

2022

**The Employers'
Guide to
Workplace
Wellbeing**

Introduction

2020 and 2021 are two years that have severely impacted us and reinforced the need for employers to support the mental health and wellbeing of their employees. Through the pandemic, employers realised that employees really do bring their whole selves to work and that the line between work and home life has dissolved. Stress in any area of someone's life contributes to, or is exacerbated by, stress at work – and employers are now expected to support their workforce every step of the way.

Many organisations already actively support their employees' mental health and wellbeing, but research has found that there is a gap between employee expectations for mental health support and what companies actually offer. There is a call for a more holistic approach to mental health support at work – one that focuses on all aspects of employee wellbeing and that looks at prevention, support and treatment of mental health and wellbeing issues.

We understand this approach may be new to many employers, and with the post-pandemic changes to workplace practices, you may need help to get started. We have therefore created this checklist to support you and highlight the areas you may want to consider when planning for 2022.

Now is the time to prioritise employee mental health and wellbeing.

Your checklist for 2022

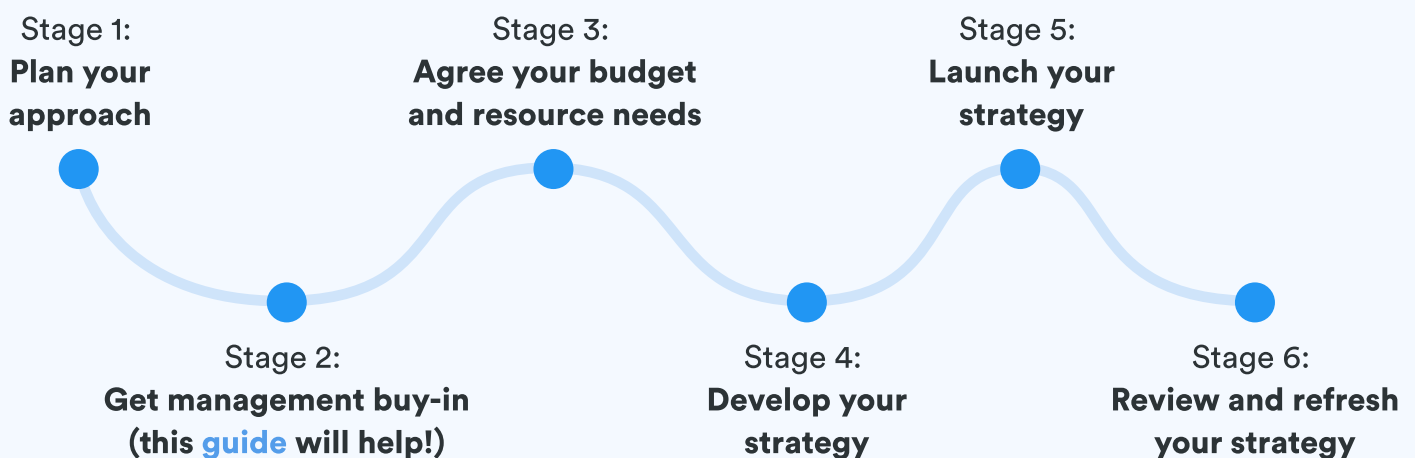
- ☐ **1.** Introduce a proactive wellbeing strategy
- ☐ **2.** Ensure you have viable internal support on offer
- ☐ **3.** Assess whether your work environment promotes positive wellbeing
- ☐ **4.** Encourage employees to have open conversations about mental health
- ☐ **5.** Promote good work-life balance
- ☐ **6.** Support recognised mental health and wellbeing awareness initiatives
- ☐ **7.** Incorporate mental health and wellbeing in your L&D programmes
- ☐ **8.** Strengthen working relationships
- ☐ **9.** Ensure 1:1s are regular, effective and personal
- ☐ **10.** Make sure your company values are aligned

1. Introduce a proactive wellbeing strategy

The first step to making employee mental health and wellbeing a priority is by **creating a strategy for the year ahead**. Many organisations decide to implement ad-hoc wellbeing initiatives throughout the year; however, the needs of employees and the organisation itself are rarely considered.

Developing a cohesive employee wellbeing strategy can help you as a company be clear about your objectives, where you may need to prioritise interventions and activity, and help you to think about measuring effectiveness.

