



# Burnout

A wellbeing partnership approach  
for employers

# Summary

If culture remains negative, then no burnout interventions or wellbeing strategy will be effective, so addressing the negative culture first is paramount.

We need to have a systemic approach which looks at all elements and not just introducing new services or insurances to the mix.

By working through a process you can ensure maximum effectiveness in reducing burnout in your people and actually then create a place where wellbeing is supported and improved.



- Symbiotic partnership agreement between employer and employee
- Remove negative behaviour and culture
- Share responsibility for good wellbeing



- Prevention
- Identification and early intervention
- Active rehabilitation



- Assessment and audit current position
- Content and communication





# Culture

# Tackling negative culture to address burnout

## A wellbeing partnership approach

### Introduction to a new employer/ employee partnership to tackle the systemic causes of burnout

Negative working behaviour is the biggest predictor of burnout symptoms and intent to leave, with one in four employees experiencing some form of negative behaviour at work, unfair or demeaning treatment, non-inclusive behaviour and more. Employees who report experiencing high levels of negative behaviour at work are almost eight times more likely, than those who don't, to experience burnout symptoms according to the McKinsey 2022 survey.

### Can we really solve burnout issues without changing how employers and employees work together?

There's a clear need to re-think this relationship. If you do nothing this is not sustainable, and the organisation will ultimately risk going out of business. What if creating a successful and lasting work environment requires a real partnership between employers and employees? This partnership resets the relationship across both sides with the need of each to take care of each other to make sure everyone can do well with more sustainable outcomes for all. The partnership means sharing the responsibility for wellbeing going beyond traditional roles allowing for parties to benefit from healthier rights, while holding each other's responsibilities to account.



### How do we re-think the relationship between employers and employees, into a practical commitment?

“ A true partnership between employers and employees creates a culture that prevents burn out by creating a safe and fulfilling environment that protects physical, emotional, psychological, economic and social aspects equally. For employees, it's about taking personal responsibility for bringing their best selves to work, by taking care of their health and wellbeing, staying positive, and contributing to a positive workplace culture. This partnership with everyone having rights and responsibilities, is crucial for tackling negative behaviour. ”

**Debra Clark**  
**Head of Wellbeing, Towergate Health & Protection**

### Why worry about having a negative culture in your organisation?

Evidence from McKinsey suggests that having a negative culture means your employees are more likely to burnout. There is also a strong social responsibility. If culture remains negative then no interventions will be effective, so addressing the negative culture is paramount. “If you always do what you've always done, you will always get what you've always got!”



**If my business is delivering and profitable why should I worry about negative culture and burnout?**

## What makes a negative culture?

A negative workplace culture is characterised by negative behaviours, attitudes, and practices that can harm the wellbeing of employees and create a negative impact on organisational success.

Key elements of a negative culture may include:

### Poor leadership

Ineffective or negative leadership that fails to inspire trust, communicate effectively, or lead by example.

### Bullying and harassment

Instances of bullying, micro aggressions, harassment or discrimination that create a hostile and unsafe workplace.

### Unrealistic expectations

Imposing unrealistic workloads, expectations, or deadlines that lead to burnout and stress.

### Lack of transparency

A lack of openness and transparency in communication, leading to confusion and distrust among employees.

