Managing Wellbeing Risks

A practical guide for the engineering consultancy industry

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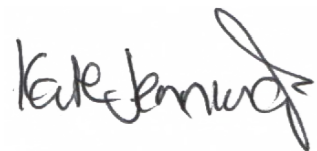
INTERNATIONAL SOS

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1 Foreword

Welcome to the first wellbeing industry guidance for the engineering consultancy sector: Managing wellbeing Risk for the Engineering Consultancy Industry. It is written for anyone with a role in a consultancy project who needs to balance both commercial and people-focused priorities. For those in a bid, project or line manager role, it will help you think about well-being risks throughout a project's life cycle and put effective, evidence-based controls in place. We know that exposure to wellbeing risk can result in physical and emotional harm for the people who work in our businesses. The challenges we all face are real and complex and we're immensely proud to support the work of those in the wider wellbeing community who have made this publication possible.

The content for this guidance was initiated at an event in September 2023 hosted by the Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE) and sponsored by Mott MacDonald and International SOS. At the event, we asked delegates representing the industry to share their wellbeing challenges and to offer solutions and best practice for solving them. This content was then collated and reviewed by event attendees and wellbeing experts to create this document.

We'd like to thank all those who have contributed to the development of this guidance. The case studies you see throughout are a testament to the fantastic things we are achieving as an industry for the benefit of those who work in it.

We are not there yet but we are committed to taking steps as outlined in this document to reduce wellbeing harm across our industry.

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2 Introduction

2.1 Creating industry guidance

Welcome to the first wellbeing industry guidance for the engineering consultancy sector: Managing wellbeing Risk for the Engineering Consultancy Industry. It is written for anyone with a role in a consultancy project who needs to balance both commercial and people-focused priorities. For those in a bid, project or line manager role, it will help you think about well-being risks throughout a project's life cycle and put effective, evidence-based controls in place.

In today's fast-paced, competitive business environment, the demand for higher productivity and rapid project delivery has placed immense pressure on people. This pressure can lead to increased stress, burnout and decreased overall wellbeing. The engineering consultancy sector is particularly affected owing to the complex nature of projects, high client expectations, and stringent timelines. This confluence of factors creates an urgent need for consistent industry guidance that addresses wellbeing comprehensively.

The guidance will help organisations within the industry align with core principles and best practices that safeguard the welfare of people. It will help employers proactively identify potential risks, implement preventative measures, and respond to wellbeing challenges in a timely and effective manner. By doing so, companies can foster a healthier workplace culture, leading to improved morale, engagement, and productivity.

Moreover, the establishment of a wellbeing guidance demonstrates a commitment to ethical business practices and social responsibility. It helps organisations stay compliant with regulations, attract top talent, and enhance their reputation as employers that genuinely value their workforce. Ultimately, a unified approach to managing wellbeing benefits not only individual organisations but also the industry as a whole by promoting sustainable growth and innovation while reducing the prevalence of mental and physical health issues.

Creating this guidance is about acknowledging the intrinsic link between the wellbeing of an organisation's people and organisational success.

By prioritising people, we build a stronger, more resilient industry that can weather challenges and adapt to the evolving demands of the modern workplace.

2.2 Building a practical guide for engineering consultancies

During conversations at networking forums, safety and wellbeing experts identified several key risk themes emerging in relation to wellbeing across the engineering consultancy sector. These risks are different from those in adjacent sectors, such as construction, and it was decided to collate these as a formal and systematic way to share learning and best practice across our industry.

Peers from our industry gave their insights to support the development of this wellbeing guidance for engineering consultancies – a sector where people (and therefore businesses) face immense pressure and real risk of harm. The development process was as follows:

- An industry event where wellbeing challenges and possible solutions were captured from delegates in and outside our industry
- First draft of this document and best practice case studies developed.
- Peer review of draft by SME's, global organisations and out-of-industry experts.
- Final draft prepared for promotion and launch event and webinar.

The aim of this guidance is to outline a framework to facilitate crucial discussions to drive behavioural change across consultancies and their supply chains to improve wellbeing during project delivery. Its focus is on organising work effectively at the beginning of new projects and considering wellbeing risks and control measures throughout the project life cycle.

We recognise that wellbeing can be a complex area that needs to be thought of holistically.

Who is guide aimed at?

This guidance is designed to help bid teams, project managers and support staff effectively plan and budget for work that prioritises people without compromising on quality or innovation. It is for – those making decisions throughout a project life cycle that will impact others' wellbeing. There must be recognition, however, that the individuals who hold these roles are also under pressure to deliver both client and commercial outcomes. So this is not to add yet more pressure onto their shoulders, but rather to ensure that leaders within our industry understand these pressures and ensure they play their part to model positive behaviour and allow for time, career development and training in business and project planning.

2.3 Why is well-being at work important?

In this section we set out the business case and the importance of proactive investment in well-being, but ultimately it is about people, and doing so because it is the right thing to do. It is a collaborative piece of work written for our sector by industry professionals.

Both work and non-work-related risk factors can have a profound impact on physical and mental well-being. Employers play a critical role in prioritising mental health and wellbeing globally.

'Leaders are in a position to improve employee mental health and well-being at scale.' (McKinsey Health Institute, 2022)

Focusing on wellbeing at work is in the best interests of both employees and employers, as it enables people to thrive and achieve their full potential.

CIPD suggests that to gain real benefit, employee wellbeing priorities must be integrated throughout an organisation, embedded in its culture, leadership and people management.

The International Public Policy Observatory suggests that there are three broad arguments for investing in workplace wellbeing: the legal case, the moral case and the business case (IPPO, 2022). The legal case is mandatory and should serve as a baseline standard. People have the right to be protected against both physical and mental harm in the workplace. In the UK, for example, employers have a legal responsibility to adhere to health and safety legislation, which includes exposure to psychosocial hazards, and also to not discriminate, as detailed in the Equality Act 2010. The moral case extends beyond the legal minimum requirements and speaks to what kind of ethical and supportive employer an organisation wants to be. The business case relates to the value and return on investment that is achieved from increased productivity, reduced turnover and enhanced reputation as the result of improving wellbeing.

2.4 What is the value of wellbeing at work?

The importance of focusing on wellbeing at work extends far beyond ethical obligations and duty of care; it is also a strategic organisational priority. Creating healthy working cultures not only enables employees to thrive but also yields significant benefits for the organisation as a whole (CIPD, 2024). Key measures often used to assess this are return on investment (ROI) and value of investment (VOI).

'Metrics used to calculate these have been differentiated into direct costs such as sickness absence, and indirect/intangible values such as employee morale, job satisfaction, employee engagement, talent attraction and retention, and productivity.' (Wellable, 2023)

Research suggests that looking solely at direct costs such as sickness absence is an important goal but is relatively short term and does not capture the full scope of the value that can be added (Wellable, 2023). The less

tangible, value-added returns can be challenging to quantify, but they contribute to a sustainable and successful organisation, and they do impact an organisation's bottom line.

'Thriving employees can yield returns of £4,000 – £12,000 per employee from improved productivity, attraction and retention, combined with cost savings from lower attrition, absenteeism and presenteeism.' (Business in the Community, 2023)

VOI
Productivity
Job satisfaction
Performance
Retention

ROI
Attraction and recruitment
Sickness absence
Referral rates
Insurance claims
Engagement

Source: Wellable

'Measures by employers to improve the mental health of their employees will yield a return on average of £5 per employee per year for every £1 spent, with the greatest returns found in preventative (£5.60) and proactive (£5.20) initiatives.' (Deloitte, 2022)

To take another example from the UK, poor mental health cost the UK economy £56 billion in 2020–2021 through approximated absence, presenteeism and employee turnover costs. Presenteeism was found to be the highest of the three cost categories, but the total cost increase is attributable to higher labour turnover (Deloitte, 2022).

Research suggests that the ratio of absenteeism to presenteeism can be as much as 1:27 when analysing the cost of lost productivity (Business in the Community, 2023).

Additional research suggests that employees facing mental health or wellbeing challenges report more negative experience at work and are four times more likely to say they intend to leave, three times more likely to report low job satisfaction, three times more likely to experience toxic workplace behaviour and twice as likely to report low engagement (McKinsey Health Institute, 2022).

We therefore encourage organisations to place employee wellbeing at the centre of their business model and to view it as a vital source of value creation.

2.5 Setting the scene: Wellbeing risk, the potential for harm and possible solutions

Wellbeing at work encompasses not only individual health and wellness but also the broader organisational environment and how work is structured. Our approach to wellbeing risk management adopts the structured methodology commonly used in health and safety risk assessments. This methodical approach helps in identifying and addressing potential risks effectively.

Organisations must consider a holistic view of wellbeing and the benefits of a healthy workplace extend beyond the office, influencing overall life satisfaction and personal wellbeing.

In developing this guidance, the ISO 45003 international standard for managing psychological health and safety at work, and the UK Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) stress management standards were used to breakdown the risk management process into specific areas.

The aim is to provide a clear and manageable framework for organisations to enhance employee wellbeing effectively.

The graphic on the next page splits each of these three sections into component parts which have been used to structure the guidance.

>>>>>>>>

Physical environment and equipment

The conditions and safety of the physical workspace, including undertaking high-risk activities.

Organisational - how work is organised

The allocation of tasks, pacing of work, and decision-making processes. The sense that someone is aligned and contributing to the vision and values of their organisation, sector and work that is important to society.

Social factors

Interpersonal relationships and social support systems within the workplace. Intersectionality of wellbeing and inclusion and a sense of belonging.

Wellbeing Risk: Setting the industry standard

- High-risk activities
- Environment and equipment
- Different ways of working: remote, isolated, flexible and agile
- People management: interpersonal relationships, support and supervision
- Organisational recognition, career development and rewards
- The role of the leader in wellbeing
- Inappropriate behaviour – bullying, victimization, harassment, violence, civility
- Roles and expectations
- Workload and job demands
- Job control, autonomy, work pace and schedule
- Change management (systems)
- Job security
- Working hours and work/life balance
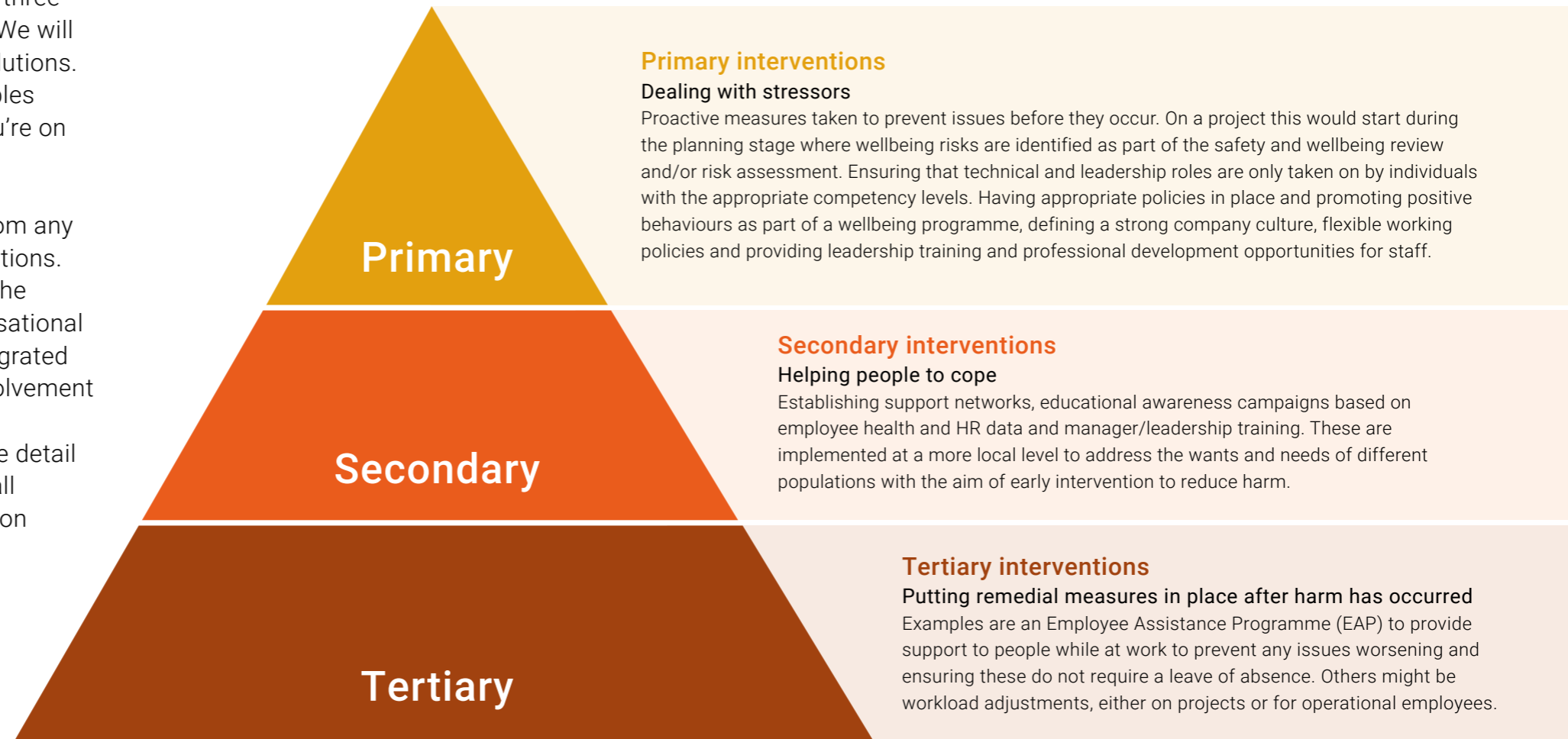- Communication

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Thank you for your attention so far and for considering the implications of wellbeing risks to your business. In the upcoming sections, we delve deeper into the three primary aspects of wellbeing risk management. We will highlight potential risks and discuss practical solutions. These solutions are supported by real-life examples applicable across various settings – whether you're on site, in an office or working remotely.

