



Implementing a Workplace Health & Wellbeing Programme

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Implementing a Workplace Health and Wellbeing Programme

The wellbeing of your workers is what makes or breaks the business's long-term success. Deflated, overworked staff deliver low quality work and lack a commitment to your business, whereas a healthy, looked-after team feels capable and eager to perform at their best. After all, most people spend a third of their life in work, so they want to feel fulfilled and have their contribution valued.



No matter what size or type of workplace you manage, implementing a health and wellbeing programme leads to significant improvements. You'll increase productivity, improve staff retention, and build a reputation as being a desirable place to work.

This guide will help you effectively implement a wellbeing programme in your workplace.

What is a Health and Wellbeing Programme?



A health and wellbeing programme involves **investing time and resources in supporting employees' physical and mental health**. You introduce various health plans and benefits that give workers the opportunity to maintain or improve their health while at work and beyond.

Programmes can range from a collection of small, positive initiatives to one or two broader enterprises. **They help staff positively manage or overcome major wellbeing challenges**, which makes them feel more valued by the company and invested in their work.

Implementing a workplace health and wellbeing programme is a **long-term commitment**. It only benefits the business if you assess which wellbeing programmes suit people best and you oversee the performance of each over time. Therefore, it involves a great deal of planning and dedication, especially from senior staff.

This level of commitment **shows workers that the company-wide culture is to support people's wellbeing**, which speaks volumes about how the business is a rewarding place to work.

Few workplaces ever aspire to this standard, perhaps because they don't see any mutual benefit, **but they fail to realise just how many benefits they lose out on** by not doing more to look after their staff.

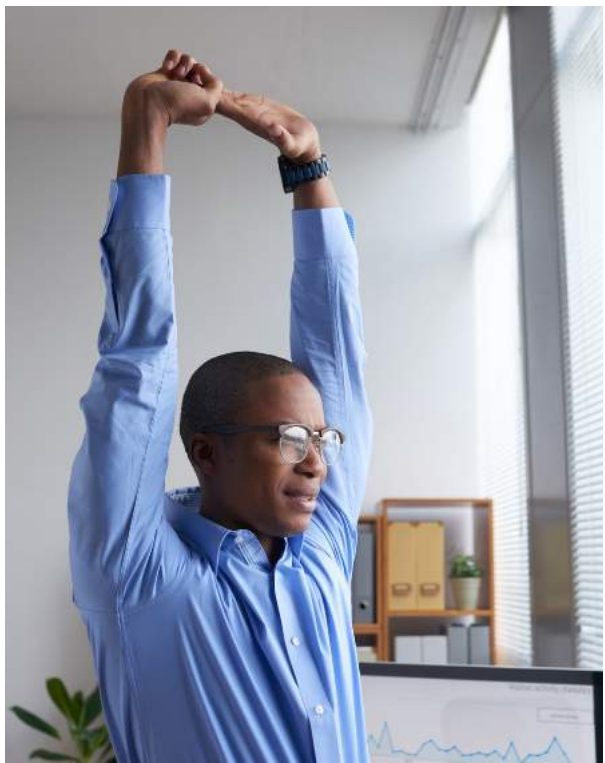
What are the Benefits of Wellbeing Programmes?

Health and wellbeing programmes provide so many company-wide benefits; it's a wonder why more businesses aren't on board. They solve numerous common problems that harm the efficiency and financial standing of a business.



The benefits of wellbeing programmes include:

- **Increased motivation and productivity.**
Ongoing support helps staff work through personal or work-related difficulties and maintain productivity in a healthy way. They'll feel motivated to commit more energy to work.
- **Higher staff retention.**
Workers who feel supported will want to keep working for you. This means you retain talented people and lower recruitment and training costs.
- **Reduced sickness absence.**
Staff will face fewer physical or mental health ailments that require time off.
- **Reduced presenteeism.**
Presenteeism is when staff come to work despite not being in the best physical or mental health, which causes them to perform below standard. According to research, presenteeism costs one and a half times more than absenteeism because it causes accidents, underperformance, and mistakes. Jobs often need completing twice or staff have to take more time off than they originally would have.



- **Reduced costs.**
In 2016/17, Britain lost an estimated £14.9 billion due to work-related injuries and ill-health. Mental health issues cost workplaces an estimated £26 billion per year, equivalent to £1,035 per employee. According to [Mindful Employer](#), research shows that spending as little as 80p on health promotion strategies can save around £4 of absenteeism, presenteeism, and temporary staff costs.
- **Higher job satisfaction.**
Staff who feel appreciated at work gain more satisfaction from working. According to a [workplace survey](#), 80% of people said that better wellbeing benefits would make them feel more positive towards their employer. 1 in 10 said that something as simple as complimentary fresh fruit would improve job satisfaction.

