

Step-by-Step Guide: Activating Wellbeing in Hospitality

In conjunction with Walk for Wellbeing



Introduction.

What is Walk for Wellbeing?

Powered by UK hospitality talent partner **mum** and supported by **Caterer.com**, **Imperial Hotels London** and **Sona**, Walk for Wellbeing is a fun, flexible annual event all about taking simple steps towards raising vital funds to support individuals and their families in the hospitality sector who are facing challenging times.

Walk for Wellbeing unites hospitality professionals, encouraging them to take steps to benefit their own wellbeing. With the initiative now going into its sixth year, Walk for Wellbeing has transformed since it began in 2020, turning into a nationwide initiative with 12 host cities now proudly championing the campaign as well as opportunities to 'walk it your way'.

To find out more and register to walk the walk, visit **www.walkforwellbeing.org**

Hospitality Action.

Hospitality Action helps support and advocates for the wellbeing of hospitality employees through important services such as financial aid, a 24-hour helpline, and mental health support. **Since 2020, it has provided over £5 million in emergency funding, awarded more than 15,000 grants to hospitality households, answered over 38,000 helpline calls, and delivered 11,306 counselling sessions.**

The primary reasons for support include poverty, household arrears, and illness or injury, with over half of beneficiaries aged between 30 and 49. Whilst the hospitality industry is dynamic, fast paced and fun, offering a great potential career, it can at times require working under pressure and stress, highlighting the importance of support services to maintain wellbeing and workplace harmony.

*walk for
wellbeing.*

Let's walk the walk and make a positive difference together

in support of

**Hospitality
Action**

powered by

mum.
talent taken care of

Wellbeing in hospitality.

The term ‘wellbeing’ is defined in the English dictionary as ‘the state of feeling healthy and happy’. It’s an accurate summary but also a simplistic definition that provokes questions like ‘what does being healthy and happy actually mean? And ‘how can I achieve a state of health and happiness?’

In recent years, a number of businesses in the hospitality industry have taken steps to improve their team’s wellbeing. Notably, there has been an increase in mental health awareness, in promoting work-life balance and in support offered to employees.

But have we achieved a state of health and happiness in hospitality?

Not yet, according to Hospitality Action’s latest **Taking the Temperature mental health and wellbeing survey**. While 78% of respondents encouragingly said they feel more comfortable talking about mental health issues than they did five years ago, the annual snapshot from the industry found that mental health issues are still prevalent and that a growing number of younger workers are suffering burnout.

The conversation has started, but we need to keep things moving if we want to talk the talk AND walk the walk on wellbeing.

“It’s clear that there remains a significant gap between policy and practice, with a disconnect between what employers believe they are delivering, and what employees actually experience.

“Whatever good is being done, the negative factors continue to outweigh. With 69,000 jobs lost since the National Insurance hikes in April, safeguarding the wellbeing of our remaining workforce has never been more vital.”

Mark Lewis, Chief Executive, Hospitality Action





How do we move on?

As the Taking the Temperature survey highlights, while the industry is making the right moves, it clearly has more work to do to close the gap between policy and practice.

So, if we want to move forward and make hospitality a happier and healthier place for everyone, what can we do?

In this Step-by-Step Guide, we will explore two ways to help boost wellbeing in hospitality – by improving our physical health and by building connections.

By paying attention to these areas and implementing a few changes, we can improve the wellbeing of our industry colleagues.

We'll also look at how focusing on these aspects could help tackle some of the current challenges that act as barriers towards achieving good wellbeing in the workplace.

Top 3 challenges affecting wellbeing.

Understaffing: 57% of respondents said under-resourcing was impacting wellbeing in the workplace, a 21% increase compared to 2024.

Excessive workloads: The high expectations of today's industry were cited by 51% of respondents as a problem, a 9% increase compared to 2024.

Work-life balance: Half of respondents said they were concerned about their work-life balance (compared to 45% in 2024).

Elevating wellbeing through movement.

In recent years, the focus – quite rightly – has been on addressing mental health, but in doing so we've overlooked how important it is to maintain good physical health for our overall wellbeing.

While mental health is one of the top three reasons used to explain time off work, more than half (51%) of respondents in the Taking the Temperature survey said a physical health issue had been the primary reason for taking time off in the last three years.

The NHS's Every Mind Matters platform highlights a strong correlation between physical and mental health, stating that a long-term physical illness can lead to stress and anxiety as well as low self-esteem and feelings of anger and frustration.

Whether a team member is struggling with mental or physical health issues, providing support in both areas will help prevent sickness and time off work. With understaffing and excessive workloads named as two of the biggest challenges facing employers, there is more reason to tackle these areas.

How to promote physical wellness.

Support fitness: Some of your team members will already be spending most of their working day on their feet, but boosting their overall fitness will improve their strength and wellbeing. You could give employees access to an on-site gym or collaborate with a local gym to offer discounted memberships; hold weekly yoga or Pilates classes at work if you have the space, or consider joining schemes that promote movement, such as Cycle to Work or Hospitality Action's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), where online fitness classes are available to members.

Promote work/life balance: Do team members have time to pursue activities and duties outside of work? Simple changes to their shift patterns, such as allowing employees with children to start 30 minutes later so they can walk them to school, or those who are part of a sports team time to finish early to make training, are great ways to improve both their physical and mental health.

