

Executive summary

January 2016

Growing the health
and *well-being* agenda:
From first steps
to full potential



The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The not-for-profit organisation champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has 140,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

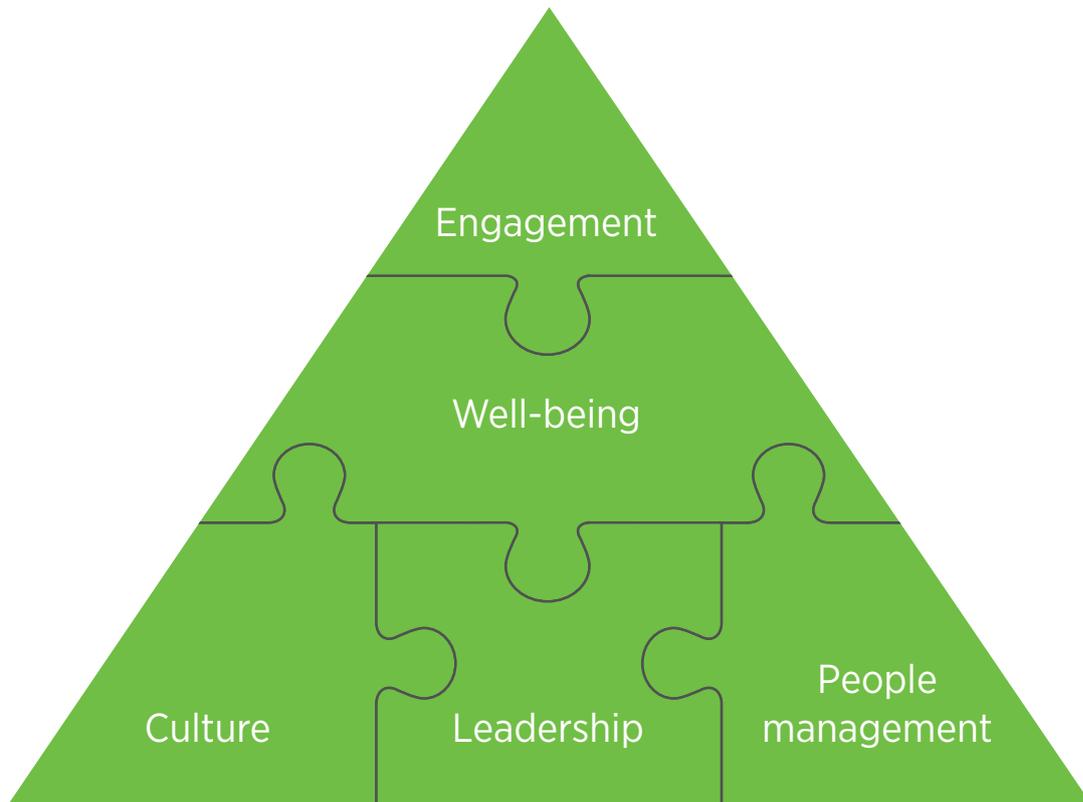
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Workplace health and well-being has risen sharply up the public policy agenda over the past decade. This has been accompanied by growing recognition of the positive link between employee well-being and long-term organisational health. There also appears to be a much broader understanding and application of *holistic* health and well-being approaches on the part of many organisations. We welcome this progress but believe that there is still considerable scope for wider and more integrated implementation of employee well-being initiatives in the workplace.

The time is right to recreate the momentum generated by Professor Dame Carol Black's pioneering work when National Director for Work and Health from 2006 (a post that no longer exists). The world of work is moving at an ever-faster pace, and pressing environmental factors such as the ageing population only increase the responsibility on employers to not only mitigate the workplace risks to, but optimise, people's health and well-being.

We want to set an aspirational agenda for the future direction of workplace health and well-being. An effective employee well-being programme should be at the core of how an organisation fulfils its mission and carries out its operations and not consist of one-off initiatives. It is about changing the way business is done. As well as benefiting employees, an integrated approach to health and well-being can nurture heightened levels of employee engagement, and foster a workforce where people are committed to achieving organisational success. As our well-being pyramid shows (see **Figure 1: The CIPD well-being pyramid**), to truly achieve a healthy workplace an employer needs to ensure that its culture, leadership and people management are the bedrock on which to build a fully integrated well-being approach.

