

Workshop 4 – Keeping the workforce healthy and happy

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These notes are intended for use in establishing the strategic direction for ‘Healthy Workplaces’ in North Yorkshire and to support the North Yorkshire Strategic Growth plan alongside the other growth plan ‘enablers’. It also supports the ‘Live Well’ Theme of the North Yorkshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2020.

The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2016 highlighted the health of the working age population and the important of creating healthy workplaces and maintaining a healthy workforce.



Sources: Adult Psychiatric Morbidity in England, 2007; Health and wellbeing at work: a survey of employees, 2014; Cimpean & Drake 2011; Naylor et al 2012; OECD, 2014; Labour Force Survey, various years

Why is this important?

Since our working lives span about half of our years, we considered 'working well' and the impact of our working environment on the health of our workforce. Employers can have a major influence on an individual sense of wellbeing, which can have a multitude of benefits for the organisation as a whole. Employees can participate more and engage with management to improve the health outcomes for their workplace.

What is wellbeing?

"It's a state of mind; healthy, happy, assured, comfortable"

The term 'wellbeing' covers many aspects of the way we feel about our lives, jobs and relationships. Our feelings of wellbeing at work are influenced by our day to day experiences with colleagues and management and how purposeful we feel about the work that we do.

Why invest in employee Wellbeing?

The current climate of austerity and change is causing distress and discomfort within many workforces, particularly in sectors already under pressure. Negative and unstructured working environments can destabilise and lead to demotivated and unhappy workforces. In contrast, emotional and personal well-being leads to motivated, productive employees who contribute to the local economy and shape positive growth in the wider community. An organisation which values their workforce, invests time and effort in their employees wellbeing, working in partnership with them to discuss improvements; thus creating loyalty and opportunities for the individual, the organisation and the local community. A number of studies point to the potential benefits for employers who choose to invest in employee wellbeing, such as better performance, reduced costs and higher creativity. This results in outcomes such as better customer experience, reduced absenteeism and increased productivity.

Developing a Happy Healthy Workforce for North Yorkshire is a reflection of the rising priority this has been given within the various partnerships across North Yorkshire, including the local economic partnerships and local health and wellbeing partnerships. It is listed as one of **7 Growth Plan Enablers** for North Yorkshire. Our aim is to present this report from the workshop as a first draft of a **North Yorkshire Workplace Wellbeing Strategy** encouraging further joint work with employers and employees.

One of the outputs from this engagement **with stakeholders** was to **create a shared vision**.

Vision "A healthy workplace is everyone's business"

Co-operating in North Yorkshire for Better Workplace Wellbeing.

We will respect work/life balance, recognise each individuals needs and embrace new technologies and flexible working practices to create a healthy working culture championed by skilled and professional employees and employers alike. We will listen without judgement, providing support to those who need it, and create a culture

of co-operation, partnership and encouragement that ensures a healthy workplace is everyone's business.

Mission Statement

"To motivate cultural change throughout the North Yorkshire workforce, encouraging structured support, improving health and inspiring productivity".

To work together to meet the holistic health and wellbeing needs of employees working in the North Yorkshire to enhance the working experience; leading to greater productivity, higher engagement and employees who flourish both in and outside of the working environment. Improve the health and wellbeing of the working population to improve life expectancy and satisfaction, and improve productivity for businesses in the area.

- Promote a culture of wellbeing to organisations to ensure sustainable practices.
- Help organisations to achieve recognition through the Workplace Wellbeing Charter.
- Integrate Five Ways to Wellbeing into workplaces through promotion of the WWC.
- Make specific services which support health and wellbeing more accessible.
- Create networks, share good practice and improve links with other organisations.
- Evaluate the success of the strategy and outcomes to establish if objectives have been met, therefore demonstrating success to share with others and secure future interest in the project.
- Consult with employers regularly, avoiding paternalistic approaches.

Objectives

- Commitment to a long term strategy for North Yorkshire's Workplace Wellbeing agenda.
- Provide a strategy that makes workplace wellbeing everyone's responsibility.
- Work with local services to further utilise and develop what is already in place, e.g. by raising awareness and clearly communicating about services on offer.
- Create a culture of health and wellbeing within businesses in NY.
- To provide structured assistance to organisations and its employees in order to share good practice, providing pro-active and reactive wellbeing services, ensuring any change is sustainable and proportionate to the needs of the business or organisation following a health needs assessment.
- Recognise diversity in order to be more inclusive in the workplace, so that employees with differing abilities, cultural and ethical needs can work.
- Support key documents that aim to improve the wellbeing of the NY population, where appropriate, through the Workplace Wellbeing Strategy.
- To integrate the provision of support into all aspects of work life in order to engender a resilient, healthy, happy and educated work force.
- To encourage discussion around health and wellbeing in order to raise awareness and reduce stigma.
- Encourage employers to demonstrate strong leadership by recognising their own needs and thereby creating a culture that supports workplace health and wellbeing.
- Allow employees the time to consider their wellbeing, recognising that employers/employees shouldn't be excluded from accessing wellbeing services.

- To help employers introduce modern, flexible working practices and new technologies to create an innovative and progressive workplace.