Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh Mid Ulster District Council

HEALTH & WELLBEING STRATEGY

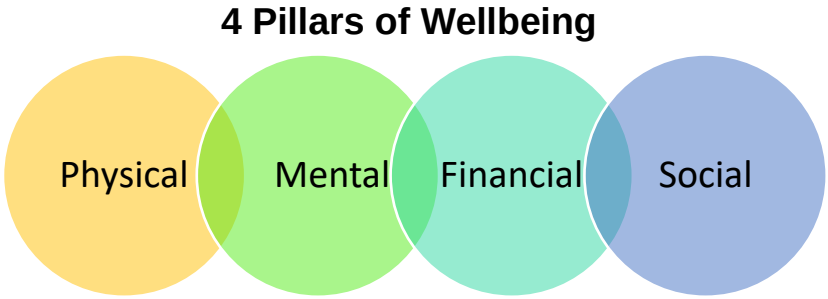
2025 - 2028

Contents

Introduction –

At MUDC the wellbeing of our employees is a priority, and the aim of this strategy is to work with our staff to integrate health and wellbeing into the day-to-day activities to enable us to create a positive and healthy working environment. Mid Ulster Council is committed to helping ensure the health and wellbeing of its employees through the formulation and implementation of polices, providing access to services and to the promotion of health improvement initiatives. MUDC aim to enable a workforce to maintain its physical, mental, financial and social wellbeing, providing a workplace which is safe, supportive and health promoting.

We recognise the need for a holistic approach to wellbeing and this strategy aims to support the 4 pillars of wellbeing:



Physical well-being refers to the state of health and fitness of the body. It involves taking care of physical health through activities that promote strength, stamina and vitality. This includes regular exercise, eating a balanced diet, getting adequate sleep, managing stress, avoiding harmful habits and maintaining proper hygiene.

Mental well-being refers to a person's emotional psychological, and social well-being. It involves feeling good about oneself, having a sense of purpose, being able to handle workplace stressors, relate to others, and make choices that enhance personal growth. It encompasses factors like emotional resilience, self-esteem, the ability to manage and express emotions, maintaining healthy relationships and feeling a sense of accomplishment or satisfaction in life.

Financial well-being refers to the state of having a stable and healthy relationship with money, where an individual feels secure, confident and in control of their financial situation. It involves having the ability to meet current and future financial needs, manage day-to-day expenses without excessive stress, and save or invest for long term goals. It involves feeling empowered and informed about one's financial choices, leading to overall financial security and peace of mind.

Social well-being refers to the quality of a person's relationships and interactions within their community and society. It involves feeling connected, supported, and engaged with others, whether through family, friends, colleagues or broader social groups. It plays a crucial role in overall happiness and mental health, helping others feel connected supported and part of something larger than themselves.

Definition of Wellbeing:

Wellbeing means different things to different people at different times. *"Health and wellbeing are about being emotionally healthy as well as physically healthy. It is feeling able to cope with normal stresses and living a fulfilled life. It can be affected by things like worries about money, work, your people around you and the environment you live in. Your wellbeing is also affected by whether you feel in control of your life, feeling involved with people and communities and feelings of anxiety and isolation".* (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NIHCE)

Afterall, a healthy, content and resilient workforce is a productive one and when we serve the people of Mid Ulster in the wide variety of life-enhancing ways that we do – our staff are essential to the achievement of our goals and vision.

Our Vision & Values

Our vision is to be at the heart of our community and our values which guide our work are:

Customer First: we will engage and listen to our customers to better understand what you want and need and offer excellent access to good quality services.

Respect: we will celebrate diversity and treat everyone equitably and with respect.

Honest & Trustworthy: we will be open and accountable in developing plans and delivering services.

Excellence: we will continually improve our services and work towards the best Mid Ulster there can be.

Innovative: we will seek to make maximum use of technology and other opportunities to improve services in our district.

