Workplace Wellbeing Census 2021

Employers' roadmap to inclusion

The working world has changed substantially over the last few years. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the vast majority of employees had to make changes to how, where and when they work. Jobs have been lost, and industries have had to pivot quickly to survive.

But we are seeing some positives, and progress towards healthier, more balanced workplaces has been accelerated. Employees report that their workload has less of an impact on their mental health, and nearly half (46%) report that wellbeing services have improved over the last year.

However, there’s still some way to go. As we look forward, employers are faced with the opportunity to rebuild their workforce in a more inclusive way, with wellbeing firmly at the heart of their plans. Bupa’s workplace wellbeing experts have laid out the steps employers need to take on the roadmap to inclusion:

1. Getting flexible
   Employers looking for a working culture that’s inclusive to all will attempt to take the advantages of both home working and the physical workplace. Continuing to offer remote working, or flexible hours, can allow employees to work in a way that’s most effective and conducive to their wellbeing.

2. Embracing diversity
   A diverse workplace boasts a number of benefits. Not only does it make for happier working conditions for staff, it also opens them up to new ideas, innovation, and greater understanding of the world their business serves. Diversity needs to be implemented from the top down. C-suites that embrace diversity and integrate it into their business plans moving out of the pandemic will see the effects on the entire workforce. Creating a workforce that is inclusive starts with making sure employees feel represented and respected by their employer.

3. Driving a positive culture
   A good company culture can improve recruitment, engagement and loyalty, which can ultimately make an organisation more successful. This centres around an environment where all employees can bring their full selves to work and can find ways of working that can bring the best out of them. Ensuring tolerance and acceptance are at the top of the to-do list over the coming months, will allow employers to begin to mend some of the cultural issues they may have experienced before the pandemic, and find ways to generate team spirit that are inclusive to everyone.

4. Promoting good health, both physical and mental
   Nearly 72% of the workforce did not take a day off sick last year, which is surprising during a global pandemic. Remote working makes it challenging for employers to manage the issue of presenteeism, and offer support to colleagues who need help with either their mental or physical health. But communicating regularly with managers and making sure they feel comfortable discussing both their physical and mental wellbeing can ensure nobody’s suffering in silence, and can confidently put their health first when they need to.

5. Giving everyone support
   Wellbeing benefits are no longer considered a ‘nice to have’ but rather a necessity for a successful business. Employers that offer packages that help employees grow their careers, obtain a healthy work-life balance and work more productively are now increasingly well recognised. Positively, nearly half (46%) of employees with access to health and wellbeing services feel that their employer’s offering has improved over the last 12 months. But continuing to communicate the wellbeing incentives on offer to colleagues can ensure that this progress is sustained post-pandemic.

The Bupa Workplace Wellbeing Census was published in May 2021. Fieldwork for the study was undertaken on behalf of Bupa by YouGov. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 4,350 employees in private businesses from 13 different sectors, polled between 5 – 25 February 2021. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adult employees (aged 18+).

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