The strategies we will explore can be adapted from any of the key themes discussed in the following sections. They are most effective when customised to fit the unique needs of your business, project or organisational culture. It is crucial that these strategies are integrated into your company culture, where leadership involvement and endorsement are essential for continuous improvement and minimising potential harm. The detail of this guidance is extensive, and we recognise all consultancy organisations are at varying stages on their wellbeing journey.

The wellbeing maturity of an organisation could be categorised by three levels of intervention type:

Three levels of intervention:

Primary interventions
Dealing with stressors
Proactive measures taken to prevent issues before they occur. On a project this would start during the planning stage where wellbeing risks are identified as part of the safety and wellbeing review and/or risk assessment. Ensuring that technical and leadership roles are only taken on by individuals with the appropriate competency levels. Having appropriate policies in place and promoting positive behaviours as part of a wellbeing programme, defining a strong company culture, flexible working policies and providing leadership training and professional development opportunities for staff.

Secondary interventions
Helping people to cope
Establishing support networks, educational awareness campaigns based on employee health and HR data and manager/leadership training. These are implemented at a more local level to address the wants and needs of different populations with the aim of early intervention to reduce harm.

Tertiary interventions
Putting remedial measures in place after harm has occurred
Examples are an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to provide support to people while at work to prevent any issues worsening and ensuring these do not require a leave of absence. Others might be workload adjustments, either on projects or for operational employees.

Primary

Secondary

Tertiary

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Throughout the development of this guidance, we have adopted a 'best fit' approach, acknowledging that categories of wellbeing risks may link and overlap owing to their nuanced nature. It is important to recognise that wellbeing impacts are often based on individual perceptions, meaning that different factors can affect different people in various ways.

Throughout all sections, case studies bring these control measures to life. If you would like more information about any of these case studies, please contact membership@acenet.co.uk.

Throughout this peer review process numerous case studies have been developed by organisations across our sector that did not fit the content exactly, they will provide further learning for those in our industry.

Please visit here to view these further case studies.

3 A quick guide

This guidance is extensive and covers a comprehensive set of solutions to well-being risks that affect people from the engineering consultancy sector. Below, some key issues and their location sections have been highlighted to help those looking for solutions to their organisation's well-being challenges, regardless of their size or place in their well-being journey.

Senior people being vulnerable to help build a culture of openness and trust Page 16, 37, 43	Fatigue monitoring can positively impact physical and psychological safety Page 21	Implementing agile working principles Page 18, 27	Using a digital tool to identify and combat negative workplace behaviours Page 34-35
A simple way to build a positive example as a leader with an 'out of office' Page 17	Consulting with people ahead of organisation changes Page 24	Effectively managing well-being risk at bid stage Page 28, 57-61	Senior leaders understanding their accountability for well-being Page 37, 43
Clear escalation processes support people managers and HR Page 18, 21, 24, 29, 41-42	Communicating boundaries around your working pattern Page 26	Resourcing for the correct competency level Page 29	We Don't Mind the Gap: equity for different groups at work Page 39

4 Organisation - how work is organised?

In this section, we look at how work (projects and tasks) could be planned to have a positive impact on those in the engineering consultancy sector. We have broken these down into the potential harm that could be caused and offer solutions along with real-life examples that demonstrate practical application.

4.1 Communication

The focus here is on effective communication which delivers the required message to achieve the intended outcome concisely

Potential to cause harm:

Lack of effective communication resulting in lack of clarity and understanding. Communication hazards are included in several potential harm categories, as below, for differing reasons:

– Lack of job control and autonomy results in individuals having little or no influence or impact on work pace or schedule.
– A high or unmanageable workload and/or job demands, with perception of no way or opportunity to ask for help or make changes.

Potential solutions:

Job control, autonomy, work pace and schedule

– Leadership teams to set a personal and positive example by instigating open conversations with teams to build trust.
– Publish stories of colleagues (especially those in leadership roles) talking about their challenges, vulnerabilities and career wins. Include a range of voices, experience, jobs, genders and ages in those sharing stories so colleagues in different locations and with backgrounds can see themselves represented.

Case Study

Colleague story example from Mott MacDonald: 'The Challenge' video

Have you had bad days? Felt overwhelmed, or like you're struggling to keep afloat? It can make the smallest task feel like a challenge and turn supposedly easy decisions into potential risks.

Mott MacDonald explores the intrinsic link between physical and psychological safety in 'The Challenge' video. We follow a group of colleagues as they take part in a series of tasks to demonstrate the importance of creating an inclusive culture to proactively prevent both physical and emotional harm. Participants were from London to California (and everywhere in between) and from various roles and leadership positions.

The video launched on internal and external channels in April 2023, but the effects have been wide ranging and long lasting. For weeks after the launch, those who took part in the video were contacted by peers inside and outside the organisation who shared similar stories. Participants were briefed to signpost scores of contacts who got in touch on to further support so they could seek help and guidance.

On LinkedIn, it was the most engaged with and shared post on the company's corporate channel. This included shares from some of Mott MacDonald's most high-profile clients, which continued the conversation around the importance of this issue across our sector and not just within one organisation. Long-term impacts of the campaign are still being felt across the business as discussions continue about the impacts of the video with participants – in particular, the barriers to reducing harm.

Search: 'Mott MacDonald The Challenge' on YouTube to watch the video.

4.1 Communication

The focus here is on effective communication which delivers the required message to achieve the intended outcome concisely

Potential to cause harm:

– Lack of positive role modelling from line managers and importance of work/life balance from leadership.

Potential solutions:

Workload and job demands

– Promote an open-door culture throughout the organisation to allow issues to be raised about high or unmanageable workloads.
– Project leaders to support their teams by holding conversations with clients to alleviate pressure caused by workloads and demands.
– Communicate the importance of work/life balance. Messages from leadership and managers who demonstrate a personal example in this regard are particularly powerful. This would include taking regular breaks and annual leave, not sending emails outside working hours, adding relevant messages to email signatures.
– When delegating tasks, managers should first ensure there is agreement from the individuals who are involved. (See also delegation of tasks example in section 4.6.)

Case Study

Email signature example text that could be adapted by leaders to set a positive example for communicating work/life balance:

I work flexibly so if an email reaches you outside your working hours, please don't feel obligated to respond immediately.

If you are a manager or leader, it's tempting but try not to add your mobile number to your email signature, to maintain a boundary and give your teams permission to do the same. A 'do as I do' model will go further in this instance. If you are on leave and are adding a colleague to your out-of-office, discuss it with them before you do so.

4.1 Communication

The focus here is on effective communication which delivers the required message to achieve the intended outcome concisely

Potential to cause harm:

– Lack of, or no, communication regarding different ways of working – for example, flexible and agile working policies.

Potential solutions:

Workload and job demands

Different ways of working: remote working, flexible, agile and hybrid working methods

– Enable remote attendance at team meetings to support agile working patterns.
– Instigate a buddy system for those working remotely.
– Conduct regular check-ins with those working remotely, with a wellbeing focus first.
– Collaborate with HR and diversity and inclusion teams if line managers need support with confidence, skills and resources to be able to do this. Make use of external suppliers and experts if further support or assessments are required.
– Include information about wellbeing support mechanisms such as champion networks, EAP and local HR on all literature and company and team update presentations.

Case Study

The importance of communication can be demonstrated by clearly defining and disseminating information about processes for reasonable adjustments. Here is an example of the process of requests for reasonable adjustments at <u>Stantec</u>, ensuring both employees and their line managers know where to go to be able to escalate requests if a solution cannot be found immediately.

Stantec wants to be able to support people to be the best they can be at work, particularly if someone has a disability, neurodiversity, mental health issue or is struggling with the menopause. The adjustments process makes use of the line manager in the first instance, with support from HR; where necessary, external support is used for assessments and guidance from external partners.

– Speak to your line manager in the first instance and let them know about any issues you might be facing and how we can support you.
– Your line manager should contact an HR advisor to make them aware. If they are unable to accommodate the support you need, the HR advisor will help you with next steps.
– In some cases, it may be appropriate to involve an expert for clinical guidance on any accommodations and support you need.
– Finally, agree a plan with your supervisor, which includes regular catch-ups to review if the support is sufficient.

Clearly defining this process reinforces the message that the business cares about equality and equity for all people within the organisation; that time, effort and financial resources have gone into developing this business process and that it is backed by leadership. Clarity around this process supports managers to know what to do in this scenario and lessens the workload on HR colleagues having to do everything on a case-by-case basis.

4.1 Communication

The focus here is on effective communication which delivers the required message to achieve the intended outcome concisely

Potential to cause harm:

– Unclear job roles and expectations, either because they are altering frequently or they have not been defined from the outset.
– No communication or opportunities for consultation regarding change management to systems that will impact individuals.
– Lack of understanding of how job role fits with the wider business strategy and vision.
– Lack of, unclear or sporadic contact with a manager/supervisor which results in:

  • Lack of support;
  • Lack of supervision;
  • Poor interpersonal relationships;
  • Lack of trust between the manager/ business and the employee.

Potential solutions:

Job roles and expectations

– Managers have a key role in conducting and encouraging proactive, open conversations to support understanding of individual roles and how they fit into the project or wider organisation. (See sections 5.2 and 5.3 for examples of manager training programmes if this is a gap in your organisation.)
– People have clear objectives linked to their roles, with agreed timescales and defined outcomes.
– Leaders visibly recognise and communicate regarding individual and team success.
– Clear communication of business strategy and vision, related to projects and roles.

People management: interpersonal relationships, support and supervision

– Run regular awareness sessions for people managers around soft skills so they know where to find support for their own wellbeing and where to signpost others
– Create clear people policies on promotions, renumeration reviews, performance management, etc. This helps to manage people's expectations and is particularly important when discussing development opportunities. Messages must be consistent and align with company values.
– Agree frequency of in-person time with team members by setting regular catch ups and one-to-ones with direct reports. Managers to be clear about how much they will be involved in work by direct report and encourage questions or support, if required.
– Managers to be familiar with and use support tools as required, e.g. EAP support, training, toolkits, support from any wellbeing champion networks and HR practitioners.
– Managers to respond to feedback received from direct reports. This includes how feedback will be acted on or responding as to why it is not possible.
– Consultation with people about what they need to manage their wellbeing at work. For example: wellness action plans, team discussions about stress and forthcoming work where pressure may be high. Make use of tools such as HSE Stress talking toolkit.
– For managers who have direct reports based in different countries and from different backgrounds, ensure that the consultation and communication are multimodal and culturally considerate.

4.2 Working hours and work/life balance

The focus here is on the volume of work and the hours worked

Potential to cause harm:

Work overload or underload:

- High levels of time pressure.
- Continually subject to deadlines.
- High level of repetitive work.
- Lack of variety of work.
- Shift work.
- Inflexible work schedules.
- Unpredictable hours.
- Long or unsociable hours.
- Fragmented work or work that is not meaningful.
- Continual requirements to complete work at short notice.
- Under-utilisation.