### Poor work-life balance

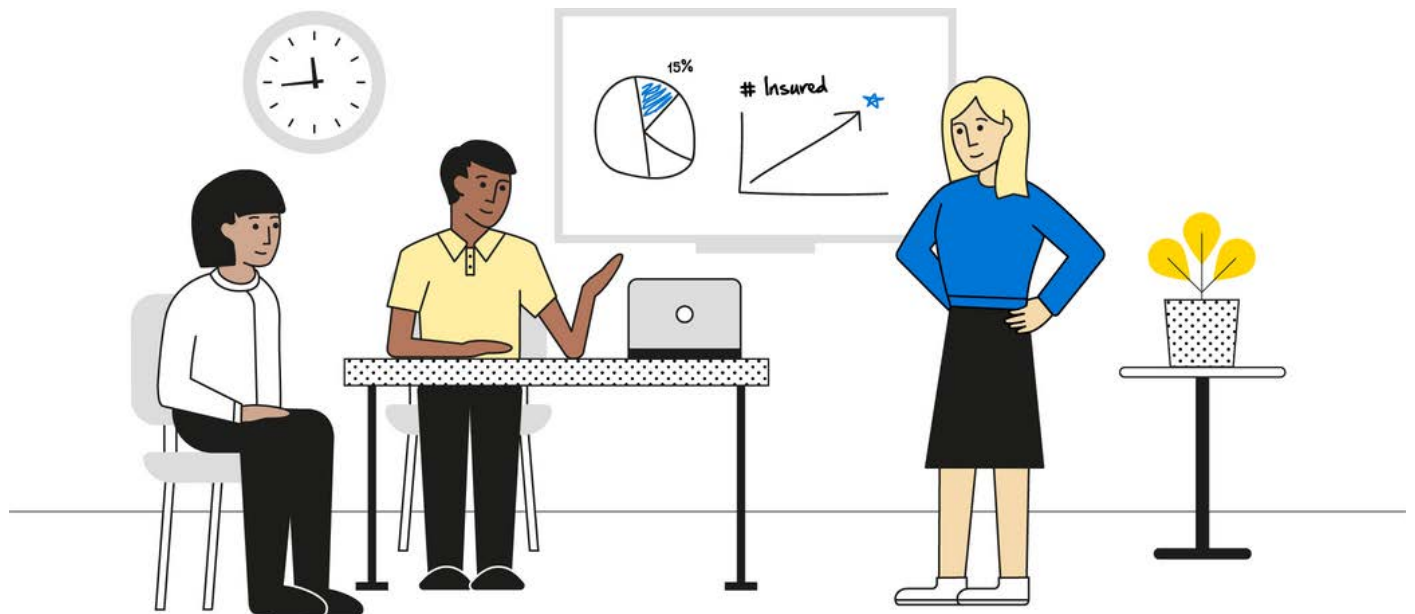
Expectations or practices that make it difficult for employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

### Lack of recognition

Failure to recognise and appreciate employee contributions, leading to low morale and motivation.

### High turnover rates

High rates of employee turnover, indicating dissatisfaction and potential issues within the workplace.



## Creating a workplace culture that prevents burnout

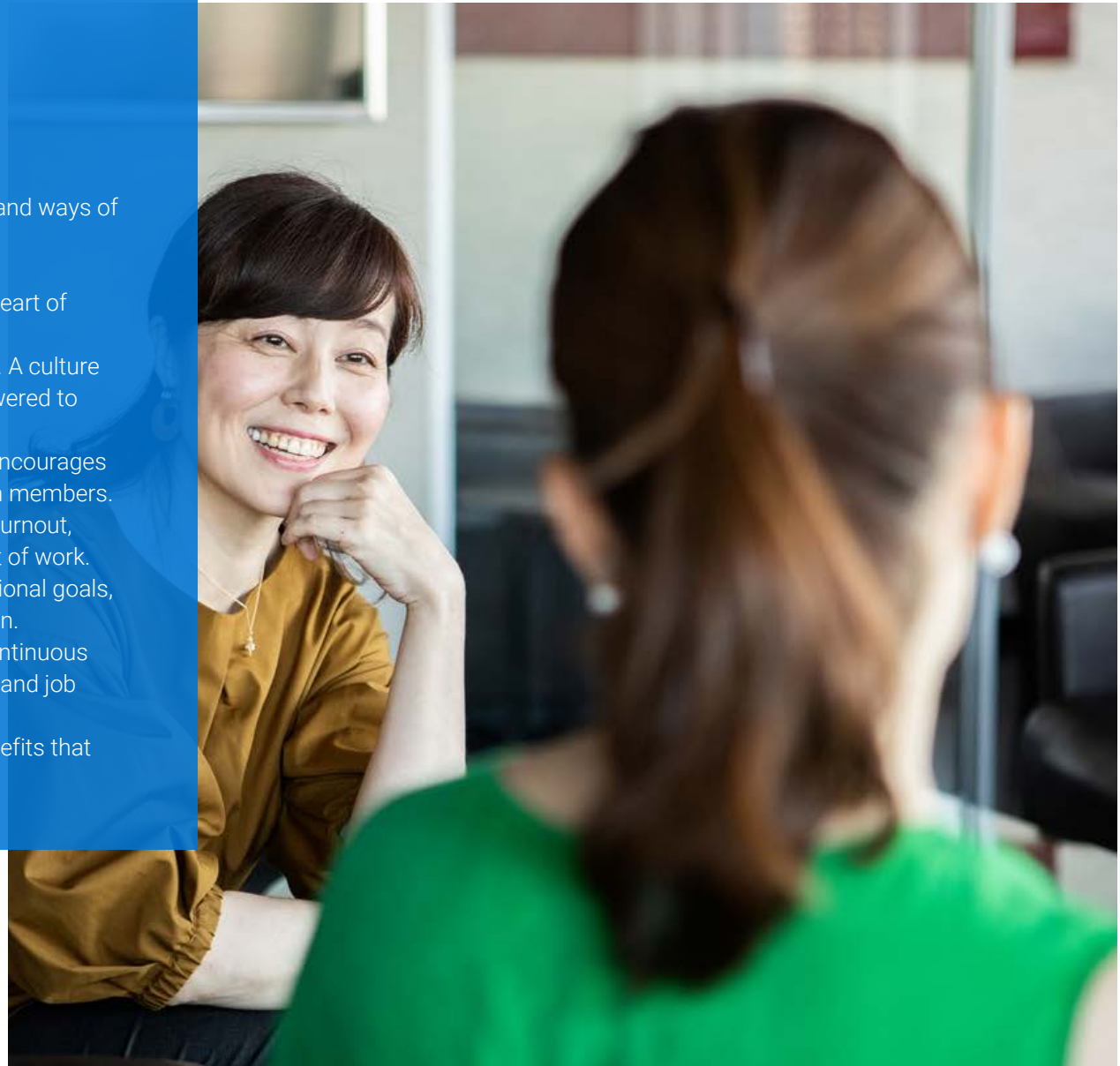
A workplace culture that maximises employee wellbeing and prevents burnout, requires a shared commitment from both employers and employees.

