supported workforce.



Cylch Meithrin y Gurnos

Y Galwad Coffi ('The Coffee Call')

At Cylch Meithrin y Gurnos, the introduction of a simple yet effective wellbeing initiative, the 'Y Galwad Coffi' has transformed our team's working environment. Recognising the challenging nature of the childcare sector, we took proactive steps to ensure staff wellbeing remains a priority.

The 'Galwad Coffi' is an initiative that encourages staff to take a five-minute break whenever they feel stressed or overwhelmed. This short pause allows them to step away, have a coffee or tea, and return to their responsibilities feeling refreshed and rebalanced.

A team leader regularly steps in to cover staff during these moments, ensuring that the team feels supported and that the children continue to receive seamless care.

Positive Impact on Staff and Children

This approach has had a hugely positive impact on the entire team. Staff members report feeling more equipped to manage stress, knowing they can take a moment to reset whenever needed. The initiative has also fostered a culture of openness and mindful awareness among staff. By normalising the need to take a break and recharge, team members have become more conscious of their emotional wellbeing and more willing to communicate when they are struggling.

One staff member shared:

“ I’m more aware of how I’m feeling, and because of the understanding and support, I feel less anxious now and manage my day and emotions so much better, knowing I can step away if needed. ”

The ‘Galwad Coffi’ has also strengthened bonds between staff members. They actively support each other, leaning on one another during challenging times. This has improved team dynamics and created a positive, collaborative atmosphere in the workplace.

For the children, the benefits are just as clear. Staff return from their short breaks feeling happier, more focused, and ready to provide high-quality care. The initiative ensures that children are cared for by professionals who are not only skilled but also emotionally present, enhancing the overall experience for everyone involved.

Conclusion

Prioritising staff wellbeing can lead to significant benefits for both employees and the children in our care. By creating a supportive environment where breaks are encouraged, we have fostered a workplace culture that promotes resilience, teamwork, and high standards of childcare. This initiative highlights the importance of small but meaningful wellbeing measures in building a thriving workforce.

Potiau Positif (*'Positive Pots'*)

At Cylch Meithrin y Gurnos, staff wellbeing is just as important as the wellbeing of the children. To foster positivity and celebration, we have introduced the *'Potiau Positif'* initiative. This simple yet powerful idea encourages staff to focus on positivity – both in themselves and in their colleagues.

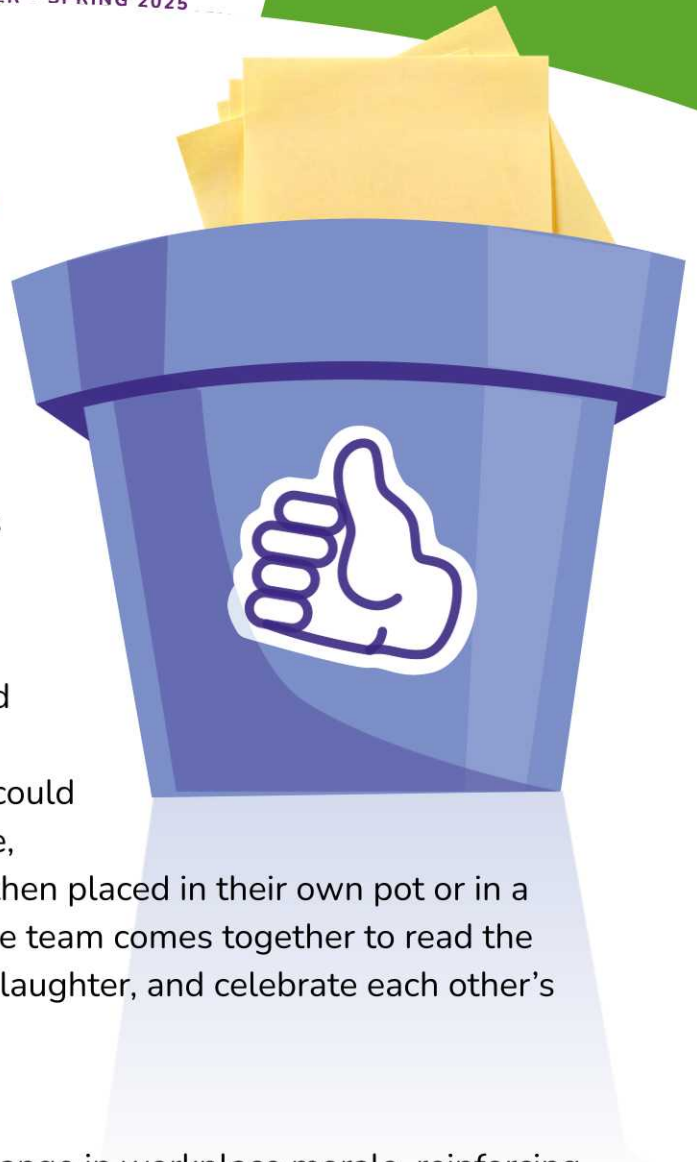
Each team member has their own pot, and throughout the day or week, staff write something positive on a sticky note. This could be a personal achievement, a kind gesture, or an example of good work. The note is then placed in their own pot or in a colleague's pot. At the end of the term, the team comes together to read the notes, reflect on positive moments, share laughter, and celebrate each other's contributions.