To achieve our vision, we as an employer, need to be aware of what impacts staff wellbeing and be conscious of this in our policy development and in the management of our staff:

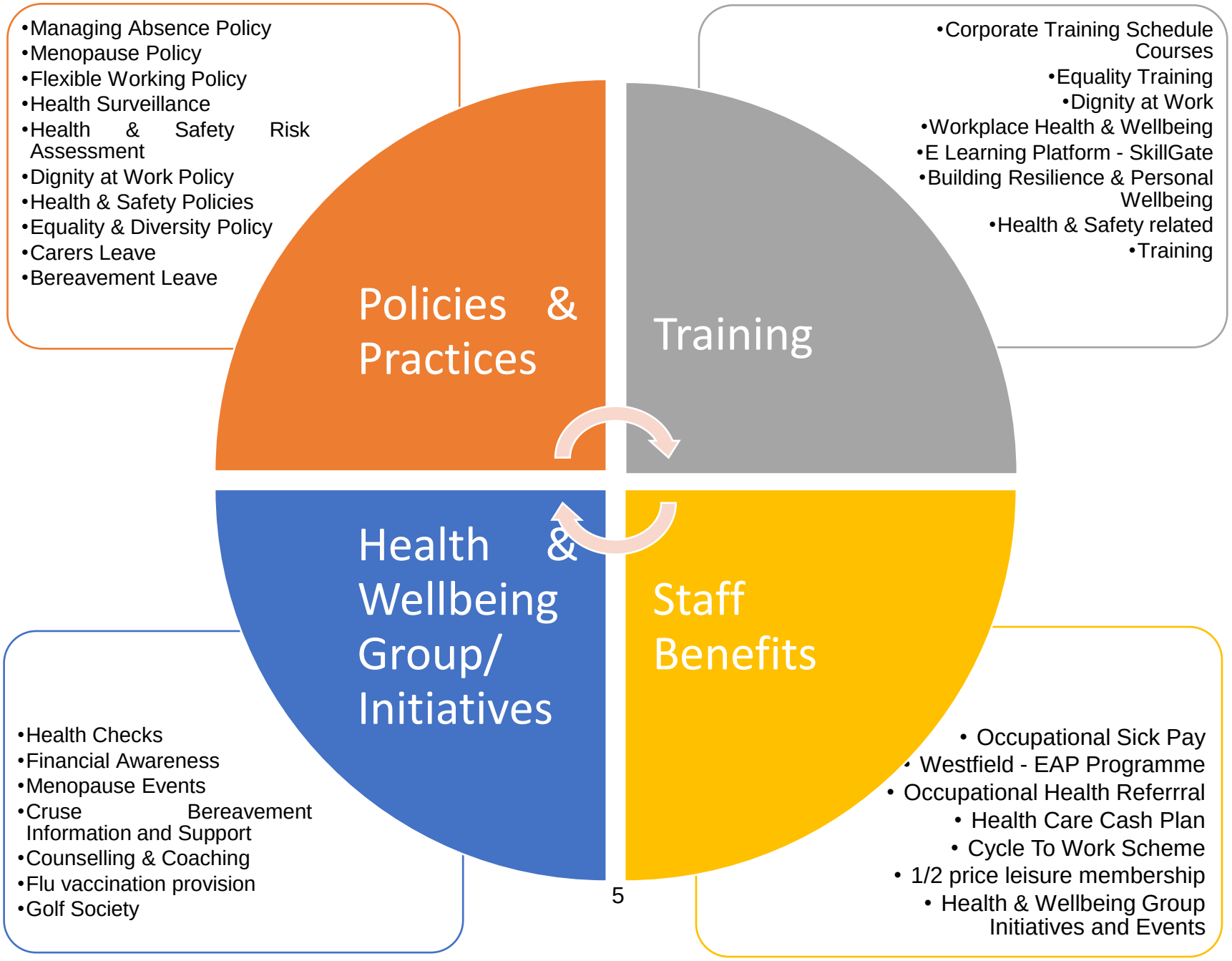
Hierarchy of Risks

Factors which can have an impact on wellbeing:

