



**PORTRAIT OF A  
WELLNESS WORKER**

## ***Portrait of a Wellness Worker***

This is a not-so policy document made from poetry, pictures and portraits – in a non-traditional sense. You can look at this as a guide, think about our well being and how best to treat our wellness workers in the creative industry, but it's more like a captured moment. A still frame in a film still in progress. The landscape is ever shifting.

Our world is built on sand.

Remember to let yourself be carried by the flow of the Tees.

Move with us, not against us.

**Listen. Adapt. Develop. Repeat.**

Present

Re - Present

Present - ing

Present - ed

Re - Present - ing

Re - Present - ed

## *Contents – Agenda*

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## *Opening/Prologue*

Today we gather, huddled inside  
To share something only company can provide.  
Pass the fabric, the willow, the pen  
Pick up the materials and only then  
Can we truly begin.

Busy hands can open mouths  
Which opens hearts  
Which lets us start  
To work out how to heal,  
Which steps to take as we reveal  
What we need; with words and tone  
And expression, working not alone  
But together.

What's important is we're here to talk....

But what do we talk about?

Generic, yet specific  
We don't dive into the horrific  
The trauma, but it's referenced  
Enough to see that our defences  
Are lower.  
There are periods of silence and still  
That words don't need to fill —  
There is closeness to the quiet, settled.  
Sometimes we need noise, other time we need the kettle  
To be the only buzz  
Because  
**We can say everything in the nothing.**

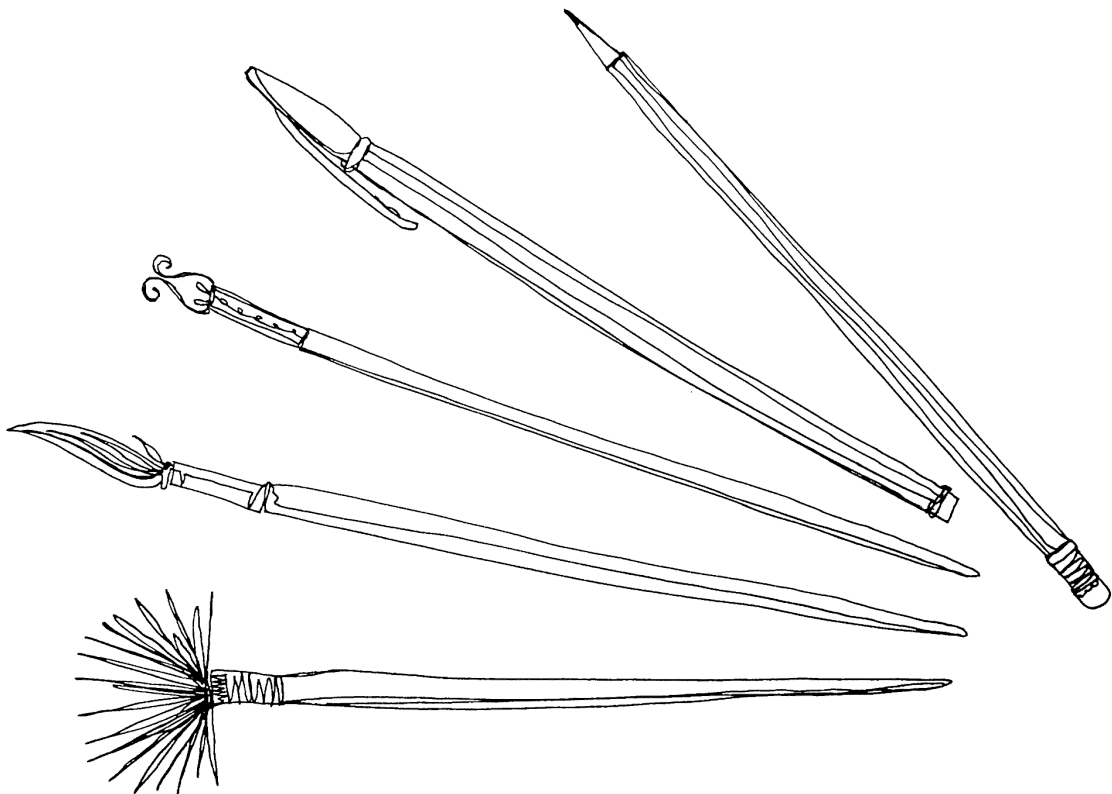
A comfortable space  
Open up at your own pace  
Serene in a place  
That is warm and safe.

We are here to breathe.

