

Be well. Get better. Be supported.

How to monitor employee health and wellbeing



In partnership with



Monitoring mental wellbeing

Good mental health strategies and the ability to assess their performance go hand in hand. How can you assess whether your initiatives are having a genuine impact on employee mental health and wellbeing or just playing lip service to the trend if you aren't measuring their effectiveness? This resource explores ways in which organisations can regularly monitor strategies so that they are achieving the best possible outcome for both the business and for employees.

Steps to monitor employee mental health and wellbeing

Understanding where you are right now

Understanding where you are on the journey towards a healthy organisation will set the stage for measuring the effectiveness of your investment in mental health. The action and initiatives you choose to implement will vary greatly, depending on where you are in this journey. You might only be starting to introduce mental health measures in your workplace, or you might have been running initiatives for several years and looking to enhance these further.

A good guide to help you find out where you currently are on your mental health journey is The City Mental Health Alliance's 'What is good mental health in the city and how do we measure it?' helping you to look at a range of factors including organisational characteristics, options for staff survey questions and more.

Answering the following questions might also help:

- Do you hold regular meetings with health providers of wellbeing services such as your insurer, or Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provider to understand your data and identify ways to improve existing programmes and practices?
- Do you have any mental health hot spots – certain areas within your business that may be more susceptible to poor mental health than others?
- Do you know what data you are able to collect, now and in the future?
- Do you have a mental health risk register and a risk committee in place? A risk register could be created looking at the likelihood of something happening against the level of the consequence.
- Do you regularly source and make best use of what success other organisations of a similar size have had in the monitoring of mental health work strategies?
- Do you include a mental health and wellbeing data report to your Board?
- Do you monitor and measure mental health related sickness absence?
- Do you have processes in place for managing longer-term absence related to mental health including tracking return to work and retention post return?

These can include triggers such as certain job roles, stress, long-hours, tight deadlines and bullying. For more information on identifying mental health hot spots, read our resource 'How the working environment can be used to support mental wellbeing'.

Set your monitoring goals

Now that you're aware of where your business is right now in monitoring employee health and wellbeing you can begin to set your monitoring goals against your mental health work strategy.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are regularly set to measure performance and output, and this often forms the basis of yearly appraisals. When mental health isn't on the

agenda, there is no guidance as to what good mental health behaviour is, or the value that a company places on it.

Just as KPIs are set for other areas of work, it is a great idea to set KPIs for mental health too. It's important to regularly check on wellbeing, not just on other work objectives.

Some measures for this section could include:

Hard data

- Mental health related sickness days.
- Number of calls your insurer or EAP receives about mental health/work related stress. Do you see any trends throughout the year? What is the uptake of these services once provided? How better can you promote them?
- Number of mental health work strategies in place, including ways in which this information is reported on internally and externally.
- Number of mental health work programmes in place.
- Number of mental health and wellbeing employee surveys, such as Mind's Workplace Wellbeing Index.
- Employee attraction and retention rates.

Softer data

- Do you communicate about your employee's mental health and wellbeing journey? For example, how a colleague has been helped to improve their mental health and wellbeing which led to a promotion?
- What opportunities do your employees have to discuss mental health and wellbeing? Do people make use of these? Do you ask for feedback?
- Do you and your employees think that mental health is demonstrably recognised as a Boardroom issue? Essential for maximising business performance? Vital to the values of the business?
- Feedback from exit interviews – for example, is your workplace supportive to your mental wellbeing? If not, why not? Were you aware of the mental health and wellbeing opportunities available to you? Did you make use of them?

Data from others

Over the past few years, awareness of mental health has accelerated, and more and more employers now understand that supporting wellbeing is vital to a healthy workplace. Alongside this, many charities and organisations exist to help businesses support the mental health of their staff. Your business could benefit from regularly reviewing data from others, to ensure that your strategies and measurements are as fit for purpose as possible.

You may want to consider:

- Who in your industry is doing great work in this area? Who can you benchmark against?
- How will you keep up to date with the latest research and tools available to you?

- Will you encourage staff to attend mental health and wellbeing conferences, workshops, training? Or even time out to listen to podcasts or read content that could inspire change?
- Does your business share across the organisation changes in trends or interesting research findings?

By implementing some of these monitoring recommendations, you can be assured that you're moving in the right direction for your organisation and its employees. Not only will these actions help you effectively monitor the great work you might already be doing in supporting mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, but it will also help you to understand on a regular basis, what's working in reality, so that you can continually improve.