Environmental Factors – cost of living, unemployment levels in the area, Government policies.
Organisational Factors – job security, funding, departmental budget pressures, restructures.
Job Role – role suitability, physical and mental demands of the role.
Individual – personal, domestic issues, caring responsibilities, health concerns

We as an employer, must consider all of these factors which contribute to the health and wellbeing of our employees when designing policies and procedures and putting in place a framework of support (see figure 1).

Figure 1 – Policies, Services and Initiatives Currently Available To Staff



Structures and Processes that Support the Strategy

This strategy will aim to provide a joined-up approach to health and wellbeing by drawing together our Council's various polices, services and initiatives/programs that impact on employees' health and wellbeing (Figure 1).

In ensuring the implementation of the strategy the council has identified the following roles and responsibilities.

The Health and Wellbeing Group

The Council has established a health wellbeing group that is made up of representatives across various services and levels in the organisation. The Group will lead on a number of health and wellbeing initiatives to promote and enhance the health and wellbeing of employees. More information regarding the role of the Health and Wellbeing Group and its members can be found on the Staff Intranet – Health and Wellbeing and on Staywell Hub (to be developed)

Contact: – EmployeeHealthandWellbeing@midulstercouncil.org

Directors, Heads of Service and Line Mangers

Mangers at all levels will be responsible for ensuring that employees are informed on an ongoing basis of workplace health and wellbeing polices, programmes and services.

Managers will also be expected to promote and facilitate the assessment of employee views and needs in relation to factors affecting their health and wellbeing through the processes of supervision, staff Personal Contribution & Support Process and wellbeing Risk Assessments. This information will be passed onto the People & Performance Officer to inform future interventions.

Employees

Employees have a responsibility to keep themselves informed of workplace health and wellbeing polices, are encouraged to avail of programmes and services that are provided to benefit their health and wellbeing. Employees are also encouraged to offer views and opinions on health and wellbeing through the various representative mechanism e.g. employee suggestion boxes, contacting the Health & Wellbeing Group, team meetings, which will inform the ongoing development and implementation of polices, services and initiatives.

Areas of Development/Action

The health and wellbeing Group aims to produce a forum to link all activities that impact on the health and wellbeing of employees. The group will produce an action

plan in the form of an annual calendar of events which will support the roll out of health and wellbeing polices developed and/or reviewed by HR.

The group will take into consideration information provided by the People & Performance Officer around trends in sickness absence or specific areas of focus.

Monitoring, implementation and Evaluation.

Key performance indicators have been identified which will assist in monitoring the effectiveness of policy development and implementation, provision of health and wellbeing services and initiatives.

Review

The strategy will be reviewed within the first 12 months to ensure it is fit for the purpose and accurately reflects the needs of the organisation and in line with the Council's Corporate Plan.

Indicator	Measure
Absenteeism Rates	Cause/Length/Patterns- % Loss/Day lost
Mental Health Related Illness	Days Lost/ % Loss
Health & Wellbeing Event initiatives suitability	Participation rates – employee feedback and suggestions
Staff Engagement & Satisfaction	Staff Survey – Pulse Surveys, Staff retention rates, number of grievances and complaints, positive feedback
EAP Programme	Usage Numbers – claim numbers, positive feedback
Return on Investment	Financial return on wellness programs by comparing cost savings against saving from reduced absenteeism

Wellbeing Strategy (2025 – 2026)