Potential solutions:

Resources, programmes and fatigue management

- Ensure the right balance of skills through good resource management.
- Allocate sufficient resources to achieve the desired levels of utilisation. Keep under review and take action if this is too low or high.
- Provide practical support during peak periods (e.g., additional or more-experienced workers).
- Reinforce the importance of booking all hours worked and any fatigue management process and associated support/escalation.
- Promote the importance of setting focus time and periods with limited meetings. Consider the benefit of implementing project rules/restrictions on emails, communications, meetings outside core hours and lunchtime. Gaining management and client buy-in will strengthen this approach and make it more likely to achieve its aim.
- Monitor working hours exceedances in line with local legislation.
- Raise awareness of fatigue factors and measures that can be taken to reduce fatigue (including sleep, hydration and diet).
- Enable sufficient breaks to manage fatigue; empower colleagues to restrict work-related contact (e.g., via mobile phone and email) in non-working time.

Case Study

An example of where fatigue monitoring can positively impact physical and psychological safety

'<u>Company X</u>', an international offshore energy corporation, operates several oil rigs worldwide. The demanding nature of offshore work, coupled with long shifts and extended periods away from home, places significant mental and physical stress on people. The company prides itself on its robust safety protocols but faces ongoing challenges related to employee fatigue and mental health.

Jake, an experienced offshore technician, had been working 12-hour shifts for several weeks on a remote oil rig. The extended shifts, isolation from family and high-pressure environment took a toll on his mental health. Despite feeling increasingly fatigued and mentally exhausted, Jake continued to push himself to meet operational demands.

One night, while performing routine maintenance on critical equipment, Jake's concentration lapsed due to fatigue. He missed a crucial step in the maintenance procedure, which led to a mechanical failure. This oversight resulted in a near miss, where a piece of heavy machinery malfunctioned and nearly caused a severe accident. Fortunately, the immediate danger was averted, but Jake sustained a minor injury during the incident, highlighting the potentially severe consequences of fatigue and mental strain. The near miss and resulting injury were directly linked to Jake's fatigue and deteriorating mental health.

Offshore environments are inherently stressful, and the lack of adequate rest and mental health support exacerbated the risks. This incident underscored the urgent need for Company X to address mental health and fatigue more comprehensively.

Immediate actions:
– Jake received immediate medical attention for his injury and was given time off to recover both physically and mentally.

– An internal investigation was launched to understand the root causes and to prevent future occurrences.

Long-term interventions:
– **Fatigue management policies:** New policies were implemented to limit shift lengths and ensure mandatory rest periods. People to be encouraged to take breaks and monitored for signs of fatigue.
– **Mental health training:** Comprehensive mental health training was rolled out for all employees and supervisors, focusing on recognising signs of mental strain and providing appropriate support.
– **Onboard wellness programmes:** Wellness programmes, including physical fitness, mindfulness practices and recreational activities, were established to help people manage stress and maintain mental health.

Technological support:
– **Fatigue monitoring systems:** Advanced monitoring systems were installed to track work hours and rest periods, providing alerts when individuals approached fatigue thresholds.
– **Ergonomic improvements:** Workspaces on the rigs were redesigned to be more ergonomic, reducing physical strain and promoting a healthier work environment.

Cultural shift:
– **Leadership commitment:** Senior leadership committed to a culture that prioritises mental health and safety. Regular communications from top executives reinforced the importance of wellbeing.
– **Peer support networks:** Peer support networks were created, enabling people to support each other and share their experiences, fostering a sense of community and mutual care.

4.2 Working hours and work/life balance

The focus here is on the volume of work and the hours worked

Potential to cause harm:
Work/life balance

- Work tasks, roles, schedules or expectations that cause people to continue working in their own time.
- Conflicting demands of work and home work that impacts people's ability to recover.

Potential solutions:

- Remove single points of failure in delivery and allocate appropriate resources for critical path programme activities.
- Set realistic and achievable deadlines which help to minimise unplanned changes on the project.
- Encourage all people to make use of annual leave and to use breaks to recharge to improve resilience. Line managers and HR teams should monitor this.

4.3 Job security

The focus here is on security of employment

Potential to cause harm:

- Uncertainty regarding security of work or job.
- Possibility of redundancy or temporary loss of work with reduced pay.
- Working in situations that are not properly covered or protected by labour law or social protection.
- Uncertainty and confusion around progression and succession planning.
- Lack of support and processes around returning to work after long-term absence.

Potential solutions:

- Comprehensive and transparent processes around career development and succession planning.
- Regular review of work pipeline, budgets, programmes.
- Develop close working relationship with client-facing teams and budget holders to identify changes early.
- Regular reporting to project team on performance, deliverables and milestones.
- Implement processes around returning to work after an absence following illness, surgery or medical diagnosis.
- Foster working relationships with HR and talent acquisition teams to create further opportunities to retain people at risk.
- Create internal jobs boards, both physical and virtual.
- Enable coaching conversations to support people who are returning to work (where required).

4.4 Change management (systems)

The focus here is prevention of psychosocial hazards in workplace change programmes

Potential to cause harm:

– Lack of practical support to assist people during transition periods.
– Prolonged or recurring change/restructuring.

Potential solutions:

Planning:

– Manage the expectations of the project team through efficient and regular consultation and communication.
– Develop clear, written policies on how the organisation manages change – for example, communicating on plans for restructuring, redundancy, returning to work after long-term sickness and parental leave.
– Plans should include contingencies for remaining team members.
– Develop a time/quality/cost matrix for decision making to ensure expectations of higher-pressure points throughout project are clear and support mechanisms are in place.
– Allow sufficient time for effective consultation, feedback and input from all concerned.

– Lack of consultation and communication about workplace changes.
– Consultation and communication which is of poor quality, untimely or not meaningful.
– Lack of proactive support for colleagues to manage the impact of change, such as insecurity.

Consultation:

– Define and explain key steps of changes being made.
– Consult people early and throughout the change process, including communication about leadership awareness that any change will affect people's experience of work.
– Engage and consult in a timely manner during key change initiatives, allowing opportunities for people to feed in their views. Ensure different groups have been considered in consultation with representatives appointed to attend meetings and disseminate messages.
– Develop a review process for this consultation.
– Provide a system for people to comment and ask questions before, during and after the change.
– Include training and retraining as part of your change process.
– Leadership and managers to make themselves available for further discussions or questions from team members.

Organisation – how work is organised?

Case Study

An example given by AtkinsRéalis about an approach to effective consultation to increase efficiency

Reducing Bureaucracy: 'Be Involved to Evolve'
While it's not always feasible to lighten people's workload by redistributing tasks, other strategies, such as streamlining bureaucracy, can significantly alleviate their burden and improve efficiency. In April 2022, AtkinsRéalis set out on its journey to reduce complexity and simplify processes across the business through its Be Involved to Evolve initiative. As part of the initiative, AtkinsRéalis analysed more than 1,500 items of feedback and grouped them by function, and by topic or action, and teams across the globe have been working hard to bring these solutions to life. Each of the ideas and solutions that people shared has helped to drive forward the evolution of many processes or experiences that are unnecessarily bureaucratic.

The top three types of bureaucracy highlighted were Processes and Tools, Approvals and Authorisations, Systems and Platforms. Actions identified include:

– More than 50 quick wins: things that can be changed quickly.
– Signposting: things already in motion and where to find out more.
– Opportunities: to help people to better understand where some processes or policies are necessary.

The feedback and ideas received will make a real difference with understanding that people have the solutions to many workplace challenges.

4.4 Change management (systems)

The focus here is prevention of psychosocial hazards in workplace change programmes

Potential to cause harm:

– Consultation and communication which is of poor quality, untimely or not meaningful.
– Lack of proactive support for colleagues to manage the impact of change, such as insecurity.

Potential solutions:
Communication:

– Start communication early and, as far as possible, make it a two-way conversation between leadership and employees/staff to prevent rumours and speculation.
– Explain what the project wants to achieve and why it is essential that the change takes place.
– Explain the timescales of changes and how changes will directly impact individuals.
– Agree a system for communicating why a change is happening.
– Agree methods of communication (such as meetings, notice boards, letters, email and feedback forms) and their frequency.
– Don't rely on a single communication route – for example, think about those who may not have access to a computer.
– Make sure people are aware of the impact of the change being made on their jobs. Talk about the potential need for (re)training, support mechanisms, etc.
– Ensure that any support mechanisms are promoted as part of a communication plan – for example, support given as part of redundancy package for those leaving the organisation and those who will remain.

4.5 Job control, autonomy, work pace and schedule

This section focuses on what control people have about how and when they complete their work

Potential to cause harm:

- Limited opportunities to participate in decision making.
- Lack of control over workload.
- Low levels of influence and independence (e.g., not being able to influence the speed, order or schedule of work tasks and workload).
- Inflexible working patterns.
- Unrealistic deadlines leading to periods of intense pressure and excessive working hours.
- Volume of work too high or too low, resulting in challenges for utilisation (timesheet anxiety and non-productive job codes).

Potential solutions:

Communication:

- Have a variety of formal and information check-ins with individuals to monitor workloads.
- Leaders should make it clear that there is not an expectation to work beyond contracted hours and should regularly signpost to support or processes to escalate issues around workload and constantly over-contracted hours.
- Consider different ways of working flexibly: different start and finish times, role sharing, allowing for greater efficiencies and use of different skills in individuals.
- Be clear on prioritising tasks and allow flexible time frames for completion where possible.
- Share positive examples from leaders about setting boundaries around their own working times so that team members feel more able to do the same.

Case Study

Example of how to communicate your boundaries around your working pattern

We're the most connected we've ever been, and lots of us have desk-based, operational jobs that involve working with colleagues or clients across different time zones. This can sometimes make it difficult to consistently work within contracted hours. Communicating some simple boundaries can ensure you're making effective use of flexible working arrangements.

Though many of us do, as we care about doing the best job possible for our clients, partners and colleagues, there is not an expectation for people to work beyond their contracted hours (please see relevant legislation in your location).

Simple boundaries can be put in place by using phases such as, 'That doesn't work for me.' Make use of Outlook features to block out periods when you are out of office when taking time back after working outside your contracted hours or time zones. It might be that this time is not taken immediately after busy periods, but it should be recouped to ensure individuals are able to maintain positive mental health. Discuss with line managers and your wider team about making use of this time back during less-busy periods.

4.5 Job control, autonomy, work pace and schedule

This section focuses on what control people have about how and when they complete their work

Potential to cause harm:

Work/life balance:

– Work tasks, roles, schedules or expectations that cause people to continue working in their own time.
– Expectation to always be available because of potential blurred boundaries resulting from poorly defined role or from remote/home working.
– Conflicting demands of work and home that are difficult to resolve and have been going on for some time.
– Work levels or pace that impact a person's ability to recover from an adverse situation.

Potential solutions:

Decisions:

– Increase people's control over the way their work is organised and monitor this through project planning meetings, one-to-ones, performance reviews, project gateway reviews, mentoring and shadowing arrangements.
– Introduce flexible working, job-sharing, more consultation about working practices or enabling people to control the pace of work tasks whenever possible.
– Allow and encourage people to participate in decision making, especially where it affects them.
– Manage expectations about what is possible (or not) for outcomes during a consultation period.

Case Study

An example of global 'agile working principles'

In a modern world where we all have a variety of responsibilities in and out of work, it is a good idea to develop a set of guiding principles when it comes to flexible/hybrid/agile working. **Mott MacDonald** has developed a set of principles to allow different parts of the business to develop the most appropriate ways of working for their location and culture that still allow people a degree of control in how and when they do their work. Agile working:

1. Enables more efficient and productive ways of working.
2. Supports positive work/life balance and well-being.
3. Supports our desire to attract and retain high-calibre talent, creating an adaptive working environment for a more diverse workforce.
4. Can help reduce unnecessary travel.
5. Is intended to be flexible and does not require a change in terms or conditions of employment.
6. Is not to be used as a benefit or entitlement to be granted to people (for example, as a reward for good performance).
7. Can be reasonably requested by all people.
8. Should be discussed with your line manager to maintain a positive working environment for the individual, their team and the wider business objectives.
9. Is subject to regular review to ensure ongoing suitability and effectiveness.
10. Does not override a need to be in attendance at the office for business reasons.

4.5 Job control, autonomy, work pace and schedule

This section focuses on what control people have about how and when they complete their work

Potential to cause harm:

– Lack of time and/or opportunities for people to address skills gaps or development possibilities.
– No clear progression opportunities or career pathways.

Potential solutions:
Skills and training:

– Use performance reviews to discuss an individual's existing skills, the need to develop new skills and alternative ways of utilising existing skills on current and future projects.
– Identify any skills gaps and include associated actions in development plans.
– Consider the need for specific training, such as time management, task management, project management skills, etc. These could be run as project toolbox talks, or lunch-and-learn training sessions.

