

# Employee Wellbeing

Sustainable. Positive. Actionable.

Our focus on wellbeing emphasises positive and sustainable change that represents an investment in future success.



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# Introduction

Employee wellbeing is at the very core of what we do. We work at the intersection of wellbeing, productivity and professional effectiveness, three mutually supporting themes. Our mission is to help people move from merely surviving work to actually thriving at work and a focus on wellbeing certainly contributes to that.

Frequently misunderstood or over-simplified, workplace wellbeing predicts crucial organisational metrics like turnover, productivity and employer brand. It needs to be on the agenda for every senior leader.

At WorkLifePsych, we want to give employees and organisations the tools they need to improve and maintain workplace wellbeing – using evidence-based approaches – in an accessible and actionable way. Read on to find out more about our approach and how we can help you and your employees attain your wellbeing goals.

## Defining workplace wellbeing

We take a holistic perspective when it comes to wellbeing. It goes far beyond the posters, slogans and good intentions you've probably read about elsewhere. As psychologists, we know the importance of mental wellbeing and its link to productivity and effectiveness in the workplace. And of course, the interface – and interaction – between our mind and body is both complex and incredibly important.

So, when it comes to supporting employee wellbeing at work, we place great importance on moving beyond placing fruit in the canteen or giving everyone a step-counter.

Wellbeing encompasses our emotional experiences, our thought processes, our capacity to deal with the challenges that come our way, and how we navigate the interface between our professional and personal lives. Wellbeing is the choices we make each day, our understanding of the impact of our behaviour and a dedicated focus on sustainable ways of working.

We want to give everyone the tools they need to improve and maintain their wellbeing in ways that are supported by scientific evidence and contribute to long-lasting and sustainable change.