AIMS	OBJECTIVES (How)	TIMELINE
To improve the health and wellbeing of our people which is a key element of achieving our strategic aim of "Being the Best Council Possible" by increasing staff engagement and wellbeing by 2028.	• Implementing (and reviewing) relevant policies/procedures – e.g. Health & Wellbeing Strategy, Absence Management Policy, Menopause Policy etc. • Take a holistic approach to wellbeing – physical, mental, financial and social. • Roll out health and wellbeing related training for both managers and staff. • Carry out benchmarking exercise with other Councils on their health and wellbeing benefits and initiatives to help us identify areas of improvement as well as best practice.	• 2025/2026 and when appropriate • Ongoing • 2025 – yearly • Yearly
Making employee wellbeing the culture, developing the values and behaviours that reflect the type of organisation we are proud to be part of with an open, fair and transparent culture.	• Training for Managers/staff on expected behaviour including: ➢ Dignity at Work ➢ Code of Conduct ➢ Equality/Disability Awareness ➢ Coaching/Mentoring ➢ Essential Skills for First-Time Managers ➢ Managing Stress ➢ Mental Health in the Workplace ➢ Resilience ➢ Effective Time Management • Work towards the attainment of a wellbeing accreditation i.e. Take 5 Accreditation from Northern Trust • Make new starters aware of health and wellbeing initiatives at	• Ongoing • 2025/2026 • Ongoing

	induction and throughout employee life cycle. • Encourage open conversations about mental health • Agree a set of Management Workplace Wellbeing Principles to encourage good practice • Listen to what employees need and use that feedback to evolve.	• 2025 • Ongoing
To create a safe and healthy working environment in line with statutory requirements and good practice to reduce work related ill health issues, absences and injuries.	• Health and Safety training for staff and managers. • Extend availability of Flu-Vaccine • Deliver targeted campaigns/initiatives based on information available to support wellbeing e.g. menopause support, men's and women's health initiatives, counselling etc. • Carry out DSE and workspace assessments	• Ongoing • Ongoing • Yearly events • Ongoing
To deliver and signpost to effective initiatives and support for staff that is easy to access and supports a wide range of staff needs – physical, mental, financial and social.	• Physical – promote benefits of physical activity such as: ➢ Discounted leisure membership, ➢ awareness days/campaigns – Safe in the Sun, Smoking Cessation ➢ Health Checks – Cancer Focus, Farm Families ➢ Occupational health provision ➢ exercise taster sessions, ➢ Annual Health Surveillance Programmes ➢ Menopause & OH clinic referrals. • Mental – Develop W.A.P (Wellness Action Plan) to support staff with their mental health. ➢ Promote Mental Health First Aiders within Council as well as current benefits available to staff	• 2025 - ongoing

	➢ Welfare Support - Counselling services • Financial – Promote Westfield Rewards, financial awareness, positive pension planning and retirement information sessions. • Social – Offer Seed Funds for the start-up of clubs – e.g. clubs and societies Golf Society, walking clubs, support groups etc.	
To improve on how we successfully engage and communicate with staff on health and wellbeing.	• Install Staff Suggestion boxes at each of our 3 Council sites to allow for non-digital submittal of wellbeing needs and suggestions. • Liaise with Union Representatives to help identify health and wellbeing needs of staff • Establish an Accountability Framework – to improve and encourage a consistent, structured approach to communication from Managers to their teams. • Promote the Health and Wellbeing Group – purpose, members names.	• 2025 • Ongoing • 2025/2026 • Summer 2025
To encourage and support staff to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle	• Organise a yearly Healthy and Wellbeing Plan of events to encourage staff participation such as Walking/Activity Challenges, Health Fairs, information sessions etc. • Promote staff benefits • Provide information sessions on the E.A.P i.e. Westfield Health.	• April 2025 • Ongoing • Ongoing
To improve staff satisfaction and engagement.	• Seek the input of staff (through a whole staff survey) across the	• 2025 and review 2026

