

# How to build a wellbeing strategy

A toolkit for SME employers



**WOMEN'S  
WORKPLACE  
WELLNESS**

# Why you need a wellbeing strategy

Investing in the wellbeing of your staff has multiple benefits. Not only does it improve your employees' work experience, but it also positively impacts your business's success and longevity.

Investing in a comprehensive wellbeing strategy not only mitigates costs but also:

- Fosters a positive work environment
- Enhances morale
- Improves your bottom line ([investing in wellbeing support has an ROI of 5:1](#))
- Boosts employee productivity
- Reduces absenteeism, presenteeism, and staff turnover
- Enhances your reputation
- Helps recruitment and retention ([75% of employees expect wellbeing support](#)).

## Did you know?

Workplace stress and burnout costs the UK [£42-45 billion annually](#).

And...

Businesses that don't support women's wellbeing at work cost the UK economy [£20.2 billion a year](#).

# Wellbeing for SMEs

It is more important than ever for SMEs to invest in workplace wellbeing support. With the rise of flexible/hybrid working, wellbeing support allows employers to engage with their staff outside of the office and create a positive work environment that works for everyone.

Deloitte has found that, in SMEs:

- 1/10 employees face dismissal or demotion for disclosing a problem
- Only ¼ of employees feel comfortable formalising mental health concerns
- Only 44% of employees are open to discussing mental health with their line manager.



Wellbeing is  
not a tick-box.

## Wellbeing challenges for SMEs:

In 2023, 87% of employees faced at least one mental health challenge. These can include:

- High stress
- Burnout
- Work-life balance
- Loneliness
- Pressure
- Workload
- Economic worries
- Uncertainty
- Bullying, harassment, and toxicity.

# Building a wellbeing strategy for your staff

Your wellbeing strategy needs to take into account:

- What support you offer
- How you present it to your team
- Whether your team gets value out of it

## Your strategy can include:

- **Mental health support** (apps, EAPs, counselling services)
- **Wellbeing services** (online tools, informative webinars, newsletters)
- **Wellness programmes** (meditation, fitness, nutrition, yoga, mindfulness)
- **Policies** (flexible working, menopause, mental health, anti-harassment)
- **Training** (mental health programmes, resilience workshops, wellbeing seminars)
- **Leadership and management** (workload management, communication training, rewards and recognition, regular feedback).

## Top tip:

Consider whether it is:

- Actionable
- Sustainable
- Measurable.



# Contents: the building blocks for your strategy

- Block 1** Step outside of the office
- Block 2** Does management actually care?
- Block 3** Don't be a one-hit wonder
- Block 4** Accessibility, usefulness, and comprehension
- Block 5** Create a culture of wellbeing
- Block 6** Continued communication
- Block 7** Is it helping? Is it used?  
Could it be better?

# Step outside of the office

Wellbeing support is for your team, so it should be made with your workforce in mind. To thrive at work, you need to thrive at home and vice versa.

Consider how they work and where they work. But, also take into account your staff's lives outside of work, their:

- Families
- Hobbies
- Responsibilities.

## Benefits of a staff first approach:

- Higher employee engagement
- Increased productivity
- Improved satisfaction and retention.

## Did you know?

Women are 7x more likely than men to leave employment due to their caring responsibilities.

## How to tailor your wellbeing policy to your team:

- Conduct surveys
- Analyse trends (staff absence, turnover)
- Customise standard policies
- Seek feedback
- Establish a process to monitor the results.

# Does management actually care?

Change can't happen without support from the top. Management, owners, and directors need to be involved at every stage of your strategy. Without this, any support is an empty gesture that is not supported by the business.

## How to lead your wellbeing initiative:

- Get involved in meetings
- Add your stamp of approval
- Communicate with your team
- Lead by example.

Remember you need to show leadership, but not interference. Wellbeing support needs to be a safe space for your team.

## Did you know?

58% of employees feel unable to discuss mental health in the workplace.

And...

This is even higher for women. 65% of women are uncomfortable discussing their health at work.

