

WELLBEING IN THE NEW WORLD OF WORK



Working from home can give employees a better work-life balance, increased productivity and less time spent commuting, but it is no panacea. Not every employee feels the benefits, and the office has benefits of its own – from improving collaboration and

connection, to helping businesses to build a stronger culture. So, as your employees begin returning to the office, how can you capitalise on these benefits, and better support their shifting wellbeing needs? Well, here's what you need to know...

WHAT DO EMPLOYEES EXPECT FROM THEIR EMPLOYERS WHEN IT COMES TO WELLBEING?



A quarter (25%) of UK knowledge workers say that they're more attracted to companies who **actively fight burnout** by being proactive about the mental health and wellness of their people.¹



A third (32%) of UK workers admit to wanting a more mindful culture, with **set work boundaries**.¹



One in three (33%) believe it is acceptable for employers to monitor health data collected from devices, with **37% agreeing** that doing this would prove their employer was **committed to improving workplace wellbeing**.²



HOW WILL RETURNING TO THE OFFICE IMPACT EMPLOYEE WELLBEING?

BETTER PHYSICAL HEALTH



46% of employees reported exercising less frequently when working remotely, whilst 39% developed musculoskeletal problems.³ Fortunately, as employees re-enter the workspace, they can enjoy the benefits of Cycle2Work schemes, comfortable office spaces and on-site gyms.

INCREASED CONNECTION



67% of employees reported feeling less connected to colleagues when working remotely.³ As the workforce returns to the office, we can expect to see these social relationships blossom again, which in turn is likely to have a positive impact on employees' overall wellbeing.

OPTIMAL WORK-LIFE BALANCE



56% of employees said they found it harder to switch off when working remotely.³ A key benefit of the office environment is the clear boundaries it sets between home and working life, helping employees to find a greater work-life balance.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP MEET THE WELLBEING NEEDS OF YOUR DIVERSE WORKFORCE...

Businesses should think carefully about how they plan to support their employees as they return to their normal places of work, so we've included a step-by-step guide of things to consider when making that transition from home working, to office based.



UNDERSTANDING WHY EMPLOYEES MAY FEEL ANXIOUS

Acknowledge and understand the legitimate anxiety that some people will be experiencing. Members of your team will need to feel physically safe from catching coronavirus, so ensuring your workplace is covid-secure and communicating that your office is safe can help to ease those concerns. Ask your employees for their feedback, help create a safe place to work and encourage them to make it their environment again. Once you have your plan in place, communicate this clearly with your workforce.⁴



HOLD REGULAR WELLBEING CHECK-INS

Increase the number of 1:1 meeting's you have in the first few days and weeks of returning to the usual place of work. Create an environment that promotes psychological safety so employees feel comfortable to talk about any difficulties they may be having, and keep an open mind to any suggestions they may have. Be vigilant to any changes in usual behaviour which could be a sign that someone is struggling. As part of your wellbeing check ins, discuss how you can work collectively together, not only to improve wellbeing but **how to reach the optimum productivity level sooner**⁴.

GET YOUR EMPLOYEES MOVING

A study of 2,315 UK employees asked respondents to rate a number of employee benefits out of 100. Office sports teams scored higher (89) than birthday days off (86), duvet days (75) and sabbatical opportunities (64).⁵

With this in mind, consider creating a variety of office sports teams at your business to give your employees the opportunity to connect with their colleagues whilst they exercise. You could even invite your people to take part in a tournament, where they play against their colleagues to win the office cup. The key is to **make sure to cater to a variety of preferences and abilities – and this means offering a range of different activities**, such as football, steps challenge and yoga.

89
/100



86
/100



75
/100



64
/100



PROVIDE QUALITY COFFEE AND HEALTHY SNACKS

Taking a few moments away from the task at hand **gives your brain and body a chance to relax and regroup**. Coffee breaks also offer a chance for socialisation, catching up, or having some small talk which can help create a sense of community and trust; which ultimately **contributes to good feelings about the job in general**.⁶ So, to help boost your employees' moods throughout the day, make sure you stock your kitchen with easily accessible, high quality coffee, including a variety of options for your diverse workforce – such as mochas, lattes, cappuccinos and americanos.

You may also want to offer a broad variety of healthy drinks and snacks, such as fresh fruit, salads, sandwiches and smoothies, ensuring you offer vegetarian and vegan options, too.



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Sources:

¹theHRDIRECTOR | ²Employee Benefits | ³Royal Society for Public Health UK | ⁴Charlie Waller Trust | ⁵Employee Benefits | ⁶PBFY Flexible Packaging