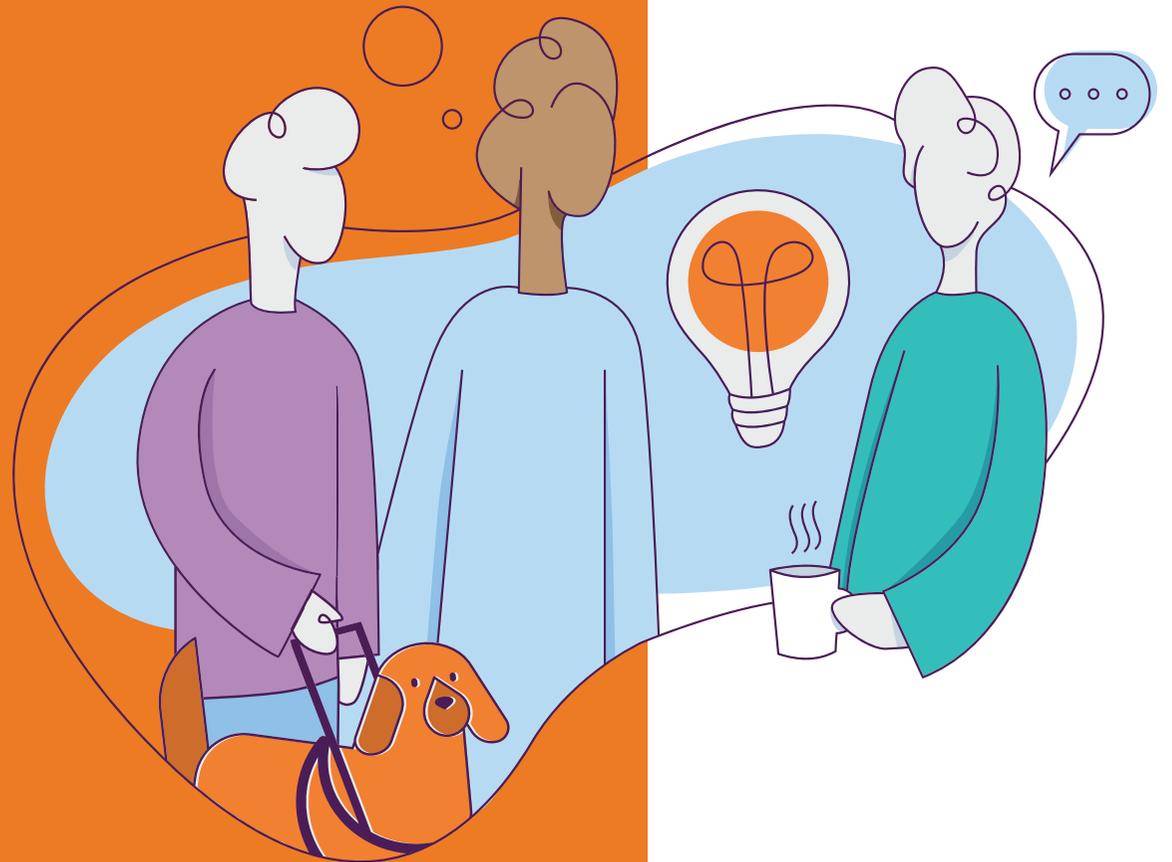




IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING AT WORK



IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES

Most people spend around 40 hours a week at work, either in the workplace or at home. So, it's important to understand the role working plays on wellbeing, and how you can promote positive health and wellbeing where employees feel supported.

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way people work, with over 60% of people in the UK now doing hybrid working. This has had an affect on people's mental health and wellbeing. Some people love the flexibility of homeworking and will want to continue this, and others will be ready to get back in to work, so you should think about how you can look after people's health and wellbeing no matter where they're working.

The small and medium businesses (SMEs) we work with often don't have much budget for responsible business, so we're sharing ten ideas for low-cost health and wellbeing initiatives (and a few at the end if you do have some money to spend) to get you started! These ideas can all be done in person or virtually, so you can adapt to how your team is working.



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1) Form a wellbeing committee

Get together a few colleagues who meet regularly to plan events, communicate wellbeing messages and raise ongoing ideas from other employees.

2) Know your health and wellbeing services

Do you offer an employee assistance programme or have health insurance that covers mental health assistance? Make sure any of this support is captured in your employee handbook and your intranet and is part of an induction for all new starters.

To help managers support employees there are some great training tools including free [15 minute online learning by Wellbeing in the Workplace](#).

3) Plan activities around awareness days

[Stress awareness month](#) in April, [mental health awareness week](#) in May, and [national work life week](#) in October: there are campaigns throughout the year that your business can get involved in. [Mind](#) has great free online resources for your wellbeing committee to use. Or how about simply using one of these days to share your key



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messages? You could remind people about your employee assistance programme or make sure they know who your mental health first aiders are.

4) But keep the momentum going

25% of adults suffer from poor mental health - now we're hybrid working, partly from home, even poor mental health that isn't work-related comes to work. Encourage senior leaders to talk about wellbeing at board meetings so it's discussed as an ongoing priority by your senior team, not only around awareness days. The Global Business Collaboration for Better Workplace Mental Health has a [leadership pledge](#) to bring senior leaders together.

