



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Driving a Safe, Healthy and Inclusive Culture throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic

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DWP Supporting our Customers and Colleagues

DWP employs 85,000 colleagues and operates 900 sites across the UK. As a Department we help support the most vulnerable members of society. About 90% of our colleagues work in customer-facing roles, many of which involve giving face-to-face support to members of the public. Covid-19 has had an unprecedented impact and makes the work we do more important than ever:

- In the United Kingdom, the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits in February 2021 was 2.7 million. This is a 117% increase since February last year
- The largest spike in claims was between March 2020 and May 2020, rising by 98.9%
- DWP is faced with dual challenges of supporting customers and keeping colleagues safe
- We have undertaken a massive recruitment drive, successfully bringing in 13,500 new work coaches and 23,000 new colleagues overall in the last year
- To keep our colleagues safe and serve our customers, we deployed tens of thousands of pieces of IT kit to enable working from home, we set up a virtual service centre, we conducted remote training for new work-coaches, we introduced social distancing and increased hygiene measures as well as new risk assessments, including bespoke assessments for those colleagues most vulnerable and at risk



Our Vision for Wellbeing, Inclusion, Safety and Health (WISH)

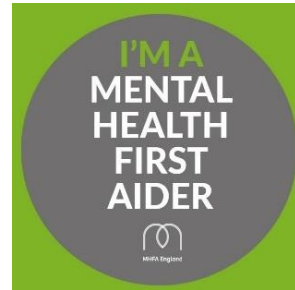
Our vision is that DWP is recognised as an exemplar employer, DWP is a model for an inclusive culture where everyone feels a sense of belonging, can be their authentic selves and feels they have a voice. Where they can be at their best, feel safe, be healthy and thrive. We will ensure:

- The make up of our organisation at all grades reflects the citizens and communities we serve
- Our buildings, offices and facilities provide an environment where colleagues feel safe, secure and comfortable
- Our people have access to cutting edge health and wellbeing support and tools to drive better health and wellbeing outcomes; there is parity between Mental and Physical First Aid and workplace adjustments are provided on time, every time
- We have a solid pipeline of talent which drives social mobility and creates impact in the Youth Unemployment agenda
- We visibly demonstrate a zero tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination in any form



Work To Date....

- Mandatory Wellbeing and Inclusion objective for Senior Civil Servants (SCS)
- 90% of SCS engaged with Wellbeing Confidence workshops
- Over 1700 trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA)
- 450 Ambassadors for Fair Treatment: volunteers who are approachable at a time of need, to listen in confidence and signpost to further support
- New on-line wellness solution and real-time wellness coaches developed and launched to support better employee health outcomes .
- I Can Be Me in DWP inclusion campaign since 2017, awareness 85%
- Supported over 500 Security Threat Risk Assessments to ensure our staff remain safe at work.
- Keeping Safe training launched for all customer facing staff
- Workplace Adjustments Governance Board and Accessibility Improvement Project in place
- Launched Action Plans for Wellbeing, Bullying Harassment and Discrimination, Disability, Race, and Inclusion



Inclusion is at the heart of what we do more now than ever...

Our vision for the future workplace:
inclusive, flexible and continuously
learning.

Moments that matter: Covid-19, Black
Lives Matter, 2020 Year of Inclusion.



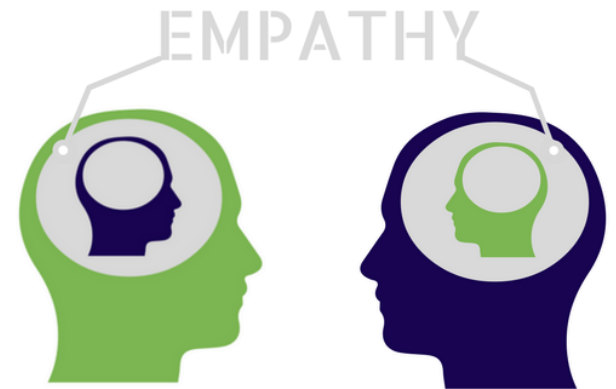
There have been opportunities...