Positive Impact

This initiative has brought a noticeable change in workplace morale, reinforcing the importance of focusing on the good rather than dwelling on negatives. For one staff member with low self-esteem, the *'Potiau Positif'* initiative has been transformative. By seeing tangible evidence of her positive contributions, she has started to think more positively about herself. The process of reading these affirming notes has boosted her confidence and overall wellbeing, helping her recognise the valuable difference she makes to the team and the children.

Conclusion

The *'Potiau Positif'* initiative has not only improved individual self-esteem but has also strengthened the team and nurtured a culture of gratitude. It serves as a reminder that small, consistent acts of positivity can have a lasting impact on well-being in the workplace.



“Belle the Dog”, Her Impact on Cylch Meithrin Evan James

For the past 5+ years, Belle has been a beloved visitor at the Cylch Meithrin, bringing joy and creating lasting connections with the children and staff. Her presence has fostered a warm, nurturing environment, where children and staff feel calm and supported.

One of the most memorable moments was when Belle introduced her babies, offering the children a unique learning experience that encouraged curiosity, empathy, and responsibility. Belle’s visits have also helped children, especially those struggling with anxiety or social challenges, by providing emotional support and boosting their confidence.

Even children who have moved on from the Cylch continue to visit Belle, showcasing the lasting impact she has made. Some even affectionately call her ‘Doti,’ reflecting the deep bond she shares with them.



In conclusion, Belle’s visits have not only brought joy but have also contributed to the children’s emotional wellbeing and social development. Her legacy will continue to positively impact future generations at the Cylch Meithrin.

2. Wellbeing Guest Articles / Interviews

Victoria Sedgwick, Tigerlily Mental Health First Aid Trainer

PACEY spoke with Victoria Sedgwick, a Tigerlily mental health first aid trainer to discuss strategies for those working in childcare and early years in relation to their own mental health. [PACEY Live: Why is](#)



[mental health such a hot topic?](#)

Spotlight on Louise Smith: Championing Mindfulness in Education

Louise Smith is a curriculum designer, speaker, and educational consultant, as well as a Mindfulness Teacher and Founder & Director of [Do-BeMindful](#) – a leading mindfulness-based education provider, supporting children from early years through to secondary school.

With a passion for strengthening the health and well-being of both children and adults, Louise has designed evidence-based programmes that foster emotional resilience and healthy habits of mind. She believes that now, more than ever, it's essential to equip our youngest learners – and the practitioners guiding them – with the tools to learn, grow, and thrive.

Within Early Years Wales' [smalltalk](#) magazine, Louise shares how her holistic approach is making a lasting impact.



3. Practical Tips for Supporting Workforce Wellbeing

A happy workforce is a strong workforce. Working in childcare and playwork can be rewarding and also busy and challenging, which may leave staff feeling emotionally and physically tired. Supporting the wellbeing of your staff can have enormous benefits for the individual and can also boost job satisfaction and productivity and help retain staff. Consider a range of ideas that appeal to everyone's interests/cultures/abilities. Remember that not everyone will want to take part and involving the whole team in elements of the planning will allow you to find a happy medium.

