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Safe, healthy & inclusive working environment - resource pack

Resource pack

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How to create a safe, healthy & inclusive working environment



For employees, the environment they operate in, the relationships they develop and the culture they enjoy while they're at work, all have a considerable impact on their job satisfaction and wellbeing. Their place of work should not only be safe but it should also be inclusive to all so that everyone, irrespective of their gender, race, disability, age, sexuality or religion, feels a sense of belonging and empowered to achieve their full potential, free from harassment, discrimination and bullying.

However, while the benefits for the individual employees are clear, as an employer, why should you be concerned with creating the right environment for your staff?

Here are just some of the ways in which it can benefit your business performance:

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- Working conditions that are attuned to employees' physical and mental health and wellbeing can boost
  morale and lead to lower rates of staff turnover and sickness absence.
- Employees who are supported to work are likely to be more engaged and more productive.
- Embedding fair work principles can help a business to reap the benefits of a more equal, diverse and inclusive workforce and the increased skills and talent pool that this provides.
- Creating an inclusive working environment can help you to recruit people with a much wider range of backgrounds and skills, which in turn can help you to find new ways of addressing challenges and to attract a diverse range of customers.
- Aside from all the clear benefits, providing a safe working environment is required by law. It is your duty as an employer to protect the health, safety and welfare of your employees and other people who might be affected by their work activities, and this includes tackling work related stress.
- You also have a legal responsibility to ensure your workplace is free from discrimination, harassment and intimidation, to advance equality of opportunity, as well as fostering good relations between any individuals who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

What can I do as an employer to ensure my staff have a safe, healthy and inclusive working environment?

So you understand how this particular Fair Work principle can benefit your business as well as your employees, but what steps can you take to make this a reality in your organisation?

Here are some practical steps to consider:

Prioritise your staff's health and safety

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All employers have a duty of care to protect their employees from harm so ensuring health and safety in the workplace should be a priority. You must provide a safe place of work, a safe system of work and adequate plant and equipment, recruit competent and safety conscious staff and provide all necessary training to ensure staff can perform their roles safely.

Try to consider the wider implications of business demands on workers' wellbeing. For example, if you offer shift patterns or expect employees to travel for work, ensure they have enough time for sleep and recovery, to avoid the serious implications of poor sleep on business productivity and staff absence. And measure excessive workload in the same way as you would measure staff absence.

Aim to achieve parity between the management of physical health and safety and mental health and safety

Work has an important role in promoting wellbeing, providing a sense of fulfilment and social interaction. However, when not managed well, it can also have negative effects on mental health, particularly in the form of stress.

Factors which can impact on mental health include:

- Physical factors such as material hazards, noise, poor lighting, dust and dirt
- A sense of unfairness and injustice arising from management process or personal relationships
- Perceived imbalance between the effort required and the rewards of a job

Create a plan for supporting your staff's mental health, with clear expectations and feedback at every level
of the organisation, in the same way as you would for physical health. Communicate wellbeing as a priority in all correspondence, have effective processes in place to tackle workplace bullying, harassment and discrimination, train managers and employees to recognise and manage psychological risks and hazards, and work towards publicly reporting your mental health records.

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Create working conditions to maximise employees' health

There are all sorts of changes you can make to the work environment to improve their general wellbeing both in and outside of work. Also, supporting people who are not well and helping employees who have been ill to get back into work, is an important feature of creating an inclusive working environment.

Introduce an effective EDI (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion) strategy

Your EDI strategy should go beyond legal compliance and seek to add value to your organisation by contributing to the wellbeing and equality of outcomes for all employees. It should be developed using the lived experiences of marginalised staff and should address a wide range of protected characteristics and experiences including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity/paternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

To identify both barriers and solutions, make sure you collect data to track your workforce diversity, and commit to addressing under-representation across the protected characteristics at all levels of the organisation. Commit too to narrowing any gender, race and disability pay gaps that may exist within your business.

Ensure fair treatment for colleagues and foster an inclusive working environment

Remember that managing diversity and developing a culture of inclusion is a continuous process of improvement, not a one-off initiative. Ensure your EDI policies remain up-to-date with the latest legal developments and review them regularly through checks, audits and consultation. Design guidelines and provide training for line managers to help them respond appropriately to diversity needs, and where possible, link diversity management to other initiatives such as Investors in People (IIP), BSI 76000 Valuing People and ISO 9001 Quality Management.