Here are some examples of specific responsibilities for each party.

### Employer responsibilities

Employers can take responsibility for creating a supportive environment and ways of working that promote health and wellbeing.

- **Prioritise Wellbeing:** Prioritise workforce health and wellbeing at the heart of organisational purpose and business strategy.
- **Promote and deliver equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.** A culture where every individual can feel safe and a sense of belonging, empowered to achieve their full potential.
- **Positive work environment:** Foster a positive workplace culture that encourages collaboration, open communication, and mutual respect among team members.
- **Workload management:** Monitor and manage workloads to prevent burnout, ensuring that employees have a reasonable and manageable amount of work.
- **Effective communication:** Keep employees informed about organisational goals, changes, and decisions through transparent and open communication.
- **Professional development opportunities:** Provide opportunities for continuous learning and skill development to enhance employees' career growth and job satisfaction.
- **Fair compensation and benefits:** Ensure competitive salaries and benefits that reflect the value of employees' contributions.





## Employee responsibilities

Individuals can take personal responsibility for bringing their best selves to work by committing to actions and behaviours.

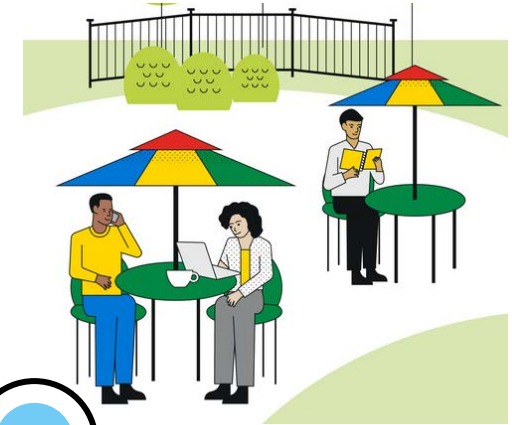
Here are some complementary actions that employees can promise to take:

- Prioritise health and wellbeing: Take care of physical and mental health by prioritising self-care, managing stress, and seeking support when needed.
- Contribute to a positive culture: Actively participate in creating a positive workplace culture by respecting diversity, promoting inclusivity and supporting organisational values.
- Build positive relationships: Foster positive relationships with colleagues, promoting a supportive and collaborative team dynamic.
- Maintain a positive attitude: Cultivate a positive mindset, approach challenges with optimism and contribute to a constructive and uplifting work atmosphere.
- Open communication: Communicate clearly, openly and respectfully with colleagues, fostering a collaborative and inclusive work environment.
- Own mistakes and learn from them: Acknowledge mistakes, take responsibility, and use them as opportunities for learning and improvement.

When both employers and employees actively fulfil their responsibilities, a symbiotic relationship is formed which maximises employee wellbeing, while also enhancing business success.

## Benefits of establishing a mutually beneficial relationship between employers and employees

Creating a workplace culture where employers prioritise employee health and wellbeing, and in return expect individuals to take personal responsibility for bringing the best version of themselves to work, brings a variety of mutual benefits:



### Employer benefits

- Attraction of top talent
- Enhanced retention
- Improved company culture
- Stimulation of innovation
- Better health outcomes
- Cost savings
- Positive branding
- Increased productivity

### Employee benefits

- Work-life balance
- Access to wellbeing programmes and benefits
- Stronger work relationships
- Enhanced health and wellbeing
- Increased motivation
- Improved job satisfaction
- Greater job security
- Career development opportunities

### Mutual benefits

- A thriving and sustainable environment for long-term success





# Burnout

# How can you address burnout at corporate level?

It is common to assume that dealing with burnout means concentrating on just the person noted to be suffering with burnout. Assuming it's purely an individual experience. However, we also need to consider the impact that teams and the leadership can have on influencing the way people feel, and experience their time at work. Only when you look at all three aspects together, holistically, can you get to the systemic issues and really address some of the root causes.

