

Community Pharmacy Living Well Campaign



December 2025

“How are you feeling?” campaign briefing

By asking the question “How are you feeling?”, this campaign aims to encourage people to look after their mental health and take the five steps to wellbeing. The campaign will run during December 2025 and January 2026.

Campaign overview

In Northern Ireland, one in five adults has a potential mental health problem (**Health Survey NI 2023/2024**). Looking after our mental health is not something we should only do when we are feeling down, it's something we should proactively maintain just like our physical health.

There are lots of ways we can look after our mental health and wellbeing. While different techniques work for different people, evidence suggests there are five core steps, called the Take 5 steps to wellbeing, that we can all take to improve our mental health and wellbeing. Building these five steps into our daily life could help us feel more positive and able to get the most out of life.

Take 5 is a preventative approach and can be used to support interventions, but it is not an intervention in its own right to treat the challenges associated with mental ill health. Please see the campaign leaflet and the questions and answers section for additional sources of help to support individuals with mental health issues.

Target audience

The target audience for the campaign is the general adult population.

Key messages

- Looking after your mental health is important.
- Checking in with yourself and talking to someone about how you are feeling can help.
- The Take 5 steps to wellbeing are simple actions you can take to improve your mental health and wellbeing. They are Connect, Keep learning, Be active, Take notice and Give.
- Trying these things could help you feel more positive and able to get the most out of life.
- If your mental health problems are affecting your day to day life, relationships or physical health, it's important to get professional help.

Take5

steps to wellbeing



Campaign materials

Copies of the following materials are enclosed:

2 x A3 posters

Take 5 steps to wellbeing



Take 5 steps to wellbeing empty belly poster



1 x A1 poster

Take 5 steps to wellbeing



A5 leaflet

"How are you feeling?" 5 simple ways to look after your mental health and wellbeing

Pharmacies should display the posters and leaflets in the pharmacy within a designated health promotion display area. Posters can be rotated over the two month period, but if space permits within the pharmacy all posters may be displayed at the same time. Pharmacies must show a poster in at least one window unit for the full duration of the campaign.

Training and professional development

The NI Centre for Pharmacy Learning & Development (NICPLD) offers courses on Anxiety disorders, Bipolar affective disorder, Depression, Schizophrenia and Zero Suicide Awareness training. Visit www.nicpld.org/url/elearning

Recorded webinars 'Carers Awareness and Support' and 'Mental health and Wellbeing Awareness' are available at www.nicpld.org/url/recordedwebinars

Information on courses supported by the Public Health Agency (Stress control classes, Mindset Adult, Mental Health First Aid NI, safeTALK and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills training) is available at www.mindingyourhead.info/training

Medicines and mental health

Be mindful about the medicines that could affect mental health. Find out more about mental health conditions, treatments and medications. Visit www.choiceandmedication.org/hscni

You could undertake training in this clinical area to further enhance your knowledge and help identify those at potential risk.

It's also important to encourage patients to keep an up-to-date list of medications to help them know their medicines and be able to discuss them with a healthcare professional should they need to. The *My Medicines List* leaflet and form can be printed from <http://pha.site/my-medicines-list>

Please hand out to patients, as appropriate.

Suggested campaign activities for the public

Start conversations around mental health

The “*How are you feeling?*” leaflet can be handed out with prescriptions or to those attending the pharmacy and used as a conversation starter. You may wish to identify people who might need support, such as patients requesting over-the-counter medicine or herbal remedies for anxiety and/or sleep. If you are speaking to someone who is caring for another person, remind them to think about their own mental health. Carers NI has lots of information and support – signpost to www.carersuk.org/ni

Customise the empty belly poster

The *Take 5 steps to wellbeing empty belly poster* has space so you can write in suggestions about local opportunities in your community. If you are stuck for ideas, you could ask other members of the team and patients/customers to make suggestions. Please do not display an empty poster.

Social prescribing

Social prescribing involves putting people in touch with local networks and services, and increasing their active involvement within their local community. It complements the Take 5 steps to wellbeing approach. Emerging evidence suggests that social prescribing can lead to a range of positive health and wellbeing outcomes for people, such as improved quality of life and emotional wellbeing.

If you know of social prescribing projects in your area, please utilise them. We would encourage pharmacies to contact projects that are relevant to their patients' needs and enquire as to how to refer and any specific referral criteria.