Remove barriers facing disabled workers

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Instil confidence across your team about managing and supporting disabled colleagues, from recruitment and induction through to training, development and progression. Look to identify appropriate workplace changes or adjustments remove barriers for team members with impairments, enabling them to reach their full potential and thrive at work.

You can access further information on how to access support for disabled workers on the **Business Wales website** or speak to a Disabled People's Employment Champion by e-mailing **DPEC@gov.wales**

And finally…

There are all sorts of other ways in which you can make your workplace more inclusive - too many to list here. For example, you can develop an Accessibility Guide and create accessible digital documents to reach a wider range of customers. As well as introducing family-friendly flexible working policies to help employees with caring responsibilities, help new mums to come back to work by engaging with the Breastfeeding Welcome Campaign. And to support first language Welsh speaking workers and attract new Welsh speakers, you should do all you can to recognise and promote the Welsh language. Examples include using Helo Blod for free translation and exploring the wealth of Welsh language resources available to employers online.

Toolkit - Safe, healthy & inclusive working environment

We've prepared these handy resource packs – one for each Fair Work principle – to help you on the path to becoming a Fair Work employer.

Now you have some ideas on what you can do to create a safe, healthy and inclusive working environment, what's stopping you?

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There’s a wealth of online tools and resources to help you implement this principle across your organisation but we know that understanding how to navigate your way through all the information can be a challenge so we’ve compiled some of the most useful ones here:

Talking Toolkit

All employers are required by law to assess the risk of work-related stress and to put steps in place to tackle those risks.

This **toolkit has templates for six different conversations** designed to get line managers and employees talking about issues which may be causing work-related stress or issues which could have the potential to become future causes if not managed properly.

Disabled People’s Employment - Business Wales

You will find a lot of support and helpful information on **employing disabled people** on the Business Wales website.

Equality, diversity and inclusion in the Workplace | Factsheets - CIPD

This factsheet explores what **workplace equality inclusion and diversity (EDI)** means, and how an effective strategy is essential to an organisation’s business objectives. It looks at the rationale for action and outlines steps that employers can take to implement and manage a **successful EDI strategy**, from recruitment, selection, retention, communication and training to addressing workplace behaviour and evaluating progress.

The Workwell Model - Business in the community

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Business in the Community's **Workwell Model** provides an evidence-based framework for embedding health and wellbeing into organisational culture. The model aims to help businesses create environments where individuals and organisations can be at their best by taking a preventative, whole-person, whole-organisation approach to health and wellbeing.

Inclusive employment: Inspire hire and grow diverse talent – Business in the community

Despite UK unemployment being at its lowest rate for years and overall employment rates for women and young people rising, people who are furthest from the labour market are still being left behind. Youth unemployment is still high, people with impairments struggle to get work and ex-military personnel are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as civilians.

People with criminal convictions are still widely discriminated against and refugees face barriers in terms of qualifications, language and documentation. This factsheet gives **advice on how to recruit candidates from these typically excluded groups**.

Social Model of Disability | Welsh Government

The Social Model of Disability distinguishes between 'impairment' and 'disability'. It recognises that people
with impairments are disabled by barriers that can exist in society or the workplace. Find out more here or **sign up to training here**

Disability Confident and CIPD: Guide for line managers on employing people with a disability or health condition – GOV.UK

This guide, which forms part of the Disability Confident campaign, gives line managers **practical advice on recruiting, managing and developing disabled**

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people. It aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing and developing disabled people.

Sexual Harassment Toolkit | Wales TUC

We all have a role to play in tackling sexual harassment in the workplace, and we cannot be bystanders when it takes place. This toolkit **provides the information you need to tackle sexual harassment in the workplace** and stop it from happening.

Equality, diversity and inclusion policy template | Acas

This **EDI policy template** is free to download from the ACAS website and can be adapted to suit the needs of your business. It outlines the purpose of having an effective EDI policy and lists the organisation's individual commitments to ensuring best practice in this area.

This document may not be fully accessible.

For more information refer to our **accessibility statement**.

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