

Why wellbeing works for business

UK employers are finding ways to keep staff happy, healthy and committed

From offers of weekly yoga sessions and free healthy breakfasts to rewards for cycling to work, smart employers are placing wellbeing at the heart of what they do.

5 A growing number of businesses are encouraging their employees to be healthy and emotionally resilient.

The idea of wellbeing schemes is not new. And one small company – with just 25 employees – is at the forefront of this.

10 Forster Communications, a PR agency that works with businesses to accelerate social change, has developed a wellness programme. It has also developed a mental health toolkit to help employers build a culture in which good mental health thrives and those who need help are supported.

15 Initiatives range from offering pedal points – five minutes additional holiday for every return journey walked or cycled to work – to free breakfasts, sabbaticals for staff with over five year's service, and flexi-time hours and flexible working conditions. In the past two years, the company has introduced a range of mental health initiatives, spanning mindfulness, pilates and resilience training on how to manage stress and busy workloads.

20 The move comes amid research highlighting a “wellbeing vacuum” in Britain's workplaces – at a time when the number of people experiencing mental health problems is increasing. A Chartered Institute of Personnel Directors (CIPD) survey found that the number of people suffering from mental health problems at work, such as anxiety, stress and depression, has risen from a quarter to a third over the past five years. And yet fewer than one in 10 (8%) of UK organisations have a stand-alone wellbeing strategy. Many rely on one-off initiatives instead.

25 Resilient : résilient, résistant

To thrive : être florissant, prospérer

A vacuum : un vide