There is a need to consider targeting:

## 1) Individuals, all employees

Ensure that all employees have the education necessary, so that they can recognise the warning signs of burnout and have the tools they need to do something about it. There is a need to dictate what good working behaviours and practices look like, as much as tasks and role objectives. These need to be measurable and form part of employee performance reviews.

## 2) Teams within the organisation

Teamwork can improve a workplaces culture. When teams works together, they can achieve way more than they ever could on their own. You can foster a collaborative team environment by clearly communicating your business's mission and goals. Explain to the individual members of the team how their roles contribute to the overall vision. This helps motivate them to work together by showing how collaboration benefits everyone.

## 3) The whole organisational system – leadership

There is a need to ensure you have compassionate leadership, where they are cultivating a supportive environment, so that everyone feels psychologically safe and able to produce their best work. Your leadership need to be great listeners and ensure their business feels heard. This needs to be followed by robust, open and clear communications. A “you said, we did ” approach to show they are being listened to, and change is happening as a result.

### How to recognise you have an issue with burnout?

Recognising that you have an issue with burnout can be difficult, but there are signs to look out for within your employees.

- Decreased productivity – working longer hours, lack of concentration and too many priorities.
- Increased absenteeism or even presenteeism, increased errors due to lack of concentration.
- A negative shift in attitude, lack of participation or forgetfulness
- Physical or emotional exhaustion within your employees.

There may be other signs such as increased activity outside of working hours. For example, sending emails outside of the normal working pattern, not meeting deadlines, asking for guidance or reassurance with tasks more than usual.



“ You may find the employee is making mistakes, or failing to follow up with clients on time – all tell tale signs there is something going on. You may be able to get a general sense of the pressures within the workplace, and amongst your teams – from increased demands and requirements from clients, or customers which should be taken into account when you're assessing if you have an issue with burnout. ”

**Dr Tarun Gupta, Chief Medical Officer,  
Legal & General UK Protection**

## Can data driven targets and KPI's help highlight the issue and give a starting point of measurement?

With burnout being a growing concern within the workplace, it's important that you have the correct measures in place to firstly create a baseline understanding of what is going on within your organisation, then for you to actively monitor your progress against this.

Let's explore some of the things you can look to implement.



### Wellbeing surveys

Most organisations will conduct an overall survey to the workforce at least once a year, with only a couple of questions focusing purely on wellbeing. Whilst these surveys will help give a feel for organisational culture, it's important to ensure there's a focus around wellbeing too. Conducting a wellbeing survey will allow you to collect that baseline data, which will help inform your strategy. Ensure that questions are covered around various areas of wellbeing, including physical, mental, social, and financial, as this will help build you overall picture. Questions around happiness and productivity in a normal working day will help you understand the overall feeling within the organisation, and help manage presenteeism.



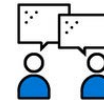
### Pulse surveys

These are a great way to continually test the ongoing thinking of the overall wellbeing survey. These may be sent out following an intervention to understand the impact, and the understanding of this, meaning you are able to collect real-time data on the value it has brought to your organisation. These may be sent out at regular intervals throughout the year, which allows for continual monitoring across a set period.



### Listening groups

By setting up listening groups it can allow for employees to share their views around topics such as workload, team morale and collective work towards creating solutions which they've been empowered to contribute towards. Ensuring that these are set out in a mutual space, with upmost confidentiality around concerns being raised is imperative for these to work, but can bring great insight into what is going on within your workplace. Consideration should be given to who chairs these sessions, as if there is low morale within the workplace, teams like management or even HR may be seen to be blockers to the conversation. Consider external support, which can help with opening up conversations within these groups.



### Stakeholder sessions

By holding sessions with individual key stakeholders, it will enable to you understand their thinking and objectives for the organisation, but can often highlight where the gaps in perception are as well. With this, you can feedback the findings from the surveys or listening groups, to ensure overall buy in to support the wellbeing of your employees.

There are a few metrics that should be closely monitored to understand if you have an issue with burnout, but also can help influence your thinking of support and interventions too.