Figure 1: The CIPD well-being pyramid



The CIPD is the voice of a worldwide community of 140,000 professionals working in the fields of people management and development. Our members play a pivotal role in shaping the way in which organisations manage and treat people, putting us in a unique position to lift employer aspiration and transform workplace health and well-being. As such, it is HR professionals who hold the key to unlocking the potential for a much wider and more sustainable integration of health and well-being practices at work. HR practitioners are also in a position to influence wider management practice in organisations. Given that responsibility for implementing the many aspects of a holistic health and well-being model is likely to fall on line managers, this wider reach is essential.

Within the full report, we document some of our key research and statistics on the current state of employee health and well-being. We also publish our well-being model, which identifies five domains of well-being (**Figure 2: CIPD well-being model**). We have described and defined the domains with illustrative elements and examples of possible workplace initiatives (**Table 1: Illustrations of the five domains of well-being**).

Figure 2: CIPD well-being model – the five domains of well-being

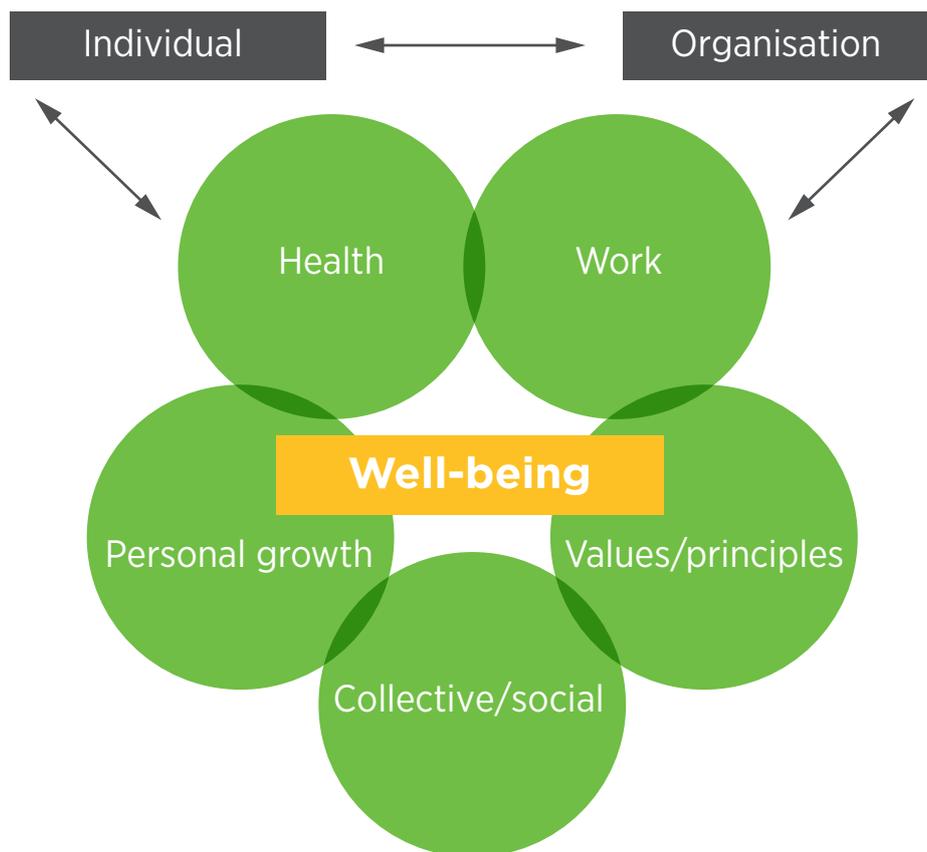


Table 1: Illustrations of the five domains of well-being

Domain	Elements	Examples of well-being initiatives/activities
HEALTH	Physical health	Health promotion, good rehabilitation practices, health checks, well-being benefits, health insurance protection, managing disability, occupational health support, employee assistance programme
	Physical safety	Safe working practices, safe equipment, personal safety training
	Mental health	Stress management, risk assessments, conflict resolution training, training line managers to have difficult conversations, managing mental ill-health, occupational health support, employee assistance programme
WORK	Working environment	Ergonomically designed working areas, open and inclusive culture
	Good line management	Effective people management policies, training for line managers, sickness absence management
	Work demands	Job design, job roles, job quality, workload, working hours, job satisfaction, work-life balance
	Autonomy	Control, innovation, whistleblowing
	Change management	Communication, involvement, leadership
	Pay and reward	Fair and transparent remuneration practices, non-financial recognition
VALUES/PRINCIPLES	Leadership	Values-based leadership, clear mission and objectives, health and well-being strategy, corporate governance, building trust
	Ethical standards	Dignity at work, corporate social responsibility, community investment, volunteering
	Diversity	Diversity and inclusion, valuing difference, cultural engagement, training for employees and managers
COLLECTIVE/SOCIAL	Employee voice	Communication, consultation, genuine dialogue, involvement in decision-making
	Positive relationships	Management style, teamworking, healthy relationships with peers and managers, dignity and respect
PERSONAL GROWTH	Career development	Mentoring, coaching, performance management, performance development plans, skills utilisation, succession planning
	Emotional	Positive relationships, personal resilience training, financial well-being
	Lifelong learning	Performance development plans, access to training, mid-career review, technical and vocational learning, challenging work
	Creativity	Open and collaborative culture, innovation workshops

While the list of elements and activities in **Table 1: Illustrations of the five domains of well-being** are helpful in enabling organisations to think about what is required in creating a well-being-focused organisation, it also demonstrates that there are large overlaps between the domains and that there is a high level of interdependence between them. For example, good line management should be a feature that runs through many of the domains. The well-being model also highlights the core symbiotic relationship between the organisation and the individual – the effectiveness of every well-being domain, element and initiative will depend on the interaction of both actors.

