

15 Ways to Create Wellbeing Warriors at Work

Practical ways to jumpstart employee wellbeing initiatives with your team



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Introduction

Hi,

I'm Lucy Tallick, and I'm the Head of Wellbeing at Reward Gateway. I've spent over 15 years in the fitness industry and have had the pleasure of helping so many people achieve their wellbeing goals. Since starting with Reward Gateway last year, my experience has been focussed on how you, as an HR professional, can find the same joy in getting your employees to where they want to be with their wellbeing.

Whether or not the thought of wellbeing gets you reaching for your gym bag — wellbeing at work is fast becoming an important part of your employees' experience. Wellbeing isn't simply limited to fitness initiatives, but it's a good first step for employers. And if it's not currently something you're thinking about then it might be time to start.

It all begins with the important decision of what's right for your organisation. At first, this can seem quite overwhelming, especially with so many wellbeing options out there! That's why we break down wellbeing into three key categories:

- Physical
- Mental
- Financial

There is not a one-size-fits-all approach to wellbeing, rather a wellbeing programme should be inclusive, personal and proactive. Within this eBook, we've got creative ideas in each category to help you make the right choices and get started on your wellbeing initiatives at work.

At Reward Gateway, we've moved wellbeing away from being a token phrase to a tangible solution that our people can benefit from. And we'd really like you to be a part of that, too. We started by recruiting our own wellbeing warriors in the business to champion wellbeing at work. It worked better than we could have imagined. Now, it's time to bring those lessons to you.

Enjoy!

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The Employee Wellbeing Dilemma



What is the employee wellbeing dilemma?

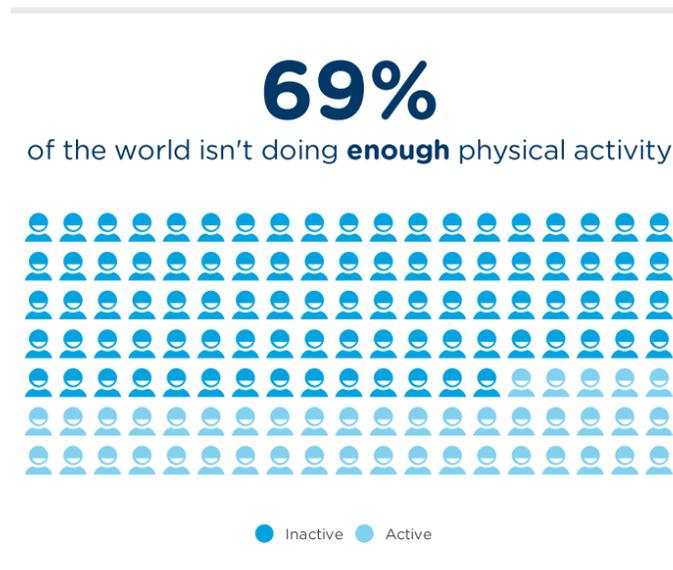
Physical and mental wellbeing seem to be the vogue of employee engagement and HR strategies right now. Everyone is talking about it and lots of companies are offering products or partial solutions to it — but no one seems to know what to actually do.

The Global Wellness Institute reports that out of three billion plus global workers, nine percent of them have access to some form of wellbeing programme in the workplace.

So why have we been ignoring things for so long? Do you believe that employees who are healthier perform better than those who are sick, tired, exhausted or unfit? Probably, right? We believe that the workplace has a role in fixing that. It's not just a problem that can't be influenced — employee wellbeing is your concern.

At Reward Gateway, we believe that people who are active, healthy and well-rested make better, more productive and more innovative employees. That's why addressing wellbeing in your workforce is no longer just an option, it's critical to your business's success.

Among the issues that a well-rounded wellbeing strategy can fix are absenteeism, productivity, staff retention and attraction.



And a lack of physical activity costs companies money.

A lot of money, in fact:

 **£554 per employee/year**
Cost of sickness absence to employer

 **7.4**
Annual sickness days/employee

 **£14bn**
Annual cost to employers

And how much does **presenteeism** (working while sick) cost employers in productivity?

 **£15B**

Annually.

It's recognised by most that wellbeing has to be a part of any employee engagement strategy. However, it's still seen as a challenge to get wellbeing in place and implement programmes that actually make an impact. I can see why — employee wellbeing can be interpreted in so many different ways. To keep your workforce active, you can schedule walking meetings, stock your on-site cafe with healthy foods or provide expensive health assessments. And each person is at a different stage in their wellbeing journey, so you need something that tailors to individual needs.