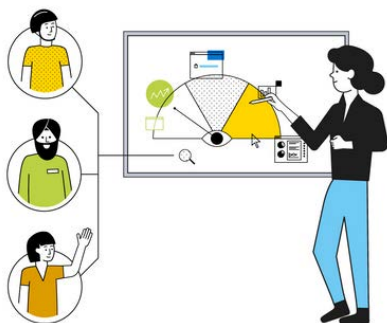
## Absence

Reviewing organisational absence is a great way to get an understanding of what is going on within the organisation. You will be able to identify if you have key areas, or teams, who are taking time off sick, and you will also be able to identify the reason for absence too. From this, you will be able to put targeted health improvement programmes in place, but also focus efforts into the areas of concern.



## Productivity

Some organisations have a time sheet filling process whereby this is cross charged to clients, which can help with identifying where time is being spent, and if it is productive or not. Having open dialogue with people managers will also help you get a grasp on the levels of productivity within the workplace. If they're not where you would expect them to be, then further investigation can be done in order to understand why.



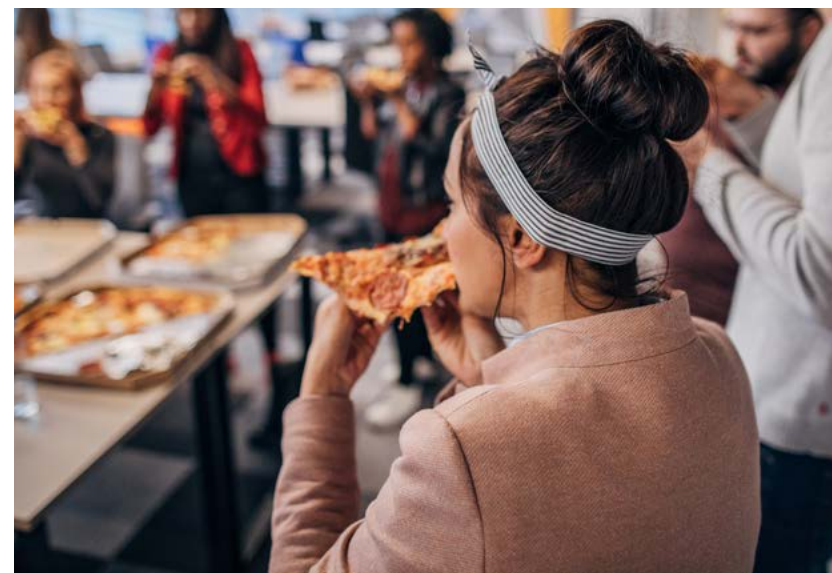
## Retention rates

Reviewing your attraction and retention rates is imperative to understand if you have a natural level of turnover, or if you have an issue with people leaving the organisation. This coupled with collecting exit interviews will help you get a sense of the reasons why people are leaving then be able to put interventions in place to reduce this.



## Grievances

Keeping track of the number of grievances from employees your business receives on a regular basis (weekly, monthly), as well as the types of grievances your company are receiving can be a good indicator of burnout, and the contributing factors to this. Grievances may point to a deeper issue concerning workplace culture etc. as well.



# How to address burnout

You need a three pronged approach, focusing on each of the following:



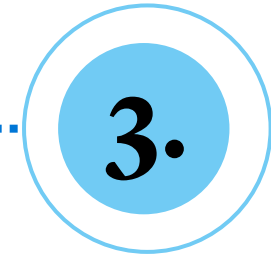
## Prevention

Job design/ training (including for line managers – resilience and mental strength training for individuals)/ education on spotting the signs of burnout/ addressing negative culture/ ensure psychological safety.



## Early intervention

The role of line managers in spotting the early signs of burnout and signposting to relevant support – stress monitoring/ modern working patterns can mean more employees are remote and not visible meaning they are isolated and can internalise issues.



## Active rehabilitation

Once diagnosed with burnout support employees to get better/ suggest workplace adjustments – be aware of the equality act/ look at how occupational health can help along with stress assessments and the use of vocational rehabilitation hand in hand with the above.



# What company culture do you want?

## Culture must run through the veins of a business

Your internal policies, processes and culture must align with what you say you will do, and align with how you support both your internal team of people and also your external customers. It can't just be a box ticking exercise, as this isn't sustainable and employee's will quickly see through this. It is therefore important that you consider the following at the same time as looking at your culture:

### **Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)**

Much of the focus in this area falls on the E and the G but what about Social? The McKinsey Health Institute recently became a founding member of the World Wellbeing Movement. A lot of the dialogue here is around how to redefine ESG, with health being a core element of this.

### **Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (E, D & I)**

Employees and job seekers increasingly view EDI as a key indicator of a good company culture, according to recent reports. Everyone should get access to equal opportunities within your business and any behaviours or people not supporting this should be called to account.