	Council to ensure strategy aligns with staff need. • Acknowledge and celebrate staff loyalty and achievement. • Carry out exit interviews to identify areas of improvement • Organise several staff engagement events and make it accessible to all staff – team building, coffee mornings etc. • Facilitate staff development opportunities: ➢ Apprenticeships ➢ Management Development Training ➢ Interview Skills for Interviewees ➢ Mentoring opportunities ➢ Secondment opportunities ➢ Career Breaks ➢ Encourage career development	• Starting 2025 • Yearly • Ongoing • Ongoing
To reduce the high level of mental health related absence.	• Increased visibility of all health and wellbeing resources. • Provide financial wellbeing awareness sessions • Providing mental health related training e.g. building resilience, stress management. • Train Managers to promote health & wellbeing. • 1-1 Counselling and Coaching sessions • Regularly review relevant policies and procedures including equality, diversity etc. • Review provision of E.A.P. to ensure still meets needs of staff • Review the current provision of Mental health First Aiders to	• 2025 - ongoing • November 2025 • Ongoing • Ongoing • 2025 • Ongoing • When required • 2025

	ensure appropriate and adequate for size of our Organisation. • Organise yearly initiatives to increase awareness	• 2025 - ongoing May - Mental health Awareness Week Oct – Menopause/Womens Health Awareness Month Nov – National Talk Money Week

Health & Wellbeing Support Directory

Physical Support

Half Price Leisure Membership – to MUDC Leisure Complexes. For more information click on the link to our Staff Intranet: Staff-Discounts-Offers

Employee Assistance Programme - WESTFIELD HEALTH MEMBERSHIP. Westfield Health Membership, help to cover the cost of:

- Chiropractic
- Chiropody/Podiatry
- Optical – glasses
- As well as
- 24/7 DoctorLine Service – free to call but you have to pay for any prescriptions – **call 0345 612 3861**
- Diagnostic Scanning Service – access to MRI, CT &PET scans – unlimited MRI scans - **call 0345 345 4556**

For more information on Westfield Health Benefits for Staff click on this link: Westfield Health Information or alternatively call the customer services number on 0114 250 2000

Mental Support

Mental Health First Aiders

Name	Directorate/Department	Contact Details
Anne Marie Campbell	Environment	annemarie.campbell@midulstercouncil.org Ext 23700

Linda Carson	Human Resources	linda.carson@midulstercouncil.org Ext 22053 or 07760 762 180
Marita McGirr	Human Resources	Marita.mcgirr@midulstercouncil.org Ext 24340 or 07827 991 910
Garry McCreesh	Environment	Garry.mccreesh@midulstercouncil.org Ext 22405
Brian Holmes	Property Services	Contact Property Services
Melanie Patterson	Environmental Health	Melanie.patterson@midulstercouncil.org Ext 24117 or 07766 740 916
Monica McDonnell	Environmental Health	Monica.mcdonnell@midulstercouncil.org Ext 24112 or 077 893 903 02
Elizabeth McLaughlin	Health, Leisure & Wellbeing	Elizabeth.mclaughlin@midulstercouncil.org Ext 25095 or 07714133674
Andrew Carson	Health, Leisure & Wellbeing	Andrew.carson@midulstercouncil.org Ext 24804
Fiona Duffin	Environment	Fiona.duffin@midulstercouncil.org Ext 23120
Keith Currie	Health, Leisure & Wellbeing	Keith.currie@midulstercouncil.org Tel:- 028 86 763853
Declan Hughes	Health, Leisure & Wellbeing	Declan.hughes@midulstercouncil.org Tel 028 79 547400
Breifne McCusker	Environment	Breifne.mccusker@midulstercouncil.org Ext 23529 or 07816339791
Nathan Hill	Health, Leisure & Wellbeing	Nathan.hill@midustercouncil.org Ext 24817 or 0788 133 00 52

Wisdom App

If you are eligible for Westfield Membership, you can access a Health and Wellbeing App called Wisdom. This App provides an enhanced set of wellbeing tools and engaging features to support your health and wellness. Download the app and enter employer code “WHCORP”.