We are here to play.  
We are here to say  
Whatever we need to –  
So I must ask you:

**Would you like to join us?**

Play  
Re - Play  
Play - er  
Play - ers  
Play - ing  
Re - Play - ing



## *Presence*

Those who are present,  
Their presence is a gift  
They lift  
The spirits of those they work with,  
Those to whom they give  
Their finite time.

Their names?  
Numerous.  
Often unknown  
Under the labels of Miss, Mr  
Of her, Mx, Sir.  
**Unknown yet not forgotten.**

Treasured  
Because their impact is measured  
In smiles and knowledge  
And skills passed on  
To another generation along  
Or a generation before  
Their legacy is found in more  
People than they know.

*Present.*  
They present to you their words, experience shared  
They speak to make sure you're prepared  
For what is expected of this undervalued role.

Value  
Under - Value  
Value - d  
Under - Value - d

## *Apologies/ Absence*

### **“Sometimes we feel helpless.**

People come to us in distress  
And what we can offer is for them to make a mess  
In a space where they can address  
Their needs  
Creatively...

But opportunity  
To support is what we do best  
I confess  
That I've bought excess  
Sanitary products, towels, and extra tea  
Things that nobody paid me  
To get. I bought them myself  
Because seeing their physical health  
And conditions of participants  
Is something we need to solve,  
When people deteriorate and dissolve  
Into tears when they walk into the room  
What can we do?

Sometimes we feel helpless.  
Access... That's what we provide,  
**An invitation into art**  
But sometimes its hard to know where to start  
When a job extends beyond its role.  
It takes a toll  
On the soul  
And we are sorry we cannot fix it all.  
Sometimes we feel small  
Against the background of such a tall  
Order.”

Start  
Start - ing  
Re - Start  
Re - Start - ing

## *Approval of Agenda*

We'll talk of our experiences – both the good and the bad.  
We'll talk about what we were given, and what we should have had.

We'll share three items, but they're a blend of so many.  
We'll share our joy, and times we couldn't have any.

We will be creative, we'll use our practised skills.  
We will make new things and show the wonder that fulfils.

We'll each give our time, the most expensive resource.  
We will give it with love and without any remorse.

We hope you will hear us, because we speak honestly.  
We hope you will notice and accept what you see.

We extend our hands now, feel free to join us.  
Art in your palms, let's make and discuss.





## *New Business*

### *0.1 Wonderful Words*

Up North  
We talk.  
In a queue, on a bus, on a train.  
We cannot contain  
Our friendly spirit.  
And we carry it  
Into every place we venture;  
Adventure —

And it is an adventure to be  
In a workshop, attend an activity.  
There is fear,  
In being here  
**Arriving is an act of vulnerability,**  
And if participants have found the ability  
To walk into this room then we can be there for you.

It's a wonderful job.  
I hear wonderful things,  
I watch as people find their wings  
And soar,  
Learn to crochet and adore  
The whole creative process  
Which helps them process  
All of their thoughts, ideas and feelings.  
That's what's so appealing  
About learning to make.  
It means you can take  
All that's inside  
And let it reside  
At your fingertips  
And eventually on your lips  
As we all start to speak  
About what happened last week  
Or maybe with depth  
We could say everything and the rest

Whatever is best  
For the hands that are active,  
Though my role can be almost passive,  
I'm invisible at times, I'm a wall,  
They don't have to think I'm here at all.

*No audience.*  
*Open up if you want.*  
*No justifying.*  
*You can just be.*  
*As it is.*  
*As we are.*

**And as the audience which doesn't exist**  
I've learned when to persist  
In conversation and when to fade out  
But what's important is I'm always about  
And in this space of co-existent –  
Non-existence –  
I've heard the most wonderful things.  
Day by day their lives start to sing  
Sounds from the mouths of those  
Who didn't know  
How to be anything other than tough  
They've found they can be enough  
They can do wonders  
No longer so afraid of going under  
I hear how they've shifted directions  
How they're making connections  
With good people or things or something more.  
They start to see what art is for.

Up North  
We talk.  
In a queue, on a bus, on a train.  
We cannot contain  
Our friendly spirit.  
And we carry it  
Into every place we venture;

**WE Adventure —**

## *0.2 Boundaries*

This is a story of boundaries  
Because pleasantries  
Can turn derogatory  
Quickly.

### **“People tell me things”**

We all agree  
In that space, when you're the authority  
Your own needs are no long priority  
And you discover secrets you never asked to know.  
Where can you go  
When you've been given their trust  
But you must  
Address what they've said?

