



Leeds Mindful Employer Network

# Wellbeing Tips for small businesses

**10 simple things** that  
will have a **positive  
impact** on you, your  
staff, and your business.

We asked a local business owner and Mindful Employer to share some top tips on how to improve staff wellbeing while juggling all the other demands of running a small business.

“The costs of poor mental health within your team can be greater than you realise. By introducing some small, inexpensive measures to promote wellbeing, you are likely to increase staff loyalty and performance. This will be reflected in customer satisfaction and of course, your turnover.”

**Louisa Henry, owner, Opposite Cafe**

## 1. Gain a basic awareness of mental health and support available locally



Take a few minutes to explore the [MindWell](#)<sup>1</sup> Leeds website and print off a copy of the ‘[How are you feeling?](#)’<sup>2</sup> leaflet. Keep a copy handy and make it available for staff to read. You could also complete the [free suicide awareness training](#)<sup>3</sup> from Zero Suicide Alliance.

## 2. Schedule regular 1:1s meetings with staff



These do not need to be long meetings, just a regular (e.g. monthly) dedicated time to check how staff are doing.

- Give people the opportunity to talk about their home/personal lives and anything that may be causing them stress or affecting how they are feeling. Have a list of local services and resources to hand – it is not your role to solve people’s problems but you can direct them to the support they might need.
- Discuss how personal/health problems might be affecting people’s work and what can be put in place to help.
- Ask whether people are experiencing stress or negative wellbeing due to work. Ask for thoughts on what could be changed or improved.

Make 1:1 meetings mandatory and make sure they are held in a confidential space – take people out for a coffee if you don’t have anywhere on site. This may seem unrealistic but it will be time well spent and worth prioritising.

## 3. Encourage people to take their holiday



Stepping away from work is important for everyone. We often don’t realise how much we need a break until we take one. Leaving it too late can lead to stress, exhaustion and burnout.

Include holiday pay in your staffing budget from the start and try to avoid using a ‘rolled up’ holiday pay scheme. Try to see holiday pay as an investment in your team’s wellbeing.

## 4. Provide as much financial security as possible



Financial pressures can greatly affect people’s wellbeing and you might not know about the financial challenges people are experiencing.

If you use zero hours contracts, guaranteeing people a minimum number of hours can be a big help.

If you know there will be periods of more or less work coming up, let people know as soon as possible so that they can plan ahead.

If you do need to make cuts, lay people off or make people redundant, explain these decisions as fully as possible. Communicate decisions sensitively and direct people to external support.

## 5. Encourage staff to build relationships and support each other



Providing regular opportunities for staff interaction can be a great way to build team cohesion. Whether through team meetings, buddying initiatives or social activities outside of work, staff will build supportive relationships and performance and job satisfaction will improve.

## 6. Give people autonomy in their roles



Wherever possible, trust people to work in a way that will be most effective for them and encourage their ideas for new approaches. If you don't take up someone's suggestion, explain why and thank them for it anyway.

## 7. Be explicit in your thanks and appreciation



It doesn't cost anything. Letting people know, genuinely, that they are valued can work wonders for their wellbeing (as well as performance and loyalty to you and your business).

## 8. Communicate openly about business pressures and decisions



Invite your staff to learn about your business. Help them to understand the pressures and difficult decisions you have to make – why you price the way you do, why you pay what you pay. Ask for their thoughts and listen to their ideas. Offer opportunities for people to step up and develop new skills.

## 9. Lead by example



If you visibly look after your own wellbeing, others will be more likely to do the same. Make sure people see you taking breaks and taking leave. Be honest about your own mental health – this can be essential in breaking down stigma and creating a culture that is open and inclusive.

## 10. Sign the Mindful Employer Charter<sup>4</sup> for employers who are positive about mental health.



This will demonstrate your commitment to better mental health at work. It will give a clear signal to your staff, customers, suppliers, and wider networks that you care. You will also gain access to a 24/7 staff advice line, MINDFUL EMPLOYER Plus<sup>5</sup> for just £1 per employee per year.

## What next?

**There are always further steps you can take:**

- ✓ Join Leeds Mindful Employer Network<sup>6</sup> for all local employers or business owners wanting to improve mental health and wellbeing in their workplace
- ✓ Work through the Mindful Employer Ten Steps Toolkit<sup>7</sup> – contact Leeds Mindful Employer Coordinator for support with any of the steps (see contact details opposite)
- ✓ Explore MindWell at Work: a guide for Leeds employers<sup>8</sup>
- ✓ Access mental health and suicide awareness training<sup>9</sup> for you and your staff (there may be local discount schemes available)

## Get in touch

Leeds Mindful Employer Network is an initiative commissioned by Leeds City Council Public Health and led by Leeds Mind in partnership with local employers.

We can provide free support to any local employer or business owner wanting to improve mental health and wellbeing in their workplace.

**Find out more and get in touch:**

**Email:** [mindfulemployer@leedsmind.org.uk](mailto:mindfulemployer@leedsmind.org.uk)

**Tel:** 0113 305 5800

**[www.leedsmind.org.uk/mindful-employer-leeds](http://www.leedsmind.org.uk/mindful-employer-leeds)**

1. <https://www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/>

2. <https://www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/about-mindwell/mindwell-promotional-materials/>

3. <https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training>

4. <https://www.mindfulemployer.dpt.nhs.uk/>

5. <https://www.mindfulemployer.dpt.nhs.uk/our-charter/mindful-employer-plus>

6. <https://www.leedsmind.org.uk/help-for-employers/mindful-employer-leeds/>

7. <https://mindfulemployertentsteps.co.uk/>

8. <https://www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/professionals/mindwell-at-work-a-guide-for-leeds-employers/>

9. <https://www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/professionals/mindwell-at-work-a-guide-for-leeds-employers/finding-mental-health-training-for-staff/how-to-find-the-right-mental-health-training-for-your-staff/>