Keep employees well-fuelled: Encourage employees to take their breaks, even when you're busy or understaffed. Some time away from the workplace – even for 10 minutes – will give them a boost. Nutrition is also essential to good health, so ensure team members are eating well to keep them fuelled during the day. Consider introducing staff meals, offering healthier dishes from your menu at a discounted rate, or asking a nutritionist to give a talk at work to help support your team's nutritional needs.

Walking for improved wellbeing.

Walking is a great way to improve the relationship between physical and mental health. Proven to reduce stress and fatigue, improve self-esteem and energy levels, walking is a simple but effective way to boost our wellbeing. Just 10 minutes walking outside is enough to increase our alertness and mood.

Walking ensures you dedicate time for yourself to step outside, reflect, and focus on you. Exercise also gives us a sense of control over how we feel and what we are doing for our health. Even a short stroll means you have achieved your goal for the day, reminding yourself how capable you are of achieving what you set out to do.

Encouraging employees to walk more helps them prioritise physical health as well as their mental health, and will give them all the benefits listed above. Employees will feel happier and more motivated in the workplace, meaning less time off and fewer instances of understaffing.

“Walking is great for our minds as well as our bodies. Being out in the open and moving forward helps us unlock thoughts, gain clarity, and reflect, and walking with others creates space for us to speak freely and share. Conversation and movement are a powerful and positive combination for overall wellbeing, helping us connect with the world around us and with ourselves.”

Craig Prentice, Director and Founder of mum, and creator of Walk for Wellbeing

How to build the habit.

Use commutes or breaks at work as an opportunity to walk:

While it may be tempting to jump on a bus all the way to work, or sit down and have a quick browse of social media before you start a shift, taking a 10 minute walk in the fresh air, is a better way to check in and reset.

Walk with others: Walking does not have to be done in isolation, and it is important to encourage people to gather as a community/ meet with friends to help connect with and support each other. Why not arrange a walking group at work to ensure it happens?

Promote walking in the workplace: Chris Cooper, General Manager at the Grand York and host of the first-ever Walk for Wellbeing York has introduced a few simple yet effective habits to promote wellbeing and connection. This includes weekly ‘Walk on Wednesdays’, charity-sponsored walks and monthly step challenges. These initiatives offer chances to connect with colleagues, stretch legs, create a sense of community, and encourages the team to walk to work and keep moving.

Build connections for improved wellbeing.

As well documented, walking can positively impact our mental and physical health. A collective walking experience like Walk for Wellbeing is also beneficial because it provides the added chance for connection.

Building healthy connections with others is proven to combat feelings of loneliness and isolation. Getting involved in an event, meeting existing and new colleagues, talking and listening to others are good moves towards improved wellbeing.

Taking part in Walk for Wellbeing is a positive step forward, and hospitality is getting better at both talking and listening. Insight from the Taking the Temperature survey reveals that 78% of people think we are better at talking about mental health, while 90% of managers said they prioritised listening as the first step in supporting team members.

We are getting there, but there is work to be done. A worrying 63% of survey respondents said they are concerned that vocalising a mental health challenge will negatively impact their progression.

By building deeper, more meaningful relationships, colleagues are more willing to open up and speak about any potential issues/struggles they are facing, so let's talk and connect more.

“In hospitality, we spend much of our time talking to people and ensuring great guest experiences. But when was the last time you had a real conversation that wasn't about work? Or the last time you asked someone ‘How are you?’ and truly listened to their answer?”

“Even when we're surrounded by people, we can still feel lonely. That's why taking time to have a genuine conversation matters. It's how we connect, build meaningful relationships, feel good, and strengthen our resilience to stress.”

Emma Keeble, accredited trainer with MHFA England, Hospitality Action Ambassador and founder of Anchor People

How to encourage connection.

Create an open-door policy in the workplace: Encourage team members to speak up if they need to. Having regular one-to-ones is a good place to start, but creating an environment where employees feel able to talk freely and know that someone is listening to them is crucial.

Know where to signpost people: If someone raises an issue or requires support, their manager needs to know where to send them for help. Hospitality Action's EAP is available 24/7 with hospitality-specific care just a call away.

Hold regular team building activities: If you've been part of a team for Walk for Wellbeing and you've had fun, why not make it a more frequent event with your colleagues and new connections? From a walk and talk session on a certain day of the week, to a team bowling night, just coming together and sharing time together away from the workplace will aid better connections and improve wellbeing.

Plan to proceed.

In this guide, we've looked at how focusing on improving physical as well as mental health, plus encouraging connection, can help boost wellbeing in hospitality.

Taking action in these areas can also help us tackle the three major challenges – understaffing, excessive workloads and work-life balance - currently impacting the industry's wellbeing.

Reference this checklist to activate wellness in your organisation:



Promote physical wellness: Support employee fitness through partnering with gyms, local schemes and offering classes. Support work/life balance through flexible shift patterns, and ensure teams are sufficiently fuelled with adequate breaks.



Get walking: Encourage employees to use commuting time or breaks to get out and walk with others. Set up step challenges, charity-sponsored walks, and dedicate time to ensure employees can connect and make meaningful relationships with each other.



Facilitate connection: Create an environment where employees can speak about issues without judgment. Hold regular team-building activities.

Walk for Wellbeing is a flexible and accessible way to improve wellbeing and connection. Not only does it help raise funds for Hospitality Action, but it also brings people together to start setting goals, deepen connections and make significant changes to physical and mental wellbeing.



Support checklist.



Hospitality Action Employee Assistance Programme

Mental Health First Aid Training

Hospitality Action Events

Register to Walk for Wellbeing

Taking the Temperature 2025 - Results