In the report, we build on our model to provide practical guidance on how employers can embed a holistic health and well-being approach that fits their organisation's needs. For HR professionals wanting to develop an appropriate employee well-being strategy in their organisation, key questions to consider are, first, what the strategy should cover and, second, how the strategy should be implemented. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to designing an effective employee well-being strategy, and its content should be based on the unique needs and characteristics of its workforce.

Successfully implementing an employee health and well-being programme relies on particular employee groups and stakeholders assuming responsibility for certain aspects of it. The employer will need to define and communicate these roles and responsibilities. For example, as we have already highlighted, HR professionals have a pivotal role to play in steering the health and well-being agenda by ensuring that senior managers regard it as a priority, and that employee well-being practices are integrated in the organisation's day-to-day operations. Senior managers, meanwhile, are important role models, and line managers and employees are more likely to engage with health and well-being interventions if they see senior leaders actively participating in them. Crucially, senior managers also have the authority and influence to ensure that health and well-being is a strategic priority for the organisation and that it becomes embedded across its operations and culture.

There are few employers that would disagree that a workforce in a good state of health and well-being must surely contribute to enhanced business outcomes. This simple premise is as good a place to start as any when considering the business case for why an organisation should take action on employee

well-being. However, if many employers are still not prioritising health and well-being, we need to look seriously at how the 'business case' is articulated and communicated. For example, a business case will be persuasive only if it is relevant and based on the unique needs and desired outcomes for the employer in question. Convincing senior management to integrate well-being throughout the business may need to start with a pilot area or by highlighting pockets of good well-being practice that already exist, and the organisational benefits that can be realised. However, there is another perspective on why employers should take action to improve the health and well-being of their workforce, aside from the mutually beneficial impact it could have for employees and the business, which is that it's the right thing for enterprises in the twenty-first century to do for their people and for wider society.

We turn now to our key calls to action for employers and the HR profession, as well as recommendations for change within the wider public policy landscape.

Employers and HR

- The HR profession holds the key to unlocking the potential for a much wider and more sustainable integration of health and well-being practices at work. HR professionals are in a unique position to steer the health and well-being agenda in organisations and drive a systemic approach, including ensuring that senior managers regard it as a priority, and that employee well-being practices are integrated in the organisation's day-to-day operations.
- Line managers are pivotal in shaping employees' experience of work and bringing people management policies to life. They therefore have a vital role to play in managing and enhancing employee well-being, but are not always trained in key areas such as absence-handling. As a consequence they often lack the confidence, willingness or skills to implement policies and promote health and well-being, particularly in relation to stress management. Training is vital to ensure that managers have a clear understanding of health and well-being policies and responsibilities, and have the confidence and interpersonal skills required to implement policies sensitively and fairly and have difficult conversations with individuals where appropriate.

