

Creating a workplace wellbeing policy



Writing an effective workplace health and wellbeing policy can be time consuming. That's why we've created a sample policy document that you can use as a framework.

You'll see that the policy has two columns. On the left are notes outlining what can be included in each section.

On the right, you'll find example content. Here, you can add and remove elements to suit your business. Or you can use our content as a guide and create your own document from scratch.

We hope you find this template useful.

SAMPLE workplace mental health and wellbeing policy

Notes

1. This section of the policy may include details on the following topics:

- How and why physical and mental wellbeing at work can affect staff
- Benefits of positive wellbeing in the workplace
- How the organisation can create a culture that encourages health and wellbeing
- How the business can support and assist those who have experienced mental ill health

A mental health wellbeing policy for:

Start date:

Review date:

The need for a mental health and wellbeing policy

Today, every UK business has a duty of care requirement to look after the health and safety of employees, including their wellbeing.

Yet, 3 in 5 people have had mental health issues due to work¹, and over 60% of staff think their employer should be doing more to address mental ill health issues².

In light of this, promoting and protecting staff wellbeing in the workplace is important for every business.

There are many factors that influence the health and wellbeing of staff. Understanding and overcoming these issues can result in a range of benefits for both individuals and the wider business.

Mental wellbeing is relevant for all employees, which means every member of staff can play a part in improving wellbeing in the workplace. By addressing mental health issues, businesses can improve the general wellbeing of employees, reduce absenteeism and presenteeism, lower staff turnover, increase productivity, and help promote the employment of those who have experienced mental health problems.

Similarly, promoting physical activity and encouraging healthy eating, can help employees manage stress and weight loss, while also improving concentration and alertness. Staff who exercise regularly and eat a balanced diet also report less illness and are more likely to recover more quickly from any illness they do get.

This workplace mental health and wellbeing policy covers the following areas:

Mental wellbeing

Promoting mental wellbeing by:

- Providing information and raising awareness of mental health issues
- Promoting policies and actions that support mental wellbeing in the workplace
- Equipping employees with the skills to support their own mental health

Physical wellbeing

Encouraging physical health by:

- Promoting physical activity across the business
- Supporting a healthy, balanced diet in the workplace
- Encouraging staff to drink 6-8 glasses of water a day

¹Business in the Community Mental Health at Work Report 2017

²Centre for Mental Health at Work Report 2017

2. This section of the policy should outline your health and wellbeing aims for your business.

We have included 3 examples on the right:

3. Objectives - these should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-specific)

We have provided some examples for you.

Each objective should be accompanied by an action to meet that objective.

Choose policy actions that suit your workplace. We have provided some examples for you.

Management and leadership

- Equipping managers and leaders with the skills to: Identify and assist those with mental ill health
- Raising awareness of mental and physical wellbeing across the business

Support for employees

Offering support to employees by:

- Creating a culture that supports the wellbeing of all employees
- Offering help, support and guidance to those with a mental health issue
- Assisting those returning to work after a period of mental ill health

Employment for those with mental health issues

Supporting those coming back to work by:

- Making any necessary adjustments to the role/environment
- Establishing agreed recruitment practices
- Retaining and supporting staff who develop mental ill health

Aim of the policy

- To create a workplace culture that promotes and supports the health and wellbeing of all staff
- To support staff in regular physical exercise
- To encourage employees to make healthy eating choices

Objectives

1. Mental wellbeing

a) To create a supportive workplace culture, tackle factors that may have a negative impact on mental health, and ensure managers have the right skills to support staff

Policy actions:

- Give employees information on mental health issues to help raise awareness
- Deliver non-judgemental support to any staff member experiencing a mental health issue
- Consider mental health first aid training for teams, or ensure the business has mental health first aiders who can support staff with mental ill health
- Give all staff access to the mental health policy
- Deliver a thorough induction for all new starters, providing an outline of the organisation, the policies and the role they are expected to play

Choose policy actions that suit your workplace. We have provided some examples for you.