Here are 10 ways that you can support wellbeing in the workplace:

1. Introduce a wellbeing champion, someone who staff can share their concerns with or someone responsible for taking ideas forward that would support staff wellbeing.
2. Offer opportunities for social activities outside of work.
3. Listen to staff – staff need to feel heard to feel valued and part of a team. This can be achieved through staff surveys, supervisions or team meetings and can be used to discuss workplace issues, wellbeing or part of your planning process. Consider what could be implemented to act on any feedback.
4. Find out more about enhancing staff wellbeing through courses and reading. Have a selection of books or magazines available that may promote self-help or hobbies (ask parents and staff to bring in any books they no longer want at home).



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5. Manage work schedules to allow enough breaks and create a quiet space that staff can retreat to.
6. Encourage time outside for staff breaks. Maybe your setting has a garden or a bench or even a local park and keep a blanket handy to sit on or use to keep warm in the colder months. Take a walk around the grounds, around the block or to the local shop and back. Share information about the benefits of walking, getting fresh air and having time to think. You could even try walking as a team for team meetings.
7. Practice mindfulness. There are many mindfulness activities that can be done in less than a few minutes or less. There are lots of websites to help you understand the benefits of practising mindfulness and activities that can be implemented on breaks, on the commute to work, when collecting children or even at the end of the working day.



8. Remember to refuel - provide healthy food/snacks, if possible or take it in turns to share a treat with everyone. Food can be a great way to bring people together!
9. If possible, offer a discounted childcare rate, which can be an additional benefit to working at your setting.
10. Tell your staff and colleagues you value them and recognise their hard work. Explore ideas to reward staff for their hard work. Consider regular recognition, employee benefit schemes or a day off on their birthday. Consider nominating your staff for an award (Cwlwm and local authorities often recognise those working within childcare and playwork on an annual basis).



4. Wellbeing and Mental Health Resources

There is a wealth of resources available to improve your overall wellbeing. Take a look at some of these resources which we hope will benefit you!

[Business Wales In-Work Support Service](#) - This service offers fast access to tailored occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and psychological therapy—helping individuals stay in or return to work while managing mental health challenges and musculoskeletal conditions.

[Happiful](#) – Happiful’s mission is to help create a happier, healthier and more sustainable society by raising awareness of mental health, bringing people together to end the stigma of mental health, and making a positive impact on the world. Subscribe without spending a penny to the **[Happiful Magazine](#)**.



Menopause – A recent PACEY survey found that many members struggle with menopause symptoms at work. The **[Menopause Charity](#)** offers helpful advice. Read personal experiences from PACEY staff and members in **[‘Menopause: a hot topic’](#)** and **[Blog: Menopause matters.](#)** Read about the menopause in Early Years Wales’ **[smalltalk](#)** magazine.



[Mind](#) – Experts in mental health. Mind and have teamed up with ORCHA, the app experts to check which **[apps](#)** meet their standards.



[NHS Wales](#) - NHS Wales offer a wide variety of resources and services in relation to wellbeing. Here are some key services available:



- **[NHS 111 Wales](#)** - A 24/7 service available to people of all ages across Wales, offering quick access to support when needed most.
- **[Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board - Five ways to well-being](#)** - A set of practical actions aimed at improving mental health and wellbeing.



- [Stress in the workplace](#) – Guidance for employers on how to support employees experiencing stress in the workplace.
- [Hapus](#) – A dedicated space for mental wellbeing, where ideas and resources are shared to promote positive mental health.



[Social Care Wales \(SCW\)](#) - Health and well-being information, advice and resources for social care and early years and childcare workers. SCW also offer a digital community



[‘Your wellbeing matters’](#) – a space to connect with others who share an interest in wellbeing.

Support at Work – The Support at Work service is fully funded by **Welsh Government** and provides expert support to improve workplace wellbeing. Whether you are a member of staff or a setting, they offer:

- **Fast-track access** to occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and psychological therapy.
- **Free support and training** for private and third-sector businesses without access to occupational health services.
- **Tailored guidance** to help employers recognise and enhance employee wellbeing, fostering a healthier and more productive workplace.

Different local authorities have access to different **Support at Work** websites:

- [Rhyl City Strategy](#) – Provides support in Anglesey, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Conway, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Swansea and Wrexham.
- [Mind](#) – Provides support in in Mid and North Powys
- [Case UK](#) – Provides support in Bridgend, Blaenau Gwent, Cardiff, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan



5. Financial Wellbeing Resources

Rising living costs are affecting many early years and childcare practitioners. A PACEY survey found that nearly 70% of members say it's impacting their mental health and wellbeing. Cwlwm is actively raising these concerns with Welsh Government and seeking support for the sector. In the meantime, we've gathered helpful resources, advice, and guidance to support you in managing rising costs.