Inclusivity incorporates an organisational system where management and colleagues foster a fair and psychologically safe work environment for all employees to be themselves and meaningfully contribute at work. Sustainability involves promotion of work, that enables a healthy work/life balance, including a manageable workload and schedule, as well as opportunities for growth and development that supports work engagement and improves job satisfaction.

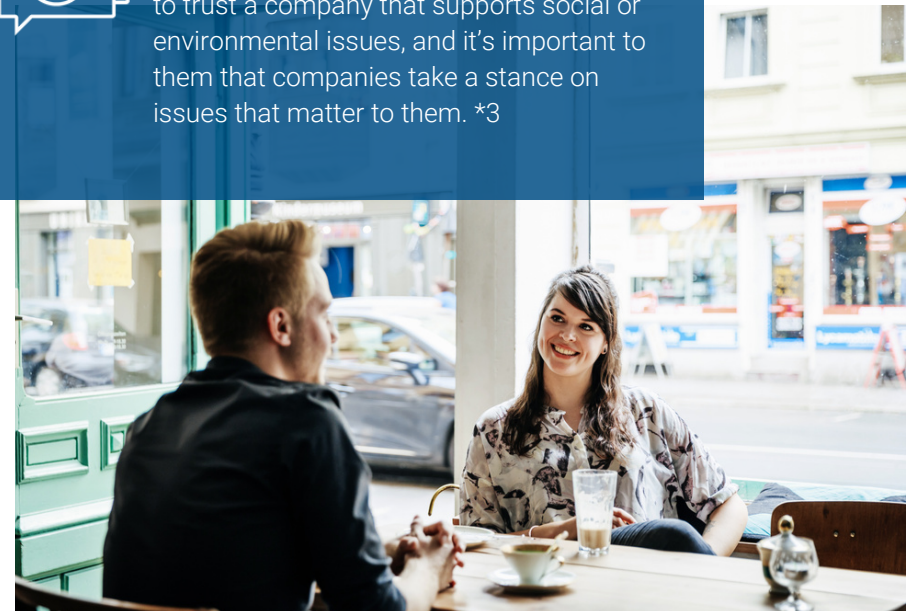
Thinking about the composition of your board and leadership, and creating a safe space for any colleague to feel comfortable - that's a vital step toward inclusion. And that means thinking through leadership and diversity at the highest level and taking an expanded definition of diversity, equity, and inclusion to explicitly include neurodiversity.

Often, what happens is that a company defines inclusion too narrowly: "We have our diversity and inclusion strategy, there's a specific officer who will be in charge of it, and it goes here within the organisation." Instead, take a broader approach. Think across the whole workplace about certain setups, workflows, and other ways teams might be set up, that could promote inclusiveness and minimise conscious and unconscious bias. Creating a supportive workplace with widely available flexibility and customisation is a significant way to help people with mental-health conditions overcome barriers.



### **Did you know?**

61% of millennials in the UK are more likely to trust a company that supports social or environmental issues, and it's important to them that companies take a stance on issues that matter to them. \*3



## **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**

Potentially a pre-cursor to ESG, CSR can support your overall culture in terms of ensuring it links everything together, including values and purposes – looking both externally and internally. This will enable sustainable mental health and wellbeing of everyone in the organisation.

### **The right culture**

Creating a business, a space where people want to join and stay, and encourage others to do the same is the goal, but what features might that have? We have outlined some of them below.

### **Dual 'agreement' between employer and employee**

There should be a wellbeing partnership between employer and employee. There must be input from both parties for positive wellbeing and culture within a business.

### **Caring**

Holistic wellbeing must be at the heart of organisational purpose, values, culture and business strategy.

### **Effective Leadership**

That should have the following attributes: strong, collaborating, open, trustworthy, fair with clear mission and known values.

### **Open communication**

In all aspects with transparency where possible. Regular cascading of information, regular updates, and regular access access to leadership, HR, and the executive board.

### **Your people and their roles**

Must be given autonomy, trust, clear objectives, escalation points, valued, appropriately rewarded and recognised, enabled to thrive, learning and development opportunities for constant individual growth.

## **Sense of belonging**

Psychologically safe, be your true self, part of something, common goals and objectives that you actively contribute to

## **Innovative**

Open to suggestions, constantly seeking to improve what they do and how they do it, collaboration opportunities. Please use the check list in Appendix I and download to do a self assessment of your own business culture.





# Wellbeing strategy



# Next steps - once you've addressed a negative culture and potential burnout issues

Once you have addressed the overall culture of the business, reducing the risk of burnout in employees, then you can push on with creating or building on your health and wellbeing strategy.