The six key development stages of a wellbeing strategy are:



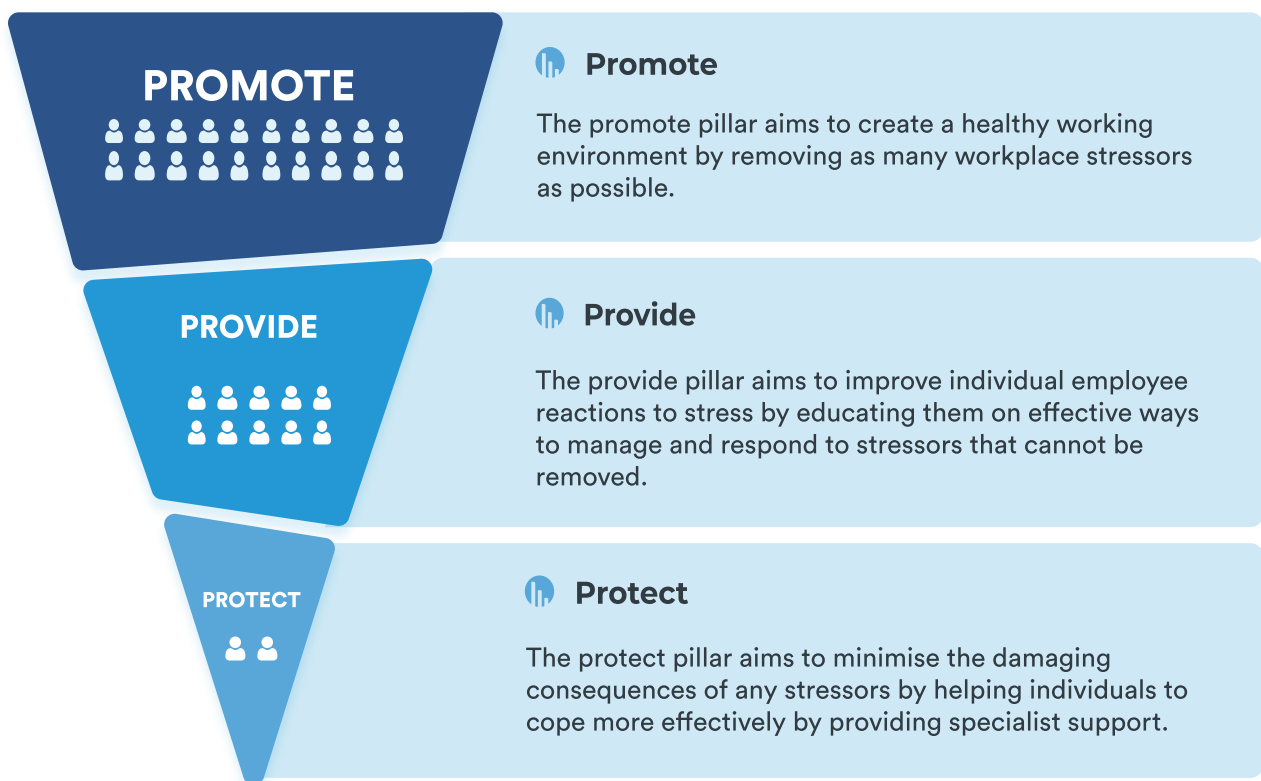
As part of stage 4, developing your strategy, you should review your current policies and procedures to ensure they support and facilitate your plans.

The best wellbeing strategies are those that are embedded across all business practices so that employee wellbeing becomes ingrained in the company's culture. Whilst it might seem a large task, it is clear that developing an effective health and wellbeing strategy is extremely beneficial to all businesses, whether you have 3 or 3,000 employees.

Using the 3 pillar framework to improve workplace wellbeing

One of the biggest pitfalls to avoid when addressing strategy is focusing on reactive solutions such as an EAP or MHFAs. These interventions help individuals when they're in the midst of crisis but ignore that **prevention is better than cure**. We shouldn't wait until someone is in crisis. Instead, our wellbeing strategy should support a **proactive approach to wellbeing, preventing individuals from reaching crisis point by creating a healthy workplace environment and minimising workplace stressors**.

With this in mind, a successful wellbeing strategy is **broken down into 3 key pillars**, informed by the unique needs of you and your employees.



You can learn more about the 3 pillars approach and how you can apply it to your business in this [webinar replay just here](#).



2. Ensure you have viable internal support on offer

Even if you have paid for external mental health and wellbeing support, **it is imperative that there is internal support available for your employees too**. This is for two reasons, firstly, if an employee is struggling, they are likely to speak to a colleague, manager or HR team member first. Secondly, **as employees spend so much time at work, it may in fact be a colleague, manager or HR team member who spots that an individual is struggling in the first place.**

Here are some basics you should have in place when it comes to internal support:

1

You should create a supportive environment where employees are not ashamed to discuss mental health issues.