- [Get help with the cost of living](#)
- [PACEY Live: How to make your money go further](#)
- [Financial management resources](#) for PACEY members only

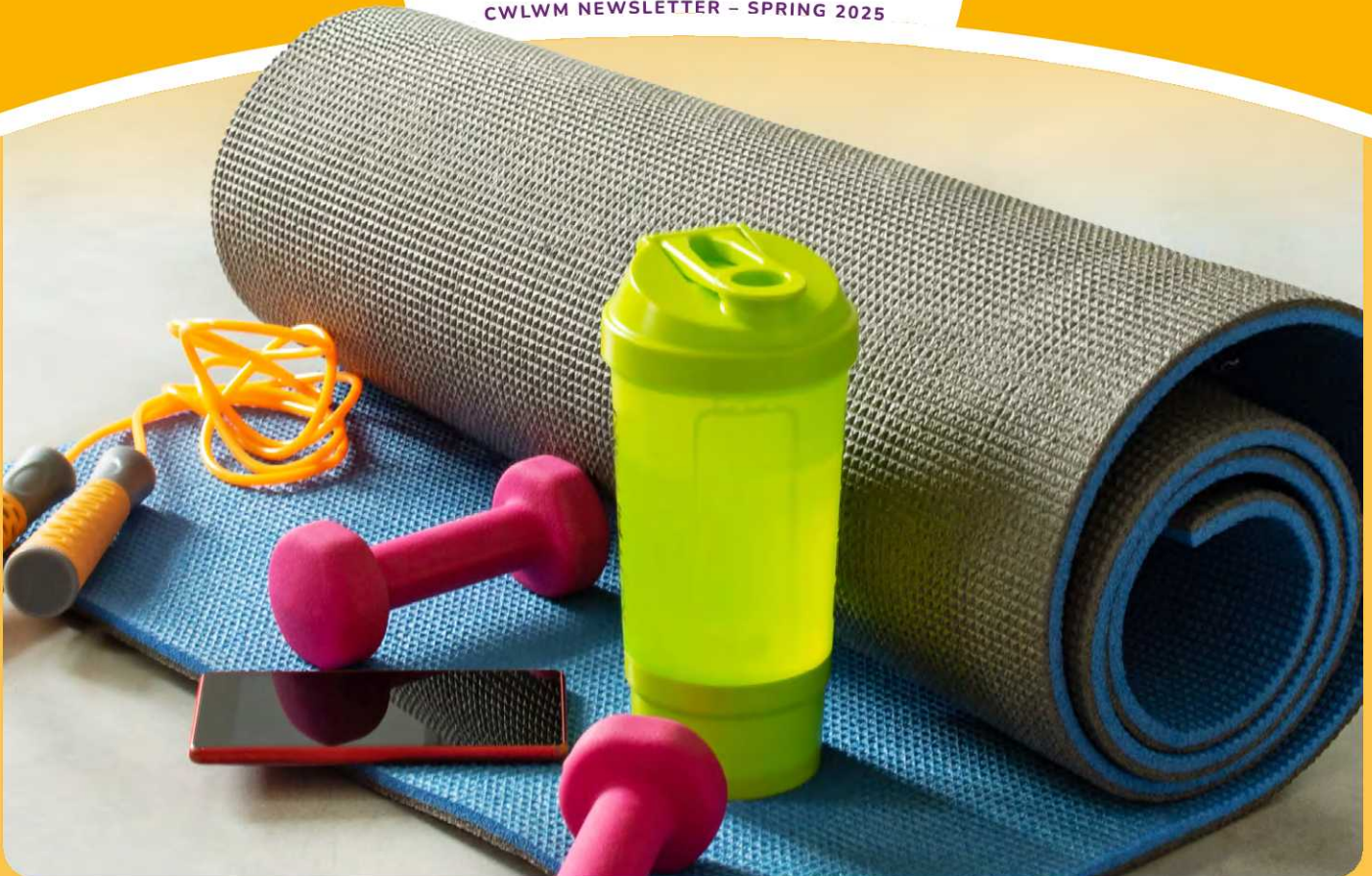
6. Healthy Recipes and Meal Ideas

Did you know that we consume at least a third of our daily calorie intake while at work? What we eat and drink affects not just our health but our work performance too. If employees fail to eat regular well-balanced meals or drink enough water, they may get headaches, feel sluggish or have difficulty concentrating. Evidence suggests that improving access to healthier food and drinks at work can benefit both employers and employees. *Ref: British Heart Foundation, 2013*

