

**St John**  
Ambulance



# Webinar 2022

Wellbeing in the Workplace:

A time for change



# Introduction

Never more than in recent times, has Mental Health and wellbeing in the workplace had such a high profile. More and more people are waking up to the concept that as individuals, just like we all have physical health, we all have mental health.

Yet whilst employers have managed employees who may have poor physical health, there has been a gap in the workplace for managing those with poor mental health. This is now being addressed through education and destigmatising poor mental health. The challenge is now to increase the reach of education, empowerment and engagement across all demographics in the workplace, including the biggest challenge of reaching those who do not wish to engage with or recognise the concept of mental health.

Employers are now investing time, money and resource into wellbeing in the workplace. Wellbeing is far more than a tick box exercise and good people management. It is about creating the culture, creating good work and taking an adaptable approach to supporting people in the workplace. Wellbeing has moved on from offering free fruit and coffee mornings and now needs to be embedded into strategies if organisations are to become resilient and prevent poor mental health and wellbeing within their employees, especially during times of uncertainty and crisis.

## What you've told us...

From our customer surveys, you have told us that the culture within the workplace around Mental Health is starting to evolve, driven in part by demand.

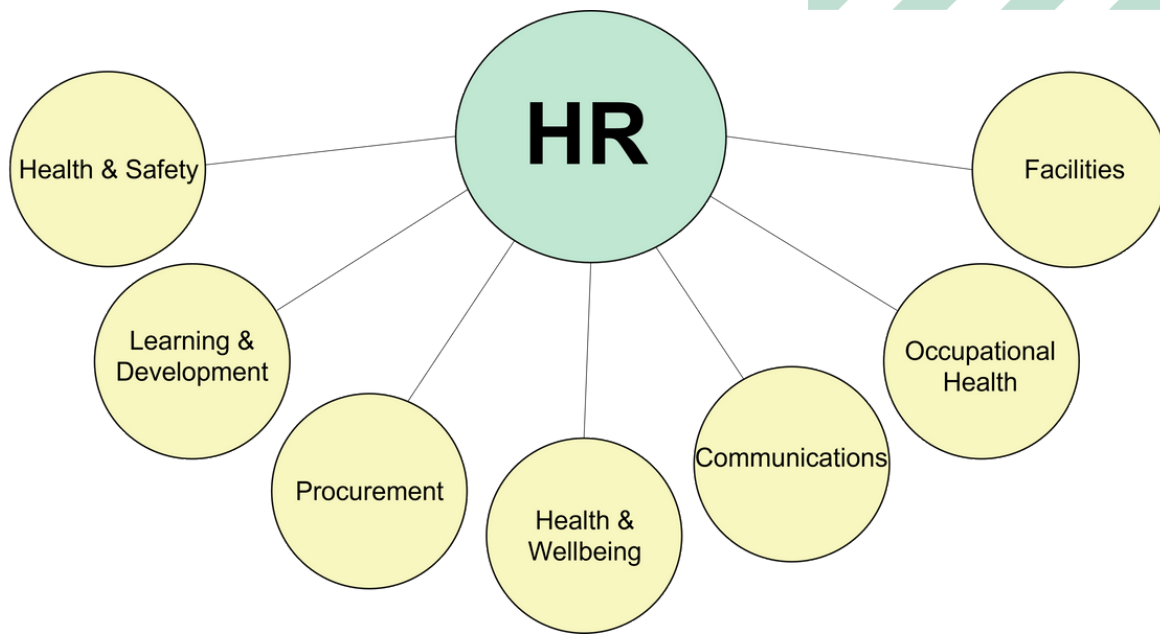
Employees are changing the way they think around wellbeing in the workplace and are starting to recognise the benefits of good wellbeing, not only in the workplace but the further reaching benefits of life outside of work.

We know too that the millennials now expect an employer to have good wellbeing provision and can sometimes be a key decider in applying for or accepting jobs.

You have also told us that as the Wellbeing culture evolves, people are unclear as to where it sits in an organisation. Early on, Mental Health leads in the workplace tended to be those who had an interest in the subject and voluntarily took on the role. They are now being seen as the go to person in an organisation. Mental Health leads are now seeking additional support to fulfil their role and many workplaces are unsure which department mental health and wellbeing in the workplace should fall within.

**Check #1** Have you completed Risk Assessments for your employees for their mental health

# What is wellbeing?



The Oxford English Dictionary defines wellbeing as 'the condition of being comfortable, healthy or happy'.

Expanding on this definition we can further add that wellbeing relates to how we are doing. It is affected by our experiences, our emotions and the time we have experienced these feelings. Even further our wellbeing is affected by how we see our value, sense of purpose, our relationships and our self-worth.

