

## Good Breaks Manager Toolkit

### Introduction

We all need to take regular breaks during our working hours to work at our best. We need to use this time well, to eat, drink, rest and recover, and re-energise. Where staff are able to rest and recover from the demands of their work, they are less likely to make mistakes, less likely to suffer from burnout and feel more engaged.

Taking a good break is a shared responsibility. We need to look after ourselves, look out for each other and have the right management and organisational support to make good breaks happen. HR and OD professionals play a vital role in helping teams create a good break culture. The Good Breaks hub on the People Portal provides a range of resources to help you support your people making good breaks happen.

Research shows that:

- 94% of employees felt they had a refreshed perspective on work after taking a break.
- Having good breaks protects wellbeing and prevents a build-up of stress that can lead to burnout and supports staff to stay well at work, improving staff retention.
- Taking better breaks leads to better patient safety including fewer medication errors and fewer falls with injuries among patients due to better nursing care.

This toolkit for managers includes:

1. What do Good Breaks look like?
2. Importance of role modelling & self-care
3. Having a one to one conversation with a member of your team
4. Putting 'Good Breaks' on your team meeting agenda
5. Overview of resources available on the People Portal

## 1. What do Good Breaks look like?

Good breaks offer the opportunity to take a break from work, do something different, detach from work thoughts and responsibilities, re-charge, eat and drink and rest.

When thinking about what a Good Break looks like for staff at HIOW and the people in your team we need to keep in mind that a Good Break will be different for different people. There are individual differences and preferences on how to switch off or recharge, whether to go for a run or a sit down, but there are also different needs for different staff groups within HIOW to take into consideration.

Here is a summary of the **WHEN** the **WHAT** and the **HOW** of a break. There are also webinar resources available on the People Portal to watch and share with your team.

### WHEN to take a break

Research shows that we need regular breaks throughout our working day/night, we need short breaks every hour, also known as micro breaks, and a longer break for lunch and some time out to rest.

### WHAT to do during your break to make it a healthy break

Different components matter as you take a break from work and support rest and recovery. It can be helpful to think about breaks as an opportunity to **RESET: Rest, Eat and drink, Surroundings, Exercise and Time together.**

### HOW to take a break

To make sure you get most out of your break it is helpful to reflect on current break behaviour and desired break behaviour for individuals and as a team. On the People Portal are reflective exercises to look at alongside the webinars, these could be discussed in a team meeting.

Within HIOW there are different staff groups with very different working patterns and circumstances, the type of break people need to switch off from work and rest and recover will depend on whether they work day or night shifts, work on a ward or in an office, or whether they have a hybrid role or work from home. A webinar is available discussing the different needs to consider for different staff groups.

**As a manager you play a crucial role in supporting your team** to take breaks, through role modelling the behaviour you would like to see in your team, one to one conversations with team members and having the topic of wellbeing and taking breaks on your team meeting agenda.

Here are some suggestions for each of those occasions:

## 2. Importance of role modelling & self-care

Research in 2007 showed that less than half of managers thought that work-breaks could improve their own performance (Bergman & West 2007).

For a team to feel permitted to take their work breaks, and to feel these breaks are important for their rest and recovery and therefore positively impact their performance, it is important they see them role modelled by their leaders and managers.

As a first step it is helpful to reflect on your current 'break behaviour' and to reflect on how well this is working for you and what message it might send to your team. It can be very powerful to identify small changes you could make that may well make a big difference, and to ask your team members to also do this reflective exercise available in the Individual toolkit.

Current break behaviour	Is this working well for me?	Impact this may have on my team	Small changes I could make to have a better break	Possible impact on others
<i>e.g. I eat my sandwich at my desk</i>	<i>It means I can keep working but that I don't really switch off from work</i>	<i>It might send a message that you should keep working while eating lunch</i>	<i>Take my sandwich outside and have a short walk while eating, block my lunchbreak out in my diary</i>	<i>This could give my team permission to do the same</i>

### 3. Having a one to one conversation with a member of your team

Having a conversation about taking breaks with your team members can have many benefits, either as informal every day conversations, or as a more formal meeting clarifying how your team members work at their best and the support they need to be able to take regular breaks and flourish at work.