The good news? Making [healthier food and drink choices](#) at work benefits you and your employers! Do you want to promote healthy eating in your workplace? Take a look at these resources:

- [British Heart Foundation](#) – Tips and tools for workplace nutrition
- [Food Standards Agency](#) – Safety and hygiene guides
- [British Dietetic Association](#) – Food Fact Sheets
- [Catering Guidance](#) – Practical tips for affordable, healthier, and sustainable catering
- [Eatwell Guide](#) – A simple way to balance your meals
- [Public Health Wales Health Promotion Library](#) – Order a range of free information leaflets





7. Fitness and Exercise Recommendations

Staying active isn't just good for your health, it boosts energy, focus and productivity which supports your health and wellbeing. Finding time to exercise during a busy workday can be tricky, take a look at these helpful resources:

The [Institute of Early Education](#) offers a digital gym. For a small subscription, you'll get access to:

- **Live & On-Demand Classes** – Browse by class type, level, or instructor
- **Training Plans** – Progress at your own pace with pre-recorded sessions
- **Expert-Led & Safe Workouts** – Delivered by top fitness professionals from Spectrum.Life.

Other guidance:

- [British Heart Foundation Health at Work](#) – Tips to promote workplace activity
- [Easy Exercise Guide](#) – Simple, effective ways to stay active daily
- [Physical Activity Benefits](#) – The benefits of moving more at any age
- [Public Health Wales](#) – Physical activity in the workplace

8. Wellbeing Training

Looking after young children is rewarding but can also be physically and emotionally demanding. A range of wellbeing training opportunities is available to support you, both externally and internally within your umbrella organisation. Explore these training sessions:

- [Supporting Wellbeing in the Early Years Workforce](#)

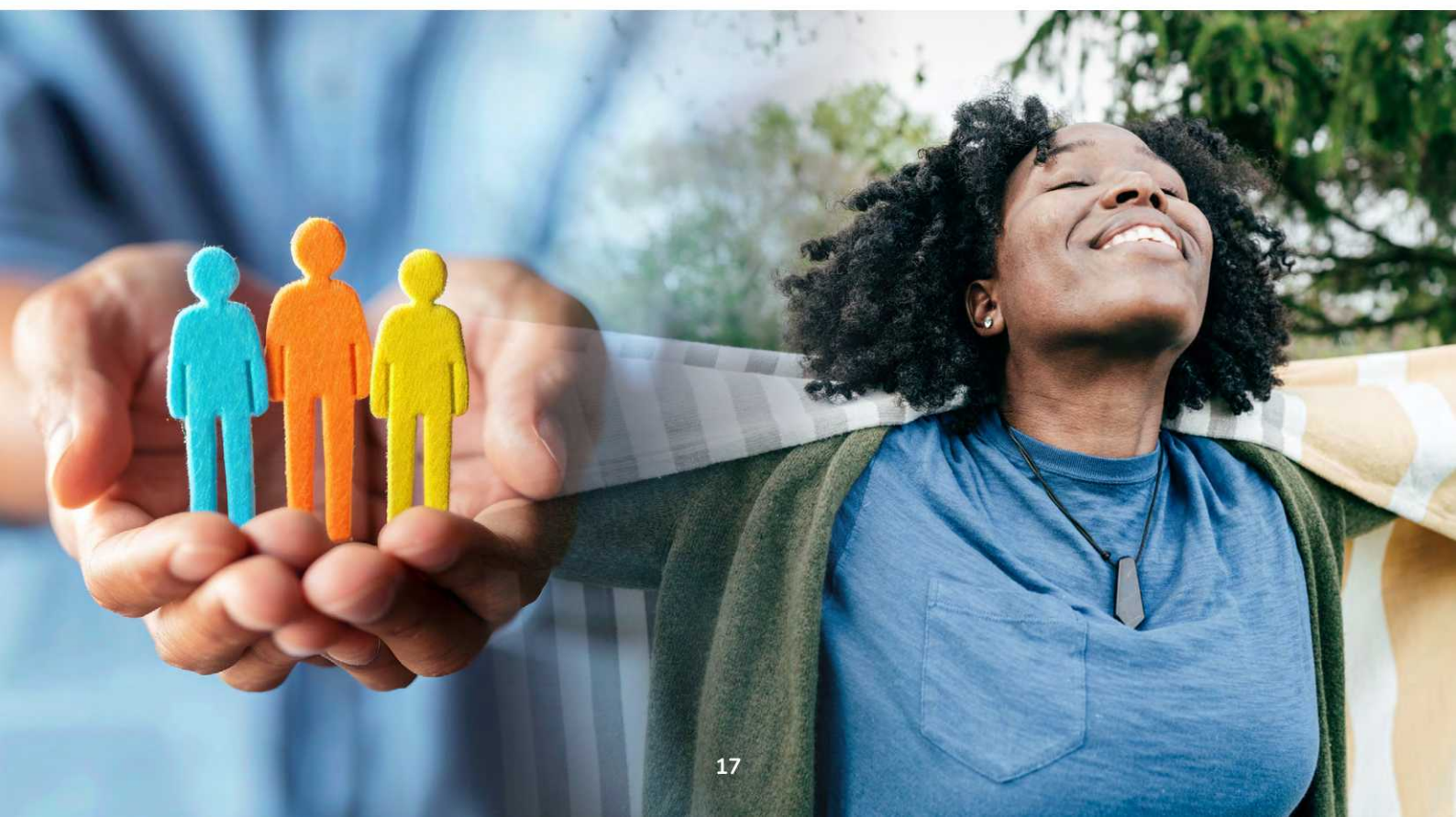
Learn basic tips on improving health and well-being with NDNA's free online course designed specifically for early years workforce.

