MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO WELLBEING
Introduction to Wellbeing

By the end of this module you will:

- Understand what wellbeing means and why it’s important in the workplace.
- Understand what wellbeing means to the people in your organisation.
- Learn quick and easy ways to improve wellbeing across your company.

What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing is about people and creating the conditions for us all to thrive. It encompasses a wide range of things, from the quality and safety of the general workplace environment, to how employees feel about their workload, and even the standard of communication between management and employees. Employees have an expectation of their employers to care for their needs and ensure they are in the best possible position to carry out their jobs. In order to do that, employees should be working in an environment that supports and improves their physical and mental health, as well as personal development, and protection of what they value.

Not only does this make employees happy but on an organisational level it can:

- Increase productivity
- Increase retention
- Reduce sickness absence

Figure: Five domains of wellbeing (CIPD, 2018)
Wellbeing Practices should be based around three areas:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 1</th>
<th>1. Prevention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initiatives that help keep employees from becoming unable to do their job. For example, to ensure an employee’s physical health, and therefore decrease their need for sickness absence, initiatives such as free fruit or onsite fitness classes can help employees to stay fit and active at relatively low cost.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Module 2</th>
<th>2. Intervention</th>
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<td>Initiatives aimed at stopping small problems before they become larger ones. A large part of this is communication; clear and open channels of communication between employees and management allows for a development of trust and therefore issues can be dealt with much quicker and more effectively. This could take the form of regular employee surveys or an ‘open-door’ policy.</td>
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<th>Module 3</th>
<th>3. Protection</th>
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<td>Initiatives that protect what’s important to the employees. These often take the form of compensation or assurance that an employee will still be financially supported should anything prevent them from being able to work such as illness or accidents. For example, Critical Illness Cover entitles an employee to a tax-free lump-sum of money that will support them and their family should they be diagnosed with any of the covered medical conditions.</td>
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## Practical Solutions:
### Quick and Easy Ways to Improve Wellbeing

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<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Employee Benefit</th>
<th>Organisational Benefit</th>
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<td><strong>Openness and Honesty</strong> –</td>
<td>This can help employees to feel valued and as though their thoughts and opinions are respected. It will help them to be less anxious when approaching senior members and therefore cultivate a greater degree of trust.</td>
<td>Employees that feel as though they are valued are much more likely to be loyal and retain their employment with the organisation. The ease of communication can also allow for the organisation to run much more efficiently with everyone being on the same page.</td>
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<td>Allow for open communication and keep employees informed with the use of things such as ‘open-door’ policy, regular employee surveys, suggestion boxes, and regular meetings that keep both employers and employees up to date.</td>
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<td><strong>Put Employees in Charge</strong> –</td>
<td>Allowing employees to run their own initiatives can be fulfilling and, once again, make them feel valued. Furthermore, it builds stronger relationships amongst the employees by engaging in and sharing common interests.</td>
<td>Again, making employees feel more valued as well as engaging them increases their loyalty and productivity. What’s more is that by letting people already in employment at the organisation run these initiatives it negates the need to hire outside help and therefore can dramatically decrease the cost.</td>
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<td>Encourage employees to create and run their own initiatives and classes, whether it’s a fitness class or a charity event use the talents already available.</td>
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<td><strong>Protecting Financial Needs</strong> –</td>
<td>With employees feeling as though they are financially secure with their salary as well as being protected for a variety of circumstances, it can dramatically increase their overall happiness and engagement with the organisation. Also improving their understanding of their financial wellbeing and the psychology behind their spending, can help them feel significantly more at ease.</td>
<td>Helping employees feel financially secure is another great of keeping your employees loyal. It can also greatly improve their motivation and productivity.</td>
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<td>It’s important to provide a fair and competitive salary but also other forms of compensation and financial protection in case employees are prevented from continuing to work, such as Life Insurance, Critical Illness Cover, and Income Protection, as well guidance on all of these matters.</td>
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<td><strong>Keeping Fit and Active</strong> –</td>
<td>This has a range of health benefits for the employee from decreased chances of heart disease to good overall fitness. It can also improve their moods and help them to feel much more energised.</td>
<td>Keeping employees healthy is good for ensuring high levels of motivation but can also dramatically decrease sickness absence and employee turnover due to illness and fatigue.</td>
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<td>Keeping employees healthy can be done in a variety of ways ranging from small, inexpensive initiatives such as free fruit or to larger more costly strategies like free gym memberships or using sit-stand desks.</td>
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<td><strong>Finding a Balance</strong> –</td>
<td>Allowing employees to find that balance can help reduce stress levels, increase happiness, and make them valued. It can also make them feel as though they are trusted by their employers which is great for the relationship they have with senior members.</td>
<td>The general improvement this can have on their stress levels and happiness can result in a reduction in the amount of sickness absence and employee turnover occurring from illness. Moreover, furthering that feeling of value and trust can help increase their loyalty and therefore increase retention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>For many employees, finding the balance between their work and home life is very important. Therefore it would be beneficial for employees and employers to collaborate and find ways to establish that balance such as negotiating hours, allowing for work to be done from home, or rewarding productivity with extra days off.</td>
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Case Study