- **Improved reputation.**

Word gets around fast about companies that don't treat their staff right, and this can put off applicants and customers. That's why it's within your best interest to build your reputation as a company that respects and supports people. It gives you a competitive edge and attracts talent.

How to Create an Effective Wellbeing Programme

Starting a health and wellbeing programme involves more than implementing random initiatives and leaving them to run with no further input. These would only maintain momentum for the short term and would burn out quickly.



To create a programme that effectively promotes workplace wellbeing long-term, you must consider various aspects and plan carefully. You need to think about which programmes suit your workplace best, consider cost effectiveness, seek staff input, and more.

Follow this step-by-step process to implement a wellbeing programme effectively.

Step 1: Think About Why You Want The Programme

Too many businesses skip over this fundamental aspect. They realise later down the line that they don't know what results they actually want, meaning their programmes end up ineffective in practice and they waste time and money.

What do you want to address in your workplace? What type of improvement to wellbeing do you hope to achieve? You need to determine where your business lacks physical and mental health support and what your staff would benefit from the most.

Aside from helping you plan properly, a clear vision enables you to:

- **Get the rest of the company on board.**
You can effectively communicate what each individual and the whole company will gain, which shows you've thought it through and genuinely want to help people. This instils trust and appreciation.
- **Gain commitment and support from senior staff.**
This is essential in order to acquire the resources your programme needs to run. When management is on board, staff will have more faith that things will get done and the company culture towards positive wellbeing will have a stronger impact.
- **Budget properly.**
Chances are you can't afford everything and you won't see a return in costs right away, so budgeting is crucial.
- **Measure its success.**
Well-established aims help you measure whether certain programmes work in practice.

Step 2: Talk to Staff

No two people's needs are identical, which means you should introduce a variety of support programmes that appeal to everyone. The more tailored your programme, the better – although you should be careful not to stretch yourself too thin.



To gain staff's input on wellbeing programmes, you could:

- **Run a seminar or presentation.**
Go equipped with examples of programmes that you could implement and why they benefit staff, but make sure you remain focused on asking employees what they want.
- **Send out staff surveys.**
Ask what aspects of the workplace need improving to benefit physical and mental health (make sure you give the option for people to complete surveys anonymously). You should provide examples of programmes so people can vote for those they'd like to try.

- **Carry out a needs assessment.**

Similar to a risk assessment, this helps you identify what aspects of a person's job put their wellbeing at risk. For example, working on a computer for long periods of time places strain on the body, while excessive workloads and tight deadlines can cause anxiety and stress. Use your findings to determine what wellbeing programmes may benefit people the most.



Step 3: Create a Plan of Action

Proper planning ensures you implement programmes in a time and cost-efficient way and that they perform as intended in the long term.

Your plan should cover the following:

- **What wellbeing programmes will you use?**

List what they are and how they'll benefit people. For example, if you plan to run monthly workshops for mindfulness, explain how it works, what techniques they teach, and how these benefit your staff at work.

- **Who is in charge of running each programme?**

Which staff members ensure that programmes run as intended on a regular basis?

- **When will you start them?**

Set a start date in advance so people can anticipate when they're coming and prepare. State which days of the week and how often programmes will run.

- **How long will the programmes run for in the long term?**

Will they run for a certain amount of weeks or are they permanent?

- **How will you monitor their effectiveness?**

For example, you can acquire feedback from staff and track absence records over the course of your programmes. We'll look at this in more detail later in the article.

- **What resources do you require?**

Detail the financial and time budget you have and how you'll use it. What do you need to purchase? Do you need to install anything or reorganise a certain area of the workplace? Do you need to set a regular order? What will these cost in terms of time and money?