4.6 Workload and job demands

This section focuses on demands of workload and the pressure this can put people under

Potential to cause harm:

– Having too much to do within a certain time or with a set number of people.
– Conflicting demands and deadlines.
– Underuse of skills.
– Unrealistic expectations of an individual's competence or responsibilities.

Potential solutions:

– Demands of work can be reduced by effective project and resource planning at bid stage. See section 7.2 'Planning the work' to proactively manage well-being at this stage in a project's life cycle.

Case Study

An example of a water and waste water consultancy using a mood-rating app to proactively manage well-being at the bid and planning stages of a project

As part of a bid, the consultancy company proposed the use of a mood-rating app that all project staff could use when logging on to the system each day. For anyone who logged on feeling 'unhappy' or 'very unhappy' on any given day, a dedicated wellbeing practitioner would contact them to find out if the reason for this was work-related or not. After this initial call, the practitioner would support them to move along the most appropriate treatment pathway supporting early intervention to prevent long-term sickness, increased sickness absence costs to the business and negative impact on project delivery.

This approach ensures that potential risks that initially impact individual project staff do not have larger ramifications more widely at project and organisational level. The consultancy has four regular project employee forums (EDI, CSR, ESG and Mental Health) that take place monthly to discuss any emerging issues on the project.

The extra resources for additional meetings and app maintenance were planned for at the outset of the project and, as a result, the client fully invested in this preventative approach as it was part of the bid.

4.6 Workload and job demands

This section focuses on demands of workload and the pressure this can put people under

Potential to cause harm:

- For managers: lack of sufficient time for line manager AND project responsibilities.

Potential solutions:

Resource management:

- Consider re-allocating duties (on a temporary or permanent basis) or making adjustments to work hours/patterns to alleviate excessive workload or demands on individuals.
- When resourcing, allow for busy and quieter periods, including budget allowance for downtime codes, in order to alleviate timecode anxiety in teams and employees.
- Establish a buddy system/mentoring system within the team or project.
- Implement good resource management practices to ensure that specific roles and responsibilities are allocated to the right people with the right skills and competences. This is particularly important at the bid stage as part of resource allocation.

Case Study

A general example for consultancies to manage resourcing with individuals of an appropriate competency level when putting project teams together

Those with high-pressure roles within our sector – such project managers or project principals – have many responsibilities, ranging from commercials to stakeholder engagement, management of client expectations, ethics, risk management and duty of care.

It is imperative that even those in senior roles are reminded of the importance of delegation of tasks to manage their workload to ensure successful project delivery. Even those in very senior roles may need permission to ask for support from teams, which can sometimes come in the form of reallocating work. The main caveats of this delegation are that even if they share out certain tasks to other team members, they must ensure:

- Tasks are given to those with the appropriate competency level;
- They take responsibility for the final check and sign off of the work.

4.6 Workload and job demands

This section focuses on demands of workload and the pressure this can put people under

Potential to cause harm:

– Having a culture where people cannot raise concerns about workload.
– Lack of task variety or performing highly repetitive tasks.
– Fragmented or meaningless work.
– Requirements for excessive periods of alertness and concentration.
– Working with aggressive or distressed people.
– Exposure to events or situations that can cause trauma.
– Poor handover/explanation/training in specific tasks.
– Inaccurate recording of hours (e.g., timesheets).

Potential solutions:
Communication

– Encourage people to recognise and take responsibility for raising concerns about deadlines and workloads they view as unreasonable.
– Ensure there is a clear understanding of escalation process to manager, HR, H&S managers.
– Establish client relationship management plans.
– Consider formal collaboration review for the project.
– Develop a system to notify people of unplanned tight deadlines and any exceptional need to work long hours.
– Consider the introduction of a work/life balance policy for the project, with expected behaviours for all parties to sign up to.

4.6 Workload and job demands

This section focuses on demands of workload and the pressure this can put people under

Potential to cause harm:

- Having a culture where people cannot raise concerns about workload.
- Leaders/managers not delegating or taking breaks and annual leave.
- Lack of task variety or performing highly repetitive tasks.
- Fragmented or meaningless work.
- Requirements for excessive periods of alertness and concentration.
- Working with aggressive or distressed people.
- Exposure to events or situations that can cause trauma.
- Poor handover/explanation/training in specific tasks.
- Inaccurate recording of hours (e.g., timesheets).
- Lack of consultation and systematic check-ins to monitor how people are doing before and during project life cycle.

Potential solutions:
Workload

- Set achievable demands in relation to workloads and deadlines.
- Check that team members are recording all hours worked and that action is taken or escalated where excessive working hours are recorded.
- If you're a team leader or supervisor, learn to say no to work if your team is already at full capacity.

Training

- Give guidance over prioritisation of tasks so there is alignment.
- Address training needs and allocate appropriate time for training, such as task prioritisation, fatigue management, stress awareness.

4.7 Roles and expectations

This section focuses on the importance of clarity of roles

Potential to cause harm:

– Role ambiguity.
– Role conflict.
– Situations where there are no clear guidelines on the tasks people are expected to do (and not do).
– Expectations within a role that undermine one another (e.g., being expected to provide good customer service, but also to not spend a long time with customers).
– Uncertainty about, or frequent changes to, tasks and work standards.
– Performing work of little value or 'purpose'.
– Perceived lack of permission to be able to speak out when an individual is struggling.

Potential solutions:

New starters, inductions and onboarding

– Ensure all new starters and new joiners to the project receive an induction to the organisation and project.
– Provide frequent updates to policies and procedures.
– Include details of where to get support or who to speak to about wellbeing concerns.

Roles and expectations

– During project initiation, develop a clear organogram with clear lines of communication and reporting.
– Ensure role descriptions are clear and include expectations.
– Define work roles, supervisory relationships and performance requirements to minimise confusion and ambiguity.
– Review job descriptions regularly, especially following changes, and discuss training requirements, including the need for refresher training.

Communication

– Provide specific instructions on how to manage foreseeable risks, how to respond if an incident occurs and how to provide post-incident assistance to workers.
– Hold regular one-to-one meetings to ensure there is clarity about what is planned for the coming months.
  · Give individuals the opportunities and space to feed back and speak up.

5 Social factors at work

In this section, we examine how work – both projects and tasks – should be planned to positively impact the well-being of individuals within the engineering consultancy sector. We've broken this down into two key areas: the potential harm that could occur without proper consideration, and the effective solutions we offer, backed by real-life, tried-and-tested examples.

Social factors include the varying potential harm caused to people when interacting with colleagues, the public and individuals from other organisations. We will explore how these interactions can affect individuals and will provide examples of how to safeguard against this harm. It is especially important to consider the role of those in leadership in these scenarios. We offer potential solutions, supported by illustrative examples, to demonstrate these strategies in action.

5.1 Inappropriate behaviour: bullying, victimisation, harassment, violence, civility and discrimination

Potential to cause harm:

Bullying or victimisation consists of repeated (more than once) unreasonable behaviours which can present a risk to health, safety and well-being at work.

Harassment can take many forms, including threatening or distressing language or behaviour, physical or verbal intimidation or discrimination, or sexual.

Violence at work is usually in the form of physical abuse or threat, which creates a risk to people's health and safety.

Civility and respect
– Lack of trust, honesty, respect, civility and fairness.
– Lack of respect and consideration in interactions among people, as well as with customers, clients and the public.

Discrimination is the process of making unfair or prejudicial distinctions between people based on the groups, classes or other categories to which they belong or are perceived to belong, such as race, gender, age, religion, physical attractiveness or sexual orientation.

Potential solutions:
Supervision, leadership, culture

– Encourage early reporting of issues to demonstrate the organisation's commitment to providing a supportive, respectful work environment, and maintaining confidentiality.
– Promote a workplace that is free of work-related violence and harassment by:
  · Leadership setting a positive example.
  · Promoting examples and colleague stories where others have come forward to a positive outcome while contextualising the process.
  · Promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect, role modelling by leaders, awareness training for all aspects of inclusivity.
  · Create peer support for minority groups.

Clear processes and support

– Refer to the organisation's code of business conduct, where one exists.
– Publish clear disciplinary processes with the reassurance that inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated.
– Communicate clearly to victims of inappropriate behaviour through process, including management of expectations of outcomes.
– Provide victims of work-related violence and harassment (including gender-based violence and sexual harassment) access to responsive and safe support services.
– Consider running workshops to discuss different scenarios to enable people to practise their skills and experience with sensitive topics.

Case Study

An example of <u>National Grid</u> developing a health and wellbeing tool to identify and combat negative workplace behaviours to allow for early intervention

National Grid, a company with a key focus on supporting health and wellbeing, has developed a tool to combat the lack of insights and metrics when it comes to psychological safety and wellbeing in the workplace. This tool aims to treat psychological safety as integral to physical safety and has been growing in capability since its development in 2015/2016.

For years, there has been an issue with trying to raise the profile of psychological safety to compare with physical safety for organisations. The two are interlinked, as an individual's thoughts and feelings can impact safety behaviours within the workplace. The lack of insights and metrics for psychological safety has made it difficult to understand the risks that people may face in terms of work-related stress and psychological safety.

National Grid's Psychological Lead developed a tool based on the HSE Management Standards to combat this issue. The tool is linked to the annual engagement survey and provides key insights and metrics across all HSE Management Standards (Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role and Change) with an additional Wellbeing Metric. It is used to highlight the business areas with the highest psychological risk. This has enabled early and proactive interventions to be put into place. It has:

– Helped with identifying negative workplace behaviours to allow for early intervention; and
– Developed insights and metrics to work towards creating parity between psychological and physical safety.

The provision of these metrics has led to an improvement year on year for management of people's health and wellbeing. From 2022 to 2023 there has been an increase of 4% in positive responses across the stress dimensions.

The tool has now been adopted by the US part of the business, with more than 23,000 people taking part. This allows detailed oversight and understanding of risks when it comes to psychological wellbeing. It also supports the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) agenda by categorising work-related stress by specific DEI areas such as gender, ethnicity and age, for example.

5.2 The role of the leader in wellbeing: organisation/workgroup culture

Potential to cause harm:

– Lack of clear vision and objectives from the top of the organisation.
– Lack of experience or competence from line managers.
– Lack of inclusion of all groups.
– Focus on productivity at the expense of individual or team wellbeing
– Failing to listen to complaints and suggestions or withholding information.
– Providing inadequate communication and support.
– Lack of accountability from leadership roles and line managers.
– Lack of fairness in process and decision making.
– Inconsistent and poor decision-making practices.
– Abuse or misuse of power.
– Lack of leadership/management training.
– Time constraints or limited time to focus on wellbeing

Culture

– Poor communication.
– Low levels of support for problem-solving and personal development.
– Lack of definition of, or agreement on, organisational objectives.
– Inconsistent and untimely application of policies and procedures; unfair decision-making.
– Lack of development opportunities for leaders in soft skills to positively role model the behaviour to develop a psychologically safe and inclusive culture.

Potential solutions:

Setting expected behaviours from the top

– Develop organisational policies that define expected work behaviours and explain how unacceptable behaviour will be managed.
– Define clear competencies for different leadership levels and managers, including softer skills such as emotional intelligence, compassion, empathy.
– Include wellbeing aspects in leaders' performance metrics – e.g., supporting people, enabling open and inclusive team cultures.
– Undertake safety leadership tours to create visibility.
– Encourage reporting of incidents and provide clear evidence of the feedback loop and of action taken.
– Improve and develop workplace culture through a range of integrated programmes (e.g., health and safety management practices, social responsibility, environmental sustainability, community engagement).
– Undertake a regular wellbeing or engagement survey to gain feedback and determine actions required.
– Develop and deliver wellbeing moments on the project to share learning.
– Put in place a governance structure that clarifies accountability and ensure these are monitored (senior management and line management) through KPIs.
– Recognise and reward leaders who consistently excel in the above.

Training and development

– Provide leadership training on topics related to psychological safety, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, stress management, mental health awareness and inclusion.
– Support people through different life stages and milestones.
– Ensure leaders have access to ongoing professional development to enhance their wellbeing leadership skills.
– Provide access to specific people management training and coaching.
– Encourage leaders to adapt and evolve their approaches based on changing needs and circumstances and societal and cultural differences (diversity and inclusivity, including neurodiversity).

Case Study

AtkinsRéalis **developed a training and wellbeing programme to ensure all senior leaders from across the organisation understand their accountability for wellbeing**

The intention of this programme was to support AtkinsRéalis leaders to create environments in which people thrive and deliver safe work in a complex world. The global workplace has changed and therefore models of leadership need to change with it to promote a clear vision of accountability for wellbeing from the top of the organisation. This involved a dramatic shift of culture to one of care and collaboration, starting with investment in a two-day 'Thrive: Developing Health, Safety and Wellbeing leaders programme.