## The business case for investing in wellbeing

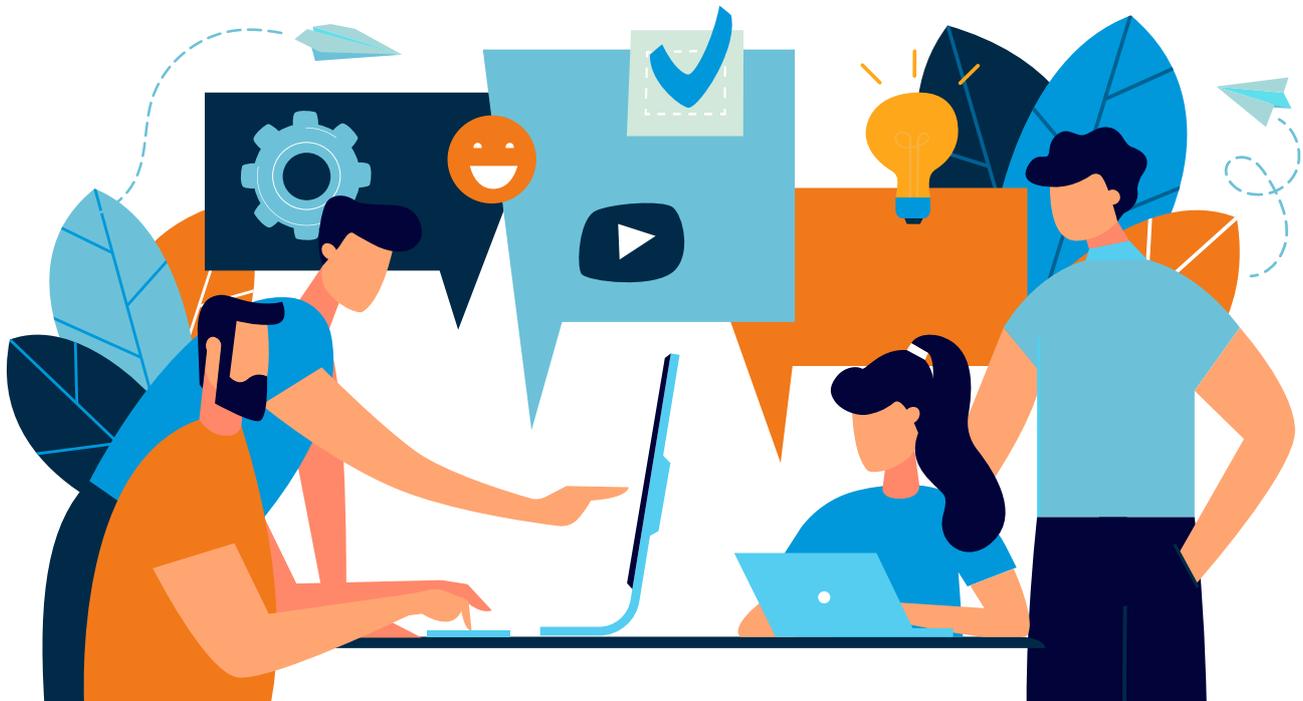


The evidence for how work can negatively impact our wellbeing has been piling up for more than half a century, yet still some organisational stakeholders need convincing that it's worthy of their focus. The UK's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) summarised their health and safety at work statistics in 2018, highlighting the following:

- There were 1.4 million work-related ill health cases in 2017/18
- In 2017/18, there were 0.6 million cases of work-related stress, anxiety or depression
- They estimate a combined cost of work-related ill health to be £9.7 billion
- 26.8 million days were lost to work-related ill health in 2017/18
- Of these, 15.4 million working days were lost due to stress, anxiety or depression

These few data points underline that wellbeing at work is a serious business and should be a key focus for organisations. Additionally, prevention is better than cure. This means an investment in ongoing wellbeing activities, to support employee health before illness kicks in, bringing with it the inevitable disruption and costs.

# How we can help



When it comes to wellbeing at work, we can help you and your employees from a number of complementary perspectives.

- **Strategic guidance and support:** insight, research and guidance when it comes to building a culture of workplace wellbeing, selecting suppliers and solutions and evaluating the impact of wellbeing initiatives.
- **Stress management solutions:** quantifying the job-related stress problem, identifying appropriate interventions, training employees to work sustainably.
- **Healthy work-life balance support:** identifying individual, team-level and organisational work-life balance challenges, providing training and development.
- **Building and maintaining resilience:** quantifying resilience from a joined-up and evidence-based perspective, providing guidance on an individual and team level and training to support the development and maintenance of resilience.
- **Development of psychological flexibility:** coaching and training to develop the thinking and behavioural skills associated with psychological flexibility – a key predictor of resilience, productivity and job satisfaction.
- **Building awareness of mental health at work:** facilitated workshops to demystify mental health and ensure people can speak up about this crucial workplace topic.

# 1. Strategic guidance and support

Before diving in and launching a range of well-intentioned initiatives to improve wellbeing, we can help you adopt a strategic perspective, quantify your challenges and identify interventions most likely to have a positive impact.

We'll start with clarifying your problem, taking a measure and using this data to formulate a way forward. We can even help you evaluate the impact of these initiatives on employee wellbeing – you'll want to calculate your return on investment, after all.



## Clarifying your priorities

We can work with you to help clarify which aspects of wellbeing you'd like to work on, how this fits in with other people-focused initiatives and more general organisational strategy. We start by asking the question "What's the problem you're trying to solve?". We can work with you to better understand the presenting issues, review possible interventions and bring the scientific evidence to bear on any exploration of next steps.