- **How will you promote these programmes?**

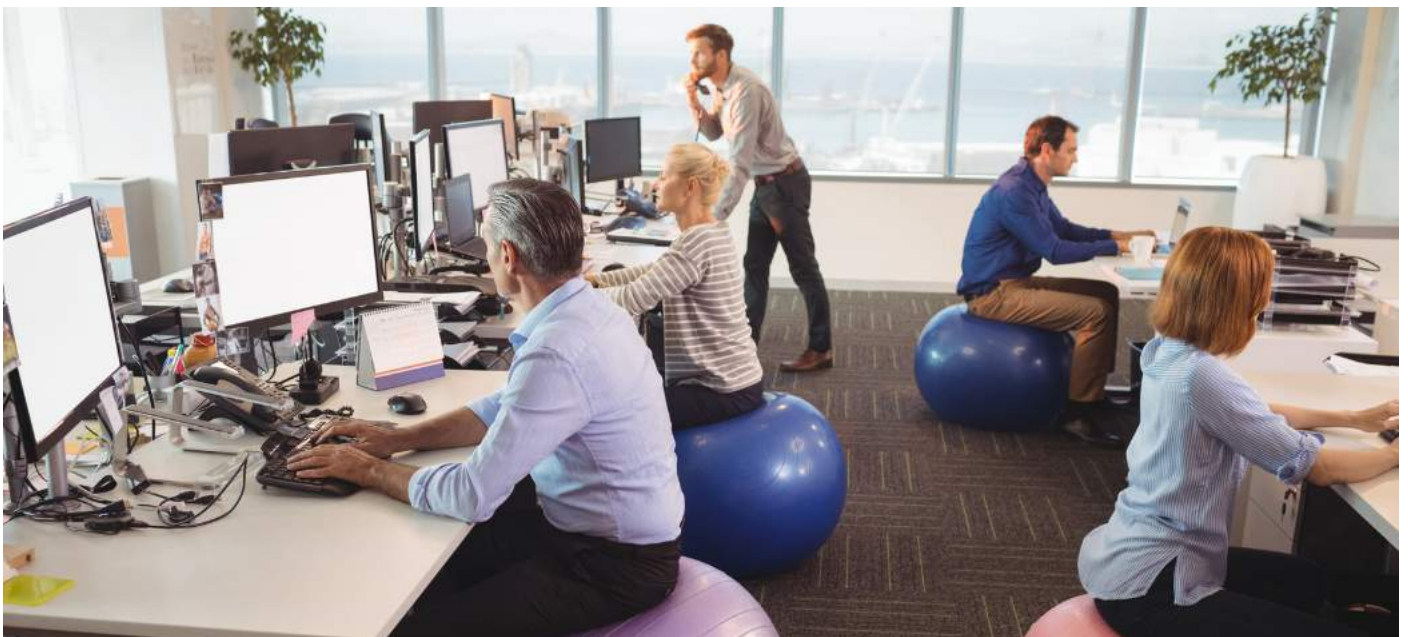
You could send out company-wide emails, put up posters, host presentations, etc.

- **Who is in charge of creating and distributing promotional materials?**

These could be the same people who manage the programmes.

Step 4: Implement Your Wellbeing Programmes

With your action plan in place, you can now confidently implement your chosen programmes and run them over time. Start simple and build them up to prevent staff and people in charge from feeling overwhelmed. This also gives you room to comfortably address any issues, such as scheduling conflicts and delays.



Wellbeing programmes you could implement include:

Advice on healthy eating.

Distribute information in lunch areas and bathrooms, run presentations, arrange for free healthy lunches or snacks every week, etc. When staff see promotional materials daily, they may eventually feel motivated to change their diet for the better, particularly if it becomes a group activity where their colleagues do it too.

Workshops.

For example, those for mindfulness, dealing with stress, counselling, etc. Remember: it's not the role of staff to become counsellors, but rather to grant people access to external support and resources that improve productivity. Search for local workshops that you can promote or arrange for workshops in the workplace.



Coordinate with wellbeing organisations.

For example, the voluntary initiative [Mindful Employer](#) give you access to information and local support for staff with wellbeing issues, such as depression and anxiety. Mindful Employer provide numerous [wellbeing resources and publications](#) that help you determine ways to manage wellbeing more effectively. They also offer templates for wellbeing plans, which you should use for stress risk assessments.

Exercise classes or gym memberships.

Free gym memberships can give staff the motivation to actually go, while a gym area in the workplace encourages them to use exercise machines, do Yoga, or meditate in the morning or at lunch. Make sure you have shower facilities, otherwise staff may not use the gym area.

Stress risk assessments.

Some people's wellbeing issues may mostly relate to work activities and their work-life balance. If so, you should help them assess factors that prompt stress and create steps for addressing these issues. Mindful Employer provides a [good example wellbeing plan](#) that staff can reference to complete their own, and the section on work-life balance later in this guide gives tips you can follow.

Smoking cessation programmes.

Distribute reading materials that encourage people to quit smoking. Organise group sessions before work or during lunch where staff can talk through issues together with others also aiming to quit.

Health checks.

