

THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEES' MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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As Covid-19 continues to spread across the globe, ICTS UK & Ireland understands the importance of safeguarding our employees' mental health and wellbeing. We recognise that all our employees are facing different challenges at this time, whether they are in key worker positions, are currently working from home or have been furloughed. Working parents are also in uncharted territory, often juggling work and home-schooling.

This crisis has turned the world upside down and lockdown has resulted in the vast majority of our employees' working conditions transformed overnight. As with every organisation across the UK and Ireland, we had to adapt quickly and change the way we work.

Our prime concern during this incredibly worrying and stressful time has been how we keep our employees safe and look after their mental health and wellbeing. We have increased our communication to our employees through additional weekly newsletters and the issuance of regular messages of encouragement from the Senior Management of both the ICTS Europe Group and ICTS UK & Ireland. Help desk email accounts have been created, which our HR teams and Directors are responding to personally.



Images above: Issue 1 of the ICTS Europe Connect news bulletin – issued weekly to keep employees informed, share tips and boost morale during the Covid-19 crisis.

In addition to the internal measures and practices we have in place to support our employees and management teams, our **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)** provides 24-hour confidential support and counselling on personal and work-related issues, including health and lifestyle, family and legal.

Our EAP provides us with regular bulletins which have included information on staying active, strategies to tackle anxiety and stress, and live mindfulness sessions in eight different languages. This service has proved invaluable over the last few months and we have seen a significant increase in usage. During the month of March alone, the number of employees who reached out to the service nearly matched the total number of cases for the previous nine months.



Images above: Examples of Mental Health and Wellbeing information shared by the Employee Assistance Programme used by ICTS UK & Ireland.

The EAP platform offers reliable information from trusted sources. The sea of digital information available at our fingertips, can increase our stress levels. It is important to block out the 'noise' and refer to *trusted* sources of information. I take this opportunity to encourage our employees to seek help and advice whenever they feel they need support.