So far, 350 leaders across the organisation have taken part in the programme, from London to Montreal. The content of the course focuses on developing the emotional intelligence of individual leaders and helping them to understand their own influence and the impact of their actions – i.e., their leadership shadow. In addition, the programme provides the opportunity for personal and professional development supported by best practice, tools including wellbeing check-ins, integrating rest and recovery, and modelling curiosity by asking better questions.

The success of this training cohort means the programme has received CEO- and board-level endorsement, with delivery to a further 600 colleagues in leadership roles planned in 2024. The change in culture has been felt across the organisation, with language and concepts from the course being used by senior leaders, including the CEO, in employee town halls and divisional meetings through learning moments.

Image: AtkinsRéalis

5.3 Organisational recognition, career development and rewards

Potential to cause harm:

– Where there is an imbalance between an individual's effort to perform and recognition and reward for that performance, such as:
  • Lack of appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation of an individual's efforts in a fair and timely manner.
  • Career stagnation and uncertainty, under-promotion or over-promotion, disparity between development pathways for support roles in comparison to technical roles.

Potential solutions:

Managed competence

– Where possible, allow people exposure to project opportunities that provide growth, or development opportunities through practical on-the-job learning.
– Enable a plan to utilise the project objectives to link to individuals' career development and personal goals.
– Where possible, involve training and development specialists to add value to the project.
– Create a job family matrix with a clear competency matrix and visible career pathways.
– Provide opportunities for sharing of learning through project examples, lunch-and-learn style sessions and project showcases. This will assist with career development and presentation skills development/profile raising.
– Set up a formal or informal mentoring process allowing more-experienced people to coach and stretch the project team members.
– Consider all stages of career, and not just initial development, and particularly those who might have had a career break, and how this might need to be tailored for those from different genders, cultures and backgrounds.

Case Study

We Don't Mind the Gap! A <u>Mott MacDonald</u> example of targeted recruitment to get women in India back into the workplace after a career break

In 2022, Mott MacDonald launched a strategic recruitment campaign across its India business. It knew there was experienced female talent in the industry sector that could be tapped into. What started out as questions on what it could do to increase the amount of female returners into the business resulted with the company hiring more female talent across India.

The organisation undertook a strategic approach to attracting and hiring individuals who, for whatever reason, had taken a career break. For some of the women this career break was as long as ten years. The company knew that women were more likely to have caring responsibilities for children and older relatives which resulted in extended career breaks. With tailored support from internal talent acquisition teams and hiring managers, the We Don't Mind the Gap initiative was born.

The initiative was named by those who first took part on the programme – ownership and empowerment go hand in hand! Those who were hired were then given six months' bespoke support from their line managers, and senior female leaders were appointed as mentors. A support network was also established to provide the right environment to foster inclusion and diversity.

The feedback from participants has been positive, so much so that Mott MacDonald is now looking to develop this programme further. For example, it has run targeted recruitment events where it has provided CV and interview advice to anyone who has taken a career break. It has also launched a part-time working policy across India, which is available to everyone. Giving potential employees flexibility within employment will help Mott MacDonald foster an environment of inclusivity where everyone can work better together.

Mott MacDonald knows the power of having a diverse workplace, and this initiative demonstrates its commitment in creating more diverse and inclusive workplaces where all can thrive and strive.

Image of Neetu Jakhar, our work returner.
Provided with permission by Mott MacDonald

Social factors at work

5.3 Organisational recognition, career development and rewards

Potential to cause harm:

– An imbalance in opportunities owing to discrimination and support for different employee groups.
– Lack of opportunities for skill development.
– Unclear career pathways.

Potential solutions:

Positive development culture

– Recognise and reward commitment and achievement.
– Provide appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation of people's efforts in a fair and timely manner.
– Use clear and concise language in communicating expectations for development. Embody a 'no surprises' culture.
– Utilise an employee life cycle model to identify recognition, development and promotion opportunities at each stage.
– Link recognition back to company values.
– Establish a consistent framework for consultation and participation to facilitate discussions of progression – i.e., reverse mentoring/coaching.
– Use informal check-ins and catch-ups around career path reviews.
– Encourage networking opportunities across different elements of the business.

Image: Empower cohort May 2024. Provided with permission by Costain

Case Study

Costain developed the Empower Programme, designed to empower women to reach their career goals.

Diversity at all levels of Costain is fundamental to effective decision making and delivering high performance. Every person should feel welcomed and able to participate, contribute and challenge.

However, a people survey carried out in 2022 by its Women's Network (one of the six employee networks) identified that the main barriers to progression for respondents included a lack of confidence, highlighted by half of the respondents. Individual visibility and challenges with networking also featured highly. Some 85% of respondents expressed a desire for some form of development/progression. In addition, Costain's EDI Gender Pay Gap data highlighted a decline in female representation at middle management level.

Based on the emergent themes from the survey and existing EDI data, Costain's Empower Programme was designed to address the experiences of women in the industry and to tackle barriers to progression into senior roles. The Empower Programme provides women working in Costain with bespoke development opportunities focusing on their career goals and aspirations. In tandem, line managers are supported to advocate for the candidates during and after the programme.

This includes raising their awareness of the differences by which men and women approach work and some of the challenges women face in the workplace.

Data has been gathered organically and feedback has been positive. On entering the Empower Programme, each candidate completes a pre-questionnaire that records their confidence, network, career goals and any other bespoke needs. Their line manager will also complete a pre-questionnaire for the candidate. On completion of the programme, a post-questionnaire for both candidate and line manager are conducted.

The line managers engaged through the Empower Programme reported the following observations about the candidates:

– Increased self-confidence and awareness;

– Increased leadership skills and characteristics;
– Increase in their team member effectively challenging senior stakeholders and better utilisation of networks;
– Increased ability to manage complex relationships.

The Programme is also measured on the following KPIs:

– Social representation (BAME/Gender/Disability): The cohorts are chosen based on the data from candidates, identification of those who may not ordinarily be self-selecting or recommendation from HR colleagues.
– Internal mobility: Additional opportunities such as secondments, learning and other business opportunities are more visible to candidates.
– Retention rates: For candidates in the first cohort, three moved roles after involvement in the Empower Programme.

5.4 People management: interpersonal relationships, support and supervision

5.4.1. Interpersonal relationships

Potential to cause harm:

– Poor communication, including poor information sharing.
– Poor relationships between managers, supervisors, co-workers and clients, or others with whom people interact.
– Interpersonal conflict.
– Harassment, bullying, victimisation (including using electronic tools such as email and social media), third-party violence.
– Lack of social support.
– Unequal power relationships between dominant and non-dominant groups of people.
– Social or physical isolation.

Potential solutions:

Project culture and behaviours

– Introduce clear commitments and expectations to an agreed set of behaviours. Agree collectively which behaviours are unacceptable and who is accountable for enforcement. Agree to adhere to company values as part of project set-up. Refer to a code of conduct where one exists. At project level this could be included in a well-being charter between the different parties.
– Communicate to clients that projects will be run in accordance with the charter.
– Implement a policy and reporting mechanism for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
– Regularly communicate these policies and procedures to people and make sure they are understood.
– Consider diversity and equality training that takes into account cultural, societal and historical barriers, if appropriate.
– Encourage and provide opportunities for people to socialise together.
– Find ways to celebrate success.
– Spotlight key influencers and individuals within and external to the organisation to actively model positive behaviours.

Case Study

Positive leadership behaviour from the very top at <u>HSBC</u>

Background
HSBC, one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations, faced challenges related to mental health stigma within its workforce. Recognising the impact of stigma on employee wellbeing and productivity, the company embarked on a mission to create a more supportive and open environment regarding mental health issues.

Incident description
The then CEO of HSBC publicly shared his own personal struggles with mental health. His openness about his experiences marked a significant turning point for the company, demonstrating vulnerability and encouraging others to speak up about their own mental health challenges. This act was seen as a watershed moment that led to a broader cultural shift within the bank.

Analysis
The CEO's candidness helped to break down the stigma surrounding mental health within the organisation. His leadership in openly discussing mental health issues made it easier for people at all levels to seek help without fear of judgement. This initiative highlighted the importance of leadership modelling positive behaviour to drive cultural change.

Immediate actions
The bank launched a company-wide mental health awareness campaign. Mental health first aid training was provided to people across various levels.

Long-term interventions:
– Mental health champions: The bank appointed mental health champions throughout the organisation to provide support and raise awareness.
– Training programmes: Comprehensive training programmes were implemented to help people recognise signs of mental health issues and understand how to provide support.
– Accessible resources: The company ensured that resources such as counselling and mental health support were easily accessible to all.

Cultural shift:
– Open dialogue: Regular forums and workshops were held to facilitate open discussions about mental health, promoting a culture of acceptance and support.
– Leadership involvement: Senior leaders were encouraged to share their own experiences and to actively support mental health initiatives, setting a precedent for the rest of the organisation.

Outcome
The initiatives led to a significant reduction in the stigma associated with mental health issues within the bank. People reported feeling more supported and were more likely to seek help when needed. The open dialogue and availability of resources contributed to improved mental wellbeing across the company, enhancing overall productivity and employee satisfaction.

The bank's approach to reducing mental health stigma serves as a powerful example of how leadership can model positive behaviour to drive cultural change. By prioritising mental health and creating an open, supportive environment, multinational corporations can improve employee wellbeing and foster a more inclusive workplace culture (McKinsey & Company, 2021).

5.4 People management: interpersonal relationships, support and supervision

5.4.1. Interpersonal relationships

Potential to cause harm:

– Poor relationships between managers, supervisors, co-workers and clients, or others with whom people interact.
– Interpersonal conflict.
– Harassment, bullying, victimisation (including using electronic tools such as email and social media), third-party violence.
– Lack of social support.
– Unequal power relationships between dominant and non-dominant groups of people.
– Social or physical isolation.

Potential solutions:

– Ensure appropriate communication mechanisms are in place and are operating effectively (individual and group) – see section 4.1 'Communication'.
– Develop a client relationship management plan with clear escalation processes in place.

Open reporting and clear escalation

– Consider management intervention to resolve specific issues appropriately and at an early stage.
– Communicate and refer to appropriate existing policies and procedures within the project team, including complaint procedures, whistleblowing, etc.
– Have a confidential system for people to report unacceptable behaviour.
– Make sure you are providing the same level of support and communications for people who work in isolation, such as lone workers and those working in remote locations.
– Undertake a regular wellbeing survey to gain feedback and determine actions required (feedback on survey responses and actions taken are required).

Case Study

Example of a wellbeing pulse survey and possible interventions

A pulse survey can be a great tool to continually monitor wellbeing on a complex project. As well as the questions themselves, it is important to consider communication and endorsement of the survey by leadership. Thinking about communication and confidentiality aspects at the outset will impact people's engagement with the project and their willingness to keep filling out the survey if nothing changes. So think about the high-level objectives of the survey and how this will be balanced with confidentiality issues.

For ease of completion and monitoring results, multiple-choice questions might be most appropriate – for example:

Q: How would you rate your wellbeing this week?
A: 1 – 5 (1 is lowest and 5 is highest).
Q: What is your biggest frustration at work currently?
A: High workload, control, client issues, clarity on tasks, support, team dynamics, none.
Q: What is your biggest positive at work currently?
A: Varity of work, growth, feeling valued.
Q: What is the biggest challenge your client is facing currently?
A: Delays, community engagement, conflicting priorities, high sickness rates

Examples of interventions and outcomes relating to questions in the pulse survey above:

– **Individual interventions:** a line manager could scan through the wellbeing scores and frustration reasons for their team and have follow-up conversations with reports to address any issues quickly.
– **Organisational interventions:** leadership and client-facing staff can use the data collected from these regular pulse surveys:
  • To have discussions with their clients about how problems can be solved as and when they arise;
  • To communicate anonymous examples of issues and solutions so people understand there is a purpose to filling out surveys on an ongoing basis.

5.4 People management: interpersonal relationships, support and supervision

5.4.2 Support and supervision

Potential to cause harm:

– Lack of support from supervisors and
  co-workers.
– Lack of access to support services.
– Lack of information/training to support work
  performance.
– Lack of constructive performance feedback
  and evaluation processes.
– Lack of encouragement/acknowledgement.
– Lack of communication.
– Lack of shared organisational vision and clear
  objectives.
– Lack of support and/or resources to facilitate
  improvements in performance.
– Lack of fairness.
– Misuse of digital surveillance.

