

# Working Well Maturity Framework

This document covers:

Why wellbeing frameworks are important

How to choose the right framework for your organisation

Introduction to the Working Well Maturity Framework



# What are wellbeing frameworks and why are they important?

## Background

Levels of mental ill health have risen in the UK across the course of the pandemic and it is likely that this trend will be long lasting. Research has consistently demonstrated the impact of work on mental health, for instance research by Business in the Community in 2021 found that 41% of experienced mental health symptoms had been caused, or worsened, by work, demonstrating the link between wellbeing, business success and productivity. Not only is there a legal and moral imperative to support and manage employee wellbeing, but there is now a clear and strong business case.

## Wellbeing frameworks offer a way to:

- Focus organisational efforts and resources
- Signal a commitment to organisational colleagues and stakeholders
- Differentiate from peer organisations

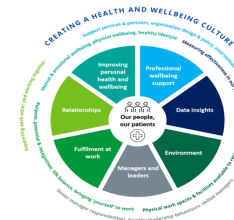
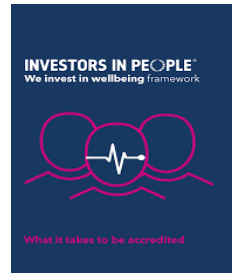
Many organisations want to take a systematic approach to protecting, developing and supporting employee mental health and wellbeing. As a result there has been a rapid growth in the availability of frameworks, standards, charters, pledges, accreditations and awards

## Examples of wellbeing frameworks and equivalents:

BRITAIN'S  
HEALTHIEST  
WORKPLACE



MENTAL  
HEALTH  
AT WORK  
COMMITMENT



# How do wellbeing frameworks differ and how do we choose between them?

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## Our review of commonly used frameworks showed that:

Frameworks differ greatly in terms of:

- Scope
- Geographical coverage
- Level of requirement
- Evidence base
- Conceptualisation of mental health and wellbeing

## Many focus on the end-result

- Placing a focus on what 'good' looks like
- Excluding the 'how' good can be achieved, or
- Excluding a clear pathway for development

Many adopt a specific lens, and therefore exclude key considerations required for a comprehensive approach to workplace wellbeing. For example, research shows that a comprehensive approach should include activities to:

- prevent psychosocial risk, develop skills and knowledge to cope with demands and support employees who are experiencing challenge
- consult employees, adopt a participative approach to ensure that changes are relevant and accepted by those in the role
- demonstrate senior leader support to drive forward a whole-organisation approach
- embed measurement, reporting and governance to monitor the experience of work, evaluate progress, and allow any barriers to progression to be overcome

## How do you select a framework for your organisation?

Our research shows that there are several things to consider when choosing a framework:

### 1. Your intended outcome

Questions to ask: What do we want to achieve? What is the priority outcome? How do these outcomes link to other business priorities? What is realistic given our organisational context and the available resources?

### 2. Your organisational context

Questions to ask: What is the function of our organisation? What policies and practices are already in place in other areas e.g. health and safety, operating systems? What data do we gather, how do we gather it? What are our competitors doing and what does this mean for us?

### 3. Your wellbeing maturity

Questions to ask: Where are we in terms of our wellbeing activities? What do we have in place? How have we made decisions about wellbeing activities so far? Who is interested in wellbeing, who is involved in deciding on and delivering wellbeing activities, who is responsible for driving forward activity?

### 4. The practicalities

Questions to ask: To what extent can we make the changes needed to achieve the standards set out in the framework? Have we got buy-in from the relevant people in the organisation? What budget will we be able to secure? What will be considered of benefit to us by key stakeholders?

# Some example frameworks: What questions do each ask?



Do you want to make a public declaration that mental health at work is a priority?

What set of actions can you follow to improve the mental health of your people?

What do you need to be in place to build a system to effectively manage risk and psychosocial wellbeing?

With a focus on prevention, how can you identify the main risk factors to employee psychological health at work?

With a focus on prevention, development and support, where are we and what do we need to do next to develop a comprehensive approach to employee mental health and wellbeing?

# Introduction to the Mental Health at Work Commitment



A framework, underpinned by the six 'mental health core standards' set out by 'Thriving at Work: Stevenson/Farmer review (2018) of mental health and employers'.

Nearly 2,000 employers have signed up to the Commitment, from private and public organisations and from a range of sectors.

1. Prioritise mental health in the workplace by developing and delivering a systemic programme of activity
2. Proactively ensure work design and organisational culture drive positive mental health outcomes
3. Promote an open culture around mental health
4. Increase organisational confidence and capability
5. Provide mental health tools and support
6. Increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting

# Introduction to the ISO45003



The first global standard aimed at providing practical guidance on managing psychological health in the workplace and upon the management of psychosocial risk, as part of an occupational health and safety management system (ISO 45001).

ISO45003 follows a similar process to that of ISO450001 – following a:

- PLAN (context of the organisation, leadership and commitment, plans and support, assessment of hazard and risk)
- DO (actions to control risks – management of risk, emergency preparedness, rehabilitation and RTW)
- CHECK (evaluating and monitoring)
- ACT (continual improvement process)

# Introduction to the HSE Management Standards for work stress



The standards outline six key conditions of work design that, if present:

- Demonstrate good practice through a step-by-step risk assessment approach (using pre-existing data, surveys and other techniques)
- Simplify risk assessment for work-related stress by identifying risk factors and underlying causes, and a focus on prevention

**Demands** - this includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment

**Control** - how much say the person has in the way they do their work

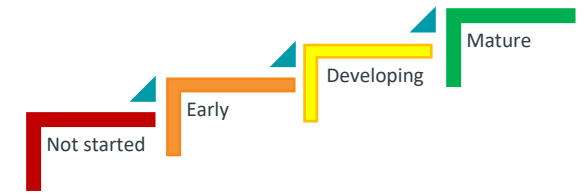
**Support** – the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues

**Relationships** - this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour

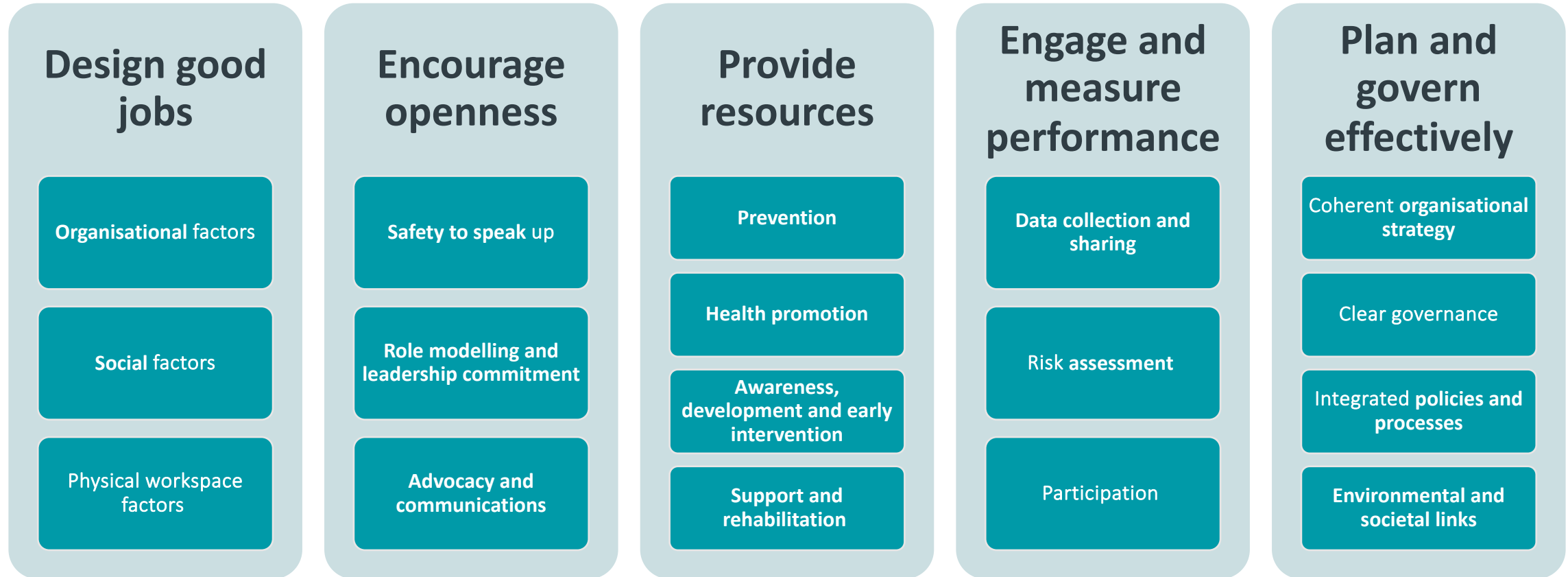
**Role** – understanding their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles

**Change** - how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation

# Introduction to Affinity's Working Well Maturity Framework



An evidence-based 'meta-framework' outlining a maturity approach across five domains and 16 sub-domains.





# The development of the Working Well Maturity Framework

## Why the Working Well Maturity Framework was developed

The Working Well Maturity Framework was developed in response to calls from Affinity's Research Consortium, a group of researchers, policy makers and employers who come together to improve the health and wellbeing of employees; and support organisations in their efforts to do so.

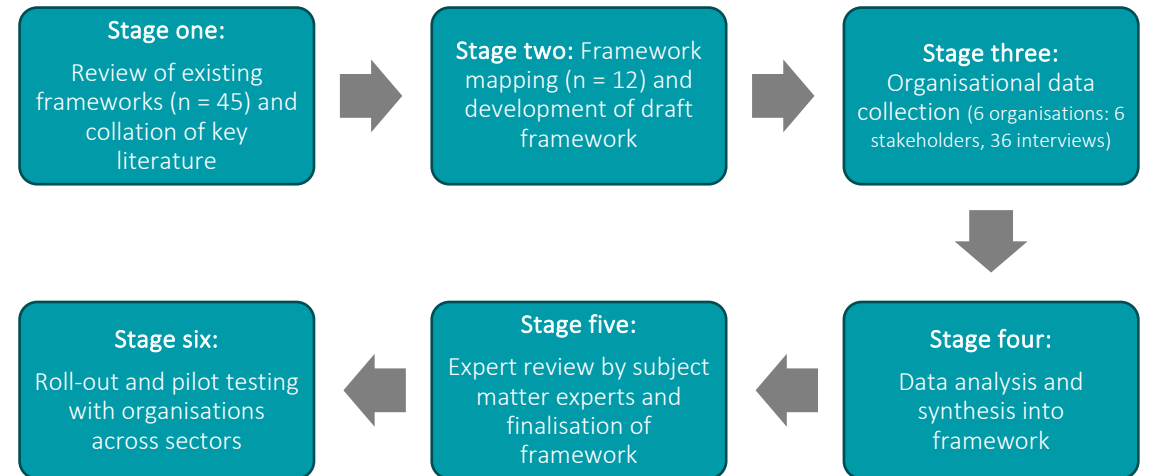
The rapid increase in the number of wellbeing frameworks available has given rise to a bewildering choice for organisations. There was a need to develop a clear picture of how wellbeing frameworks differ, and to bring cross-sectoral insights to bear upon a framework that aspires to be practical, providing ideas and guiding priorities for organisations.

## The framework can be differentiated from other frameworks in the following ways:

- Clear evidence-base: following a rigorous methodology, utilising evidence from both academic and practitioner sources and with input from wellbeing experts.
- Represents a move beyond a 'gold standard' which presents an 'end result' of good wellbeing practice, to a model that sets out the steps to maturity.
- Provides an indication of how organisations should think about and address wellbeing through use of dimensions focused on preventing stress, promoting good mental health and supporting others, presented in a clear and accessible way.
- Considers contextualising wellbeing at work in relation to macro-challenges of the modern age such as sustainability, inclusivity and the changes in working patterns following the pandemic.

## How the Working Well Maturity Framework was developed

The emergent maturity framework was developed through a multi-staged, collaborative process, based upon evidence drawn from academic and practitioner sources, with input from wellbeing experts sought at different stages.

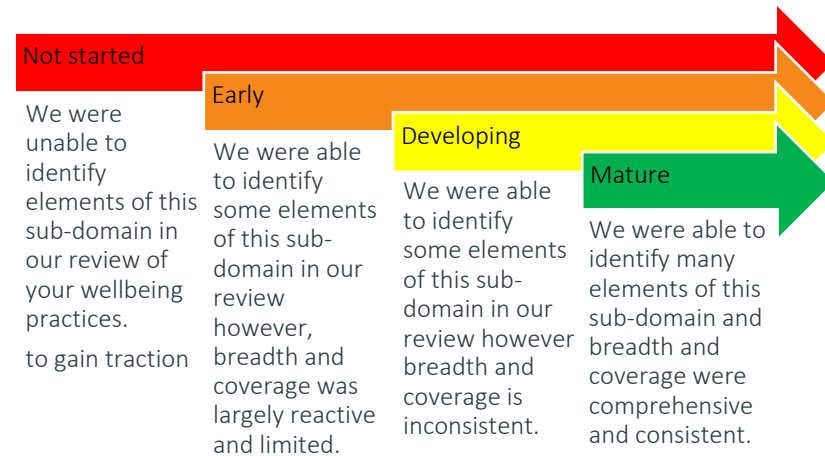


# About the Working Well Maturity Framework

## How the Working Well Maturity Framework works

- The Working Well Maturity Framework is structured to chart a sequenced organisational journey of four stages.
- The framework consists of five domains and 16 sub-domains, enabling a review of the extent to which an organisation:
  - Plans and governs for wellbeing
  - Provides good jobs
  - Speaks up about mental health and wellbeing
  - Provides information, training and resources
  - Understands and works in an integrated way
- The framework moves from Stage 1, the baseline of no dedicated wellbeing provision or approach, through to Stage 4, or maturity, where an organisation shows a fully embedded commitment to wellbeing. The earlier stages are the 'building blocks' for wellbeing provision. To progress, these must be in place.
- The framework can be used to guide the development of an organisations' wellbeing strategy, or help an organisation understand where they are and what next steps could be useful to improve employee wellbeing.
- An organisations' stage of development can be reviewed by drawing together evidence from interviews, focus groups and the analysis of policies and other documentation.
- This mapping of maturity therefore represents a judgement based on the evidence provided and may be limited in some instances on this basis.

## How progress on Working Well Maturity Framework is reported



## How the Working Well Maturity Framework can be used

The framework can be used to :

- provide an in-depth mapping of current activities against established mental health and wellbeing frameworks, helping to guide decisions on which accreditations to work towards
- identify current strengths and development areas in provision to manage and support employee mental health and wellbeing,
- make recommendations to strengthen provision drawing on research evidence, practitioner experience of what is known to work in other organisations, organisational data and employee consultation, and
- enable organisations to prioritise action and develop an integrated plan to improve employee health and wellbeing.



To find out more about our Working Well Maturity Framework or to discuss how we can support you in developing your wellbeing strategy, email us on [hello@affinityhealthatwork.com](mailto:hello@affinityhealthatwork.com)

Greatest thanks to our Research Consortium members and all those who shared their valuable insights and experiences about wellbeing at work to inform the development of the framework

Affinity Health at Work is a consultancy and research group. Founded in 2006, our work has been funded by the World Health Organisation, UK Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and Health and Safety Executive, and clients in the public, private and third sector of all sizes – from small teams to global organisations.



For more information about Affinity Health at Work:

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