5) Build positive wellbeing practices into everyday life

Have weekly team meetings? Spend the first two minutes of the meeting asking each team member to rate how they feel that day on a scale of 1-10 (e.g. 9 - "I feel great, really well rested and feeling positive about the week" or "6 - feel tired, I had a difficult commute this morning or feel anxious about a project") This is an easy way to quickly gauge how your team are feeling and see whether you might have a colleague that needs some support. If you think people are spending too much time in meetings, you could try



changing them by having a stand-up meeting, or change video calls to phone calls and encourage people to get outside for a walk at the same time.

6) Give your lunch and learns a wellbeing spin

Short videos on mental health can serve as powerful conversation starters and can be a great start to a lunch and learn. Get some colleagues together, play one of these clips and have a discussion afterwards.

- Our [address your stress](#) resource is a good team exercise to help colleagues understand the different ways people experience stress
- We hosted a webinar on wellbeing at work with one of our ambassadors Jen Barnett, Head of Inclusion, Diversity and Wellbeing at Grant Thornton [which you can watch again](#)
- The World Mental Health Organisation's '[I had the black dog; his name was depression](#)' is a look into what depression feels like

7) Get moving

Desk-based workers spend around seven hours a day sitting down, so you need to get moving!



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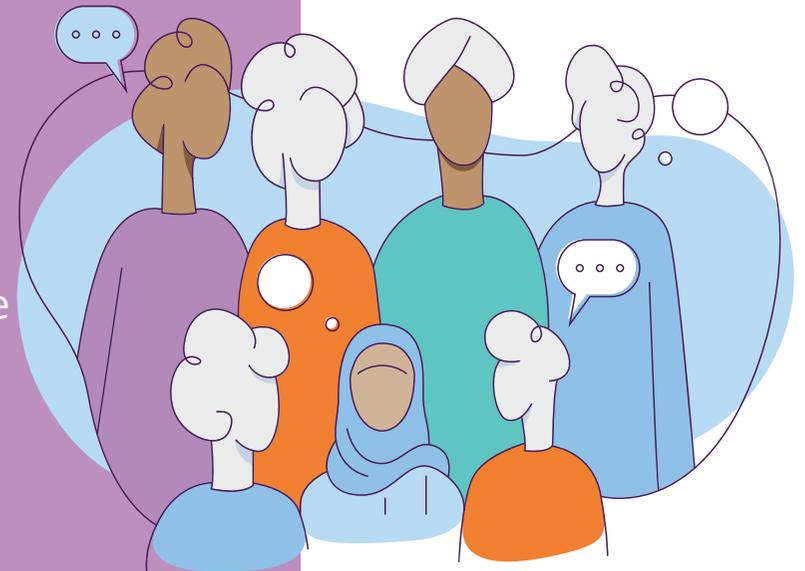
- Move every 45 minutes by setting yourself reminders to get up and walk around
- If you have any yoga enthusiasts at work, ask them to show you some desk yoga moves for regular stretching
- Encourage some competition by taking part in a walking challenge. Use your phone to track your steps – the Heart of the City team takes part in the **Business Healthy** challenge every May!

8) Host a curry and chaat

We love this idea from the Mental Health Foundation to get your team together for a **curry and chaat night** – download a free placemat setting and over food, sit opposite (or Zoom with) a different colleague and get to know someone new!

9) Do a digital detox

Spending lots of time glued to digital devices means you're contactable from around the world. And the Covid-19 pandemic has only increased the amount of time people are spending looking at screens. As a team, discuss setting boundaries around digital detoxing such as switching your phone off during holidays and when you leave work – some teams even set a rule of no emails on Friday afternoons!



Some businesses have a dedicated mindfulness room that has a strict 'no screens' policy, and they've produced digital detox guides for employees.

10) Know where your gaps are

Where are you already doing well and where can you improve the support you offer to people? Use our wellbeing progression model to take a benchmark and think about your areas for improvement.

11) Make wellness action plans

Make wellness actions plans a standard part of how you work. Well all have mental health, so normalise the conversation around it. You could work on wellness action plans in 1:1 meetings using Mind's guide to wellness action plans.

12) If you have some budget...

- **Hold Mental health first aid awareness training.** Best practice suggests matching the number of trained physical first aiders at work with mental health first aiders. You can do one or two-day courses in mental health first aid training or awareness with Mental Health First Aid England, St John Ambulance and Noa Burger.



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- **Subscribe to a wellbeing app.** Mindfulness and therapy apps such as [Headspace](#), [Calm](#) and [Spill](#) are very popular and offer a low-cost way for employees to take time out and get some support.
- **Invite expert speakers.** Are you based in a shared space with other businesses who are interested in promoting wellbeing activities? You could split the cost of inviting in a speaker to talk about the importance of sleep, exercise or other wellbeing topics.
- **Offer an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).** If you don't already have an EAP in place, it's a good idea to offer one. There are increasingly more SME-focused offers that are affordable for smaller businesses, like [Medigold Healthcare](#).