Potential solutions:

Support
– Hold regular one-to-one and team meetings to talk about any emerging issues or pressures.
– Include wellbeing as a standing item for meetings.
– Consider buddying systems or work shadowing to improve understanding of roles across the team.
– Find and share positive examples of how managers have supported people.
– Establish support measures for people who are experiencing negative impacts from exposure to psychosocial risks.
– Provide specific instructions on how to manage foreseeable risks, how to respond if an incident occurs, and how to provide post-incident assistance.
– Provide access to, or information about, support services, general occupational health services, confidential debriefing, counselling and conflict mediation services.
– Ensure appropriate communication mechanisms are in place and are operating effectively (individual and group), including providing feedback.
– Undertake a regular wellbeing survey to gain feedback and determine actions required (feedback on survey responses and actions taken is required).

Resources
– Share information on areas of support available – e.g., assistance programmes, charities, occupational health and external organisations.
– Talk about the ways your organisation can provide support if someone is experiencing problems outside work.
– Consider the need for project-specific wellbeing champions, Mental Health First Aiders or specific wellbeing support functions.
– Develop and deliver wellbeing moments on the project to share learning.

Training
– Regularly consult with people to ensure training is up to date.
– Offer access to counsellors or training in basic counselling skills.
– Increase awareness of psychosocial risks and providing information and training to people on how to report them.
– Provide training to develop awareness and appropriate skills to identify psychosocial risks and recognise early signs of work-related stress and ill-health.

Case Study

An example of <u>Heathrow's</u> Prioritising People training programme to develop internal mental health fitness champions

Heathrow is a 24-hour operation with thousands of moving parts. As it ramps up to enable the welcome of increasing numbers of passengers, it wants to ensure its managers have the mental capital to ensure that they, colleagues and passengers go home safe and well every day.

Research led by the NHS has estimated that in England almost 20% of the population will need either new or additional mental health support as a direct consequence of the coronavirus crisis. In Heathrow's internal engagement survey 2022, 49% of leaders said that pressure was an issue. There were also gaps in leadership capability owing to a reduction in face-to-face, soft skills training during COVID, and many people were new to the airport or to manager roles, and some to both.

Heathrow started recruitment during the third lockdown to prepare for growth; however, the pace of growth, the challenging labour market and the time it takes to onboard a colleague at an airport meant it was also carrying gaps in resources, creating additional pressure on its leaders. High mental resilience was important to lead others in a new environment while managing increased passenger demand and emerging challenges.

Heathrow wanted to support its people in the best way possible. It recognised that managers would benefit from tools and techniques to improve their own mental wellbeing, to maximise their mental capital to manage pressure and to be able to help their teams to do the same.

Heathrow created a team of internal mental health fitness champions to deliver the mental health fitness training tool for all managers. Upskilling its internal leaders rather than using external facilitators meant that they both felt empowered to deliver the programme and were invested in it. Each area of the business had a nominated mental fitness champion who had credibility within the team and could understand the challenges that managers in those areas would be facing at that point. Heathrow trained 40 champions to give a ratio of one trainer to 16 managers.

Champions were able not only to deliver training to managers in their areas as a training module, but also to offer continuous day-to-day support to them, through ongoing advice and discussions.

Impacts and outcomes

- Line manager relationship scores improved by 45% after commencing the training.
- Overall wellbeing scores increased by 66%.
- Managers' confidence to approach and support mental health conversations increased.

6 Environment and physical factors

In this section, we explore traditional health and safety elements, emphasising how people's physical environments can lead to both short-term and long-term emotional harm.

6.1 Different ways of working: remote, isolated, flexible and agile – onsite or desk-based

Potential to cause harm:

- Working in locations that do not have a local support network, such as those on secondment or on long- or short-term assignments.
- Working alone in non-remote locations without social/human interaction at work (e.g., working at home).
- Working out in the community as part of community outreach.

Potential solutions:

Environment

- Consider the introduction of flexible working arrangements.
- Assess the risk of physical violence and verbal abuse by consulting with employees and others, such as the police, demonstrators and charities.
- Provide training to help people deal with and defuse difficult situations.
- Provide clear and repeated signposting to support pathways (to company, EAP, wellbeing champion network, external organisations).
- Review lone working risk assessment controls and ensure effective check-in/monitoring which extends beyond site visit process.

Communication and support

- Provide greater access to support for people who are working remotely or are working in isolated locations.
- Schedule regular catch-ups and check in with project team members.
- Enable agile working policies and share positive examples of where this is working well to the organisational and individual benefit.
- Encourage home workers to support each other using a buddy system.
- Clarity of secondment arrangements and monitoring of ongoing arrangements.
- Good use of annual leave.
- Ensure activities have been assigned an appropriate risk level and controls are implemented where physical security risks are possible. This could be physical risks as well as those from marginalised communities where people have to mask because of legal restrictions or cultural restrictions while travelling to different countries.

6.2 Environment and equipment

Potential to cause harm:

− Inadequate or inappropriate equipment – e.g., operating with tools or devices that are unsuitable for the required tasks.

Potential solutions:

− Organisations must provide a suitable working environment free from harm, including:
  • Adequate computer workstation setup with adequate screens for tasks.

Case Study

An ergonomic solution that prioritises workplace health

'**Tech X**' is a leading multinational corporation in the technology industry, with offices in more than 30 countries. The company specialises in developing advanced hardware and software solutions, and often requires people to work with high-tech equipment such as servers, high-resolution monitors and advanced computer systems. While Tech X is known for its innovation and productivity, it has faced challenges in ensuring that the physical equipment used supports people's health and wellbeing.

David, an IT systems administrator at Tech X headquarters in New York, spent the majority of his workday managing and configuring servers. His workstation was equipped with a standard office chair and a fixed-height desk, which were not ergonomically designed. Over time, David developed chronic lower back pain and carpal tunnel syndrome owing to the non-ergonomic setup and the repetitive nature of his tasks.

One particularly busy day, David experienced a severe back spasm while lifting a heavy server, causing him to collapse and require emergency medical attention. This incident not only highlighted the risks associated with inadequate physical equipment but also led to a temporary disruption in the IT department's operations, affecting the entire office.

David's injuries were primarily a result of the non-ergonomic design of his workstation and the physical strain of lifting heavy equipment without proper support. The incident underscored the need for Tech X to re-evaluate its approach to ergonomics and physical wellbeing, particularly for those in physically demanding roles.

Immediate actions:
David was provided with immediate medical care and medical leave to recover from his injuries.

Environment and physical factors

An ergonomic assessment of the IT department's workstations and equipment handling procedures was conducted.

Long-term interventions:
– Ergonomic workstations: Tech X initiated a company-wide upgrade to ergonomic workstations. Adjustable chairs with lumbar support, height-adjustable desks, and monitor stands were provided to all.
– Manual handling training: Comprehensive training programmes on proper manual handling techniques were introduced, emphasising the importance of using correct posture and equipment when lifting heavy items.
– Physical equipment aids: The company invested in physical aids such as trolleys, lifting straps and automated lifting equipment to reduce the physical strain on people handling heavy equipment.

Technological support:
– Health monitoring software: Software solutions were implemented to remind people to take regular breaks, adjust their posture and perform stretching exercises to prevent repetitive strain injuries.

– Remote management tools: For roles involving heavy lifting, remote management tools were introduced, allowing IT administrators to perform many tasks virtually without the need for physical handling of equipment.

Cultural shift:
– Health and safety culture: Leadership at Tech X emphasised the importance of a culture of health and safety, encouraging people to report any discomfort or equipment issues immediately.
– Wellness programmes: The company expanded its wellness programmes to include access to physical therapy, regular ergonomic assessments and health workshops.

Outcome
The implementation of ergonomic workstations and enhanced manual handling protocols led to a significant reduction in physical injuries. David recovered fully and returned to work, benefiting from a new ergonomic setup that prevented further strain. Overall, Tech X saw improved employee satisfaction, reduced absenteeism and increased productivity as a result of the focus on ergonomic solutions and workplace health.

Environment and physical factors

6.2 Environment and equipment

Potential to cause harm:

- Poor workplace environmental conditions: enduring issues such as cramped spaces, inadequate lighting and ventilation, and exposure to excessive noise.
- Insufficient resources: facing a shortage of necessary tools, equipment or other essential resources to effectively complete work tasks.
- Insufficient training or competence to carry out high-risk activities.

Potential solutions:

- Office and site location reviews.
- Sufficient space for all to work comfortably.
- Fitness-for-task medicals for high-risk activities.
- Provision of adequate heating, lighting, ventilation, temperature controls, welfare, refreshments, access to food, etc.
- Office design that includes accessibility of the environment.
- An environment that supports physical and mental wellbeing, including neurodiversity and disability considerations (e.g., quiet spaces, showers and lockers, plants).
- Provide and maintain appropriate equipment for performing the work (e.g., manual handling equipment), and improve equipment as necessary.
- Improve workplace surroundings and physical workplace features to isolate or protect people from hazards (e.g., noise, lighting, vibration, temperature, chemicals).
- Isolate or protect people from psychosocial hazards – e.g., with physical barriers to reduce risk of violence.
- Provide and require the use of appropriate and effective personal protective equipment (PPE) where there are risks that cannot be minimised using more effective higher order controls.
- Make physical adjustments – with hazards properly controlled.
- Occupational health hazard identification, including service provision and advice.
- Appropriate PPE can reduce people's concerns about exposure to a range of other hazards and can contribute to controlling and reducing psychosocial risks related to the work environment, equipment and hazardous tasks. Ensure provision of inclusive well-fitting PPE.
- Promote the message that people can stop working if they don't feel safe.

Case Study

Promoting a culture that supports anyone who doesn't feel safe to carry out their work by promoting the "stop work authority" at <u>Stantec</u>.

All people have the right to refuse work when they feel there is an immediate danger to their own health and safety or to the health and safety of others present at the worksite. They call this their Stop Work Authority and the company reinforces that all people are authorised and responsible for implementing this in the case of unsafe acts, conditions or simply not being confident in the safe work plan. Reinforcing this fundamental right to speak up reinforces the need for psychologically safe environments.

Stop Work Authority doesn't have to be a formal process, and it doesn't mean shutting down all work on a site or project. It might be a simple pause in the work activities so the team can discuss if something doesn't feel right. Stantec continually reinforces that when people implement the Stop Work Authority in good faith, leadership will always support the decision.

Worker fundamental rights are communicated through new starter inductions, and reinforced through recurring health and safety and ethics training and wider communications. Stop Work Authority events are reported through the online reporting system, thereby providing visibility of the frequency and nature of implementation. People regularly share examples and recognise Stop Work Authority as a proactive leading indicator. Recent examples include:

- A team were carrying out a lighting survey at night. The risk assessment for the first visit to site was developed from a desk study. However, when the team completed their dynamic risk assessment on site it was a lot darker than envisaged, the road was very busy and there were some strange characters in the area. So the team stopped work and returned to base to replan.
- A team were on a site visit with client representatives. The client representatives wanted to cross a busy A-road to look at some assets. The Stantec people agreed it wasn't safe so constructively voiced their apprehension and suggested the group stayed where they were. The team then replanned how to get to the other assets safely.
- A Stantec employee was on a visit to a contractor's site when they observed the contractor working in the road without traffic management. The individual implemented the Stop Work Authority, explained their concern and asked the gang to come to a safe location out of the road, then discussed the matter with the site manager.

Reinforcing this fundamental right to speak up contributes to the progression of a psychologically safe environment. Regular communications, such as a recent intranet story providing tips on having a constructive intervention conversation, build people's skills and confidence to enact the Stop Work Authority. This confidence is enabled through knowing they are fully supported by leadership, without fear of reprisal.

6.3 High-risk activities

Potential to cause harm:

The definition of high-risk activities will vary from organisation to organisation, but may include:

- Undertaking activities that have a higher risk of injury – e.g., working at height, working in confined spaces, working near or on water.
- Working in extreme environmental conditions or situations, such as very high or low temperatures.
- Working in higher-risk geographical locations from a security or medical perspective.

Potential solutions:

- Ensure a risk assessment is undertaken to cover the types of activities to be undertaken, the individuals at risk of harm, the environment, the geographical location and any factors affecting the culture and level of safety standards in place.
- Ensure that sufficient information and expertise is available to enable the risk assessment to be developed.
- Ensure that people have the required competence to conduct the activities in the given environment. Training programmes can assist with this, but the level of experience and supervision must also be considered.
- Where high risk of injury exists, consider access to specialist injury prevention specialists to proactively prevent injuries before they occur.

Case Study

<u>National Grid's</u> on-site musculoskeletal early intervention programme

National Grid has implemented an on-site early intervention programme to address musculoskeletal injuries within the gas, electric and support operations in the US. Launched in 2016, this initiative has reduced the incidence and severity of injuries among field service staff.