Let's take a moment to be honest. Achieving success with a wellbeing programme is within your reach and the first step is to understand that looking after employee wellbeing means something different to each and every person.

Whether you have 100 or 100,000 people in your organisation, it's no longer possible to have a one-size-fits-all wellbeing solution. They simply don't work.

So how can we solve the employee wellbeing dilemma?

Start thinking about wellbeing in a new way:



Gym memberships

No more excuses!



Exercise classes

Yoga, cycling, swim and more



Wellbeing at work

Group exercise classes, walking meetings and more



Open and honest communication



Smart financial choices



Pro Tip

Set your objectives

To ensure the success of your wellbeing strategy and approach, it's important that what you do achieves the following four objectives:

- Understands the needs of your employees and treats them uniquely.
- Educates your employees to make a healthier lifestyle an attainable and desirable goal.
- Empowers them to make small, sustainable lifestyle changes and helps them create healthy habits to improve their overall wellbeing.
- Focuses on preventative strategies rather than crisis management.

Uncover Your Wellbeing Needs



The pillars of employee wellbeing

The pillars of employee wellbeing focus on three main areas: financial, physical and mental. But in order for your wellbeing programme to be successful, it's essential to broaden your focus and also consider how your programme will be more personal, proactive and inclusive. Remember that all three pillars are stronger when successfully used together. We'll outline specific examples of each of the pillars later on in this eBook, but let's go over them briefly now:

1. The **financial** wellbeing pillar provides your employees with resources to manage their money and make smart decisions to alleviate stress, increase their focus at work and improve their overall financial wellbeing. Go a step further and provide your employees with an employee discounts scheme.

2. The **physical** wellbeing pillar should motivate your employees to get up and get moving. Whether it's about standing up while taking calls or implementing walking meetings, the importance is that employers are encouraging active behaviour. You can choose to partner with local health and fitness providers, or implement a solution like SmartFit™.

3. The **mental** wellbeing pillar is perhaps overlooked at times but is crucial to employee wellbeing. This pillar is all about employers expressing gratitude and encouraging employee recognition to provide motivation. Supporting your employees with an open environment where they can speak freely and have an outlet for stress and anxiety is also a big part of mental wellbeing.

By incorporating all three of these wellbeing pillars, your programme will:

Promote happier, healthier employees | Reduce absenteeism | Increase productivity |
Strengthen employees' resistance to stress | Support talent acquisition and retention | Improve employee engagement

Now it's time to discover the wellbeing needs of your organisation. It's really important that you look at this from two angles — **the needs of your employees** and **the needs of the employer — you**. It's impossible to implement a wellbeing strategy without looking at both sides. Today it's time to begin your investigation. Begin by discovering what needs you have as a business and understand what it is that your employees need, too. If you're finding it tricky, here are some questions you can ask yourself.

Employer needs

Set out the current challenge and pain points that your organisation has. If you can't think of any off the top of your head then the questions opposite might tease out the right information:

Do you have a high level of sickness absence?

Are you in a high-stress environment?

What is the work/life balance of your team?

Has a recent survey highlighted or raised an issue around the wellbeing of your employees?

Employee needs

An employee wellbeing programme will only be a success if it actually engages with your people. Sounds simple, right? But all too often we see solutions put in place without any input from employees. If you don't factor in the individual needs of the people who are going to use your solution, then it's not going to work.

That's why now is the time to find out what your employees really want and need. There are many ways to do this, such as detailed surveys and health risk assessments. Of course, you might have already done this, in which case — you're already one step ahead!

Healthier employees contribute to:

Reduced absenteeism	Lower healthcare costs	Lower risk costs	Boosted self-esteem
Earlier return times to work	Higher talent acquisition and retention	Increased energy	Reduced stress
More resistant to stress/mental health concerns	Positive corporate brand		
Productivity	Improved employee engagement	Improved sleep quality	

Assembling Your Wellbeing Warriors





Pro Tip

Get your VIPs excited

When recruiting your wellbeing warriors, it's important that they're just as excited as you are about the new wellbeing initiatives. To help add to their exclusivity, consider:

- Giving them early access to any technology you're using, such as an employee engagement platform or discounted wearables.
- Asking them for their feedback often, before you go live with any announcements, to give them ownership of what they're championing.
- Providing them with VIP access to exclusive areas containing articles or fact sheets to help them understand the background of the initiatives.

Implementing a wellness programme all by yourself can be a daunting task, whether you've got a workforce of 20 or 20,000! So let's start by thinking about who we can rally around to help you out. We've found that having a team of wellbeing warriors who act as champions will drum up engagement, excitement and participation for you. This allows you to focus on other areas that govern success.