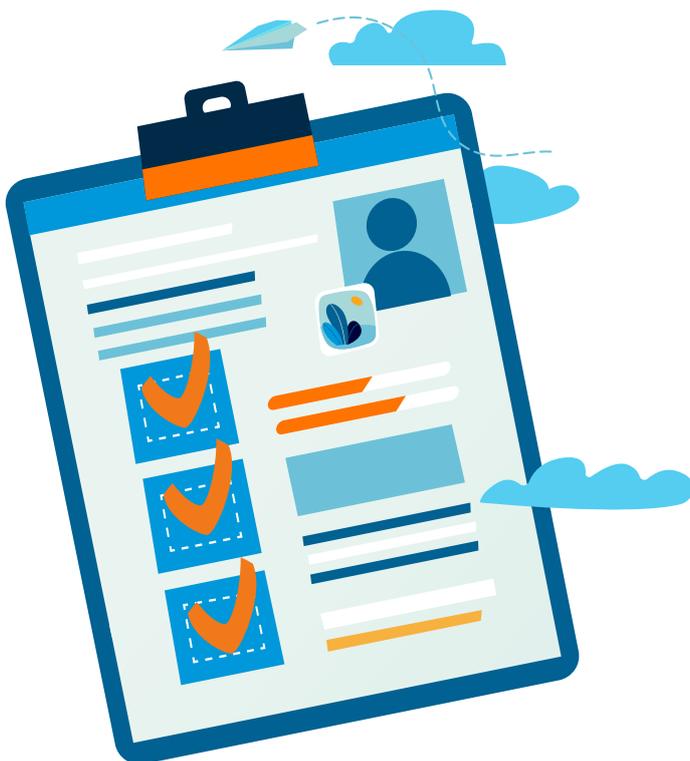
Aligning wellbeing initiatives with your mission, vision and values can help them be better understood by your internal audience.

## Quantifying the challenges

It's important to take a measure of what's going on when it comes to wellbeing. Terminology like 'stress' and 'resilience' can often be mis-used, even with the best will in the world. We can use established scientific measures to quantify the wellbeing challenges and issues present in your organisation, for example, or facilitate focus groups to better understand the employee perspective.

## Evaluating the impact of interventions

When you've made an investment in improving the wellbeing of your employees, you want to know how well it has achieved its aims. We can work with you to evaluate the impact of your wellbeing initiatives, using a range of measures and approaches, each one designed to withstand the scrutiny of your senior stakeholders – and allowing you to demonstrate how your organisation is making working life better for employees.



## 2. Stress awareness and management



Simply put, when we believe our resources to deal with the challenges we face are insufficient, we experience stress. It may be a brief episode, down to an unmanageable workload, or it may be a chronic experience, resulting from the fundamentals of how our job is designed.

Whatever its cause, stress damages our mental and physical wellbeing, impacts productivity, increases turnover and costs the national economy hundreds of millions of pounds every year. We can support individuals, teams and your entire organisation by bringing a robust and evidence-based approach to the problem at hand.

### Organisational stress audit

Using scientifically-validated methods, we can turn anecdote into data and allow you to take evidence-based decisions on how to handle stress in the workplace.

You may feel that your organisation has a problem with stress, or have had some feedback via your employee survey. But have you asked the right questions? Do you think everyone has the same understanding and interpretation of what stress actually is? Before investing in stress management initiatives, we can help scientifically quantify your stress problem, identify the root causes and highlight the areas of your organisation that require priority support.

## Coaching for individuals

You may have examples of a few key individuals experiencing work-related stress. We can provide tailored and focused coaching interventions to give them the thinking and behavioural skills to better cope with pressure and setbacks at work.

Based on a model of Psychological Flexibility, the focus of this coaching is moving people from feeling 'stuck' to 'unstuck' and giving them options as to how they respond to challenges around them.

## 'A mind like water' workshop

For teams or colleagues who have a shared experience of work-related stress, we can run our 'Mind like Water' stress management workshop.

This session demystifies job-related stress and explores the mind-body interface, so that delegates understand where their experience of stress comes from. We share a combination of thinking and behavioural skills to help delegates re-appraise pressure and respond to it in a more sustainable and effective way, relying on cognitive and behavioural coping strategies that will benefit them in the long term.



## Bespoke team development sessions

Dealing with workload, relationships, organisational change and other kinds of pressures can be a real challenge for teams. And the challenges can differ from team to team, making one-size-fits-all solutions ineffective.

We can create bespoke sessions and workshops around the needs, demands and goals of your teams, ensuring they learn how to manage local pressures, with an added focus on team interaction, mutual awareness and support. By the end of the session, they'll have an understanding of the sources of stress at work, how they can manage these as a team and how to provide mutual support when in a challenging environment.