Utility field workers, owing to their physically demanding roles, frequently suffer from musculoskeletal injuries. Overhead line crews often experience shoulder injuries, while gas and support staff are prone to back strains and sprains. Many of these injuries can be prevented through better physical fitness, ergonomic positioning and early intervention for discomfort. Traditional communications from the safety department had limited success in reducing these injuries, as best practices for injury prevention were not being adopted in the field.

Following a successful pilot, National Grid partnered with ATI Worksite Solutions to bring on board a team of Certified Early Intervention Specialists (CEIS). These professionals, akin to athletic trainers for sports teams, are experts in physical conditioning and first aid. Deployed across New York and Massachusetts, the |CEIS team prepares people for physical tasks, advises on ergonomic techniques and provides care for early signs of discomfort, thus preventing further injury. A significant element of the programme is the utility worker movement screening

(UWMS), which identifies potential injury risks and prescribes targeted conditioning programmes. The CEIS also serve as first responders for acute injuries and offer guidance on general health topics, enhancing overall worker well-being.

The programme has been highly effective, as evidenced by employee feedback: 'I appreciate National Grid supplying us with an Athletic Trainer. This has helped me with my shoulder mobility; without it, I may have had to have shoulder surgery.' – US operational employee. In 2023 alone, the CEIS treated 467 musculoskeletal injuries, with 87% resolved through first aid and conditioning, significantly reducing the need for medical intervention. Additionally, 699 UWMSs were conducted, with 85% of participants reporting improved physical condition. The programme not only aids in immediate injury prevention but also contributes to a decrease in injury severity and medical expenses over time.

The implementation of the onsite musculoskeletal early intervention programme by National Grid has significantly contributed to preventing and mitigating injuries among field service operations people. The programme demonstrates National Grid's commitment to well-being, extending beyond standard safety measures to actively engage people in maintaining their physical health and safety.

Environment and physical factors

6.3 High-risk activities

Potential to cause harm:
Remote or isolated work

– Working in locations that are far from home, family, friends and usual support networks (e.g., isolated working or 'fly-in-fly-out' work arrangements).
– Working alone in non-remote locations without social/human interaction at work (e.g., working at home).
– Working in high-risk locations where physical security from the public or different groups is possible.

Potential solutions:
Remote or isolated work

– Understand and acknowledge the psychological impact that working in high-risk areas may have on individual and team wellbeing
– Where potential impacts may be higher than usual, consider pre-, during- and post-activity wellbeing reviews. This will assess psychological impacts and feed back any learning into the system.
– If people experience any traumatic events as part of the work activity, consider the potential for PTSD and instigate appropriate mechanisms to address this.

Case Study

<u>Mott MacDonald</u> developed the Wellbeing Risk and Planning (WRAP) tool to systematically assess risks on a complex project which led to a greater focus of communication and fostered a sense of belonging with people working remotely

Recognising that the ISO 45003 Standard and HSE's Management Standard had an organisation focus, Mott MacDonald identified a need for a risk assessment at a project level.

The Wellbeing Risk Assessment and Planning (WRAP) tool is based on the ISO 45003 risk assessment approach but follows a more concise set of headings and asks questions.

This facilitates a systematic and structured discussion with the relevant team members. Issues can be organised in order of impact and severity and actions put in place.

The advantage of this approach is that it takes a broader view of all psychological risks, which also educates project teams (in a type of practical training).
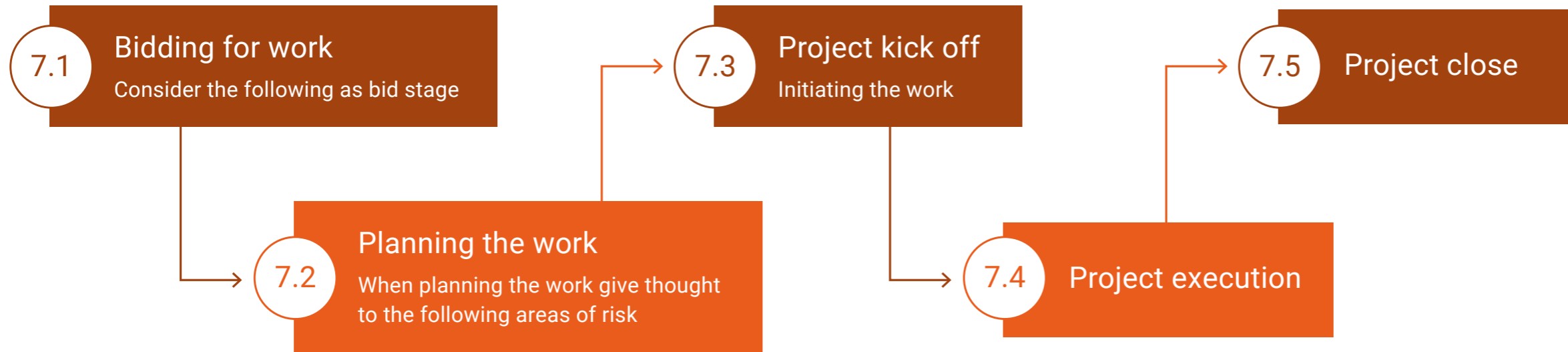
Furthermore, it ensures that any effort and investment is targeted to the biggest risk areas and will have the best impact.

The WRAP tool was used on a recent major highway and tunnelling project with a large project team (150+ across multiple locations and countries) and the client, contractor and partners. The project set up a working group, which included a wide variety of ideas from all organisations, such as gym access near the main office and improvements to office space. One of the main risks identified as having a high impact on wellbeing was isolated and remote working. The geographical nature of the team meant that it was difficult to foster a sense of belonging and integration to the project team. A communication plan and focused strategy was put in place to specifically manage this through inclusive catch-ups and regular updates to include everyone and acknowledge this risk.

Environment and physical factors

7 Project delivery life cycle: wellbeing risk identification

In the earlier sections, we outlined potential harm and corresponding solutions that might arise during project planning in engineering consultancies. In this segment, we shift our focus to the life cycle of a project. We introduce key questions that new businesses and bid professionals, in collaboration with project managers, should consider through the various stages of a project's development. Please refer to the life cycle stages below:

7.1 Bidding for work
Consider the following as bid stage

7.2 Planning the work
When planning the work give thought to the following areas of risk

7.3 Project kick off
Initiating the work

7.4 Project execution

7.5 Project close

Source: Mott MacDonald

7.1 Bidding for work

Consider the following areas during the bid phase:

1. What legislation exists in countries to help address roles and responsibilities of the supply chain (e.g., client)? Consider the impact of different legislation on international projects with personnel in different locations.
2. Are there skills gaps that could place additional pressure on people? In particular, emotional intelligence and/or communication skills competencies for line managers or leadership roles?
3. Are there any uncertainties around resourcing which could lead to additional demands during project execution?
4. Have contingency plans, processes and additional budget considerations been put in place to account for changes (but not limited) to: time delays, change in scope, individuals leaving the business, serious accidents/incidents? For example, occupational health risk profiling for high-risk activities on projects.
5. Is the organisation in a joint venture with another company?

Although this is not an issue in itself, two companies working together brings a necessity for collaboration and involves two potentially different cultures being introduced to one another. It's useful to think about potential issues up front and agree a common approach and structure and how issues will be escalated. Sometimes a memorandum of agreement on safety and well-being can be helpful in setting out key standards to be applied at the earliest stage of engagement.

6. Are there any key senior stakeholders who can be brought in as safety and wellbeing sponsors at project inception to either model positive behaviours or ensure accountability for these elements throughout the project?
7. Where is the work taking place? Will those involved be physically isolated and need more management supervision or oversight?
8. Is the project in the public eye and likely to have a degree of public scrutiny? If so, this can bring additional pressures on those responsible for delivery to the clients. Think about when this is likely to be and allow for additional resources if possible.
9. Are there client or industry standards that will make the work more difficult or complex to manage?
10. Are we undertaking statutory health and safety roles (such as in the UK the role of the designer and/or the principal designer)? If so, have adequate time and resources been allocated to enable the discharge of these duties to achieve a safe and healthy outcome?

Case Study

An example where a joint venture proactively collaborated to support smaller businesses in the project's supply chain was the Smart Motorway Alliance. The details of which have been provided by WSP.

The goal was to create a collaborative and supportive wellbeing environment in an alliance model that was made up of seven partners and a supplier partner network. The aim was to create an equitable wellbeing environment no matter which organisation colleagues worked for, and a place to collaborate and share best practice across organisations to enhance the wellbeing opportunities for all. The Alliance also recognised that smaller supplier partners did not have access to mental health support, such as an EAP.

Solution

– The programme began by setting up engagement groups for collaboration and co-creation of the wellbeing programme. This included an Alliance-level steering group composed of a representative of each of the seven partner organisations in the Alliance and three representatives from different supplier partners; a working group of representatives across each of the main schemes in the Alliance; and a supplier working group composed of suppliers who were keen to support the wellbeing across the Alliance.
– They titled the wellbeing programme 'Journey to Wellbeing', to create a consistent wellbeing brand across the Alliance. It included equitable wellbeing materials for all colleagues working in the Alliance to access resources such as the Journey to Wellbeing toolkit – an accessible toolkit for all colleagues to access virtually or in printed form which they could use in the Alliance, but also share back to their partner organisations.

– They also co-created a wellbeing matrix and assurance activity to support with developing a consistent environment across all schemes to ensure a consistent proactive approach to wellbeing across all schemes.
– The Alliance co-created a supplier partner matrix with supplier representatives to enhance the wellbeing offering in supplier partner organisations and to share best practice across the community.

– The Alliance partnered with Maximus, who provided access to mental health support to ensure there was an equitable mental health support pathway, particularly for the smaller businesses who may not have had access to an EAP.

Outcome

– The wellbeing collaboration across the Alliance increased; schemes shared best practice with one another on how to engage their local workforce; supplier partners shared their practices and policies to support others on topics such as menopause; and the micro businesses and small supplier partners who previously had no access to an EAP started promoting Maximus to their colleagues.
– In the recent Alliance engagement survey, 92% of colleagues believed the Alliance prioritised their health and wellbeing, 89% praised the Alliance's health and wellbeing communication and 88% were at ease discussing mental or physical health concerns.

7.2 Planning the work

When planning the work, give thought to the following areas of risk:

1. Brief team members on their roles and responsibilities within the project team, along with accountability for safety and wellbeing and escalation processes.
2. Explain the expectations of their roles and the tools available to assist with undertaking them.
3. Use an organogram to show reporting lines and how issues should be escalated where necessary.
4. Agree methodology and timescales and be clear on expectations for deliverables, including check and approval processes.
5. Agree a communication plan for internal project communication: communication channels, frequencies, meeting structures, etc.
6. Agree communication protocols with the client.
7. Agree how changes requested from the client will be discussed, agreed, scheduled and, if agreed, communicated to the team.
8. Agree how internal changes are communicated and create a feedback loop for people to use.
9. Identify milestones or stages in the project where there may be additional workload, particularly if this will impact key individuals.
10. Agree with clients potential contingency plans and escalation processes resulting from milestone identification.
11. Discuss working hours and the potential for flexible working. Be clear on expectations in this regard. It is likely that while there is scope for agile working and flexibility, there may be some roles or times during the project where there is less flexibility, and it will help to manage expectations to clearly communicate this.
12. Are there certain tasks or activities that place additional pressures on people, where rotation of the activity may be advisable to manage this risk? For example, public interaction, critical presentations, exposure to higher risk, working remotely. If it is not possible to rotate these higher-pressure tasks, consider periods of alternative activity to allow for rest and recuperation. The same applies to more repetitive, monotonous tasks that under-utilise skills – these should be rotated where possible.

Case Study

Arup is making use of existing tools out in the public domain to manage wellbeing risks on projects

Arup is using the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) Health and Wellbeing Index (HWI) to calculate the impact of health and wellbeing risks. The use of the HWI will allow the business to effectively measure the consequences of these risks compared to investment in health-based choices in their rail business.

This project is still in infancy; however, it has been very impactful to be able to quantify health and wellbeing risks in the same way as health and safety risks and incidents. This has highlighted the need for further investment, and funding in health and Wellbeing continues to support the premise that wellbeing needs to pre-emptively be considered at the project design and bidding phase to ensure all wellbeing risks are appropriately managed from the outset.

This tool and its insights will be used to influence all aspects of the work, design, fatigue management, and health and wellbeing of people.