Flight Centre

Most notably, Flight Centre understand their employees need for rest and relaxation. Therefore, having been under their employment for three years, employees are entitled to 4 weeks holiday to popular destinations at a discounted price. Not only does this allow them to recuperate, it means that their employees are more familiar with the trips they offer as a company and so can better sell them to their clients. In addition, they offer onsite consultants for everything from financial needs to fitness advice. So, whether they want to start doing yoga or invest their money it is all available to them with the necessary guidance.

Expert Opinion:

Dr Ellen Ernst Kossek, School of Human Resources and Labor Relations, Michigan State University

“Worker wellness considers how physiological wellbeing on and off the job can lead to healthy minds and healthy families. It can also lead to fewer accidents and less stress and depressive symptoms. Worker wellness programs are not a fringe benefit but can reduce health care costs. They can also generate higher morale, loyalty, and retention and reduce absenteeism and workers compensation costs.”
Fun Facts

At present, sick days cost the UK economy £18bn in lost productivity each year.¹

Of employers offering wellness programs:²

- 67% reported increased employee satisfaction.
- 66% reported increased productivity.
- 63% reported increased financial sustainability and growth.
- 50% reported decreased absenteeism.

For a mid-sized business (250-999 employees):³

- 70% say a benefits package offering is extremely or very important to their job satisfaction.
- 61% say a benefits package offering is extremely or very important to their employer loyalty.
- 80% say improving their benefits package would make them happier employees.

Sources:
²https://www.ifebp.org/bookstore/workplacewellness/Pages/default.aspx | Note: the stats from Aflac are available for a range of business sizes.
Ask Yourself...

- How important is wellbeing in your organisation currently?
- Does your current wellbeing strategy suit the needs of everyone in your organisation?
- Are you doing anything other than using the employee’s salary to keep their loyalty and motivate them?
- Are you creating a motivating environment that nurtures your employees?

Exercise:

Populate the below blank boxed to help you focus on potential initiatives and what the employee and organisational benefits could be:

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<td>A daily ‘email blast’ that informs employees on important updates and changes happening in the workplace as well as potential opportunities for employees such as available training courses to sign up to.</td>
<td>Helps employees to feel as though their employees listen to them etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increases the employees loyalty etc.</td>
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Useful Links/Resources

A presentation by Dr Robert Kerr of the University of Ulster on Cost Effective Ways to Improve Employee Wellbeing:

The Stress Management Society report on how wellbeing is affecting absence and ways of combatting this:
http://www.stress.org.uk/taking-control-absence/

The Stress Management Society report on an integral part of overall wellbeing, happiness:
http://www.stress.org.uk/happiness-is-contagious/

Rise, a Canadian organisation dedicated to helping companies focus on taking care of their employees, report on other easy ways to improve your wellbeing strategies:
https://risepeople.com/blog/8-activities-to-incorporate-into-your-workplace-wellness-program/
FREE Business Stress Consultation

We provide a range of services across the UK and internationally. We are always happy to discuss how we can support you. Please get in touch today and take the first step in reducing the impact of stress in your organisation.

We look forward to supporting your wellbeing journey.

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