

# SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT MAY 2026

As we move into the late spring and early summer period, it's a good time to pause and reflect on wellbeing, safety, and the support available to us.

This edition of the Safeguarding Newsletter focuses on **Mental Health, Supportive Manager conversations, and staying safe over the impending summer months**. These themes are relevant to both colleagues and apprentices, particularly as routines change, workloads shift, and social activity often increases coming into the Summer months.

Mental Health Awareness Week 2026 takes place in May and uses the theme "Action", highlighting that awareness is important, but positive change happens when we take small, meaningful steps to support ourselves and others.

Throughout this newsletter, you will find information, reflection prompts, and signposting to trusted support services. The aim is to help everyone feel informed, confident, and supported - whether you're looking after your own wellbeing or supporting someone else.

## IN THIS EDITION, WE WILL EXPLORE

- Mental Health Awareness Week 2026 – "Action"
- Promoting our Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA)
- Supportive manager conversations
- Financial wellbeing & upcoming webinar
- Summer safety awareness

## SAVE THE DATE

### Upcoming Webinar: Financial Wellbeing & Empowerment

- **Date:** 19th May 2026
- **Time:** 15:00–16:00
- **Platform:** MS Teams [LINK](#)
- The session **will be recorded**, so if you can't attend live, you'll still be able to access it afterwards. If you would prefer **not to be recorded**, please ensure your **camera and microphone are turned off** during the session.

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### MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK 2026: TAKING ACTION

Mental Health Awareness Week 2026 runs from **11–17 May** and is led by the Mental Health Foundation. This year's theme is **"Action."**

The theme focuses on the idea that while understanding mental health is important, meaningful change happens when we take practical actions - for ourselves, for others, and within our workplaces and communities.

Actions don't need to be big or dramatic. Often, the most effective steps are small and realistic, such as checking in with someone, taking breaks, setting boundaries, or asking for support when it's needed.

Mental health affects us all at different points in life. Creating an environment where people feel able to talk openly and access help early can make a real difference to wellbeing, confidence, and performance.

It's important to recognise that we all have Mental Health, just as we all have Physical Health – but like with Physical Health it can vary from poor health to well health.

**We All Have Mental Health** - this video is aimed at a younger audience – but the message is still relevant, no matter our age!

#### Actions for yourself

- Taking regular breaks
- Getting enough rest and sleep
- Managing screen time
- Building movement into your day
- Practice mindfulness, or actions that bring you JOY!

#### Actions for others

- Checking in with a colleague or apprentice
- Listening without judgement
- Encouraging help seeking

#### Actions at work

- Using support networks
- Speaking openly about wellbeing
- Making reasonable adjustments where needed



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### INSTEP MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDERS (MHFA): SUPPORT WHEN YOU NEED IT

Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) play an important role in supporting wellbeing across Instep UK.

MHFA's are trained to:

- Listen non judgementally
- Recognise when someone may be struggling
- Provide reassurance and signposting to appropriate support

They are **not** counsellors or therapists, but they are a safe point of contact if you're unsure where to turn or need a supportive conversation.

Speaking to an MHFA can be a positive first step, whether concerns are work related, personal, or a mix of both.



Joanne Senior  
[jsenior@instepuk.com](mailto:jsenior@instepuk.com)



Dee Wentworth  
[dwentworth@instepuk.com](mailto:dwentworth@instepuk.com)



Charlie Smither  
[csmither@instepuk.com](mailto:csmither@instepuk.com)

#### What does the role of a Mental Health First Aider mean to you?

**Dee** - *To me, the role of a Mental Health First Aider means being someone others can come to when they are struggling, knowing they will be listened to without judgement and taken seriously. It is about noticing when someone is not themselves, offering support in a calm and approachable way, and helping them feel comfortable enough to open up.*

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### What's a common misconception about being an MHFA-er?

**Jo** - Mental Health first aiders are not counsellors, nor do they claim to be experts in every area of mental health and wellbeing. They are there to assess the current situation, and to guide and signpost to other services who are trained and equipped to support. If you were at an event somewhere, and fell over and bumped your head, you would pick up with the first aid team – they might apply a cold compress and advise you to go to A&E to get checked out – it's the same with mental health first aid – we would be there to apply the cold compress, make sure you were OK, but might suggest exploring other avenues of support that are experienced and equipped to support with whatever you are facing.

**Charlie** - Another misconception is that people should only reach out when they are at crisis point. You do not need to be struggling massively to deserve support. Sometimes it is the quieter conversations that make the biggest difference.

### How do you encourage open conversations and help people feel safe during them?

**Dee** - I encourage open conversations by being approachable, calm and non-judgemental so people feel comfortable coming to me. For me, it is about creating a relaxed, confidential space where they do not feel pressured and know they can speak freely at their own pace.

### How would you suggest someone start a conversation with you, or let you know they 'need a chat'?

**Jo** - This can, for some, be the hardest step! There is no right and wrong – just reach out and ask if you can grab a confidential chat, book time in a diary, ring out of the blue – it's whatever YOU feel comfortable with.

**Charlie** - I also remind people that it is okay not to have the words. Life is not always tidy and conversations do not need to be either. Sometimes just being heard is enough for that moment.

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### LINE MANAGER CONVERSATIONS

Line managers play an important role in supporting wellbeing, but supportive conversations are a shared responsibility.

If something is affecting your wellbeing, reaching out early can help prevent challenges from escalating.

Conversations don't need to include all the answers - they're about being heard and exploring support options together.

#### Managers are encouraged to:

- Listen with empathy
- Focus on support, not judgement
- Signpost appropriate help when needed considering Employee Assistance Programs, Safeguarding Team Members or MHFA's as a first point of contact.

#### Employees and apprentices are encouraged to:

- Speak up early where possible
- Share what support might help
- Know that asking for help is a strength

### CONVERSATION STARTERS



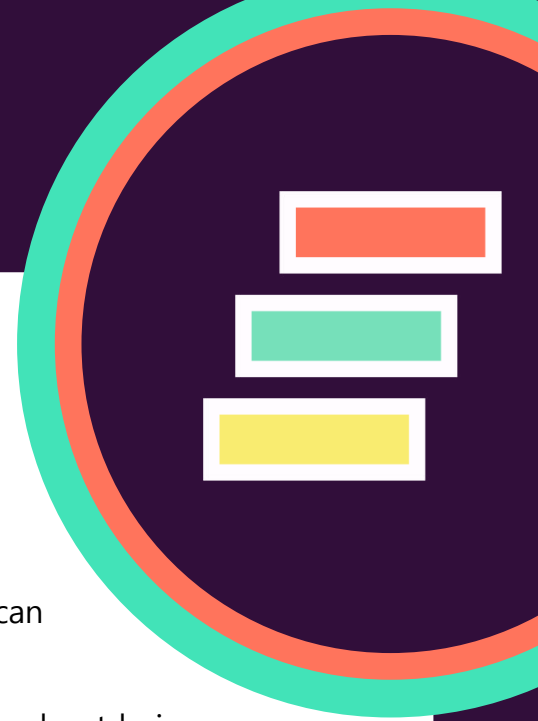
I'm finding things a bit difficult at the moment.



I'd like to talk about my workload / wellbeing.



I'm not sure what support I need, but I'd value a conversation.



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### SUMMER SAFETY: STAYING INFORMED & PROTECTED

The summer period often brings more social activity, travel, and changes to routine. While this can be positive, it can also increase certain safeguarding risks.

Being informed helps people make safer choices and support one another.

#### SUMMER SAFETY FOCUS AREAS

##### Travel safety

- Research destinations and local customs
- Keep emergency contacts accessible
- Share travel plans with someone you trust

##### Scams and fraud

- Be cautious with unexpected messages or offers
- Verify links and payment requests
- Trust your instincts - pressure is a red flag

##### Alcohol awareness

- Know personal limits
- Stay with trusted people
- Look out for vulnerability in social settings

##### Cultural differences

- Be aware that norms can differ when travelling
- Respect local laws and customs
- Ask questions if unsure

[Action Fraud](#)

[FCA – ScamSmart](#)

[Drinkaware](#)

[Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office](#)

How can you balance enjoying the summer while still looking after your own safety and wellbeing and that of others?



## RAISING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

As your training provider, Instep has a duty of care to its learners, we need to ensure that you are protected from harm, abuse and exploitation. If you would like to raise a safeguarding concern, please either phone 07849 643815 or email [safeguarding@instepuk.com](mailto:safeguarding@instepuk.com) you can also scan the QR code above to raise a concern.

### Meet Instep's safeguarding team:



**SLT Lead for Safeguarding**  
Hayley Wilcox  
[hwilcox@instepuk.com](mailto:hwilcox@instepuk.com)



**Designated Safeguarding Lead**  
Tracey Carter  
[tcarter@instepuk.com](mailto:tcarter@instepuk.com)



Joanne Senior  
[jsenior@instepuk.com](mailto:jsenior@instepuk.com)



Lauren Green  
[lgreen@instepuk.com](mailto:lgreen@instepuk.com)



Sally Gautier  
[sgautier@instepuk.com](mailto:sgautier@instepuk.com)



Nick Bremner  
[nbremner@instepuk.com](mailto:nbremner@instepuk.com)



Susie Beavan  
[sbeavan@instepuk.com](mailto:sbeavan@instepuk.com)

Tell your Coach in your next Learning Impact Visit what your key takeaways from this newsletter are

If you have any suggestions for future updates please advise your Coach