Your crack squad of wellbeing warriors should be made up of employees and managers in all areas, levels and focus on wellbeing goals. If people can see that everyone is involved, then it gives your solution much more credibility and shows that they won't be excluded. Which, of course, will provide the best possible engagement from everyone in your workforce.

Champions provide a human aspect and are a key part of adding trust, as your employees will get the message from their peers organically as opposed to a static message on a poster. I'm sure you might

agree that people will be much more excited about something that's mentioned by a colleague over coffee than a flyer casually passed around.

[Wellbeing warriors will spread trust in your wellbeing programme. Whether new or established, they act as a friendly pillar of support to others. It's that word-of-mouth marketing which quickly builds engagement results.](#)

You can predetermine your champions by allocating responsibility and making it part of someone's role, e.g. HR Managers, Engagement Teams etc. Or, you can recruit Champions, allowing the natural advocates within your workforce to step forward voluntarily. I've found that those who are already active are more than willing to step forward and pitch in.

For example, in an office environment, give them quick and relevant bits of information they can pass on in conversation. For more spread-out demographics, give them content for emails or videos that they can share.

Get Creative with...

Physical Wellbeing

Physical wellbeing, as I'm sure you're aware, covers aspects such as fitness, nutrition, sleep, and smoking cessation. This all centres around getting your employees to be more active and encouraging them to make better decisions around how their lifestyle choices effect them. With physical inactivity being named the largest public health crisis of the 21st century, here are five ways to introduce physical wellbeing in your workplace:



1. Offer free bottled water

Employees often forget to drink anything other than coffee throughout the day. Offering free bottled water (or even convenient locations to fill up reusable water bottles) can go a long way in keeping your staff healthy and hydrated.



2. Switch to walking meetings

Not only does it help create a less formal environment than a stuffy conference room, it also helps employees get some much-needed exercise on the sly.



3. Implement a step challenge

Many of us are competitive by nature, so introducing a step challenge is an easy way to get your workforce moving!



4. Offer group activity options

Research shows that we are far more likely to participate and maintain a regular form activity when exercising in groups and clubs. You can use the group mentality to promote walking clubs, yoga classes and more.



5. Get some employee discounts to your local gym, fitness centre, or on fitness equipment

A wellbeing benefit that can reduce the financial barrier to fitness can help employees work on their wellbeing without hurting their wallet.

Get started today, and print this page for inspiration!

Get Creative with... Financial Wellbeing

Financial wellbeing can be a little less obvious to promote than physical wellbeing – we agree with you on that. But it doesn't mean that you shouldn't give it any less attention. Especially when financial worries can build stress that spills over into working life. Reward Gateway's wellbeing solutions come with a blog on how to save money, which is a start. Here are five more ways you can help:



1. Launch an employee discounts programme

Save your employees money on things they already buy, like grocery store trips or on splurge items like a dream vacation. (Learn more about our employee discounts programme at rg.co/discounts)



2. Provide budgeting classes tailored to financial goals

Expert advice is always welcome, as many find creating a budget intimidating.



3. Raise pension awareness and promote saving for the future

Make sure your employees know the importance of contributing to their pension fund and how it can help over time.



4. Partner with local banks to give free appointments with financial advisors

Depending on what stage of life your employees are in, appointments about homebuying expenses or how to budget for university could be helpful.



5. Educate on how benefits such as Childcare Vouchers can reduce financial burdens

Consider putting in place a Childcare Voucher scheme to allow for savings on costly childcare expenses. (Learn more about our Childcare Voucher scheme at rg.co/ccv)

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Get Creative with... Mental Wellbeing

Mental wellbeing is the one out of the three wellbeing categories that is overlooked the most, mainly because it's a subject that a lot of people don't feel comfortable talking about, don't understand or are conscious of addressing in the "right" way. That's why it's important to start small and ensure employees don't feel bombarded. Here are five suggestions on how to do it:



1. Educate others for signs of poor mental wellbeing

Teach your managers and employees to be aware of differences in behaviours, which could be signals for experiencing stress and anxiety, and foster a culture of open communication.



2. Create "unplugged hours"

A tech-free environment can help recharge your employees' batteries to help increase productivity.



3. Organise volunteering days

Consider rolling a volunteer day into your allotted holiday so employees are more likely to take the time to help others.



4. Allow flexible hours or working from home

The stress of a commute can be tough on employees, so offering a work from home day or flexible working hours can help.