2

All employees should have a basic understanding of mental health, this includes spotting the signs that someone is struggling and knowing how to approach mental health conversations. **Our free Everymind Champion course** is the perfect place for employees to start.

3

Offer peer support, buddy systems and mentoring.

4

All staff should be aware of the internal and external support available to them and how to access it should it be needed. You should use your communication channels to signpost information sources and processes.

5

Ensure you are using a holistic approach that aims to prevent, manage, and support the mental health and wellbeing issues of your employees.

3. Assess whether your work environment promotes positive wellbeing

Most employees spend lots of time in their company office or work environment. It is therefore **important that the environment employees are working in promotes positive mental health and wellbeing**. Factors such as lighting, colour schemes and greenery can all impact the mood of your workers and thus affect their work performance. Moreover, you should review your basic hygiene factors such as toilet and kitchen facilities and ask for employee feedback on how the current office design affects their wellbeing.

Office workers benefit from having **a variety of work settings such as break out spaces, hot desking, meeting rooms etc. so that they can choose where and how they want to work for particular tasks and activities**. This ensures they are not stuck in the same position at a desk all day. You should also check your office ergonomics meet required standards. **Office ergonomics help employees work comfortably and can reduce stress** and injury caused by sitting in awkward positions and completing repetitive tasks.



4. Encourage open communication about mental health

Organisations who **openly communicate about mental health and wellbeing help to normalise mental health conversations, making staff feel comfortable and supported at work.**

Being open about mental health and wellbeing also helps staff to think more about their own and their colleagues' mental health and what factors can affect this. You can also use your internal communications to raise awareness about mental health, the help available and your willingness to support employees. You could **raise awareness through blogs, mythbusters, factsheets, tips for managers, useful web links and FAQs.** The use of posters, noticeboards, staff newsletters, magazines, intranet and internet pages to get the message out can also be very effective. You might also find our **resources** page useful!

Introducing **mental health champions** to ensure the voices of people with mental health problems are heard has been found to work well. Staff forums, diversity networks and other structures that represent the voice of employees should involve and include staff with mental health problems. This helps **ensure employers understand people's experiences and can also encourage colleagues with mental health problems to become role models and advocates across the organisation.**

5. Promote good work-life balance

If the last few years have taught us anything, it is that **work-life balance is key to not only employee performance, but their mental health and wellbeing too.** The pressure of an increasingly demanding work culture is presenting a significant challenge to the mental health of many employees. **Long working hours and tight deadlines are causing employees to neglect the factors in their lives that make them resilient to mental health problems.** The main way to protect employee mental health against the potential detrimental effects of work-related stress is to ensure they have a healthy work-life balance. Put simply, a work-life balance is the amount of time and focus a person gives their work versus other aspects of their life – whether it is raising a family, hobbies, relaxation, or anything else.



As an employer you should encourage your employees to focus on other aspects of their lives too. Here are some ideas of how you can do this:



Offer **flexible working**.



Encourage **managers and senior leaders to role model work-life balance** themselves.



Set expectations that **time off means time off**.



Do not expect employees to work/check emails in the evenings and weekends if it is not in their contract to do so.



Encourage managers to focus on productivity and outcomes, rather than hours.



Encourage breaks.



Regularly **review workloads**.



Give employees **time to volunteer**.



Support working parents.



Ask employees for feedback on any improvements that could be made by the company.



Acknowledge that every employee is different and therefore their work-life balance needs will vary.

6. Support recognised mental health and wellbeing awareness initiatives

As an organisation trying to create a culture that is supportive of mental health and wellbeing, **you need to engage in awareness initiatives (e.g. local, nationwide and worldwide) that promote a similar message.** For example, you may use Mental Health Awareness Week to educate, promote and engage wellbeing amongst employees.

By supporting awareness days throughout the year, you're able to educate employees around mental health whilst also demonstrating that you truly care about their wellbeing. Moreover, **by engaging in these events and charitable activities that support local, national and worldwide causes, you will see significant benefits for both your employees and you as an employer.** Your employees will have increased performance, engagement, networking opportunities and morale; whilst as a company you'll reap these benefits as well as enhancing your PR opportunities and corporate identity.