Stronger
Connections

Listening
Circles

Greater Sense of
Belonging

New Ways of
Working



...And there have been challenges



Personal Safety

Anxiety about the
Future

Physical and
Mental Health

Isolation and
Alienation



Reaching out to colleagues in challenging times

In May 2020, we launched regular Wellbeing Pulse surveys, with 7 Surveys delivered to date. The Pulse Surveys have given valuable insight into colleague wellbeing, helping us to:

- Understand how colleagues are feeling
- Measure the effectiveness of communications
- Develop and tailor our response

Some of the insights we have learnt are:

- Colleague sentiment has been shaped by the trajectory of the pandemic; how colleagues are feeling now is at their best since the pandemic began
- Confidence in DWP's efforts to maintain a safe and healthy working environment has risen overall throughout the pandemic
- Colleagues consistently report mental health, the safety and wellbeing of themselves and their families, and sleep as being among the main factors influencing how they are feeling.
- Colleagues who access wellbeing resources tend to be more satisfied with the support available to them than colleagues who aren't using them
- Time is reported as a main barrier to accessing wellbeing resources
- Satisfaction with the physical and mental health support available is at its highest; showing improvement across groups where we have put into place targeted support



Wellbeing Insights

Over several months we have pro-actively collated wellbeing data and insight from across our Networks and Partners. From this, four broad insight themes have emerged:

- **Inclusivity:** a strong theme that has emerged is unconscious bias linking to issues of perceived unfairness in how different 'groups' of colleagues are being treated
- **Coping with change and uncertainty:** anxieties around the future roadmap. Including schools, office, flexibility, financial anxieties/pressures, and general uncertainty about what is going to happen next.
- **Loss and grief** of everyday life: this has been heightened by the lockdowns, with changes in job requirements and social distancing in place for the foreseeable future.
- **Exhaustion:** for those experiencing bereavement; strained home relationships; split attention/cognitive load of juggling work and home, caring responsibilities, and an increase in virtual meetings.



Wellbeing Provision

We've used the insights to refine our wellbeing provision, developing new interventions and products to support our people. We are also currently assessing the impacts of scheduling formal wellbeing time into service planning. Our benchmarking continues to tell us that our wellbeing offer remains first-class. Our interventions include:

- **Targeted support:** 'Reflect and Protect' sessions providing support for vulnerable demographic groups including BAME, LGBT+, Under 30, Carers, and colleagues with hidden disabilities. Rolling out new mental fatigue assessments and support for returning to work in Spring 2021.
- **Wellbeing Virtual Roadshow:** Reaching over 30,500 colleagues with 165 30 minute sessions so far. Support campaigns for Cancer and Long-Covid also underway.
- **COVID-19 Wellbeing Guidance:** Providing comprehensive guidance for health, wellbeing, and resilience.
- **Enhanced Bereavement Support** for colleagues and managers including Grief and Loss reflective sessions and Bereavement Support Packs for information and support plus specialist EAP interventions.
- **Mindset Matters:** Regular publications sharing top tips and guidance to help colleagues look after themselves and support their colleagues
- **Wellbeing Buddies:** 200 colleagues matched with a volunteer, giving them the opportunity to connect for a friendly, supportive chat about their wellbeing.



**Mindset
Matters**

More than ever



Driving a culture where everyone feels safe throughout the pandemic

We have been helping colleagues and customers stay safe throughout the pandemic by constantly monitoring internal and external risks and developing policies and processes.

- Case conferences for all positive cases (where staff have been in the office in the previous 72 hours). Where workplace transmission is suspected 'circuit break' closures are an option. These can range from between 72 hours and 10 days.
- Adjusting to local restrictions and national rules for devolved administrations.
- Social distancing mailbox where staff can report concerns about social distancing on site.
- Site inspections, where there are concerns either about social distancing or number of positive cases.
- Guidance on working safely in a corporate hub and booking tool to ensure corporate sites comply with social distancing and colleagues can be traced for Test & Trace
- Produced a Working from Home training product and risk assessment. Including information on working risk safely and protecting information at home.
- Bespoke H&S related training and broadcasts to help (particularly new) managers to understand physical and psychological impacts of Covid-19.



Inclusive Ways of Working

In order to help people adjust to new ways of working and protect their own and others' wellbeing, we produced guidance on Inclusive Ways of Working to help colleagues have open conversations about their needs and preferences with regards to ways of working.

The main themes of the guidance are:

- Different working environments
- Different methods of virtual interaction
- Different working patterns
- The importance of empathy and kindness

The guidance aims to promote:

- Kindness
- Open-Communication
- Flexibility





Thank you for listening!

**Do you have any
questions?**

