



etbi

Education and Training
Boards Ireland
*Boird Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Éireann*

WELLBEING STRATEGY

2024-2026



INTENDED FOR
ETBI Staff
PREPARED BY
Wellbeing Committee



Education and Training Boards Ireland

Workplace Wellbeing Strategy January 2024 - December 2026

FOREWORD

“Where people are stronger together”

I am pleased to present Education and Training Boards Ireland’s (ETBI) Wellbeing Strategy for 2024 to 2026, a guide aimed at supporting our people’s wellbeing, whether working virtually or in the office. With this Strategy, ETBI wholeheartedly endeavours to provide a high-quality working environment and, in doing so, to make sure no one is left behind. Our people are our greatest assets, and we understand that a healthy and resilient workforce is the cornerstone of our collective success.

The wellbeing strategy for 2024–2026 articulates that supports wellbeing and understands its impact. Together, we achieve this by recognising unique attributes and taking a responsive approach to supporting the wellbeing of our people. Embedded within this strategy are seven key pillars of wellbeing: Mental, Emotional, Physical, Recreational, Social, Environmental, and Spiritual. Each pillar is accompanied by specific goals aimed at cultivating a workplace culture that nurtures the personal and professional growth of our employees.

The three-year implementation plan focuses on three core commitments: Connection, Care, and Contentment. These commitments align seamlessly with the overarching ETBI Statement of Strategy 2022-2024 and HR Strategic Work plan 2022 – 2024, providing a holistic framework for the wellbeing of our people.

Considerable efforts have already been invested to date in supporting our staff, both in-person and virtually, through initiatives such as virtual tea breaks, positive work surveys, staff hybrid meetings, and the Keep in Touch (KIT) initiative.

Warm regards,



Paddy Lavelle

General Secretary



CONTENTS

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THIS DOCUMENT	3
Strategy Workplan	3
ETBI staff input in the making of this document	3
Introduction	3
2. IMPORTANCE OF WORKPLACE WELLBEING	4
Benefits of a Healthy and Well Workforce	4
3. GOALS OF THE STRATEGY	5
Who will drive positive Workplace Wellbeing at ETBI?	5
4. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	6
Three-Year Action Plan 2024 – 2026	6
5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	9
6. APPENDICES	10
APPENDIX A	10
APPENDIX B	11
APPENDIX C	12



1. DEVELOPMENT OF THIS DOCUMENT

The Wellbeing Strategy is a result of a highly considered, meaningful workplan undertaken by the wellbeing committee to represent the interests and wellbeing of each staff member in Education and Training Boards Ireland. The stages shown in figure 1 involved in the workplan show the process taken in developing this document.

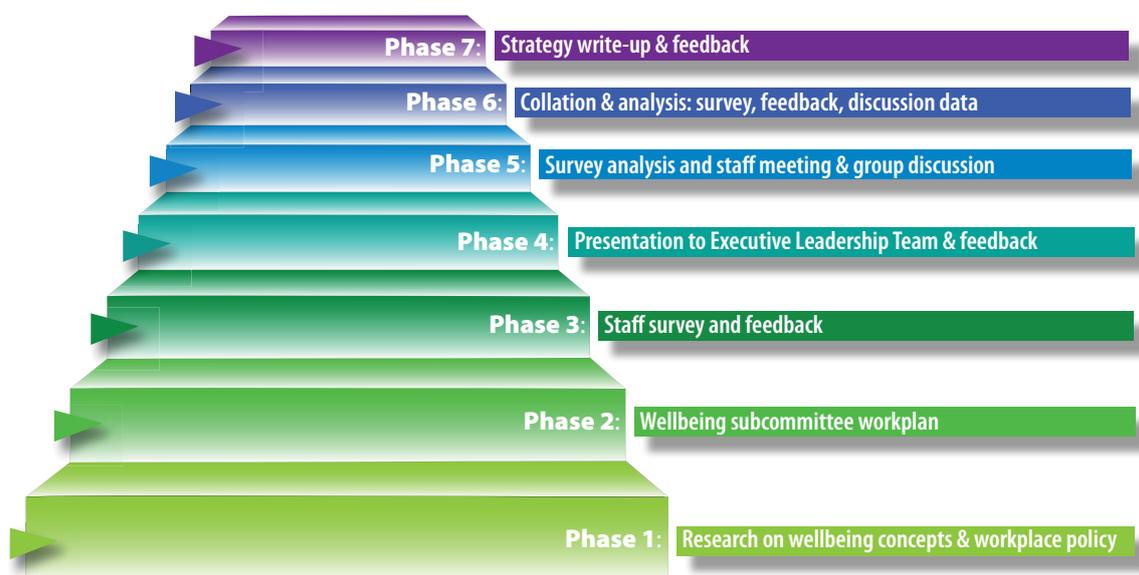


Figure 1 Strategy development stages- phases 1-7: from initiation of research into wellbeing to drafting the Wellbeing Strategy.

ETBI staff input in the making of this document

Throughout each of the above phases, it was important to collate input from ETBI staff members to make informed and considered decisions regarding the content in the Wellbeing Strategy. An online survey was then issued to ETBI Users (staff) to capture individual views on health and wellbeing in the workplace. Survey questions can be found in appendix A.

Considerable effort was made to reflect the survey findings in the analysis phase of the survey data (appendix B), which were collated and analysed to generate the ETBI Workplace Wellbeing Framework, as shown in appendix C.

Introduction

Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) is the national representative body for the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) in Ireland. ETBI's mission is to lead and advance the continued development of education, training, and youth work in Ireland.

ETBI's work is based on the following three pillars:

- **People:** To develop and support a high-performing and engaged workforce.
- **Partnership:** To work collaboratively with ETBs, government departments, and other stakeholders to deliver high-quality education, training, and youth work services.
- **Potential:** To support ETBs to achieve their full potential and deliver on their strategic goals.



2. IMPORTANCE OF WORKPLACE WELLBEING

“Wellbeing has been defined as the combination of feeling good and functioning well; the experience of positive emotions such as happiness and contentment as well as the development of one’s potential, having some control over one’s life, having a sense of purpose, and experiencing positive relationships”. (Ruggeri et al., 2020, p.1)¹

The World Health Organisation defines wellbeing in its broadest sense as encompassing “quality of life and the ability of people and societies to contribute to the world with a sense of meaning and purpose” (W.H.O, 2021, online)². It represents an individual’s physical, mental, emotional and spiritual state of being. It is important that you aim to look after all of your health so that you have a balanced approach to your overall wellbeing.

Workplace wellbeing is important for ETBI and its people for a number of reasons. A healthy and well workforce is more productive, has less absenteeism, and experiences higher levels of job satisfaction. This can lead to benefits for the organisation such as improved performance, better stakeholder relations, and positive working environment.

Workplace wellbeing is also important for the health and wellbeing of ETBI’s employees. Employees who feel supported and valued by their organisation are more likely to be engaged and motivated in their work. This can lead to a number of positive outcomes, including improved mental and physical health, reduced stress levels, and increased resilience.

In addition, workplace wellbeing can help ETBI to attract and retain top talent. In today’s competitive job market, employees are looking for employers who value their wellbeing and offer programmes and support to help them stay healthy and happy. By investing in workplace wellbeing, ETBI can position itself as an employer of choice.

Benefits of a Healthy and Well Workforce

There are a number of benefits to having a healthy and well workforce. These include:

- **Increased productivity and reduced absenteeism:** Healthy employees are more likely to be productive and have less absenteeism. This is because they are less likely to be sick or injured, and they are more likely to be able to focus on their work.
- **Improved job satisfaction:** Healthy employees are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. This is because they are more likely to feel supported and valued by their organisation, and they are more likely to be able to achieve their work-life balance goals.
- **Improved employee engagement:** Healthy employees are more likely to be engaged in their work. This is because they are more likely to be motivated and energised, and they are more likely to feel connected to their organisation and its goals. Overall, workplace wellbeing is important for both ETBI and its employees. By investing in workplace wellbeing, ETBI can improve the health and wellbeing of its employees, increase productivity, reduce absenteeism, and improve job satisfaction.

¹ Ruggeri, K., Garcia-Garzon, E., Maguire, Á., Matz, S. and Huppert, F.A., 2020. Wellbeing is more than happiness and life satisfaction: a multidimensional analysis of 21 countries. Health and quality of life outcomes, 18(1), pp.1-16.<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12955-020-01423-y>.

² World Health Organisation. 2021. “Promoting wellbeing”. W.H.O. Retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/activities/promoting-wellbeing#:~:text=Well%2Dbeing%20encompasses%20quality%20of,resources%2C%20overall%20thriving%20and%20sustainability>. Accessed on 06.08.2023.



3. GOALS OF THE STRATEGY

The ETBI Workplace Wellbeing Strategy sets out to promote the importance of the Seven Pillars of Wellbeing: Mental, Emotional, Physical, Recreational, Social, Environmental, and Spiritual. The following are some specific goals for each pillar:

Mental Wellbeing

- Reduce stress and anxiety among employees.
- Promote mental health awareness and understanding.
- Encourage employees to seek help for mental health problems.
- Create a supportive and inclusive workplace culture.

Emotional Wellbeing

- Help employees to develop emotional intelligence and resilience.
- Promote positive emotions and relationships.
- Encourage employees to take care of their emotional wellbeing.

Physical Wellbeing

- Encourage employees to adopt healthy lifestyles.
- Provide opportunities for employees to be physically active.
- Create a healthy and safe work environment.

Recreational Wellbeing

- Encourage employees to engage in leisure and recreational activities.
- Provide opportunities for employees to socialise and connect with others outside of work.
- Promote a healthy work-life balance.

Social Wellbeing

- Build a strong and supportive workplace community.
- Encourage employees to build and maintain positive relationships with their colleagues.
- Promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Environmental Wellbeing

- Create a sustainable and environmentally friendly workplace.
- Encourage employees to adopt environmentally friendly practices.
- Raise awareness of environmental issues.

Spiritual Wellbeing

- Respect the spiritual beliefs and practices of employees.
- Create a workplace where employees feel comfortable expressing their spirituality.
- Promote a sense of purpose and meaning in work.

By promoting and embedding the importance of the *Seven Pillars of Wellbeing* as a cultural norm in ETBI, both management and staff can play their part to endeavour to place workplace wellbeing at the heart of all decisions, actions and activities. The *ETBI Workplace Wellbeing Framework* (See **Appendix C**) has been developed sharing the responsibility of good wellbeing on both the individual and on the organisation.

Who will drive positive Workplace Wellbeing at ETBI?

At ETBI, our commitment to fostering positive workplace wellbeing is multi-layered, embracing every level of the organisation, from individual staff members to the very top tier of leadership.



1. Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

At the helm, our Executive Leadership Team understands the profound importance of wellbeing. Recognising their intrinsic duty of care, the ELT pledges to uphold an organizational ethos that prioritises the health and welfare of every ETBI employee. Their leadership will pave the way, ensuring resources, support, and commitment are ever-present in our quest for holistic employee wellbeing.

2. Line Managers

Promoting positive workplace wellbeing is a large part of the role of line managers. They play a critical role, not just in disseminating information and resources, but in being vigilant observers. By continuously checking in with their teams, offering support, and championing wellbeing initiatives, they are the pivotal bridge between organizational objectives and individual needs.

3. Wellbeing Committee

The Wellbeing Committee oversees the planning and rollout of organisational initiatives. With a clear mandate to drive and promote the Seven Pillars of Wellbeing, the committee is both a think tank and an action group. An open invitation ensures that the committee is inclusive, with representation from all directorates of ETBI, ensuring that our strategies are as diverse and comprehensive as the members we serve.

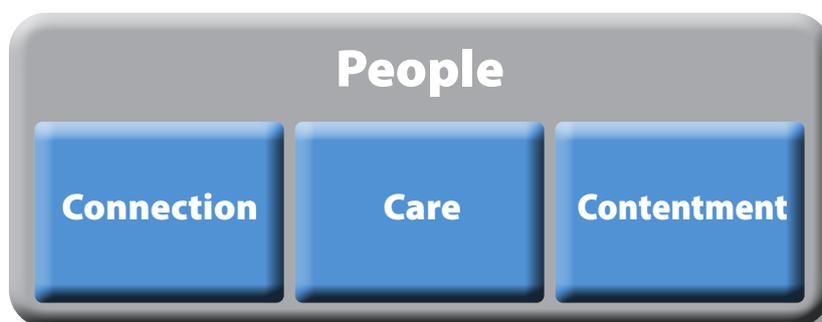
4. Individual Responsibility

While organisational structures and supports are essential, the onus of wellbeing also lies with each individual. Every ETBI staff member is encouraged to be proactive in their self-care, understanding their unique needs and boundaries. Recognising when to ask for support, and availing of the resources and services available, is an integral part of one’s personal and professional journey.

Together, with a unified and layered approach, ETBI is positioned not just to react but to anticipate, nurture, and cultivate an environment where the wellbeing of its members is at the heart of everything we do.

4. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

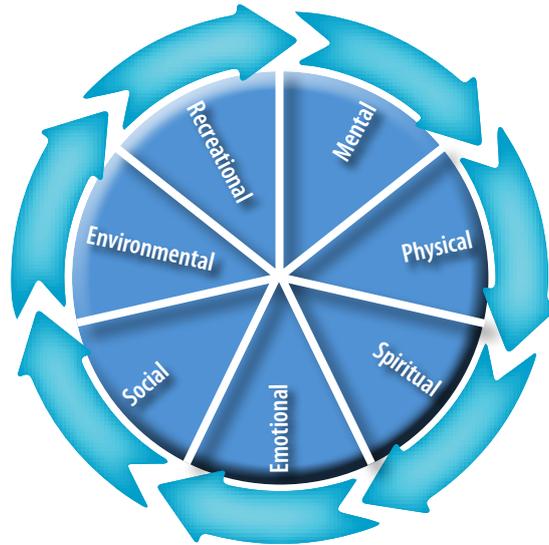
Three-Year Action Plan 2024 – 2026



In the pursuit of developing a comprehensive three-year action plan for our Wellbeing Strategy, we have identified three key commitments – Connection, Care, and Contentment – to guide our initiatives from 2024 to 2026, ensuring a focus on what matters most to our People. By acknowledging the importance of these elements, we aim to enhance the overall wellbeing of our People in ETBI, our stakeholders and communities we serve.



Commitment 1 – Connection (2024):



This year, our primary emphasis is on fostering connections within the organisations. Connection plays a vital role across all 7 pillars of wellbeing, fostering a sense of belonging and support within social wellbeing, enhancing mental and emotional wellbeing through meaningful relationships, and promoting recreational and physical wellbeing through shared activities. By staying connected and nurturing these relationships we feel happier and more secure, giving us a better **sense of purpose**. We encourage everyone to be responsible in supporting each other including our stakeholders and community. Connection will be supported in the following ways:

ETBI Shared Calendar: Each year ETBI holds six in person events designed for staff engagement. These events ensure cohesive connections by providing updates and reinforcing our collective vision and purpose. They seek our people's voice and foster organisational and personal growth.

In January 2024, all staff will receive invitations to attend the comprehensive series of events, including four staff meetings, two workshops, and two major Staff Events (Christmas and Summer).

Monthly Face-to-Face Team Gatherings: In response to feedback from our survey and direct staff consultations, there is a heightened focus on strengthening team connections through in-person interactions. Between September and May of each year, managers will convene with their teams to deliver updates, foster collaboration within the section, and encourage mutual support among team members.

Fortnightly/Weekly One-on-One Meetings: Managers will conduct weekly/fortnightly individual meetings with their team members for a general check in.

Monthly Virtual Tea Breaks Themes– Calendar of Wellbeing Events: The Wellbeing Committee will introduce diverse themes each month, including Step Challenges, Hydration Awareness, Shared Recipes to Boost Veggie Intake, Nature-themed Photography, Meditation Sessions, and Exercise activities.

Strategic Visibility Initiatives: In 2024, ETBI is planning a comprehensive redesign of its building to optimise space usage and create more collaborative environments. This presents a valuable opportunity for ETBI to establish a strategic platform that emphasises our unwavering commitment to wellbeing and highlights achievements within each Directorate. The revamped design will serve as a showcase for initiatives undertaken by various Directorates at the head office.

Survey Management: Towards the close of 2024, our Wellbeing Committee will coordinate a survey to assess advancements in Connection, fostering ongoing improvement. By prioritising Connection as our foremost commitment, we establish the groundwork for a flourishing and interconnected workplace that prioritises the wellbeing of our people.