## Graduate, Management and Leadership Development

Do you have a graduate, management or leadership development program in your organisation? We can work with your existing content to create interactive, interesting and evidence-based content to give your delegates the insight and skills they need to effectively manage pressure at work.



We have significant experience in creating and running structured development programmes for a variety of clients, and these invariably cover content on managing pressure and avoiding stress. These can be stand-alone workshops, elements added to your existing workshops, or an entire programme based on addressing pressure and improving wellbeing in the workplace.

Our programmes are created on a bespoke basis, taking your values, strategy and culture into account. We can target the content to the audience, ensuring maximum impact and uptake of the information.

### Managing Pressure 101

This 90-minute briefing session explores work-related stress and how to manage it effectively. We cover definitions, origins and impacts of stress, as well as sharing helpful action employees can take to manage stress in a healthier way. This session is perfect for larger groups or where logistics mean that time away from the workplace needs to be kept to a minimum.

### Mindful Moments 101

A practical introduction to the health benefits of mindfulness practice. Research illustrates the benefits of mindfulness when it comes to stress and wellbeing more generally. This ninety-minute session introduces delegates to practical ways to adopt a more mindful approach at work and in life more generally. We cover the principles of mindfulness and work through a series of practical exercises, exposing delegates to different ways of developing their focus.

### 3. Supporting a healthy work-life balance



The interface between the workplace and home is frequently a source of difficulty and stress. Its subjective nature means that one-size-fits all policies and rules rarely work for the majority of employees – sometimes even removing the flexibility they need.

As experts in the work-life interface, we take a different perspective. It's not about 'balance', it's not about just two areas of our life and it's not about reaching a static, perfect outcome. Dealing with the demands of work and home in an ongoing, dynamic activity and so any training or coaching should reflect that.

We emphasise the need to reflect on roles, goals, values, responsibilities and workload, as well as the 'must do's' and 'nice to haves' of life. Our support gives employees a personalised approach to help them navigate work-life challenges, based on their unique circumstances, values and personality.

#### Coaching for individuals

Work-life challenges are among the top five reasons people approach our team for coaching. It might be an overspill of workload from work to home, an overspill of worry and emotion from work to home or even personal issues making life at work difficult. The root causes can be in how people manage and prioritise their workload, how they utilise technology or something as fundamental as their self-concept.

We can work with individuals to provide them the skills to coach themselves through work-life challenges, tailoring goals and outcomes for their individual circumstances and requirements.



### ‘Work-life fit’ workshop

This one-day workshop examines the work-life interface from a contemporary and scientific perspective. This interface between work and home can be a source of immense stress. Especially when we view it as a competition between work and home or striving for a perfect balance between the two.

However, when we instead work on navigating the challenges and design a work-life fit around our job and our personal life, we can leave behind outdated notions of ‘balance’ and engage with our multiple life roles and the work they bring with them in a much more successful and dynamic way.

Delegates will leave this workshop with an understanding of their preferred work-life style, tactics and techniques for minimising unwanted ‘overspill’ from one domain to the other and a plan for implementing a work-life fit that is unique to them.

### Bespoke team development sessions

Certain challenges to a healthy and sustainable work-life interface come from how work and teams are organised. It may be due to shift-work, supporting clients and colleagues in varying time-zones or a requirement to be ‘on call’ for serious incidents.

Regardless of the challenges, we can design and run bespoke team sessions where the specific elements of the work environment require it – focused on the needs, demands and goals of your teams.

By the end of the session, they’ll have a solid understanding of the challenges to their individual and collective work-life interface, how they can manage these as a team and how to provide mutual support when in a challenging environment.

### Work-life 101

This 90-minute session covers the essentials of work-life balance, and is perfect for larger audiences or in situations where logistics make an all-day workshop challenging. It represents an excellent and thought-provoking examination of the work-life interface, sharing tips and approaches delegates can start to implement immediately.