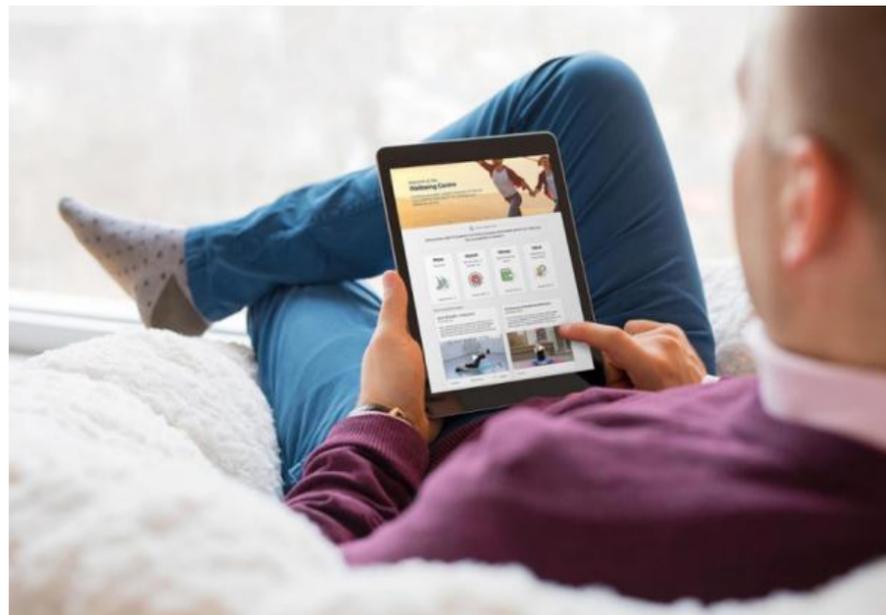


5. Reserve a room for meditation sessions once a week

Have one of your wellbeing warriors lead a meditation session and encourage your employees to recharge during seasons of high stress.

Get started today, and print this page for inspiration!

Wellbeing Solutions with Reward Gateway



Reward Gateway offers a variety of wellbeing solutions to help employers improve wellbeing in the different pillars of wellbeing we've discussed in this eBook. Take a look at the options:



Wellbeing Centre

A one-stop shop to help improve employees' overall wellbeing, including access to exercise, nutrition, financial advice and mindfulness tips.



Employee Savings

Give your employee access to thousands of discounts at top retailers, in-store and online vouchers, easy reloadable cards, cashback, and an employer-branded mobile app.



EAP

Prioritise mental wellbeing and offer employees a confidential telephone service with helpful support and advice through the Employee Assistance Programme.



Cycle to Work

Improve employee wellbeing with extended discounts at key cycling retailers and tailored communications.



Healthcare Cash Plan

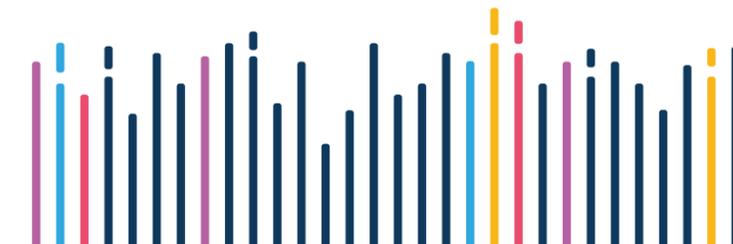
With the Healthcare Cash Plan, employees can claim money back on essential healthcare costs.



Our wellbeing solutions give your employees more opportunities to increase their overall physical, financial, and mental wellbeing through innovative benefits designed for high engagement.

If you're interested in learning more about any of Reward Gateway's employee engagement products to attract, retain and engage your people, please get in touch. We'd love to help you get started.

Contact Our Consultants:
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Conclusion

I sincerely hope you find something relevant within these 15 suggestions to create wellbeing warriors in your workplace. If you'd like to talk around any of the ideas that we've raised, or discuss ones of your own to see how they might work, then don't hesitate to get in touch with one of the members of the wellbeing team at Reward Gateway.

Although no two wellbeing programmes are alike, there is a common denominator between all — they focus on a holistic, inclusive approach that includes financial, physical and mental wellbeing.

We can help you find the right combination of tools to help you reach your wellbeing goals.

If you're ready to start tackling your employee wellbeing strategy, we're here to help you get started. Let's all start being a little more personal, proactive and inclusive to meet both our needs as employers and our employees' needs as well.

For more on how to kick off your wellbeing strategy, reach out to us or visit me on the [Reward Gateway blog](#) of employee engagement experts.

To better engagement (and better wellbeing!),



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