7.3 Project kick-off

1. Be clear on expected behaviours – use an internal company code of conduct or agreed values.
2. Agree acceptable and expected behaviours with client, and whose company code and/or values all will follow.
3. Explain that unacceptable behaviour on the project will not be tolerated and provide examples of this (bullying, harassment, etc).
4. Explain the process for reporting such behaviour – whether it is internal or coming from the client.

7.4 Project execution

1. Add wellbeing to the standard meeting agenda.
2. Use regular meetings to ask people how they are and encourage sharing of wellbeing moments.
3. Monitor any changes in individual behaviour that could indicate a wellbeing issue and take appropriate action to signpost to support mechanisms.
4. Use a meeting review process to assess how people are feeling after key meetings.
5. Consider the use of wellbeing pulse surveys within the project team and identify whose responsibility it is to ensure results are analysed and acted on (or not), as well as communication to project teams.
6. Escalate any behavioural or relationship issues, either internally through line management or with the client. Use HR teams to seek advice on any relationship or performance issues.
7. Promote the use of whistleblowing facilities if they are needed to retain confidentiality.
8. If project team members are working away from home, seconded to another organisation or working in a remote location, plan additional measures to stay in contact and check in more frequently to assess their wellbeing.

7.5 Project close

1. Review any wellbeing issues that were raised and assess how they were dealt with.
2. Consult with project team members about what could have gone better.
3. Share learning points with safety and wellbeing teams to share with the wider organisation.

8 Acknowledgements

As cited during the introduction, the content for this guidance has been developed by organisations in and out of the engineering consultancy sector. The Association of Consultants and Engineering would like to thank all those who gave up their time to attend the event in London in September 2023 and shared their expertise and experiences from across our sector.

Event speakers

Rebecca Addlington OBE
Professional swimmer (retired) and speaker

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Dr Rodrigo Rodriguez-Fernandez
Global Health Advisor, International SOS

Event attendees and sponsors

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- WSP

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Contributors

This guidance has been assembled by the Association of Consultancy and Engineering and co-authored by Mott MacDonald and International SOS.

9 Standards, guides, glossary and references

9.1 Standards and legislation

Given the variability in standards and legislation across different countries, it is beyond the scope of this document to detail specific regulations for each location. However, it is crucial for organisations to understand and adhere to the legal requirements associated with managing psychological risks wherever they operate.

These requirements should be integrated into the appropriate management systems to ensure compliance.

One notable framework that organisations can adopt is outlined in the ISO's Guide for Managing Psychosocial Risks (ISO 450003:21). This guide focuses on occupational health and safety, specifically psychological health and safety at work, by applying well-established health and safety risk management principles. In the summary below, we apply the principles of prevention to demonstrate how it can be adapted for effective wellbeing risk management.

Principles of prevention	Effective strategies to mitigate Wellbeing risks
(a) Avoiding risks	– Planning to avoid well-being risks at the outset.
(b) Evaluating the risks that cannot be avoided.	– Risk assessment – implementing processes for organisational, project and individual level evaluation of wellbeing risks. – Providing training to develop awareness and appropriate skills to identify psychosocial risks and recognise early signs of work-related stress and ill-health.
(c) Combating the risks at source.	– Processes to identify root causes, contributory factors and main sources of risks. – Staff feedback/engagement. – Focused action planning.

Principles of prevention	Effective strategies to mitigate Wellbeing risks
(d) Adapting the work to the individual, especially as regards the design of workplaces, the choice of work equipment and the choice of working and production methods, with a view, in particular, to alleviating monotonous work and working at a predetermined rate and to reducing the effect on health.	– Agile working policies. – Display Screen Equipment (DSE) training and assessments. – Appropriate consultation with people and those who are directly involved in the work activity. – Feedback routes from people. – Results of staff engagement surveys. – Positive working environments where people can 'be their true selves' in a fully inclusive environment. – Increase people's control over how work is undertaken.
(e) Adapting to technical progress	– Automating processes to reduce monotonous activities. – TW had a great example of using VR headsets to let people experience certain mental health conditions.
(f) Replacing the dangerous by the non-dangerous or the less dangerous.	– Limiting remote or isolated work. – Limiting work in higher-risk environments. – Improving workplace surroundings and physical workplace features to isolate or protect people from hazards (e.g., noise, lighting, vibration, temperature, exposure to chemicals).
(g) Developing a coherent overall prevention policy which covers technology, organisation of work, working conditions, social relationships and the influence of factors relating to the working environment.	– Implementation of relevant organisational policies (wellbeing, health and safety, bullying, harassment, ethics, EDI, etc.). – Developing a business code of conduct which aligns with organisational values and culture. – Development of specific project wellbeing charters. – Office/workspace designs. – Accreditation to ISO 45001 and alignment with ISO 45003 guidance. – Whistleblowing process and support for potential victims. – Increasing support for people experiencing potential psychological harm.
(h) Giving collective protective measures priority over individual protective measures.	– Organisational and project level risk assessments. – Isolating or protecting people from psychosocial hazards – e.g., with physical barriers to reduce risk of violence.
(i) Giving appropriate instructions to people.	– Company intranet sites. – Resource libraries. – External resources, such as access to subject matter experts, wellbeing specialists, etc. – Training/induction/onboarding, etc. – EAP. – Clear job architecture and use of performance and talent management processes.

9.2 Glossary terms

What do we mean by wellbeing?

Understanding Wellbeing: a multifaceted concept
Well-being remains a topic of considerable debate regarding its exact definition (Dodge, Daly, Huyton & Sanders, 2012). However, there is a general agreement that wellbeing is a complex, multi-dimensional construct influenced by both external circumstances and personal perceptions. External factors include environment, health status, social relationships and freedom from poverty. Personal perceptions encompass aspects like life satisfaction, happiness and subjective wellbeing (Diener, 2009; Michaelson et al., 2009; Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009).

The UK Department of Health defines wellbeing as 'feeling good and functioning well'. This definition highlights that wellbeing not only involves each individual's experience of their life but also includes how these experiences compare with societal norms and values. Wellbeing can thus be assessed through both subjective and objective measures (Department of Health, 2014).

Interconnection of Wellbeing *and* health
The UK Department of Health elucidates the reciprocal relationship between wellbeing and health, stating: 'Health influences wellbeing and wellbeing itself influences health.' According to the Department, health ranks highly among factors that people consider important for wellbeing. Both physical and mental health significantly affect wellbeing; however, mental health and wellbeing are distinct dimensions – mental health is not merely the absence of mental illness (Department of Health, 2016).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as 'a state of mental and psychological wellbeing in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community'. This state is influenced by a myriad of socioeconomic, biological and environmental factors (World Health Organization, 1948).

Like physical health, mental health exists on a continuum and can deteriorate. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2024), everyone possesses mental health just as they do physical health. Current data shows that one in six people in the working-age population of Britain exhibits symptoms associated with mental ill health at any given time (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2016). Moreover, reports indicate a decline in mental health levels since before the pandemic (Deloitte, 2022). In alignment with global findings, McKinsey's global survey reveals that approximately 60% of employees have faced a mental health challenge at some point in their lives. This underscores a critical point for corporate leaders: the impact of mental health challenges cannot be overlooked (McKinsey Health Institute, 2022).

The importance of Wellbeing at work

Both work-related and personal factors significantly influence employee wellbeing. Employers play a pivotal role in prioritising mental health and wellbeing on a global scale. The McKinsey Health Institute (2022) notes that 'leaders are in a position to improve employee mental health and wellbeing at scale', highlighting the extensive impact that organisational leaders can have. Prioritising wellbeing at work is mutually beneficial for both employees and employers, as it enables individuals to thrive and contribute more effectively to their roles.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2024) emphasises that for organisations to truly benefit, wellbeing initiatives must not be superficial additions. Instead, they should be deeply integrated throughout the organisation, becoming a core part of its culture, leadership and people management practices.

Term/phrase	Definition
Management system	A set of interrelated or interacting elements of an organisation to establish policies, objectives and processes to achieve those objectives. A management system can address a single discipline or several disciplines. The system elements include the organisation's structure, roles and responsibilities, planning, operation, performance evaluation and improvement. The scope of a management system may include the whole of the organisation, specific and identified functions of the organisation, specific and identified sections of the organisation, or one or more functions across a group of organizations (ISO 45001),
Communication	A process by which information is exchanged between individuals (Merriam Webster). The focus in this document is on concise communication that delivers the required message to achieve the intended outcome.
Environment and equipment	Environment: 'surroundings which a system or organisation effects, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna and their interrelation with humans (third parties)' (UK Government Master Glossary of Safety Terms and Definitions). Equipment: 'the set of necessary tools, clothing, etc. for a particular purpose' (Cambridge Dictionary).
High-risk activities	Activities where there is an increased likelihood that a person may be harmed or suffer adverse health effects if exposed to a hazard.
Inappropriate behaviour	For the purposes of this document, inappropriate behaviour encompasses bullying, victimisation, harassment, violence and civility. The detail of what this looks like will depend on local culture and standards and needs to be defined at organisational level.
Job control (including autonomy, work pace and schedule)	A person's ability to influence what happens in their work environment. For the purposes of this document, this includes an individual's autonomy, the pace at which they work and the schedule within which the work needs to be completed.
Job security	A high level of assurance or confidence for people to believe they're able to maintain their existing role for the foreseeable future. This provides a sense of protection against internal and/or external risks that might affect or change their employment status.
Leadership	For the purposes of this document, leadership is used in the context of an individual modelling best practice, engagement, support and proactive action and championing of well-being behaviour and policies for the organisation/workgroup culture.
Organisational recognition (including reward and career development)	For the purposes of this document, organisational recognition refers to formal and informal acknowledgement of an individual's effort in their role. This can manifest in various ways, such as private or public recognition and acknowledgement, financial reward and career progression/development.

Term/phrase	Definition
People management (including support, supervision and interpersonal relationship)	For the purpose of this document, roles and expectations refers to an individual having an understanding of their role and guidelines on the tasks they are expected to complete.
Roles and expectations	Organising people and building teams to optimise business performance. For the purposes of this document, this encompasses support, supervision and interpersonal relationships.
Ways of working	For the purpose of this document, ways of working refers to agile, hybrid, flexible, isolated and remote working. Individual definitions are as follows: **Agile working:** reasonable ability to vary the location of work – e.g., working from a different office or an individual's home office. **Hybrid working:** a form of flexible working where an individual spends some of their time working remotely (usually, but not necessarily, from home) and some in the employer's workspace.Flexible working: reasonable ability to modify the times that an individual works, in the interest of the person. **Isolated working:** when an individual is physically on their own in a workplace or worksite. **Remote working:** personnel habitually working at locations that are remote from their management chain of command and parent organisation, whether it be working on the move, working from home or working from satellite locations.
Work/life balance (including working hours)	Equal or appropriate time and priority to personal and professional activities. A healthy work/life balance will look different to each individual. The focus in this document is on the volume of work. (, 2021).
Workload (including job demands)	'The amount of work or working time expected or assigned' (Merriam Webster). For the purposes of this document, the demands of the job, activity or role upon the person are also considered.
Violence at work	Physical abuse or threat, which creates a risk to the health and safety of a person or multiple persons. This includes incidents involving an explicit or implicit challenge to health, safety or well-being at work. Violence can be internal, external or client initiated, e.g.: − abuse − threats − assault (physical, verbal or sexual) − gender-based violence

Term/phrase	Definition
Bullying and harassment	Can take many forms, including threatening or distressing language or behaviour, physical or verbal intimidation or discrimination, or sexual harassment. These may be associated with an abuse or misuse of power. None is acceptable and all are defined as unwanted, offensive, intimidating behaviours (sexual or non-sexual in nature) which relate to one or more specific characteristics of the targeted individual, e.g.: – race – gender identity – religion or beliefs – sexual orientation – disability – age
Bullying victimisation	Is repeated (more than once) unreasonable behaviours which can present a risk to health, safety and well-being at work. Behaviours can be overt or covert, e.g.: – social or physical isolation – assigning meaningless or unfavourable tasks – name-calling, insults and intimidation – undermining behaviour – undue public criticism – withholding information or resources critical for one's job – malicious rumours or gossiping – assigning impossible deadlines
Microaggressions	Insensitive statements, questions or assumptions traditionally aimed at marginalised identity groups can happen to anyone, of any background, at any professional level. The research is clear about the impact seemingly innocuous statements can have on one's physical and mental health, especially over the course of an entire career.
Psychological safety	A group-level phenomenon and shared belief held by members of a team that it's OK to take risks, to express their ideas and concerns, to speak up with questions and to admit mistakes – all without fear of negative consequences. Creating this environment in the workplace leads to more engaged and motivated employees and more inclusive decision making (Business Review, 2023).

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