- Employers need to implement a holistic approach to health and well-being that is preventative and proactive, as well as reactive, with a focus on rehabilitation back to work. Their approach should promote good physical health, good lifestyle choices and good mental health, as well as taking on board the importance of ‘good work’ in enhancing employee well-being.
- An employer’s approach to employee well-being needs to be sustainable and linked to both the organisation’s corporate strategy and workforce needs, and integrated within every aspect of its people management activities.
- Creating a healthy culture is perhaps the greatest challenge for organisations; it requires commitment from senior leaders and managers and, for many, a reassessment of priorities and considerable changes in work culture and organisation. A culture that isn’t supportive of well-being can undermine an organisation’s efforts where there is a perceived disconnect between rhetoric and reality. The benefits of a well-being culture are not limited to reduced absence and reduced absence costs – organisations that genuinely promote and value the health and well-being of employees will benefit from improved engagement and retention of employees with consequent gains for performance and productivity.
- Further understanding of the mutually reinforcing relationship between employee well-being and employee engagement can help HR to implement effective health and well-being programmes in their organisation and build a more compelling business case for future investment and commitment by senior managers.
- Too few organisations evaluate the organisational impact of their health and well-being activities and it is vital that HR practitioners monitor and report on a range of health, employee satisfaction and organisational measures to build a strong case to convince senior management of the need for ongoing financial commitment to health and well-being.

Government and wider public policy action by stakeholders

- A key challenge is achieving a joined-up policy approach on the part of government, as called for by Professor Dame Carol Black when National

Director for Health and Work, and the many agencies and stakeholders whose work impacts on the workplace health agenda, including government departments, healthcare providers and business. This applies equally to the localism agenda, whereby responsibility for aspects of health and social care has shifted away from Whitehall, providing scope for more joined-up action to improve health and well-being at a local level.

- Human capital reporting has a vital role to play in helping organisations to measure, report and benchmark the health and well-being of their people, and the CIPD’s Valuing your Talent research provides the framework to encourage accountability by enabling organisations to develop and monitor indicative metrics and outcomes for employee well-being and engagement. We call on the Government to establish human capital management (HCM) reporting standards for FTSE 350 organisations on core agreed HCM information, such as total cost of workforce investment, recruitment and retention costs, annual investment on training and development and employee engagement scores. This data can be used to ensure companies include a clear and more consistent narrative on how they invest in, develop and manage the health and well-being of their people and the link to business strategy and performance in their annual reports. The Government should lead by example by ensuring that consistent HCM reporting is embedded in the annual reporting of all public sector organisations as a means of providing more insight into how the public sector invests in and manages its people to improve resilience, health and well-being and drive value for service users.
- Providing and promoting more financial incentives for employers could encourage a greater number of organisations to invest in this area. There should be further and serious consideration of the case for introducing wider tax incentives for employers that invest in a health and well-being programme for staff, as highlighted in NHS England’s five-year forward review, which says: *‘there would be merit in extending incentives for employers in England who provide effective NICE recommended workplace health programmes for employees.’*

- It is time to review the HSE's Management Standards to ensure that they capture societal and workplace changes over the past ten years.
- More work and guidance is needed to improve the use of the 'fit note' to support employers in improving the return to work of people who may be fit for work where appropriate, particularly in relation to more comprehensive training and support for GPs.
- It is crucial that the Government provides adequate guidance and support for GPs and employers on the new Fit for Work service, and that its planned evaluations of the new service are comprehensive and action-oriented.
- Anti-stigma campaigns such as 'Time to Change' (<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk>), run by the leading mental health charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, can have a significant impact in raising awareness about mental health and helping to reduce the stigma and discrimination around mental ill-health. There is scope for wider action to promote such campaigns on the part of employers, government and other stakeholders.

The full report is available at cipd.co.uk/well-being, along with a wealth of other CIPD resources on employee well-being. The aim of our work is to set aspiration, stimulate thinking and promote debate, which in turn can influence practice.

Join in on social media using **#wellbeing16**.



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