



Newsletter

Summer 2024

*Promoting
Mental Health
at Work*

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Top Benefits*

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Annual Leave
Management*

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Promoting Mental Health

Mental health directly influences employee productivity, creativity, and overall job satisfaction. Poor mental health can lead to increased absence levels, decreased performance, and higher turnover rates. A workplace that supports mental health can enhance employee engagement, reduce stress, and create a more positive organisational culture.



Steps to Promote Mental Health in the Workplace

1. Create a Supportive Culture

- Company leaders should openly discuss mental health, demonstrating their commitment to creating a supportive environment.
- Encourage open conversations about mental health to normalise it and reduce stigma.

2. Offer Resources and Support

- Provide access to professional counselling and mental health services by offering your employees an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Considering introducing Mental Health Days to allow employees to take time off to focus on their mental well-being without fear of judgment.
- Conduct regular mental health awareness coaching sessions and workshops to educate employees on recognising signs of mental distress and how to seek help.

3. Promote Work-Life Balance

- Offer flexible hours and remote working options to help employees manage their personal and professional lives better.
- Ensure that employees have manageable workloads and realistic deadlines to prevent burnout.

4. Encourage a Healthy Workplace

- Encourage regular breaks and provide spaces for relaxation.
- Organise team-building activities that foster social connections and build a sense of community.

Implementing Mental Health Initiatives: Best Practices

- **Start from the Top:** Leadership teams should be the champions of mental health initiatives. Their active participation can drive acceptance amongst their team.
- **Inclusive Approach:** Involve employees in the creation and implementation of mental health initiatives to ensure they meet their needs.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Mental health support should be an ongoing effort. Regularly update and improve your mental health strategies based on feedback and changing needs.
- **Confidentiality:** Ensure that all mental health services and conversations are kept confidential to build trust and encourage employees to seek help.

If you would like more information on promoting mental health in the workplace, please contact Chelsey@agilehrconsulting.com

Enhancing Employee Satisfaction: Top Benefits for Small UK Businesses

In the competitive UK job market, small businesses need creative strategies to attract, engage, and retain top talent. While large corporations may have extensive benefits, small businesses can still offer a compelling package within the framework of UK employment law. Here are some effective benefits to consider:

1. Flexible Work Arrangements

The UK has embraced flexible working, especially post-pandemic. Offering options for remote work, flexible hours, or compressed workweeks can enhance employee satisfaction and productivity. Under the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023, all employees have the right to request flexible working from day 1, making it a valuable benefit to promote.

2. Professional Development Opportunities

Investing in employee growth is beneficial for both parties. Offering training programmes, workshops, or funding for further education can foster a culture of continuous improvement. The Apprenticeship Levy

can be a useful tool for funding such initiatives, even for smaller employers who can benefit from co-investment.

3. Health and Wellness Programmes

Supporting employee well-being is crucial. Small businesses can offer wellness programmes, including gym memberships, mental health resources, or wellness stipends. Encouraging a healthy lifestyle helps reduce absenteeism and aligns with the UK's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidelines on workplace stress management.

4. Employee Recognition Programmes

Recognising and rewarding employees for their hard work and achievements can significantly boost morale and motivation. Implementing recognition schemes, like employee of the month or small bonuses, can make employees feel valued. Such initiatives should align with HMRC guidelines on trivial benefits to ensure tax efficiency.

5. Comprehensive Insurance Options

While extensive health insurance might be challenging, providing basic health, dental, and vision insurance is attractive. Employers can consider salary sacrifice schemes to offer these benefits tax-efficiently. Offering life insurance or short-term disability coverage is also valuable and shows commitment to employee welfare.

6. Retirement Savings Plans

Helping employees save for retirement is a legal requirement in the UK. Setting up a workplace pension scheme under the auto-enrolment regulations is essential. Offering competitive employer contributions can significantly impact retention and demonstrate a commitment to long-term employee security.

7. Paid Time Off (PTO)

Generous PTO policies, including holiday entitlement, sick leave, and personal days, are mandated by UK law. Employees are entitled to at least 28 days of paid holiday annually, including bank holidays. Providing additional leave or enhanced sick pay can be a strong incentive for prospective employees.

8. Workplace Perks

Small perks can make a big difference. Consider offering free snacks, drinks, or casual dress codes. Team-building activities or social events can foster a positive workplace culture. Such perks should be managed in line with HMRC guidelines to ensure they are cost-effective and tax-efficient.

Mid Year Annual Leave Management

It is important for businesses to manage annual leave so this is a fair and flexible process with minimal disruption to the business.

Here we've put together some tips for successful annual leave management so your employees can be encouraged to have their well-earned breaks!

Have a Policy in Place

Your policy will provide clear guidelines - establishing process and any rules (carry over/ notice/ how many from a team can take holiday at the same time etc).

Work-Life Balance

Embed in your company culture the importance of work-life balance. This should cascade from the top! Ensure your managers support and encourage their team members to take their full annual leave entitlement – they could build this into their regular 1:1s/ team meetings.

Encourage Early Planning

Encourage employees to request annual leave as early as possible. This will also help with any necessary handovers and/or resource allocation, ensuring minimal disruptions to business operations. It will also help employees to balance their leave throughout the year – rather than taking extended leave towards the middle to end of the holiday year as they seek to use up their remaining annual leave.

HR System/ Annual Leave Management Tool

Use your HR system to support your annual leave management. They usually have:

- Shared calendar
- Automated approval – systems can set up rules for holiday eg the system can approve only 2 from the same team to be off at the same time
- Often your annual leave management system will allow auto reminders to be set up to remind your team to plan and request leave.
- Use apps so the team can apply for annual leave via their smartphone
- Simple reports which can help identify areas of concern around wellbeing eg if an employee hasn't had a day off for 6 months this can easily be seen and managed.
- Blackout period options where you can restrict holiday booking on certain dates

Quarterly Reports

Check your team's progress quarterly for taking/ booking annual leave and identify any areas of concern. This can be a useful way to prompt a conversation with an employee.

If you would like more information on the above, please contact hils@agilehrconsulting.com