7. Incorporate mental health and wellbeing in your L&D programmes

There is no denying that skill and knowledge training will indirectly help with employee wellbeing, but what is often missed in L&D programmes is direct L&D opportunities for mental health. **Giving people tools to help them look after their own wellbeing can enable them to better deal with pressure and reduce the impact of stress as it develops their mental resilience.** Combined with effective skills and knowledge training, you are helping your employees to cope with any challenges they may face in both their work and personal lives.



Here are some ways you can include **mental health and wellbeing training** in your L&D strategy:



Offer training courses on managing stress, improving sleep, meditation and mindfulness, understanding emotions, improving self-esteem etc. These can be both online and in person.



Provide seminars on healthy eating/nutrition and the benefits of exercise.



Invite nutritionists, psychologists, life coaches etc. to give lectures to your employees and/or provide 1:1 consultations.



Offer resources to help with financial wellbeing, such as training, webinars, advice sheets and meetings with financial planners.

8. Strengthen working relationships

When employees have effective relationships with their colleagues, they are more likely to have higher job satisfaction and better performance due to increased mood and productivity. **Effective working relationships are ones that are built on trust, acceptance, open communication and teamwork.** As an employer, you need to facilitate the formation of effective employee relationships.



Here are some starting points:

Provide employee days where there is a focus on teamwork and getting to know each other.

Encourage group projects and cross-departmental collaboration.

Engage in team profile analysis so that employees understand each other's strengths, weaknesses and working preferences.

Encourage non-workplace socialising.

Provide L&D opportunities on subjects such as teamwork, active listening and communication.

Encourage employees to eat lunch together in the lunch hall or kitchen facilities provided (where possible).

Provide peer support, buddy systems or mentoring to allow colleagues to support one another outside of the official line-management structure and help strengthen relationships.

Have clear and robust policies on negative workplace behaviour such as bullying and harassment.



9. Ensure 1:1 meetings are regular, effective and personal

One-to-one meetings with line managers are a chance for employees to receive feedback, updates and progress checks but should also be an opportunity for managers to understand the current wellbeing and mental health state of the individual employee. **Regular one-to-ones have been found to boost employee engagement, build mutual trust and helps identify any issues early.**

As an employer, you can help by:



Encouraging managers to speak regularly with staff about how they are doing – not just their work progress. They should explore with them what work factors might be impacting on their mental wellbeing. Training for line managers should be provided to ensure this is carried out appropriately. To help, why not grab our free managers toolkit [just here!](#)



Ensuring appraisal and supervision procedures ask about mental wellbeing and stress and give staff permission to talk about home, as well as work issues if they wish.



Maintaining regular, clear lines of communication with all staff, especially those working in isolation, for example with monthly team meetings or regular phone catch-ups.



Encourage the giving and receiving of feedback from both sides.



Ensure that employees know that they can request a meeting outside of the normal schedule should they need to discuss anything important with their line manager.

10. Make sure your company values are aligned

When employees live by the values that are most important to your business, performance and wellbeing can improve as a result. This is because **employees who understand your core values have a clearer understanding of their own role; know what the company is trying to achieve, and how they can contribute;** know the values and attributes they need to adopt to perform at, and achieve their full potential; and use the core values to guide their actions in new or difficult situations.

Therefore, as an organisation, having the right values is paramount to employee wellbeing, job satisfaction and business success. **Focussing on the right values can cause a shift in culture (a positive change) and help nurture wellbeing.** More specifically, having a small set of simple and unique values (shaped by your business purpose and employees) which are truly role modelled by the leaders, can shape the 'how' of your organisation. To do this, **your values should be incorporated into everyday business activities,** such as: recruitment practices, development/coaching conversations, feedback and customer interaction. In time, your values then define who you are and how you operate as a business.

How we can help

At Everymind, we are on a mission to normalise mental health conversations in the workplace and improve overall employee wellbeing. We appreciate that as a company, improving mental health is just one focus in an ever-changing landscape; so we offer a range of solutions to help save you time, but also maximise your existing resources. Our services include:



The Everymind App – 24/7 mental health support in your employees' pocket



Everymind Champion Certification Course



Awareness Days Calendar & Support



Interactive Wellbeing Webinars



Wellbeing Check-Ins for Managers, Champions & MHFAs



eLearning Packages



Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy Consultations



Virtual and Face to Face Training Workshops



4-Week Wellbeing Challenges & Coaching



Keynote Speakers

For more information on how we can help you to help your employees, please email info@everymindatwork.com