## 4. Building resilience

Resilience is a personal attribute that speaks to persistence in the face of challenges and setbacks and healthy ways of dealing with difficulties. It comprises both psychological and behavioural component and impacts productivity and wellbeing. It should be a focus for every organisation.



### RQi assessment and feedback

The RQi is a robust and evidence-based assessment of resilience. It takes a holistic perspective on resilience, examining both the psychological and behavioural aspects of this attribute, highlight strengths and flagging possible areas of concern. We can provide an assessment and feedback service for your employees, providing them with a clear and actionable report and personalised insight into how they can contribute to their own improved resilience.

### Coaching for individuals

Whether a recent challenge has taken its toll or in preparation for challenges yet to come, a focus on coaching for resilience is crucial for so many high performing professionals. Our coaching utilises evidence-based approaches to boost self-awareness, identify helpful habits and support psychological flexibility – a key predictor of resilience.

### Bespoke team development workshops

When it comes to team-level support, we can create and run engaging workshops to both educate and skill-up your employees. Your team may have been through some challenging times or may be facing a period of uncertainty or difficulty. Either way, our focus will be on supporting the thinking styles and behaviours that lead to resilient responses.

By the end of the session, they'll have a great understanding of resilience as a concept, clarity on the local challenges to their individual and collective resilience, how they can manage these as a team and how to provide mutual support when in a challenging environment. These sessions can also be augmented with the inclusion of an RQi assessment and feedback element in advance of the workshop, to provide individuals with their own report and action plan for boosting resilience.

## Fit for the Future': Developing a resilient outlook

This day-long workshop focuses on identifying appropriate thinking and behavioural responses to challenges and setbacks and building an effective strategy for boosting resilience. Delegates will learn about the 'building blocks' of resilience, the role of thinking and behaviour and the health supporting habits they can easily build into their routines.



This workshop can be augmented with the completion of a Resilience questionnaire (the RQi) and individual feedback, to provide a truly tailored and individual insight into their resilience journey.

## Resilience 101

This ninety-minute session gives delegates an engaging and clear overview of psychological and behavioural resilience. It's perfect for larger groups or where absence from the workplace for longer training is made difficult. This can serve as an excellent introduction for later workshops or team development sessions.

## Sleep 101

Sleep is one of the building blocks of resilience and our wellbeing more generally. But it's also frequently misunderstood. This ninety-minute session demystifies the science of sleep and how it contributes to our wellbeing. We explore strategies for improving sleep duration and quality and the relationship between sleep and psychological and physical wellbeing.

## 5. Developing psychological flexibility



Psychological Flexibility is a set of thinking and behavioural skills which help us deal with pressure and setbacks in a healthier and more sustainable way. By developing these skills, we become more aware of the present moment, are less likely to be led by unhelpful emotions and can deal more effectively with unhelpful thinking patterns, such as a harsh inner critic.

The research base supporting the impact of psychological flexibility on wellbeing, job satisfaction and productivity is impressive. And the good news is, that because they are skills, just about anyone has the capacity to build their psychological flexibility and experience the benefits it brings. As it's based on principles, rather than rules, it's incredibly flexible. And so we can teach people the core skills through one-to-one coaching, formal training courses or indeed add the content to structured development programmes.

## Coaching for psychological flexibility

Coaching someone in the development of their psychological flexibility involves clarifying their personal values, building their capacity to experience discomfort and attend to the here and now, while taking committed action towards meaningful goals. Coachees develop the capacity to take helpful action, regardless of the passing thoughts and emotions they are experiencing at any give moment.

## Training courses in psychological flexibility

### **‘Check your compass’**

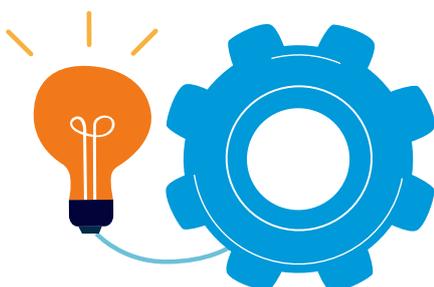
This half-day session gives delegates an accessible introduction to the skills, time to practice each and an emphasis on getting in touch with their values to guide their pursuit of meaningful goals at work. Delegates leave with an action plan for the application of their values and the tools and techniques to adopt a more mindful and focused approach at work.