Sometimes it's our own identity  
That people disagree  
With, that our existence is a lie,  
Or that the place that my  
Friends occupy is wrong.  
Their feelings are strong,  
And our role is to challenge  
But not to avenge  
So we might be attacked or offended  
But we've all pretended  
Not to be affected  
By having our protected  
Characteristics insulted.  
Now and again, we change their minds  
When we are patient, kind  
Without condescending,  
We just take time amending  
Misconceptions with creative endeavours  
That we take on together.  
Visiting plays and reading the words  
Of those they'd never before heard  
Never thought, had not been introduced  
And by the end they've produced

Not just a work of craft and design  
But enough resolve to cross the line  
Into a new world of acceptance.

And that's wonderful. It's amazing,  
It makes braving  
That fear almost worth it. Almost.  
Because I can't boast  
Inhuman determination and strength.  
We work at length  
To overcome  
But sometimes we have to be done.  
We have to take a step back  
And take care of our own wellbeing

**Because no human being**

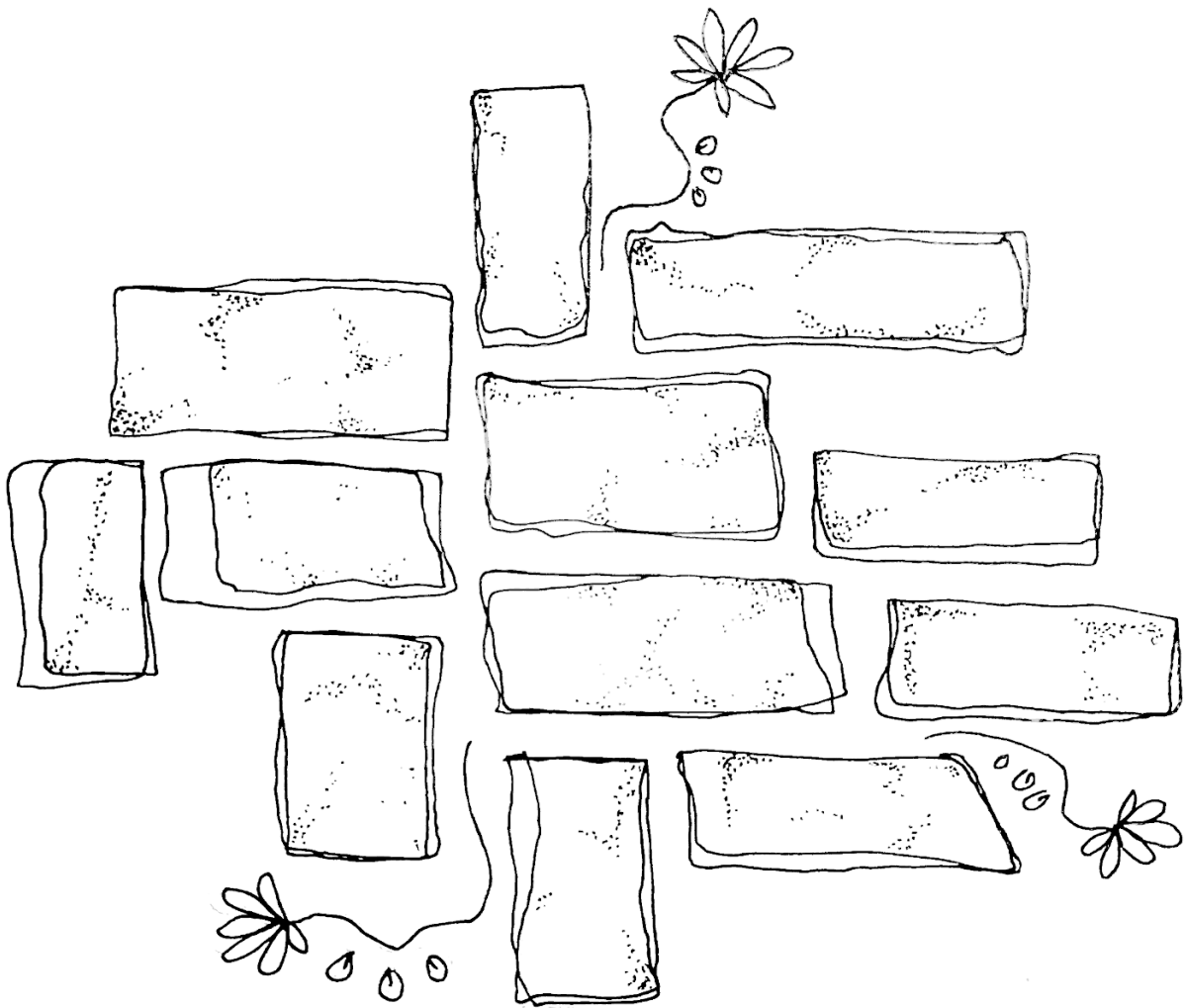
**Can care properly for another if they're under water.**

Bricks without mortar  
Will fall in the storm  
So it's fair to inform  
Whoever you need to that you're leaving.  
We often feel guilt and grieving  
For putting our needs ahead  
Instead,  
But if I am drowning —  
Then I cannot help you.