# Don't be a one-hit wonder

One-off events have a one-off impact. To create meaningful change, you need to build a schedule and plan. Having goals isn't enough; you need to act on them.

Your plan should include a variety of different initiatives to cover all staff.

## Beware of wellbeing washing

Awareness days are great for raising awareness, but companies can use them to imply that they support an issue without taking action – [see The Women's Organisation's statement for International Women's Day](#).

## Top tip:

Set SMART targets to ensure your aims become a reality.



## Examples of year-round support you can offer:

- Accessible online support services
- A programme of events (webinars, social events)
- Workplace arrangements (regular check-ins, flexible working, office management).



# Accessibility, usefulness, and comprehension

Wellbeing support needs to work for the user. Ultimately it needs to help your team, so you need to ensure it is easy to use, impactful, and supports everyone.

## Questions you should ask:

- Do my staff know how to access support?
- Do they engage with the support offered?
- Do you cover the full spectrum of services they require?



## Top tip:

Wellbeing support is most effective when it includes:

- Prevention
- Promotion
- Detection
- Treatment.

## A wellbeing strategy for everyone:

- Offer a variety of support services
- Include multiple points of access
- Ensure anonymity
- Promote your offerings
- Measure your impact and results.

# Create a culture of wellbeing

Embed your support throughout the entire culture. Make sure it impacts everything, including:

- Management styles
- Meeting structures
- Communication techniques.

Without a culture of wellbeing, your support will be meaningless. Wellbeing is not isolated; it impacts everything your business does.

## How to add wellbeing to every aspect of your business:

- Build self-care into the working day
- Ensure leadership commitment
- Practise clear communication
- Consider workplace arrangements
- Normalise wellbeing and reduce stigma
- Introduce recognition and rewards.

### Top tip:

Review your business practices to ensure they don't put strain on your team.

### One example:

The temperature you set the office can make work uncomfortable for women going through menopause. A simple adjustment can boost your employees productivity and work experience.

# Continued communication

Everyone's wellbeing has ups and downs. Your employees will not need support at the same time or in the same way.

Therefore, it's essential to regularly remind your staff that they have access to support whenever they may require it.

## How to ensure your team knows they are supported:

- Regularly remind your staff via your comms (newsletters, emails, Slack etc)
- Include your wellbeing policy in your employee handbook and recruitment forms
- Advertise your support in your office/as an email footer.



Keep wellbeing at the front of your team's mind.

## Top tip:

The Leafyard team embed gentle reminders into our wellbeing newsletters to make sure everyone knows how to access support.

## One example:

Advertising your support at different times will ensure that your part-time staff, hybrid staff, and staff on maternity can access it too.

# Is it helping? Is it used? Could it be better?

Your support is for your staff, so consider this when you measure its success. Offering support by itself is not a measure of a successful strategy, you need to ensure that it is impacting the people it was designed for - your employees.

## How to monitor and evaluate your support:

- Define your key metrics (we recommend you use SMART goals)
- Collect and analyse data (surveys, feedback forms, focus groups)
- Evaluate participation (at Leafyard, we focus on engagement rates to ensure we're having an impact)
- Benchmark your results against your targets
- Conduct regular reviews (at Leafyard, we produce quarterly reports)
- Take action based on your results.

“Offering support by itself is not a measure of a successful strategy.”

### Top tip:

Leafyard collects quantitative and qualitative data to get a 360-view of how we impact employees' well-being.

# Building your strategy with Leafyard

Leafyard helps SMEs relieve the pressure of building a wellbeing strategy. Through our 360-degree approach to employee wellbeing, we help companies reduce workplace presenteeism, improve productivity, and create a positive workplace culture.

Using behavioural science and an AI framework, our app helps users make meaningful and substantial changes to their habits, minds, and thought patterns.

## Book a demo

Interested in providing mental health support for your employees?

[Book a demo](#)

Leafyard is not just a mental fitness app, we offer our clients...

- Cultural transformation
- Employer branding
- Strategy support.

[Book your consultation  
with Leafyard](#)