- Provide ways for staff to support their own mental wellbeing, for example through stress-buster activities, lunchtime activities and social events
- Offer employees flexible working hours
- Set realistic targets and deadlines for staff to prevent long working hours
- Deal with any conflict quickly and make sure the workplace is free from bullying, harassment, racism or or discrimination
- Ensure all staff have clear job descriptions, objectives and responsibilities, as well as the training to do their job well
- Ensure good communication between managers, staff and teams

b) To provide support and guidance for any member of staff experiencing mental health issues

- Check how working conditions and the organisation's policies are having an effect on mental health
- Ensure staff members with mental health issues are treated fairly and without judgement
- Encourage staff to talk to a mental health first aider, HR, occupational health, a counsellor or GP
- If a team member has been on long term sickness absence, ensure a gradual return to work with support at each stage
- Treat all matters relating to staff mental ill health in the strictest confidence, and only share information with prior consent from the individual concerned

c) To encourage the employment of people who have experienced mental ill health

- Show a positive attitude to employees and job applicants with mental health issues, including having positive statements in recruitment literature
- Ensure that all staff involved in the recruitment process are aware of mental health issues and the Disability Discrimination Act
- Do not assume that those with a mental health issue will be more susceptible to workplace stress, or will necessarily take more time off than other applicants
- Ensure that all line managers have received mental health first aid training, or have the skills to manage mental health in the workplace

d) To recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue

- Identify workplace stress factors/scenarios and carry out risk assessments of the business.
- Provide training in good management practices
- Provide resources to help managers implement the company's workplace mental health and wellbeing policy
- Offer support through a confidential counselling service, or qualified mental health first aiders

Choose policy actions that suit your workplace. We have provided some examples for you.

2. Physical activity

a) To raise awareness of the importance of physical activity for managing stress and maintaining mental wellbeing

- Provide leaflets and information on the importance of physical activity
- Provide courses and talks on the ways that physical activity can help staff manage stress and back pain, as well as improving mental alertness and concentration

b) To recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue

- Map out walking trails or routes in the local area and publicise them across the business
- Provide information on local gyms, classes and sports facilities
- Encourage lunchtime activity groups, e.g. running clubs, football games
- Provide corporate membership at local gyms
- Provide details on the UK's Cycle to Work Scheme

3. Healthy eating

a) To raise awareness of the importance of healthy eating for both physical and mental wellbeing

- Provide information and resources on how healthy eating can contribute to mental health, for example, increasing levels of concentration and the ability to cope with everyday stresses
- Appoint a healthy-eating champion to create a workplace health eating programme
- Provide courses and talks on the benefits of healthy eating

b) To encourage and support staff in making healthier eating choices

- Provide food storage and preparation areas for lunchtime meals
- Organise a fruit and vegetable delivery box for the office
- Create a yearly healthy eating week, with activities and events
- Provide easy access to cold water in all offices and meeting rooms
- Work with in-house catering teams to offer healthy menu options
- Encourage staff to eat lunch away from their desks

Communication

All employees will be made aware of the workplace mental health and wellbeing policy - and the resources that are available to them.

The workplace mental health and wellbeing policy will be included in the employee handbook, as well as in induction packs. It will also be promoted each year and will be available to download from the staff intranet or shared drives and servers.

4. Explain how the policy will be communicated across the business

5. Regular reviews and monitoring are important for checking the effectiveness of the health and wellbeing at work policy

How will you check progress?

We have provided some examples for you.

All staff will also be made aware of their own responsibilities in implementing the policy actions. Including, raising any issues or concerns, and seeking help from a line manager, HR, occupational health, or a mental health first aider.

A mental health lead, or team will be established to ensure the policy actions are implemented across the business. Regular updates will be provided to all staff through line management.

Reviewing and monitoring

The HR department will be responsible for reviewing the workplace health and wellbeing policy, as well as monitoring its effectiveness.

The policy's effectiveness can be measured through:

- Feedback from staff
- A mental health and wellbeing at work risk assessment. (You may wish to use the St John Ambulance Workplace Stress Risk Assessment guide to help with this).
- Staff sickness, presenteeism and staff turnover levels
- Exit interviews
- Use of occupational health or counselling services
- Staff complaints or referrals
- Feedback from the company's mental health lead, or qualified mental health first aiders

To ensure it stays relevant, the policy will be reviewed six months after the policy start date, then every year after that.

6. Declaration
Date:
Signature: