

Top tips for managers

how to promote health
and wellbeing at work



What is workplace health?

Workplace health is the commitment of employers and employees to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of everyone at work. This is delivered through workplace policies and procedures which encourage good health, by raising awareness about health issues and providing information about where to get help.

Most people spend a third of their adult life at work which means that work can have a real influence on health and wellbeing. Healthy workplaces are great places to work and result in health and business benefits for employers and employees.

Why does it matter?

Preventable disease and poorly managed health conditions are costly for individuals and their employers. Personal distress, sickness absence, lost productivity, reduced performance and low morale are just some of the costs.

The key to success is prevention and early intervention. Employers need to think about what they can do to keep their workforce healthy. Team members and colleagues need to think about how to support each other and employees need to think about how to take better care of themselves.

So, what can managers do?

- **Lead from the top**
Employee health and wellbeing programmes need to be led from the top. Without management buy-in, programmes are just bolt-ons.
- **Purpose**
Be clear about how the programme complements your core business priorities and how it will achieve business objectives. If you can't explain this, then no-one else will be able to.
- **Who and what needs to change**
Prioritising health and wellbeing is likely to require some cultural and behavioural change, on the part of management and employees – everyone has a role to play. You will need to model what you say.

Did you know...

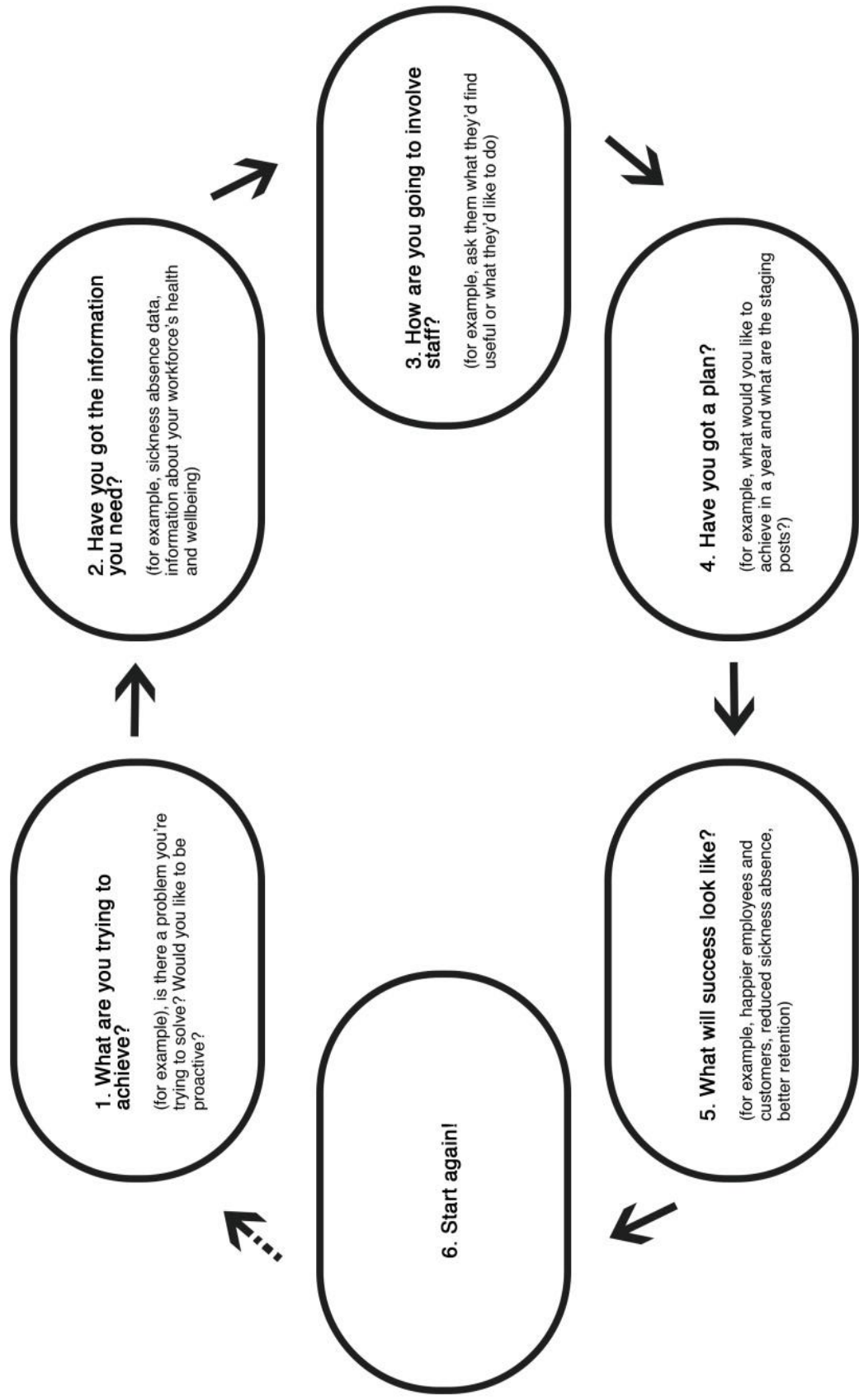
- **A third of adult life** is spent at work.
- **1.3 million workers** were suffering from a work-related illness in 2015-16

- **Make sure it's relevant**
What works for one business organisation doesn't work for another. You need to tailor your programme and activities to your workforce and your business.
- **Making a difference**
Decide how you will measure progress. What will change year on year, for example, reduction in short and long term sickness absence, increases in job satisfaction?
- **Resources**
There are lots of things that are cheap or free – this doesn't need a lot of investment but it may require some. You may need to do some pump priming or bring in some external resources, for example, training or promotional items.
- **Involvement**
Take employees with you – make sure there's something for everyone. This is not just for people who are already fit and healthy. To the contrary, you should be targeting those who aren't – they will see the biggest benefits if they make some changes.
- **Don't impose**
You can't make people participate and you don't necessarily know what's best for them. If you turn this into an obligation, people will turn away. Start where they are and focus on what they'd find useful.

Did you know....

- **Mental health conditions cost Bristol employers approximately £281 million a year.**
- **In Bristol in 2016, more fit notes were written for mental health reasons than for any other condition.**

PROMOTING WORKPLACE HEALTH



1. What are you trying to achieve?
(for example), is there a problem you're trying to solve? Would you like to be proactive?

2. Have you got the information you need?
(for example, sickness absence data, information about your workforce's health and wellbeing)

3. How are you going to involve staff?
(for example, ask them what they'd find useful or what they'd like to do)

4. Have you got a plan?
(for example, what would you like to achieve in a year and what are the staging posts?)

5. What will success look like?
(for example, happier employees and customers, reduced sickness absence, better retention)

6. Start again!

Next steps

- **Public commitment**
You don't necessarily need a health and wellbeing statement/strategy but sometimes they help. They provide a visible statement that you know that your staff are essential to the success of your business/organisation and that having a happy healthy workforce is important.
- **Employee health needs**
How much do you know about your employees' health needs? If you don't, you might want to ask them. Depending on the size of the business, you might want to use a survey but there are other ways of finding out (for example, as part of induction when people join the business, at team meetings, as part of annual appraisals and 1:1s). Remember that the purpose is to help not intrude.
- **Compliance**
Make sure you're complying with legislation and guidance (for example, sickness absence, reasonable adjustments, return to work arrangements, equalities, health and safety and smoke free legislation).
- **Planning**
Make a plan. If you're a small business you might want to choose one topic that you'd like to do something about and work on that before looking at anything else (there are lots of examples of small businesses actively promoting health to their customers). Think about how many activities you will carry out in a year. What can you manage?
- **Integrate**
Try and integrate your health and wellbeing activities into daily working life – they're much more likely to be successful if you do.

Remember...

- **Mean what you say**
Don't treat it as a tick box exercise. There won't be any sustainable change if you're going through the motions.
- **Be realistic**
Don't be unrealistic about the pace of change. Making a plan is quick, implementing it takes a while.

Suggestions

There are lots of things you can do to promote health and wellbeing in the workplace. What's suitable will depend on the kind of business and the sort of work that you do. Here are some ideas to get you thinking:

- Encourage a culture of openness – if people can talk about what's bothering them (at work or at home), it will help to prevent issues from escalating
- Provide signposting information so staff can choose to get help when they need to, for example, put information on a noticeboard, in the kitchen or in the toilets. For example, where to get help to stop smoking.



- Encourage staff to take breaks – lots of people don't take them (even though they're a legal entitlement) but everyone benefits from a breather. Taking a break helps to prevent accidents and mistakes and lifts the spirits.
- Encourage employees to go and talk to colleagues rather than phone, text or email them.
- Put a soup maker in the kitchen and once a week, make soup for everyone. In the summer, make smoothies (or something similar).
- Lots of people have smart phones with step counters on them – introduce workplace challenges, for example, who (or which team) has walked the furthest in a week.
- Organise socials that include something healthy – go dancing or bowling, rather than drinking.
- Use health related activities for team building – for example, shared lunches, charity fundraisers, volunteering, quizzes.
- If you have an Employee Assistance Programme, promote it – lots of them are underused.
- Give staff time off to attend health checks.



Useful contacts

National:

Lots of free resources, including how to write a business case for health and wellbeing, a model health and wellbeing statement, a staff survey template, toolkits, action plan, workplace challenges and other ideas: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/health-at-work/resources/resources-2>

One You – national website with lots of information about health and wellbeing: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou#izEGKP1YX5IOPwfE.97>

Workplace health and safety: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workplace/index.htm>

Advice on smoking at work: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/smoking.htm>

Advice for employers on the Equalities Act: <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3017>

Government support service for employers and employees after 4 weeks sickness absence: <https://fitforwork.org/>

Advice for employers and managers on how to use fit notes: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fit-note-guidance-for-employers-and-line-managers>

Health at Work Guide to alcohol: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/publications/health-at-work/health-at-work-guide-to-alcohol>

Mental health toolkit for employers: <http://wellbeing.bitc.org.uk/all-resources/toolkits/mental-health-employers>

Advice on managing cancer in the workplace: <http://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/organising/work-and-cancer/if-youre-an-employer/managing-cancer-in-the-workplace.html>

Musculoskeletal toolkit for employers: <http://wellbeing.bitc.org.uk/all-resources/toolkits/musculoskeletal-health-toolkit-employers>

Advice for staff on how to be healthier at work: <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/workplacehealth/Pages/workplacehome.aspx>

Work related stress: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/>

Local advice and support:

Live Well Bristol - information about healthy lifestyles and how to get help:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/web/live-well-bristol>

Bristol Mental Health and Employment Service - for employers and employees needing help: <http://www.bristolmentalhealth.org/services/employment-service/>

MIND – local help and support: <http://bristolmind.org.uk/>

Bristol Wellbeing Therapies – how to access NHS services: <https://iapt-bristol.awp.nhs.uk/>

Exercise referral programmes for people with health conditions in Bristol: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/exercise-referral-programmes>

How to become a Sugar Smart workplace: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/web/live-well-bristol/sugar-smart>

Bristol Alcohol and Drugs Service: <http://www.bdp.org.uk/about/roads.html>

Free NHS health checks for people aged 40-74 who are Bristol residents: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/web/live-well-bristol/check-yourself>

Bristol Citizens Advice Bureau: <https://www.bristolcab.org.uk/>

Samaritans: <https://www.samaritans.org/>

Help for those experiencing violence and abuse: <http://www.bava.org.uk/>

Help for victims of hate crime: <https://www.sariweb.org.uk/help-support/how-can-sari-help-me/>

Information about health services in Bristol: <https://www.bristolccg.nhs.uk/your-health-local-services/health-services/>

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