“People tell me things”  
And sometimes those things  
Are children talking of danger.  
But I'm not their friend, not quite a stranger,  
It's great that they know  
We're someone they can go  
To when problems arise,  
But sometimes when they want us to empathise  
They don't realise  
Our duty of care means we need to  
Think things through  
And report those statements,  
But it could build resentments,  
We don't want to undo

All our work with this group  
Forming a bond is hard enough,  
**But we need you to be safe.**  
That's more important than 'friendship' perceived.

We need to give, and receive  
Care. With a capital C.  
We need clearly defined boundaries.



### *0.3 Tell Me A Story*

Expectations set –  
But we often forget  
That we're as human  
As everyone we've met  
In the room for a workshop.

"Tell me a story"  
I hear them all ask,  
I put on my theatre mask  
And get ready for the task,  
But all the while I spin them a tale  
Of magic and wonder where dreams can prevail  
And set sail  
Up the Tees  
And across all seas,  
I have to wonder...  
**Is there a story for me?**

Venture  
Ad - Venture  
Ad - Venture - s  
Ad - Venture - r  
Ad - Venture - rs

## *Additions*

### We want...

|         |             |               |
|---------|-------------|---------------|
| Quiet   | Stillness   | Time          |
| Order   | Flexibility | To decompress |
| Glitter | Space       | To play       |
| Funding | After care  | Preparation   |
| To help | To breathe  | To Support    |

### We need...

|                 |                    |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| To sparkle      | To be young        | To be old                |
| To act out      | To not feel guilty | Self expression          |
| To recover      | To communicate     | To be communicated with  |
| To be supported | To rest            | To plan                  |
| To be paid      | To be considered   | To create, make & design |

### We will...

|            |          |                |
|------------|----------|----------------|
| Talk       | Meditate | Read           |
| Crochet    | Create   | Study          |
| Learn      | Absorb   | Listen         |
| Understand | Downsize | Upsize         |
| Be Wrong   | Be Right | Try            |
| Fail       | Succeed  | Pass on skills |

Comfort  
Dis - Comfort  
Comfort - able  
Un - Comfort - able  
Comfort - ed  
Comfort - ing



## *Items*

We talked about who was here,  
We talked about why.

We said our sorries,  
Though we always find space to try.

We made our plans  
And approved them in turn.

We promised to listen  
And, above all, to learn.

We discovered our boundaries  
And that they needed setting.

We told many stories,  
But none are we getting.

We found what we wanted  
And saw needs alongside.

We decided on actions  
And what care we'll provide.

We painted a picture  
With words and with voice.

We will keep creating,  
It's the best possible choice.

## *Adjournment/ Epilogue*

So, the question is: What is the point?  
Art is without purpose, by definition  
But as we follow the calming repetition  
Of routine through craft  
Though rag rugs and first drafts,  
Through collected layers built up on floors:  
Asking 'what is this all for'  
Starts to produce a different answer.

It's a strange kind of good,  
Not medical, yet we should  
Practice for our health,  
Practice for our sense of self.

Wellbeing.  
How can we be a well being?  
**It's not a simple question and there is no simple answer.**  
But we can tell you what we know,  
And that's that we glow  
When we get the chance to craft  
And to act a little daft  
And have a laugh  
At least once a week,  
When we speak  
With friends and strangers.  
Strangers who become friends –  
Making can lend  
Itself to community formation  
And thought generation,  
We have an appreciation  
For one another.  
We can count on each other.

So... Where do we go from here?  
It seems that's up to you.  
You decide what to do.  
We've given our moments.  
We no longer own them,

They're out in the air.  
Will they stay there?

Will you take what we've told  
And hold  
Those ideas in good hands?  
Do you understand?

*Tomorrow, will you gather, huddled inside  
To share something only company can provide?  
Pass the fabric, the willow, the pen  
Pick up the materials, because only then  
Can we all truly begin.*

Human  
Human - Being  
Well - Being  
Being - Human



This *Not-A-Policy-Document* was written, illustrated and performed by **Lizzie Lovejoy**.

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Thank **you**, too. You know who you are.



**SOUTH TEES  
WELLBEING NETWORK**