Commitment 2 – Care (2025):

In 2025, our primary objective is to cultivate a culture of Care within the organisation, encompassing both self-care and the wellbeing of others in the workplace. Engage in acts of kindness for yourself or others, volunteering, or by fostering a sense of interconnectedness and fulfilment within ETBI.

Continued Commitment to Connection: In 2025, we will persist in our dedication to Connection with ongoing and embedded initiatives.

Care will be supported in the following ways:

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP): HR and the Wellbeing Committee will actively promote and increase awareness of the EAP to provide comprehensive support.

Physical Health: ETBI's management, HR and the Wellbeing Committee at ETBI will support the development and encouragement of initiatives that promote physical activity in the workplace.

Mental Health: ETBI's management, HR and the Wellbeing Committee will encourage reporting of mental health concerns, bullying, burnout, support concerns in the workplace to enable early intervention and prevention. Development initiatives will include activities promoting positive mental health at work, featuring speakers on Resilience, EAP events, and specific talks on mental health.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Implementation: The Executive Leadership Team (ELT), Human Resources (HR), and the Wellbeing Committee within ETBI will actively endorse CSR initiatives, integrating volunteer opportunities to actively contribute to the community, supporting our community for one day each year.

Survey to understand Health & Wellbeing and measuring effectiveness of interventions.

Towards the conclusion of 2025, our Wellbeing Committee will coordinate a survey to evaluate progress in fostering Care and to gauge how our people are supporting both their own and their colleagues' physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing and the effectiveness of interventions.

Commitment 3 – Contentment (2026):

Our primary focus is the contentment of our staff within the workplace, their roles, interactions with stakeholders, and contributions to the community. Investing in employee wellbeing enhances resilience, boosts engagement, reduces sickness absence, and elevates overall performance and productivity. Building upon the successes of 2024 and 2025, our goal is to address some aspects of an individual's professional journey, from onboarding to departure, and everything in between. Contentment will be actively promoted through the following initiatives:

Calendar of Events: Life Cycle Theme: A series of talks covering diverse life stages, including topics such as Planning for Purchasing Your Own Premises, Parenting, Caring for Older Relatives, Building Resilience in Close Circles, Financial Wellbeing, Men's Health, and Rainbow Week.

Environmental Initiative Week: A dedicated week focused on home retrofitting, e-charging points, and indoor plant care.



Financial Stress Education and Guidance: Several informative sessions will tackle financial stress through educational talks and advice, featuring an annual pension discussion and courses specifically tailored for staff approaching retirement.

Personal Growth – We want to continue to support staff on personal development on Training, Development Policies, all staff have access to LinkedIn Learning, PMDS.

By systematically implementing these commitments over the next three years, our objective is to cultivate a workplace environment that prioritizes the holistic wellbeing of both individuals and the team, building on the foundation of contentment established in 2024 and 2022.

Matrix

The matrix below can be used as a reference tool when organising wellbeing events for staff, the purpose will be to monitor which elements of wellbeing are included in the various initiatives, enabling the wellbeing committee to identify gaps to ensure all elements are incorporated over the course of a year.

Wellbeing Pillars	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3	Event 4	Event 5	Event 6	Event 7	Event 8
Mental	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Spiritual	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Emotional	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Social	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Recreational	<input type="checkbox"/>							

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the significant number of stakeholders engaged in the formation of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy including:

- Wellbeing Committee
- General Secretary & Executive Leadership Team
- All our People in ETBI that provide us with valuable feedback.
- Facility's Unit
- Communications Unit

Wellbeing Committee would also like to acknowledge the contributions made by many staff in the formation of this first strategy for the health & wellbeing of our staff and the incredible energy and commitment that staff will provide in implementing the strategy.



6. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ETBI Online Staff Survey Questions (multiple choice questions)

Survey Questions

Mental wellbeing

1. On a scale from **1-10**, how would you rate your overall mental health?
(1 = Poor, 10 = very well)
2. In the past month, how often have you felt mentally drained?
3. Do you have someone to discuss your problems or worries with at work?