If the conversation is a more formal meeting, it is helpful to take time to think through the conversation first.



#### Before the conversation:

- Arrange a suitable time and place to talk.
- What to think about:
  - It is important to notice the signs and signals of your team members:
    - Are they thriving or are they struggling?
    - Do they seem under pressure?
    - Do they take their regular breaks?
    - Do they come back to work re-energised and refreshed?
  - What outcome would I like to get from this conversation?
  - Get an overview of work priorities as well as staffing so you are equipped with the necessary information to discuss what would work best and have a view of whether this is realistic in the current team structure and with the current workload
  - If my team member requests a change in their break schedule, what is the potential impact on them, the team and myself as a manager? How can that impact be mitigated?



#### During the conversation:

- Allow your team member to be as honest and specific as possible about their thoughts and listen without judgement
- Be open to feedback and reflection on your break behaviour
- Be honest with your team member about possibilities and potential impact
- Take time to think through the conversation and change requested, either during or after the meeting
- Agree a plan, including timelines and next steps



#### After the conversation:

- It may be helpful to agree for you or your team member to summarise your conversation in an email to have a record

## 4. Putting Good Breaks on your team meeting agenda

People who are doing the job day to day will have great suggestions as to how the way work is done can be improved. This will be the same for making good breaks happen. Not all suggestions will be possible, but it is likely that there will be some small changes that can make a big difference.

- Think about how you open up the conversation about breaks, the importance of breaks and the barriers to taking a good break.
- Use the resources on the People Portal to encourage your team to think about their own break behaviour.
- Dedicate a regular team meeting agenda item to Good Breaks, there are materials on the people portal that you could watch and discuss together, reflective exercises that can be done during or after a team meeting and a team break charter you could fill in together to summarise your teams approach to supporting good breaks.
- Share any changes you make with the Good Breaks Working Group so that others can try them out.

## 5. Overview of resources available on the People Portal

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the 'Good Breaks Training' page on the People Portal. The page features a navigation bar with the NHS logo and the text 'Hampshire and Isle of Wight'. Below the navigation bar, there is a main heading 'Good Breaks Training' and a sub-heading 'bringing together staff from across HIOW to improve breaks. Together, we have developed these resources to support staff across HIOW to take 'Good Breaks''. The main content area is divided into three columns, each representing a different resource:

- GOOD BREAKS Introduction**: Good Breaks Overview. We've created this resource for NHS colleagues.
- GOOD BREAKS Bitesize Webinars**: Webinars. A series of short webinars.
- GOOD BREAKS Examples of Good Practice across HIOW**: Case Studies. Good break ideas from across HIOW and the NHS.

The URL in the browser's address bar is <https://www.hiowpeople.nhs.uk/good-breaks-training/>.

# GOOD BREAKS

Good Breaks Training - People

hiowpeople.nhs.uk/resources/good-breaks-training/

Health & Wellbeing  
Hampshire & Isle of Wight

What help do you need? One-to-one support What's On Latest Resources

NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight

## GOOD BREAKS

### Toolkit for Human Resources and Occupational Development professionals

HR/OD Toolkit

A good break culture is vital.

## GOOD BREAKS

### Manager Toolkit

Manager Toolkit

What do Good Breaks look like for your team?

## GOOD BREAKS

### Toolkit for Individuals

Individual Toolkit

Helping you take a good break.

What can I do for myself and others?

<https://www.hiowpeople.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Good-Breaks-Manager-Toolkit-Oct-2023.pdf>

Good Breaks Training - People

Good-Breaks-Manager-Tool... Good-Breaks-Individual-Tool... Good Breaks Webinars - Peo...

hiowpeople.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Good-Breaks-Manager-Toolkit-Oct-2023.pdf

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