Westfield Employee Assistance Programme - 24HR Information Line which offers:

- Counselling for emotional problems like stress anxiety and depression. -
- Bereavement Support.
- Structured counselling – 6 sessions online, over the phone or face to face

To access this support call **0800 092 0987**

HSC Directory of services to help improve mental health and emotional wellbeing

These directories list the organisations that offer services to help improve mental health and emotional wellbeing in your Trust area. It not only details sources of support for stress, depression and anxiety but also support for eating distress, bereavement, sexual health, student and child/youth support, benefit/financial advice and family/relationship support. Where possible, additional information has also been provided, such as websites or email addresses and contact details within each Health and Social Care Trust area.

Northern Area Trust

https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/2023-02/Northern%20Area%20Card%2002.23%20final.pdf

Southern Area Trust

https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/2023-02/Southern%20Area%20Card%2002.23%20final.pdf

Coaching

You can avail of face-to-face coaching/counselling with a local provider if you are struggling mentally and need support. Contact your manager or a member of your HR Team for confidential referral.

The Here 2 Help App

ABOUT THE APP

The Here2Help App provides quick access to advice and support services for anyone in crisis or needing help. It contains details of local, not-for-profit organisations who can help with many issues such as mental health, addiction, housing and domestic abuse.

The App was created through a local initiative and developed by Noel McKee from East Antrim Counselling: https://eastantrimcounselling.com/here2help/

Inspire N.I. – call 0808 189 0036

Lifeline – call 0808 808 8000

Cruse Bereavement Support – 0808 808 1677

Confidential Advisors

Confidential Advisors are trained individuals, there to support staff who have work related concerns and will assist in finding informal resolutions in the workplace.

Where informal resolutions are insufficient, Confidential Advisors, will also support employees in lodging and progressing work related complaints if they so wish. Further information regarding the role of Confidential Advisors can be found in the Dignity At Work Policy & Procedure.

Name		**Contact No**	**Location**
Lynn Shiels	Ext 22603	Business & Communities	Magherafelt
Eunan Murray	Ext 22554	Environmental & Property	Dungannon
Claire McNally	Ext 23305	Chief Executive's	Cookstown
Marita McGirr	Ext 24340	Organisational Devlpt	Dungannon
Emma McCullagh	Ext 23524	Planning	Magherafelt
Johnny McNeill	Ext 24407	Technical Services	Cookstown

Financial Support

Westfield Rewards – Get discounts and rewards from hundreds of leading retailers, restaurants and destinations. Further information can be found on our staff intranet.

Westfield Advice and Information Line – confidential help and advice on legal issues such as debt, consumer property or neighbour disputes. Call **0800 092 0987**

Inhouse Training – look out on our quarterly Learning and Development Schedule for information sessions on Positive Retirement, How To Get The Most from Your Pension etc. which is regularly updated on the Staff Intranet

MindWise – Mental health and money advice service - **08088010373 or visit https://www.mentalhealthandmoneyadvice.org/ni/**

Staywell Hub

The Stay well Hub is available through the Staff Intranet Home Page and has details on MUDC health and Wellbeing events/initiatives as well as numerous videos and articles on all areas of health and wellbeing, including financial health which is constantly updated with new topics and support.

You can access the Staywell Hub at the following link with your Intranet staff login: **https://staywell.mudc.wellhub.info/**

Social Support

Social Wellbeing refers to the quality of a individuals' relationship and interactions with others. Social wellness is about building meaningful, respectful relationships, fostering a sense of belonging, and feeling supported and connected.

The Health and Wellbeing Group develop a yearly calendar on events to help meet the social needs of our employees. These include workshops, social gatherings, coffee mornings, walking groups, promoting sporting societies such as the Golf Society etc. To see what is available go the Staff Intranet.

For further information on health and wellbeing support contact your designated HR Business Partner or Tanya.Gwynne@midulstercouncil.org