Mental health and wellbeing apps

A selection of mental health and wellbeing apps can be found on the HSC Apps Library offering self-help information and advice for adults seeking mental health support. The apps include topics such as anxiety, depression, stress, sleep and meditation. You may wish to familiarise yourself with the apps available to provide personalised recommendations for patients. Visit <https://apps4healthcareni.hscni.net/en-GB/adult-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

Professional help

Some people may need extra help based on their individual circumstances. Explain that a range of organisations can offer help. You could familiarise yourself with the service directory on *Minding your head* and signpost patients to a service appropriate to their needs. Visit www.mindingyourhead.info/services

If you are concerned about a patient, please encourage them to talk to their GP, a mental health professional or a relevant service, such as Lifeline.

Campaign activities for pharmacy teams

It is also important for pharmacy team members to prioritise their own mental health and create a supportive working environment. Here are some campaign activities to consider.

Host a mini-workshop

Pharmacies could host brief workshops (10-15 minutes) with the pharmacy team, perhaps before work, on topics like Take 5, stress management or relaxation techniques. You could collaborate with a local service to deliver the training. If space and time permits, you could even host a workshop for the public.

Weekly self-care challenges

Consider launching a weekly self-care challenge to encourage staff to adopt healthy habits. This could be building the Take 5 steps to wellbeing into everyday life.

Create a mental health resource corner

Consider dedicating a section of the staff room to mental health resources. Stock it with useful resources.

Pharmacists' Advice and Support Service

The Pharmacists' Advice and Support Service (PASS) provides a range of free, impartial and confidential services to pharmacists (and their dependants), and foundation year students. These include information and signposting to sources of support and face-to-face, telephone, and specialist counselling. For further information, visit www.pfni.org.uk/pass/how-we-can-help or telephone the PASS Coordinator (Mob: 07951 044876).

If you are aware of any other wellbeing benefits provided by your employer, please share this information with colleagues.

Social media

For pharmacies using social media channels, there is an opportunity to let followers know the pharmacy is involved in the campaign and to promote the campaign messages. Please share the Public Health Agency's posts or create your own posts and tag the Public Health Agency, Health and Social Care NI, Community Pharmacy NI and NICPLD in your posts.

Please use the hashtags **#LivingWell**, **#LookAfterYourMentalHealth** and **#MindingYourHead** as appropriate on social media posts for this campaign.



X:

@publichealthni
@HSC_NI
@compharmacyni
@NICPLD1



Facebook:

@publichealthagency
@healthandsocialcareni
@communitypharmacyni
@NICPLD



Instagram:

@publichealthni
@health_and_social_care
@compharmacyni
@NICPLD1

All Living Well materials to support this campaign can be found at <https://bsc.hscni.net/living-well>

Questions and answers

Q: What do I do if someone requests herbal remedies to help with their mood?

A: The promotion of herbal medicines is not part of this campaign. Some herbal medicines can be misused and can affect how other medications work.

Q: What do I do if someone presents with a more serious mental health problem?

A: If you are concerned about someone, advise them to make an appointment with their GP. You can also signpost them to Lifeline or call Lifeline on their behalf – 0800 808 8000. If you feel the person is in immediate danger, dial 999.

Q: What do I do if a young person or parent is looking for information?

A: The Youth Wellness Web is an online information resource. It has been co-designed by young people for young people for easy access to mental health resources and services. It provides information and tips on mental health and wellbeing, as well as advice on bullying, bereavement and more. There is also a section for parents with information and useful resources to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Visit <https://cypsp.hscni.net/youth-wellness-web/>

Q: What if a patient has questions or concerns about starting or stopping medications for a mental health condition, or has worries about side effects?

A: This conversation is a good opportunity to promote the **My Medicines List** as it enables the patient to know their medicines and be able to discuss them with a healthcare professional.

Patients who have questions or concerns about their prescribed medications can be provided with advice and reassurance by their pharmacist. Patients should be advised to review the patient information leaflet, and the pharmacist should answer any specific questions such as the potential benefits and how to manage and report any side effects.

Should a patient wish to stop their medication, it's important to signpost them to speak to their GP or mental health professional before making any changes/stopping any medication.



Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).
www.publichealth.hscni.net

Find us on:

