

Wellbeing & Worklife Balance

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Meet your trainer

- ▶ I have been a HR professional for 15+ years, working across private and voluntary sector organisations
- ▶ People fascinate me. The world of HR gives me a chance to help people navigate challenges, build strong teams and understand the very quirky world of employment law.
- ▶ Outside of work you'll find me spending time with my family, travelling the country in our caravan and crocheting.



How we will make this a great session

- Keep an open mind, respect everyone's input, even if it differs from your own
- Thoughtful questions – curiosity is encouraged, let's be mindful of how we frame questions
- Supportive participation – a space where everyone feels comfortable sharing ideas
- Please give us your feedback – it's so important to us

Today's session

- Why Wellbeing Matters
- Importance in our sector
- Evolving DNA of the employee
- Current Trends
- Useful templates and guides
- Q&A

Let's rate our wellbeing this morning

**On this sheep-scale,
how do you feel today?**



Evolution of 'Good' Job Perceptions: 2000s to Today

- **Early 2000s:** Focus on **pay** and **job security** — stability and financial reliability were top priorities.
- **2010s Onward:** Shift towards **work-life balance** and **career development** — flexibility, personal growth, and mental well-being gained importance.
- **Technology & AI:** Employees seek tech-enhanced roles but are mindful of automation risks.
- **ESG Values:** Growing desire to work for **ethical**, **sustainable**, and **inclusive** organisations.
- **Today:** A 'good' job is **holistic** — blending compensation with purpose, development, flexibility, and values

WORK LIFE BALANCE

- Flexibility in working
- 'Core hours'
- Overtime
- Remote work revolution

PAY AND JOB SECURITY



CAREER/ EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

- Personalised learning and development
- Upskilling initiatives
- Employee morale

AI

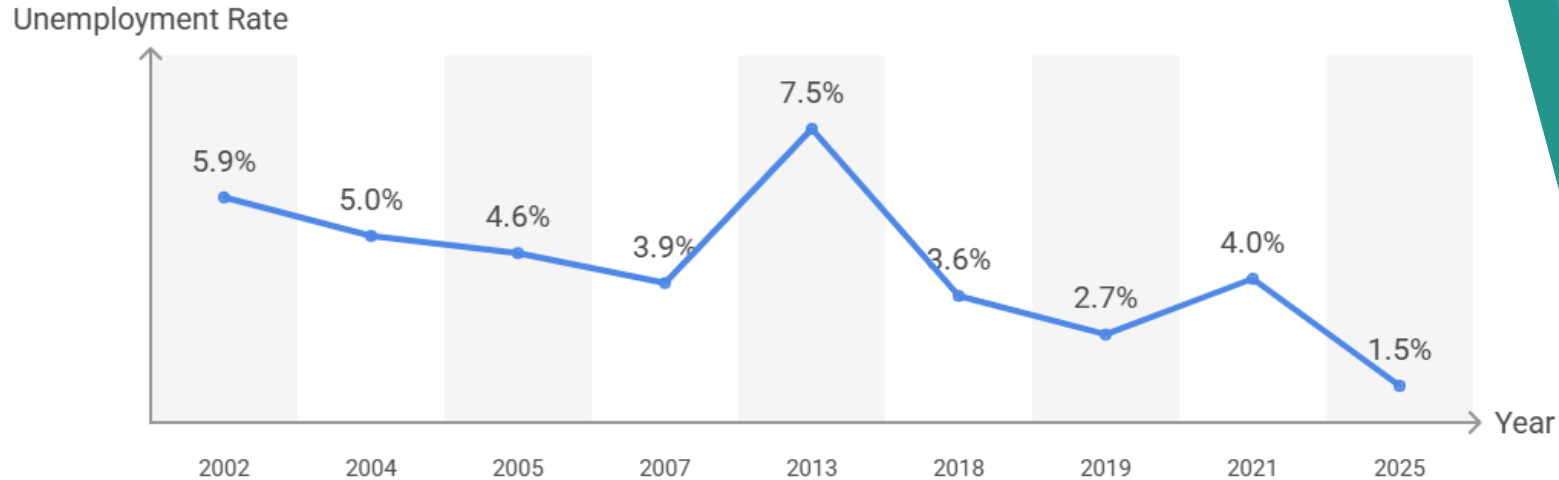
Increasing technological innovation
Policies to maintain productivity and engagement in a virtual environment



ESG

- Diversity, equality and inclusion initiatives
- Health, safety and welfare at work
- Increasing policies

Why it matters...Unemployment Trends



Unemployment Rate Trends (2002-2025)

Labour Government Impact

- ▶ Since taking office, the Labour Government's first budget* introduced **£40 billion in tax rises**
- ▶ **Over half** of this falls directly onto employers
 - ▶ Increase in Employer National Insurance
 - ▶ National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage increases

Labour's vision is precariously balanced and much will rest on how industrial strategy evolves in the next 12-18 months

Good Jobs Bill Northern Ireland

- ▶ Zero Hours Contract Reform
 - ▶ Banded contracts
 - ▶ Exclusivity Clause ban for low earners
- ▶ Flexible Working Enhancements
 - ▶ Day 1 Rights
 - ▶ 2 requests per year
- ▶ Trade Union Recognition
 - ▶ Threshold reduction from 21 to 10 employees
 - ▶ Extra protection for industrial action participants

Good Jobs Bill Northern Ireland

- ▶ Agency Worker Protections
 - ▶ Abolish Swedish Derogation
 - ▶ Equal pay for agency workers
- ▶ Work-life Balance Measures
 - ▶ Paid Neonatal leave
 - ▶ Enhanced paternity leave flexibility
 - ▶ Statutory right to disconnect

Migration from State to Employer Responsibility



The Impact in our sector....

- ▶ **Moral Pressure, Financial Strain:** not for profits are often least resourced to do so.
- ▶ **Inequality Risk:** Larger employers may absorb the shift, while smaller ones fall behind — creating a two-tier employment system.
- ▶ **Sustainability Question:** Without matched state investment, this shift is not sustainable in the long term.

Case Law Examples

Thompson v Scancrown Ltd (2021)

Flexible working and indirect sex discrimination

A senior estate agent, returning from maternity leave requested to work four days a week and finish at 5pm (instead of 6pm) to collect her child.

The employer refused the request without clear justification.

The Tribunal held that refusal disproportionately disadvantaged women and was not objectively justified.

Mrs Thompson was awarded **£184,961.32** in compensation to reflect loss of earnings, loss of pension contributions, injury to feelings (£13,500) along with interest.

But it doesn't mean a blanket 'agreement'

Dobson v North Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust:

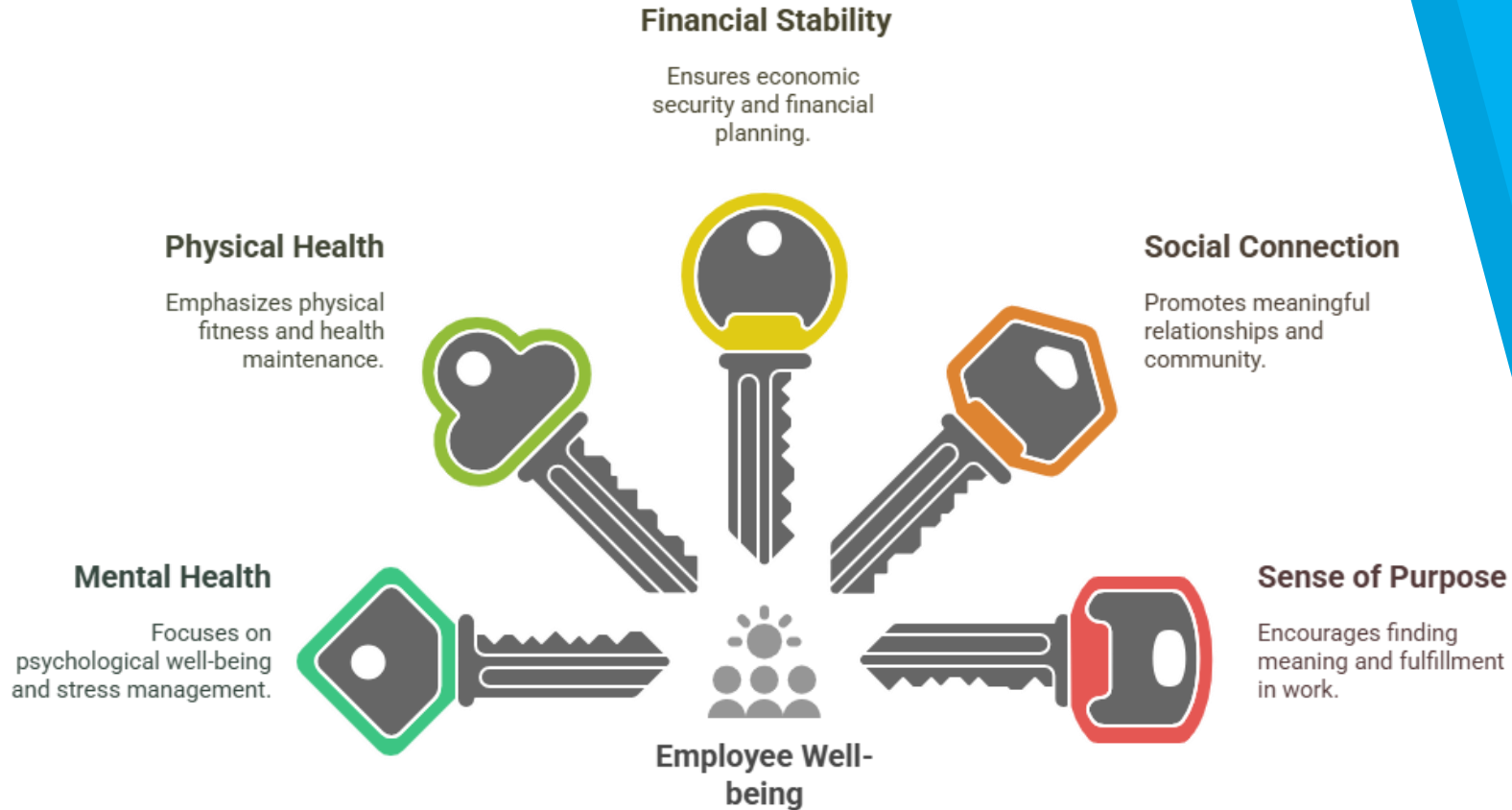
- ▶ Dobson, a community nurse with childcare responsibilities, was dismissed for refusing to work weekends under a new flexible working policy.
- ▶ The ET dismissed claims of indirect sex discrimination & unfair dismissal, reasoning that flexible working requirement did not place women at a particular disadvantage, as other female colleagues complied.
- ▶ The claimant appealed and the EAT found that ET had erred by limiting the comparison group to Mrs Dobson's immediate team. Case was resubmitted to ET.
- ▶ Upon rehearing, the ET acknowledge that the policy did place women at a disadvantage, but concluded that requirement was a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim i.e. continuous patient care

From Balance to Wellbeing

While work-life balance focuses on managing time and responsibilities, **wellbeing** considers the **whole person** — physical, mental, emotional, and social health — and how work either supports or erodes that.



What is Workplace Wellbeing



Is Wellbeing just a Buzzword?



How many of us will experience
mental health issues at some
point in our lives?

Is Wellbeing just a Buzzword?

What % of UK Organisations
report stress-related absence
amongst staff?

Is Wellbeing just a Buzzword?

What % of users report improved
anxiety levels after using an
EAP?

Is Wellbeing just a Buzzword?

How many workers say financial
stress affects their performance
at work?

Is Wellbeing just a Buzzword?

How many working adults in the
UK say they don't get enough
sleep?

The Impact

According to the CIPD 2023 Health and Wellbeing at Work report, organisations focusing on wellbeing see:

- Better morale and engagement.
- Healthier, more inclusive cultures.
- Tangible improvements in work-life balance.

55% of employers want to do better with wellbeing, but say they lack guidance or training.

Pillar 1: Mental Health

Good mental health isn't just “not being depressed.” It's about resilience, stress management, knowing when you're close to the edge and having safe ways to talk about it.



What does
poor mental health
look like at work?



Practical support

- ✓ Team debriefs after hard days
- ✓ Normalise check ins that go beyond 'how are you?'
- ✓ Know your own triggers and boundaries
- ✓ Managers modelling healthy behaviour
- ✓ Buddy systems in teams
- ✓ Wellbeing hour
- ✓ EAPs – even a basic plan - lead to a 56% improvement in employee anxiety levels
- ✓ Look to the strength of our sector for resources – Inspire, Action Mental Health Workplace Wellbeing Hub, Mindwise, Extern, Aware and more
- ✓ Mental Health first aiders – sometimes free places funded by PHA

Pillar 2 – Physical Health



Real life...

- ▶ Encouraging breaks and actual lunch hours
- ▶ Promoting hydration
- ▶ Monthly health themes with internal sponsors
 - ▶ Mindful May
 - ▶ Heart health February
 - ▶ Womens health October
 - ▶ Mens health November
- ▶ Stretch breaks – calendar reminders
- ▶ Standing meetings
- ▶ Lunchtime walking groups - strava

Pillar 3 – Financial Wellbeing

Financial stress will sabotage every other area of wellbeing.

Worrying about money causes sleepless nights, tension, and reduced focus.

Consider...

- ▶ Create a safe and non judgmental space for your employees to share concerns – 12 mins of your time can make a big difference
- ▶ Consumer Council NI – awareness raising sessions; online advice on managing finances
- ▶ Signposting to free debt advice – Advice NI, Christians Against Poverty, Citizens Advice
- ▶ Can you afford to pay Living Wage?
- ▶ Consider flexible working – I'm serious

Pillar 3 – Social Connections

**Co-worker: We should totally hang
out after work one day!**
Me:



Human First

Blue Zone big 9

1. Natural Movement
2. **Purpose**
3. Stress management – including prayer, mediation, **spending time with loved ones**
4. 80% rule
5. Plant slant
6. Wine at 5
7. **Belong**: strong community ties and sense of belonging
8. **Loved ones** first – big emphasis on multigenerational living
9. Healthy **social** circles

Pillar 3 – Social Connections

- Remember those genuine chats and check ins?
- Peer support groups
- Celebrating wins as a team
- Monthly 'tea and share' sessions
- Monthly wellbeing themes – lunch and learn

Joyful June 2024

MONDAY



3 Re-frame a worry and try to find a helpful way to think about it

10 Bring joy to others by doing something kind for them

17 Take time to notice things that you find beautiful

24 Bring to mind a favourite memory you feel grateful for

TUESDAY



4 Take a photo of something that brings you joy and share it

11 Eat good food that makes you happy and really savour it

18 Look for something good in a difficult situation

25 Show your appreciation to people who are helping others

WEDNESDAY



5 Think of 3 things you're grateful for and write them down

12 Write a gratitude letter to thank someone

19 Get outside and find the joy in being active

26 Make time to do something playful, just for the fun of it

THURSDAY



6 Get out into green space and feel the joy that nature brings

13 Take a light-hearted approach. Choose to see the funny side

20 Rediscover and enjoy a fun childhood activity

27 Be kind to you. Do something that brings you joy

FRIDAY



7 Do something healthy which makes you feel good

14 Share a happy memory with someone who means a lot to you

21 Send a positive note to a friend who needs encouragement

28 Notice how positive emotions are contagious between people

SATURDAY

1 Decide to look for what's good every day this month

8 Find joy in music: sing, play, dance, listen or share

15 Look for something to be thankful for where you least expect it

22 Watch something funny and enjoy how it feels to laugh

29 Share a friendly smile with people you see today

SUNDAY

2 Say positive things in your conversations with others

9 Ask a friend what made them happy recently

16 Speak to others in a warm and friendly way

23 Create a playlist of uplifting songs to listen to

30 Make a list of the joys in your life (and keep adding to it)



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together



Pillar 4 – Purpose

**Co-worker: We should totally hang
out after work one day!**

Me:



What's this got to do with work life balance?

Work-life balance isn't about laziness or slacking. It's a buffer. It's risk management. We need to give human beings more time to be humans



Consider...

- ▶ Staggered hours or job shares.
- ▶ Remote work options with boundaries.
- ▶ Flexible start/finish times
- ▶ Part time working
- ▶ Job sharing
- ▶ Compressed hours
- ▶ Term time only contracts
- ▶ Annualised hours

Good jobs bill – **day one** right for **anyone** to request is coming, with the option for **2** requests in a year:

- ▶ Outline your process for requests – timelines, meetings, decisions
- ▶ Case by case consideration
- ▶ Trial periods

Top Traits & Priorities of Gen Z Workers

- ▶ **Health and Wellbeing are non-negotiable**
 - ▶ Access to mental health resources
 - ▶ Healthy boundaries around working hours
 - ▶ Psychological safety at work
- ▶ **They Value Work life balance over climbing the ladder**
 - ▶ Flexibility is expected, not a perk
 - ▶ They want meaningful work *and* time to live – balance not burnout
 - ▶ They are more likely to job hop than stay in a role depleting their energy
- ▶ **They expect employers to care about ethics and social impact**
- ▶ **Tech savvy and digital first** – they don't know a world before the internet and digital agility
- ▶ **Open Communication and Feedback culture**
 - ▶ Approachable supportive managers, not just authoritative
- ▶ **Crave Personal Development**
 - ▶ Regular check ins and their voice to be heard

Takeaway Documents



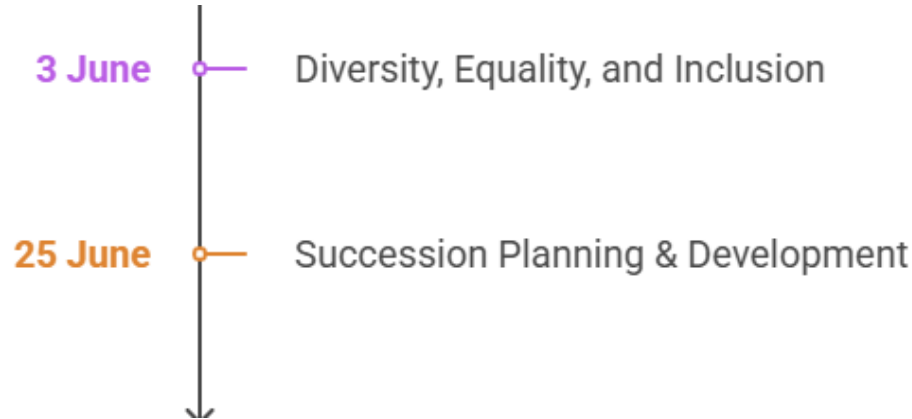
Stress Risk Assessment

Template Wellbeing Policy

Let's check in again....



Engaging & Retaining Talent Programme



Thank you
Don't forget your feedback!

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