Emotional Wellbeing

4. On a scale from **1-10**, how able are you to manage your stress levels?
(1 = Not able, 10 = Very able)
5. How often do you feel overwhelmed by your emotions while at work?
6. How frequently do you feel you are in control of your emotions during work hours?

Physical wellbeing

7. On a scale from **1-10**, how would you rate your physical health?
(1 = poor, 10 = very good)
8. How often do you engage in physical exercise and/or other recreational activities during a typical week?
9. Do you feel that your workplace encourages and supports physical wellbeing?

Environmental Wellbeing

10. On a scale from **1-10**, how comfortable do you find your working environment?
(1 = not comfortable, 10 = very comfortable)
11. Do you believe that your workspace is set up in a way that is conducive to your productivity?
12. Are there aspects of the physical work environment you believe could be improved?
Explain _____

Spiritual wellbeing

13. On a scale from **1-10**, how much do you feel your work provides you with a sense of purpose or meaning?
(1 = does not provide, 10 = provides well)
14. Does your work align with your personal values and beliefs?
15. How often do you feel satisfied or fulfilled by the work you do?

Recreational Wellbeing

16. On a scale from **1-10**, how would you rate the balance between your work and recreational activities?
(1 = poorly balanced, 10 = very well balanced)
17. How often do you feel that work pressures negatively affect your recreational time?
18. Would you value more opportunities for recreational activities with colleagues?

Social Wellbeing

19. On a scale from **1-10**, how would you rate your social interactions at work?
(1 = poor, 10 = very good)
20. Do you feel connected and part of a team in your workplace?
21. How often do you feel comfortable and willing to share your ideas or concerns with colleagues?
22. Would you like to join the ETBI Wellbeing Committee?
(If yes, please forward your name to rachel.byrne@etbi.ie)
23. Would you like to comment on any of the questions/sections above?



APPENDIX B

Summary of Findings – Workplace Wellbeing Staff Survey August 2023

<p>Mental Wellbeing</p>	<p>Over 50% of respondents sometimes felt mentally drained. Just under 50% of respondents said they had someone who they could discuss problems or worries with at work.</p>
<p>Emotional Wellbeing</p>	<p>64% of respondents are always in control of their emotions during working hours reflecting the professionalism of staff in ETBI</p>
<p>Physical Wellbeing</p>	<p>Data suggested that more could be done to encourage physical activity. 66% of respondents were happy with the input but 33% reported that they would like to see more happen.</p>
<p>Environmental Wellbeing</p>	<p>94% of respondents were very satisfied with their working environment and agreed that it was conducive to productivity. There is overwhelming satisfaction with the hybrid working model</p>
<p>Recreational Wellbeing</p>	<p>50% of respondents reported that work can impinge on recreational time. 60% of respondents reported that they would value more opportunities for recreational activities with colleagues.</p>
<p>Social Wellbeing</p>	<p>73.5 % of respondents feel connected and part of their team. 90.5% of respondents feel comfortable contributing to their team.</p>
<p>Spiritual Wellbeing</p>	<p>76% of respondents feel that their work aligns with their own personal values and beliefs. Only 2% of respondents don't feel fulfilled or satisfied by their work.</p>