- [Managing Time Effectively](#)

Improve your time management skills and improve business performance with NDNA's online course for early years practitioners.

- [Personal Wellbeing course](#)

An online course with Social Care Wales for those working in social care, early years, and childcare.



9. A Funny Story: Me or the Corsa!



Here's a funny and thoughtful story, published by Leanne Marsh, Head of Service Development, Mudiad Meithrin which compares self-care to car maintenance, encouraging us all to look after ourselves, just as well as we do our vehicles!

Some say turning 50 is a milestone – it marks the middle of life, or finally recognizing yourself, or simply having gained enough confidence to stop caring what others think! Time for myself, after raising two independent, smart daughters, and finally having the freedom to do what I want instead of constantly working around the children.

What no one told me is that turning 50 comes with an invitation – to a mammogram, a full MOT, blood tests at the doctor's, and a delightful little poo test by post! Why all the hassle? I'm fine, I'm healthy – there's nothing wrong with me!

"Take a seat," said the nurse when I went for my MOT. "Roll up your sleeve so I can do the blood tests. You're not going to faint on me, are you?"

“No,” I said (as the strong, independent 50-year-old woman that I am!). “But I have no idea why I’m even here wasting your time – I’m absolutely fine.”

The nurse laughed. “Funny, isn’t it, how we look after our cars better than we look after ourselves?”

That sentence stuck with me.

Where would I be without my car? It’s essential for my personal and work life! I clean it regularly to make sure everything inside is fresh and tidy, I check the tyres before driving to Aberystwyth to ensure they’ll carry me safely on the journey. It has an annual MOT, a yearly service, an oil change, and I replace worn-out parts due to the demands I’ve put on it over the past year. And when the fuel runs low and I know it won’t make it to the destination, I fill it up – because without fuel, it can’t do its job.



So why don’t we treat our health and well-being as well as we treat our cars?

Just because we feel ‘fine’ doesn’t mean we actually are. We need that MOT – to check what’s not working and what needs fixing. Our health is what keeps us going, what carries us through daily life. And fuel... well, we need that too. We need to eat well, take breaks at work, and recharge our batteries. Running on empty doesn’t help anyone.

So, five months into being 50, I’ve made some decisions. I take breaks at work. I go for lunchtime walks. I swim for an hour every week. I eat healthy (with the occasional bit of chocolate and a glass of wine!). And I take more time to read, to breathe, to think – because my health and well-being are just as important as my car’s.

Me or the Corsa? It’s taken me 50 years to realise it applies to both.



www.cwlwm.org.uk

The Cwlwm partnership consists of the following organisations:



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