Our lives move at such a hectic pace driven by an increased use of technology.

How many of us feel digitally fatigued through virtual meetings, digital platforms and apps and the constant bombardment of social media?

Eventually we may start to lose the ability to rationalise what we are being exposed to. We may start to experience negative emotions, adopt unhealthy coping strategies such as poor eating habits, such as increased snacking or increased convenience foods, increased alcohol intake, lack of exercise, sacrificing sleep or getting poor quality of sleep. Whilst these coping strategies may seem effective initially, they are detrimental to our health and unsustainable longer term.

**Check #2** Have you completed a wellbeing audit of your workplace

# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

In the workplace we can spend far more time talking about wellbeing than actually focusing on it and making it a priority. It can be confusing and overwhelming as there is so much information 'out there' and it can be full of contradictions. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - which are well-known in the world of psychology include physiological needs, safety needs, love, esteem and more.



We can draw parity when considering a Hierarchy of Mental Health needs. Without mental health, our physical and emotional health will decline. When our deficiency needs are not met, this can affect our position on the mental health continuum and subsequently impact on how we think, act and feel.

We know from research that loneliness is a key trigger to people experiencing poor mental health. This can come from being in a remote and isolated community, working away from the work environment and those who find it difficult to connect and engage with others.

When an individual feels unsupported, they may experience feelings of isolation and the perception of being stigmatised may prevent them seeking out support. By having managers and leads that have been trained to have a supportive conversation, you will start to drive connection and helping someone take the first steps to recovery .

It is not always obvious that someone is experiencing poor mental health and mental illness can often go undetected, which is why it is important to promote that awareness.

Recognise and accept that it is hard for individuals to engage in difficult yet worthwhile conversations. Individuals may feel that they won't be understood or that there is stigma attached. Managers and leaders can be fearful as to saying the right or indeed the wrong thing.

Training your managers and leaders to have these impactful conversations will demonstrate compassion, with the outcome of making that individual feel valued and listened to and will start to give them hope of recovery.

Ask yourself, are we as an employer or organisation taking care of our people's needs? If you don't look after your people, how will they look after your business etc..

When someone sees that help to find a solution is possible, they'll start to take action. They'll get the proper rest, socialise with others, develop coping strategies, have self-compassion etc.. This supports a proactive approach in building an individual's personal resilience.

# Why is resilience important?

Resilience is the ability to recover quickly from setbacks and tackle challenges head on. People who are resilient have flexibility, energy and mental agility as well as a strong support network to enable them to perform at their highest level, ensuring the capacity to respond to pressures at work and deal with work demands.

Being resilient and building a resilient team can be seen as one of the first steps in taking a proactive approach in building a mentally health workplace.

We share our vision of resilience through working with the Wellbeing Project.

The *5 pillars of resilience* give a holistic overview of social, psychological and physical wellbeing. It is about how we think and act on a day-to-day basis, and it provides an accessible framework for building lasting resilience.

Think of it as a car journey:



**Energy:** Keeping your car battery charged and fuel in the car (nutrition)



**Future focus:** Having a map and a sense of direction as to where you want or need to go (having purpose or meaning to move forward rather than getting stuck in the present or past)



**Inner drive:** The engine. Having the motivation and confidence to keep going when the going gets tough and challenging



**Flexible thinking:** Adapting and flexing: what happens if you encounter an unexpected obstacle and have to find an alternative route. i.e. changing course or finding another way forwards.



**Strong relationships:** People who are with you on the journey, ie your support network.

## Did you know?

We run resilience training courses aimed at maximising the resilience of a workforce by empowering managers and their teams to bounce back from adversity and cope with workplace pressures in a more effective way.

# Why is wellbeing important?



Cost to the employer £1,000 each year per employee



40 - 50% of people in the workplace will be struggling at any one time



Promotes increased resilience in the workplace



Promotes connectivity reducing loneliness

While individuals carry the primary responsibility for their mental health, employers see tangible benefits when they invest in their workers. Good mental health leads to higher productivity, a lower risk of injury, and reduced spend on additional health care services.

A Health and Safety professional's responsibility is for the physical health and safety of employees. This is managed through conducting risk assessments and having safe systems of work in place. By doing so, they prevent or mitigate the likelihood of events that lead to injury or illness. But the effectiveness of these safety programmes is limited without a holistic approach that also considers a workers' mental health and wellbeing.