Allow staff time to attend physical and mental wellbeing health checks, and encourage them to go. If these checks indicate any areas that need improving, look at support programmes that can help. For example, if they identify musculoskeletal issues, you should address [ergonomic hazards](#) in the workplace and implement exercise programmes that help the back.



Always aim to implement a mix of benefits and work-related wellbeing programmes. That way, your programmes provide a balance of preventative and corrective strategies: you address areas affected by work and give people something extra to benefit their wellbeing.

Step 5: Assess and Measure Your Programmes

If you want to see long-term benefits, you must track the performance of your programmes. An ongoing assessment enables you to identify whether staff are using and benefiting from programmes, as well as determine whether you're budgeting time and money correctly. You can then look at areas to improve.

To measure the effectiveness of programmes:

- **Use your aims as a benchmark.**
Your programmes should fulfil the majority of your original goals. If not, you may need to adjust or discontinue certain initiatives.
- **Gain feedback from staff about programmes.**
Ongoing communication is key, as it lets you know exactly what programmes staff find useful and whether they can access them comfortably. To gain feedback, send out surveys and arrange for managers to host regular 1-2-1s, where they can ask staff directly how they're finding wellbeing programmes and whether they fulfil their expectations. Ask those who don't use programmes why not and whether they have requests for something different.



- **Determine whether staff have a good understanding of what's available.**
Their feedback enables you to adjust programmes to accommodate their needs and fit around their work commitments if they clash too much.
- **Make sure you assess productivity levels, sickness absence, management time, and overall staff morale.**
These provide strong evidence for whether the business as a whole is benefitting equally from programmes.

By this stage, your wellbeing programme should be up and running and only require occasional tweaks. Over time, as the company grows, you can implement new programmes to continue benefiting your staff and the business alike.

Stress Management and Work-Life Balance



One aspect of staff wellbeing you need to manage closely is work-related stress. All sorts of factors can turn a healthy amount of pressure, which drives productivity, into an unhealthy level of anxiety, which negatively affects performance and work-life balance.

Where people show signs of stress, carry out a stress risk assessment and create a plan with them to manage unhealthy levels of pressure at work. Remember that wellbeing programmes can significantly improve overall mental health, which helps people manage their stress more effectively.

Consider displaying our stress management poster throughout your workplace. It gives staff tips and ideas for pausing over the course of the day to de-stress – in and out of work.

Free Downloadable Stress Management Poster



How to Promote Work-Life Balance

Stress often results from a poor work-life balance, particularly because modern technology makes it too easy to take work home with us. People can access their work and emails through Google apps, USBs, or by taking their laptop home with them.

Research shows that people only benefit from remote working when they get to choose. Businesses who enforce extra workloads on people, because they know they can take it home, damage their wellbeing and performance. A lack of downtime means their life becomes a repetitive cycle of work.

If businesses let people choose when they want to work remotely, staff can reserve remote work for when they're motivated and energised to do so.



People will appreciate the flexibility and feel respected, as it means they can arrange work around their life, not the other way around.

Ultimately, however, businesses should prevent staff from taking their work home with them. People should be able to separate work from their home environment so they can fully relax in a work-free space.

To support staff's work-life balance, you should:

- **Trust staff to do their work.**
If you hire skilled people, you don't need to worry: they'll get the work done. Avoid micromanaging and applying too much pressure. All this does is panic people, make them doubt themselves, and rush work. That's not to say you shouldn't apply some pressure, however: a healthy amount helps people organise their time, so you need to find a balance.

- **Restrict access to the company server outside of work.**
For example, by setting a password system. Doing so ensures people aren't tempted to pick up work out of hours and prevents people from piling work onto others without senior approval. If staff work from home part-time or want to do additional work, you can grant them individual access. However, they shouldn't make a habit out of working remotely.



- **Listen to concerns.**
Use 1-2-1s to ask people how they're getting on in work and life and to address any imbalances. Maintain an open-door policy where staff feel comfortable coming to you with their concerns.

- **Encourage people to take their full lunch break.**

Stepping away from work gives people time to reorganise their thoughts and recharge, which means they can return to work with a clear mind and perform better than they would without a break.

- **Don't let people stress about work during holidays.**

There's nothing worse than returning from a holiday and realising you need to catch up on work. You should organise around people's time off so they can pick up at a normal pace once they return. Otherwise, they won't get the full benefits of their break. Make sure they don't have remote access to work either.

These strategies are crucial for maintaining a healthy work-life balance. They will compliment your wellbeing programmes to ensure people work in a healthy, productive way.