APPENDIX C

ETBI Workplace Wellbeing Framework

Pillars of Wellbeing	Individual Actions	Organisational Actions
Mental Wellbeing	Regular Self Care 10-minute guided Mindfulness or Meditation	Promote a healthy work-life balance Flexible working hours with breaks encouraged; respecting boundaries
	Stay Connected Regular check-in with friends and family	Mental Health Awareness Programmes Annual series of information sessions and talks
	Physical Activity Plan a weekly schedule of physical activity – an activity that you enjoy	Create a supportive environment Encourage team-building activities Create forum to share concerns and provide feedback
Emotional Wellbeing	Emotional Awareness and Expression Set aside time for reflection; write down feelings without judgement; communicate with trusted individual	Encourage Open Communication Hold regular feedback sessions; create open forums for discussion; educate managers on active listening skills
	Develop Resilience Adopt growth mindset; focus on past successes; learn from failures; reframe negative thoughts	Provide training on Emotional Intelligence Organise workshops on emotional intelligence
	Set Boundaries Learn to say “no”; take regular breaks to recharge	Offer Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) Promote the availability of EAPs and highlight confidentiality
Physical Wellbeing	Regular Physical Activity Commit to a workable weekly programme; Incorporate small, short activities during work	Ergonomic Work Environment Provide appropriate equipment for comfortable working environment; conduct ergonomic assessments; offer training on posture
	Balanced Diet and Hydration Prioritise whole foods and limit processed foods; Try to drink at least 8 glasses of water per day	Promote Physical Activity Create virtual walking club; Organise monthly fitness challenges; Incorporate short physical breaks during long meetings
	Regular Health Check-ups Schedule routine medical check-ups, dental cleanings, and vision tests.	Heathy Food Awareness Conduct nutrition-based workshops; Provide healthy options at staff gatherings
Recreational Wellbeing	Pursue a hobby Identify activities you’re passionate about, whether it’s painting, reading, gardening, or playing a musical instrument. Dedicate specific times each week to engage in these activities.	Team-Building Recreational Activities Organise regular team outings, such as adventure trips, workshops, or just a day out.
	Outdoor Activities Plan regular outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling, picnics, or even just walks in a local park. When possible, combine physical activities with outdoor settings.	Flexible work hours or Days: Highlight policy on allowing for flexible start and end times; Highlight Hybrid/remote working policy
	Socialise and Connect Join clubs or groups based on interests, attend workshops or classes, or simply plan regular get-togethers with friends or family.	Recreational Space and Activities: Develop recreational space in Head Office for use by teams; Continue to build virtual clubs – book club, podcast club etc. book club, podcast club etc.



APPENDIX C (cont.)

ETBI Workplace Wellbeing Framework

Pillars of Wellbeing	Individual Actions	Organisational Actions
Environmental Wellbeing	Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Reduce waste by buying products with minimal packaging, reuse items when possible, and recycle materials like paper, glass, and plastics. Compost organic waste.	Green Office Initiatives Use energy-efficient lighting, heating, and cooling systems. Encourage digital documentation over printing. Implement waste segregation and recycling programmes.
	Conserve Energy and Water Turn off lights and appliances when not in use. Install energy-efficient bulbs and appliances. Fix leaks and use water-saving fixtures.	Sustainable Supply Chain Management Collaborate with suppliers and partners who have eco-friendly practices. Prioritise locally sourced materials.
	Sustainable Transport Walk, bike, carpool, or use public transportation. Consider electric or hybrid vehicles and support initiatives for cleaner public transport.	Promote Environmental Awareness Organise workshops or seminars on sustainability. Support or participate in environmental community events.
Social Wellbeing	Active Social Engagement Engage in community events, join clubs or groups based on interests, participate in local volunteering, or simply make an effort to meet with friends or family regularly.	Team Building Activities Organise regular team outings, workshops, or challenges. (Professional development seminars to more relaxed social events).
	Effective Communication Listen actively, express feelings honestly but respectfully, and try to understand others' perspectives.	Open and Inclusive Environment Implement and promote diversity and inclusion policies; Provide training to staff on diversity and inclusion topics; Continue with Virtual Coffee Breaks
	Building Empathy and Understanding Practice putting oneself in others' shoes, show genuine interest in others' experiences, and offer support when needed.	Mentorship and Support Programmes Set up mentor-mentee programme, create peer support groups, and provide resources for employees to navigate work and personal challenges.
Spiritual Wellbeing	Meditation and Mindfulness Engage in daily mindfulness practices, such as deep breathing, guided meditation, or simply being present in the moment.	Support Work-Life Balance Offer flexible working hours, emphasise the right to disconnect; Ensure employees can take breaks when needed to rejuvenate.
	Seek Meaning and Purpose Reflect on life's purpose, personal values, and beliefs.	Offer Quiet Spaces Create a Quiet Room in Head Office where employees can reflect, or take a few moments of calm during a busy working day
	Engage in Acts of Kindness Volunteer, help others without expecting anything in return, or simply engage in random acts of kindness.	Promote Respect for Diversity Organise diversity training; Celebrate various cultural or religious holidays; Create a working environment where employees feel free to express and practice their beliefs without fear of discrimination.





WELLBEING STRATEGY

2024-2026

Wellbeing Committee



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