



## **Managers Guide to** **Support Employee Wellbeing**

Employee wellbeing – on the surface, you may think that this is just about how your team are ‘feeling’, but as a matter of fact it covers a number of different areas from physical and mental, through to financial health, social wellbeing, emotional health. It’s important for businesses and those in manager/supervisor roles to understand the benefits of supporting an individuals’ wellbeing as well as their responsibility in doing so.

Managers play a critical role in ensuring the wellbeing of individuals and teams within an organisation – they are often the first line of support and depending on the level of trust and relationship between an employee and their line manager, they may be the first person that an individual comes to when experiencing something outside of work.

Therefore, it's important that if you're a manager within a business, you understand both the benefits of supporting the wellbeing of your team and the ways that you can do so – and we've drafted this helpful guide to do just that!

### **The benefits of supporting employee wellbeing**

If you're interested in considering some Mental Health training for your teams but aren't sure where to start, the first course to look at would be 'MHFA Champions'. It can be run online or in a face-to-face format and is suitable for individuals at all levels. The aim of this course is to provide knowledge and confidence to individuals in providing Mental Health First Aid to individuals who may need some support, as well as how to incorporate Mental Health support into the workplace to continue challenging the stigma and to create a mentally healthy environment.

We don't need to start by saying that supporting and managing your employees' wellbeing will bring huge benefits, as I'm sure you've guessed by now that we already believe it does – but there is evidence to verify the “why's” and “how's”! We could write pages on these, but to get you started we've pulled together a few of the benefits that we feel bring the biggest benefits to a business regardless of size or industry:

- *Increased levels of employee motivation*
  - All employees will be motivated by different factors – some employees are financially motivated, some are driven by career progression, some are driven through simply delivering their best and doing a good job. However, all factors of motivation can be linked to a different factor of wellbeing and so supporting these areas will in effect impact employee motivation. For example, if your employee is financially driven but they're experiencing financial issues outside of work, this could be having a detrimental impact on their performance and motivation as their mind is focused on the worry. Providing financial support tools, for example, can support with improving their wellbeing in this area and subsequently their motivation at work.
  
- *Increased employee engagement*
  - When an employee feels valued and listened to, they become more engaged with a business – well, it's much more than this, but this is another area we could write pages on! Employee engagement is a huge topic area and there are so many factors that impact this, and supporting their wellbeing is one of these. When employees are engaged, businesses see huge improvements from increased retention rates through to higher productivity rates, too. This is because they feel supported and valued, and so paying attention to this area is key.
  
- *Reduced sick days and presenteeism*
  - By supporting an individuals' wellbeing, you're ultimately saying that you support their health across the board. This means that you want your team to feel their best, but that you understand that this isn't always the case but that you'll support them if they don't. By providing support in this area and a safe space for employees to feel comfortable to say that they aren't well, whether physically or mentally, this will reduce presenteeism and by agreeing support can reduce sick days before it reaches this point. Establishing this environment and taking an approach that puts wellbeing first will create a support-based environment which will enhance

## How I can support my employee's wellbeing as a manager

So, how can you support your team as a manager? We know that in different businesses, managers may not necessarily have any involvement or control over budget or business decisions. But that doesn't mean that you can't support! Here's our list of things you can consider as a manager to ensure that you're providing support to your team in a way the counts:

- **Lead by example** – take breaks, be open/vulnerable about aspects of your life that you are comfortable sharing but in a professional and appropriate way.
- **Wellbeing isn't just mental wellbeing, but also physical too** – you may find that those experiencing poor mental health may struggle to stay active and vice versa, those with a physical injury may experience poor mental health as a result of this. Keep this in mind when considering the wellbeing of an individual.
- **Consider the root cause of the issue as this may determine support** – what's on the surface may not be at the heart of the issue or affecting a person's wellbeing. For example, if someone seems stressed or anxious it could be that financial health or worries are causing this, so try to ensure that support offered is appropriate.
- **Be up to scratch on company policies and benefits** – this will be crucial in signposting and guiding employees to the right support.
- **Work with your company to put forward suggestions for benefits etc. if you find that you don't have an available solution or if you think that there may be better support options out there** – again, managers are on the front line, and so you'll be best placed to advise whether employees are asking for things that aren't currently offered, or which benefits are having the most success.
- **Share healthy resources** – even if your company doesn't have a budget for this, try to implement actions that support this. It could be sharing a health recipe with the team each week, or if you do have a budget then consider providing healthy snacks for example like fresh fruit delivered to the office each week. You could give remote workers a voucher to do the same so that they still experience the benefit.
- **Consider walking meetings for informal meetings with your internal team** – encouraging movement and fresh air when you can, such as during informal meetings, is a great way to increase the wellbeing of your teams. For remote workers, make sure they aren't

- **Consider how people feel at different stages of their employment and provide support accordingly** – Let's take a new starter, the first day can be very daunting and bring up anxieties and worries for even the most seasoned professional. Can you assign a buddy to make their first day less scary? For those within your team currently working at mid to senior levels of their career, have you considered their personal development outside of career progression? Can you support them with training, maybe in the softer skill areas such as delegation, if you feel that they would benefit from this? Just because they have worked for an organisation for a long time, it does not mean that they don't feel the value of continued training and investment.
- **Reward and recognition** – whilst you may not be in control of any financial incentives, consider the recognition you're giving. This is known as one of the most influential factors in a Gen-Z's views on a workplace. It doesn't have to be huge or tangible, but simply saying 'thank you' or recognising when a good piece of work has been completed will go far in increasing their wellbeing at work.
- **Get to know your team well** – understand what motivates them so that you can better manage and support each individual accordingly. This will also help to develop your professional working relationship and understanding their skillsets and interests.
- **Don't forget about remote employees or those working internationally** – if they're in your team/a direct report, it's your responsibility to provide support and to reach out them. Be fair and try to offer the same support and benefits to all employees regardless of location.

This guide is simply a starting point – there is a huge amount of research regarding employee wellbeing available online, and your teams will also be a valuable asset in providing feedback surrounding this area, too. Our team are also on-hand to answer any questions you may have in this area, or to discuss any ideas you're considering implementing.



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