### **‘Do what matters’**

This course is run over three, ninety-minute sessions across six weeks. This minimises absence from the workplace, allows the training to be slotted in over shorter breaks, while also giving delegates an ample opportunity to practice the skills in between each session. Delegates will learn how to adopt a mindful approach, extract themselves from internal struggles and how to put their values into practice in pursuit of meaningful goals.

### **‘Show up, let go, get moving’**

This day-long workshop represents an excellent deep-dive into all of the skills of psychological flexibility. Delegates will get to practice techniques to increase their self-awareness, to reduce the impact of their unhelpful thoughts and emotions and to put their values into practice on a daily basis. They will learn the role of our thinking and emotions in our inner life and how to gain greater focus on what really matters each day.



## 6. Mental health at work



The increase in awareness of mental health in recent years is a welcome development. But the recent figures from the HSE quoted at the outset of this document also serve to underline just how serious the mental health challenge is in the workplace.

### ‘Think again’ – understanding mental health at work

This one-day workshop focuses on demystifying mental health and increasing delegates’ comfort in speaking about it. We present mental health as a continuum, rather than categories or labels. We explore the origins of common mental health conditions (e.g. depression, anxiety, job-related stress), their prevalence in the population, and the success of various therapeutic interventions.

This is not a therapy workshop, rather an opportunity to focus on facts and have a helpful discussion about everyone’s mental health.



## About WorkLifePsych

Founded in 2014 by Dr. Richard MacKinnon, we're a team of workplace psychologists whose expertise lies in developing people at work. We operate at the intersection of wellbeing, productivity and professional effectiveness and provide coaching, training and structured development programmes.

Our focus on people development reflects both our skill set and our passion. We've coached leaders, managers, graduates and individual contributors across and globe and in a range of organisational sectors. We love seeing people make progress towards their goals and hearing how our support has made all the difference in their working lives.

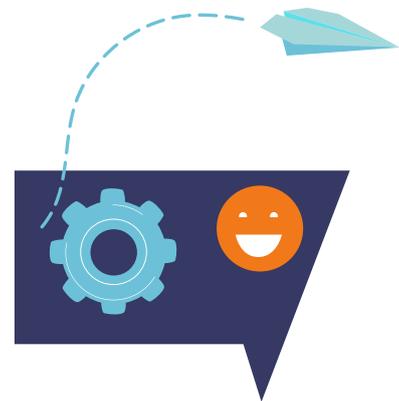
As psychologists, we're best placed to combine our deep knowledge of workplace psychology with cutting edge approaches to get you the best results. We avoid fads and fashions and focus on what actually works.

You can find out all about our activities and see the profiles of our team by visiting our website at [worklifepsych.com](http://worklifepsych.com).

Alternatively, get in touch to find out more about how we can help:

[info@worklifepsych.com](mailto:info@worklifepsych.com)

**+44 (0)20 7947 4417**



## What our clients say

*Our managers have gained confidence and are more cheerful as they go about their work – despite the day to day challenges of management.*

*We are extremely pleased with the programme and its impact and wouldn't hesitate to recommend Richard and WorkLifePsych. They have exceeded our expectations.*

Conall Lavery, CEO, Real World Analytics

*We asked Richard to run a few of his 'Psychological Flexibility 101' sessions and 55 of my colleagues signed up for the initial workshops. I was really impressed with their feedback and their comments in the brief online survey we used afterwards illustrated just how keen they were to learn more and start putting this all into practice.*

Lorraine O'Sullivan, Group People Director, Dentsu Aegis Network Ireland

*Having observed the delivery of one of the workshops, I would say that Richard's style engaged and challenged the delegates. He responded well to all their questions and provided feedback and support throughout the various practical components of the workshop. He delivered a workshop that met our needs perfectly.*

Louise Morris, Learning & Development Manager, Certas Energy