Here is an overview of the effects that poor mental health can have on a business:

- Engagement: when a person struggles with poor mental health, it's likely the person is less engaged with their activities. Low engagement results in poor productivity, which has a direct impact on your bottom line.
- Poor performance and low engagement has the potential to increase the risk of injuries in the workplace. Workers need to be mindful of their activities to maintain safety. Unfortunately, poor mental health or wellbeing can make it challenging to maintain this mindfulness and awareness required for stringent safety measures.
- When an employee experiences a physical injury, poor mental health or wellbeing can worsen the underlying condition. The cost of recovery increases because it's harder for a person to return to work quickly when dealing with not only a physical injury but with the additional impact of poor mental health. Any sickness comes at a cost to the business, however serious mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), could potentially result in short-term disability expenses.

# Wellbeing Programmes



Wellbeing programmes should focus on improving the overall health and wellbeing of employees



Reduce the impact of periods of poor health and helps those who develop conditions stay at work or return as quickly as possible



Employers should strive to provide 'good work'. This includes job security, providing a decent income, widening social networks, giving people a purpose



Having a wellbeing programme contributes to improving physical and mental wellbeing. The health benefits of good work extend beyond working-age adults to their children, wider social network and communities

## What next?

Thinking about your overall goals to achieve wellbeing in the workplace a key objective should be to focus on what measures you as an employer can take to improve the overall health and wellbeing of the employees and how to reduce the impact of periods of poor health and help people back into work as quickly as possible.

## What makes good work?

- **Job security**
- **Pay is reflective of the role and its value and is a balance between effort and reward**
- **Work that prevents harm, ensuring a safe and healthy workplace**
- **Physical work environment is safe, encourages productivity and prevents isolation**
- **Design of the job allows an element of autonomy and control**
- **Promotes good mental health and reduces stress**
- **Encourages and supports good health, including a work life balance and appropriate career progression.**

# Four stages to a good Mental Health culture

## Shift from responding to preventing



Identify and turn risk into resilience



Implement resilience framework



Continuous improvement of resilience framework



Build resilience and respond to an incident

We have designed a four pillar approach to building a mentally healthy workplace which looks at some key areas for different levels within organisations, i.e. Leaders and decision makers, line managers and employees.

The framework starts to encompass a holistic approach to wellbeing in the workplace, drawing parity with physical and mental health first aid and looks at how leaders can drive and support a better mental health culture in the workplace. The framework also considers what support Mental Health First Aiders need and how this can be addressed.

The first pillar considers the risks to poor mental health employees face and looks to identify protective and preventative measures.

When adopting this approach, we aspire to see leaders starting to understand the overall risks their organisation faces and what strategies can be put in place to address those risks. This could be identifying specific groups of employees who may be at a higher risk for stress or remote workers or those who may have personal factors which may make them high risk.

Within this pillar, those with direct line management responsibility start to understand specific risks their team faces, and their role in managing those risks to their team. Lastly this pillar starts to help employees understand the role that they can play ensuring a healthy and safe workplace

Examples of support for this pillar may include:

- Provision of risk assessment training to key managers (stress risk assessments, wellbeing audits)
- Provision of training for managers and employees around mental health in general



The second pillar is around taking a proactive approach and implementing your resilience framework.

The aim here is to ensure the successful implementation of measures to ensure risks are managed, reduced and mitigated and help employees understand what is being implemented and how this helps to keep them safe and well.

Examples of ways you may do this:

- Include wellbeing and mental health content in your induction programme.
- Make use of webinars for leaders and managers.
- Recruit Mental health first aiders and to promote the role of a mental health first aider at work (in addition to physical first aid).

Having implemented your framework be proactive in embedding a review cycle aimed to keep leaders and managers abreast of major changes to regulations, risks and changing medical protocols and also provide insight to what is going on across industry and from regulators and help line managers have open and honest conversations with their teams about mental health

Examples of ways you can do this:

- Provision of team talk toolkits, resources for managers to use as part of regular team meetings to reinforce wellbeing messages.
- Share good practice amongst wellbeing practitioners.
- Create a community of wellbeing practitioners with provision of CPD to maintain competency.