## Why would I want a health and wellbeing strategy?

There are numerous reasons why a business should have a health and wellbeing strategy. These include:

1. Having employees who are fit and well is good for business. It can reduce absenteeism, improve presenteeism, increase productivity and create staff loyalty.
2. People looking for their next job, their next employer, will look at how a company supports the health and wellbeing of their people. It's important to them and can be critical to recruiting the talent you want in your business.
3. It can help you retain your staff. Employees know that their employer has a duty of care to offer satisfactory support, with 86% stating they would leave a role if their wellbeing was not actively supported \*2
4. It's also just the right thing to do and could save someone from reaching a crisis point, and needing more serious support and intervention in the future.



### Did you know?

Investing in workplace mental health support offers an average return of £5 for every £1 spent\*1

## It's so complex, where do I even begin?

One online tool you could use is the free 'Business in the Community Workwell Self-Assessment'. It's designed to suit diverse organisations of different sizes, sectors and varying levels of maturity and it's a measurement tool for evaluating your organisational wellbeing journey. It's been developed by a group of wellbeing practitioners and is easy to use.

[BITC workwell model](#)

[BITC workwell self assessment tool](#)



BITC Workwell model

Understand your starting point/ your base line. Appropriate for all organisations, it's free and includes national benchmark scores and then you can track your improvements

The Workwell self assessment model gives you:

- A baseline measurement that you can then review progress against.
- A way to identify which areas to focus actions and investments on for the benefit of your people.
- The ability to benchmark your wellbeing performance alongside the wider UK business community.

Alternatively, you can seek advice and support from an independent consultancy specialising in wellbeing.

A reputable consultancy will likely:

- Arrange a detailed discussion of your challenges and requirements.
- Review the options and prepare recommendations for your consideration.
- Help you to place any insurance you may require, or purchase any services you agree are beneficial.
- Be available for support and guidance throughout the year.
- Re-visit your options at the next renewal, and each year thereafter.

Some may charge you a fee for this work, and others will only charge when you take the advice given and place business through them.

## Recommended reading

[Mental health and employers: Refreshing the case for investment](#)

[Employees leave jobs without wellbeing support](#)

[The importance of ESG and company culture](#)



# How to contact us

We're a leading provider of Group Protection cover in the UK with over 90 years of expertise and knowledge. We looked after almost 7,200 group protection policies and provided protection to almost 2 million employees at the end of 2023.

If you'd like to know more about our support material for burnout, our Wellbeing Advisory Board, or about how our Group Protection proposition can support the wellbeing of your business, please contact your account manager, or you can contact us on the following details.

## For Employers



Call us: 0345 072 0751

Lines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm  
(we may record and monitor calls)



Email: [employer.services@landg.com](mailto:employer.services@landg.com)

## For Advisers

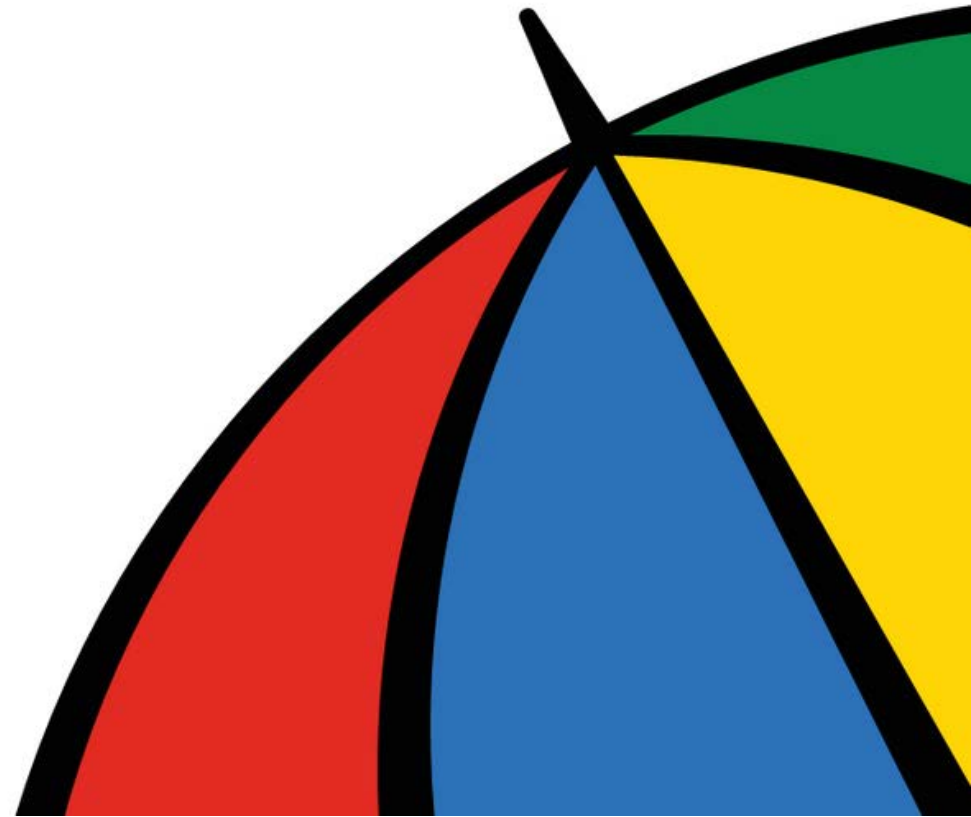


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# Appendix I - Company check list to create great business culture



Creating a business, a space where people want to join and stay and encourage others to do the same is the goal but what features might that have?