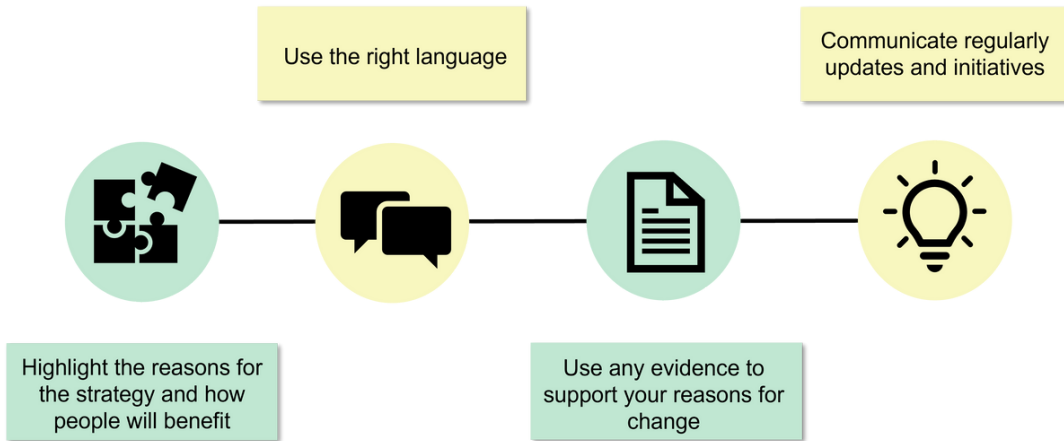
In the final pillar consider how to build resilience to respond to an incident

Consider what training and tools to are in place to support your organisation if an incident were to occur and to mitigate long term impact of this on both the organisation and the employee such as:

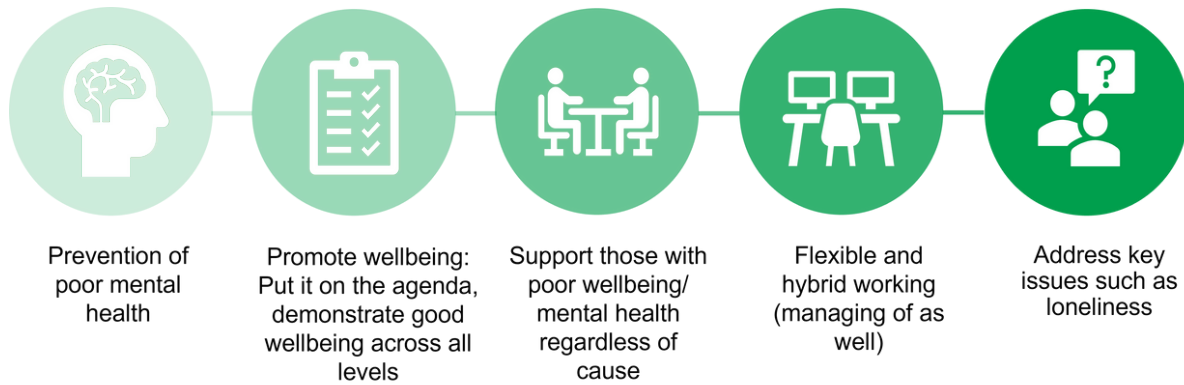
- Developing the skills of leaders and managers to work effectively when responding to a wellbeing incident as a team. This could be someone returning to work after an absence, due to physical or mental health illness.
- Train employees to recognise when someone is in poor mental health and know how to sign post to a Mental Health First Aider. Ensure all your First Aiders' skills are kept up to date. Train managers in compassionate leadership and supportive conversations.
- Consider other tools that are available to support someone coming back into work such as wellness action plans, buddy systems, risk assessments and reasonable adjustments etc.

# Create and Sustain Communication

So once your wellbeing strategy is in place, it is important that wellbeing conversations start happening in the workplace. Starting that conversation can sometimes be daunting, however, remember you may be the first person to recognise someone struggling and you driving connection by showing empathy and compassion could be the first steps for someone who needs professional help and hope that they can recover. You don't have to find a solution or make the conversation about you, just be there to ask open questions and listen.



# Take the journey approach



# Take the lead



## Our resources

- [Mental Health resources](#)
- [Mental health blog](#)
- [Mental health quiz](#)
- [Mental health advice and information](#)
- [Mental health & wellbeing checklist](#)
- [Mental health risk assessment guide](#)
- [Manager's Guide: Managing wellbeing for remote workers](#)
- [Mental Health First Aid training courses](#)
- [Resilience Training Courses](#)
- [Supportive Conversations Video](#)

## Recommended reading

[Health inequalities: What are they? How do we reduce them? Good work for all. Inequality Briefing 2 What are they? How do we reduce them? \(healthscotland.scot\)](#)

[Thriving at Work: the Stevenson/Farmer review on mental health and employers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Good Work Index | Survey reports | CIPD](#)

[deloitte-uk-workplace-mental-health-n-wellbeing.pdf](#)

[Ruby Wax: What's so funny about mental illness? | TED Talk](#)

[What is compassionate leadership? | The King's Fund \(kingsfund.org.uk\)](#)