Feature	Reason	Questions	Red/amber/green	Action required
<b>Caring</b>	Holistic wellbeing should be at the heart of organisational culture to show you care about employees	<p>Does your business purpose include wellbeing?</p> <p>Do your values align with your purpose?</p> <p>Does wellbeing feature in your business strategy?</p> <p>Do you have appropriate sickness and absence policies in place?</p> <p>Do you offer wellbeing days? For example, Volunteering days, duvet days?</p>		

Feature	Reason	Questions	Red/amber/green	Action required
<p><b>Effective leadership</b></p>	<p>Leading effectively with a fair approach to wellbeing is essential to building the right culture</p>	<p>Do you look at behaviour competencies as well as performance when recruiting new managers or promoting internal staff to management positions?</p> <p>Do your business leaders have the right training on how to be strong, open, trustworthy and fair?</p> <p>How do you invest in your leadership team and in managers?</p> <p>How are your leaders encouraged to collaborate with each other and with colleagues?</p> <p>Are leaders and managers aware of your mission, values and purposes? Do their job function align with these?</p>		
<p><b>Open communication</b></p>	<p>This covers all aspects of communications including clarity and transparency (as far as is possible)</p>	<p>How does information get cascaded in your organisation?</p> <p>Do you provide all staff with regular updates?</p> <p>Do staff get the opportunity to access Exec team/Board/HR members?</p> <p>Can staff give their feedback for review? How do you do this?</p>		

Feature	Reason	Questions	Red/amber/green	Action required
<p><b>Your people and their roles</b></p>	<p>People need to feel like they belong. They are clear on how their contribution to the business helps it to achieve its goals</p>	<p>Do all staff have clearly documented objectives which are SMART?</p> <p>Are there known escalation points for staff?</p> <p>Do their job roles allow autonomy?</p> <p>Are people appropriately rewarded and recognised outside of usual salary and annual bonus scheme? How do you do this?</p> <p>Opportunities for continued growth and development exist for all staff. How?</p> <p>How do we instil that everyone is valued and trusted?</p>		
<p><b>Sense of belonging</b></p>	<p>People need to feel psychologically safe at work in order to produce their best work and feel like they are actively contributing to the business and its results</p>	<p>How do you ensure people can bring their true self to work?</p> <p>What are your E, D &amp; I policies?</p> <p>How do you share our overall goals as a business with our people? Are these clearly defined and documented?</p>		

Feature	Reason	Questions	Red/amber/green	Action required
<p><b>Innovative</b></p>	<p>People doing the job can often identify ways to improve things and it is wise to give them the opportunity to share their ideas for innovation and improvement</p>	<p>As a business, are you open to new suggestions? How do your staff get to share their ideas?</p> <p>What opportunities exist for collaboration on projects?</p>		
<p><b>Clarity of employer/employee relationship</b></p>	<p>For culture to be great, people held accountable for their behaviour, need a collective and systemic approach involving both employer and employee</p>	<p>What does your employee onboarding process look like?</p> <p>Do you have a documented mutually beneficial agreement between employer and employee? This would highlight the expectations of each on the other.</p> <p>Are exit interviews carried out as standard and do the results get reviewed regularly for trends and patterns?</p>		
<p><b>Partnership</b></p>	<p>To create maximum impact need to ensure good culture extends to your wider stakeholder and supply chain groups</p>	<p>Do your values and purpose extend to the agreements you put in place for your supply chain?</p> <p>How do you measure the success of your relationships with key stakeholders?</p> <p>On what basis does the Board agree new partnerships with external companies?</p>		

Feature	Reason	Questions	Red/amber/green	Action required
<b>Accountability and transparency</b>	You need to use measurement to ensure that things are being done right. This will also promote transparency as data may need to be reported on externally as well as internally.	<p>Are you clear on what you report on and why?</p> <p>Who do you report to and who sees the data being produced? Is data included in your annual report for example.</p> <p>Do you have a baseline understanding of your wellbeing status for the business?</p>		