



HM Government

Conversations with employees about WorkWell

WorkWell

Conversations with your employees about WorkWell

This guide has been produced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) to support you in having conversations about the WorkWell pilot with your employees.

It provides background to WorkWell, explains the benefits of the service, and gives helpful conversation prompts.

About WorkWell

WorkWell is a pilot that aims to help disabled people and people with health conditions to start, return to and stay in work.

This service is free, voluntary, and it offers your employees an opportunity to talk confidentially about their work and health needs from an early stage. It aims to prevent them falling out of work due to a disability or health condition. It also supports employees in managing a condition when they return to work from a sickness absence.

Participants will have access to a Work and Health Coach. Together, they will agree realistic and reasonable next steps that can form part of a personalised action plan. Work and Health Coaches will consider the full range of available local support and provide signposting, tailored to individual need.

Participants can choose to share action plans with their employer, which could include advice on how they can best be helped to return to and stay in work.

WorkWell provides light-touch, holistic support for participants' health-related barriers to employment and is intended to complement and not replace existing Human Resources, Occupational Health or health support offers.

Employer benefits

Reduce absence, achieve greater productivity

WorkWell has been designed to address the needs of employees who are at risk of falling out of work due to a disability or health condition. The programme aims to empower your employee with the knowledge and the support needed to overcome obstacles, ensuring they remain in work and are productive.

Stay competitive and profitable

Retention of employee knowledge and experience is becoming increasingly critical in a competitive jobs market. WorkWell supports employers to retain valuable staff, which can help to reduce retraining and recruitment costs as well as preventing organisational knowledge from being lost.

Support your employees and build understanding

WorkWell gives support to employers of all sizes and helps fill knowledge gaps around how to support an employee with a disability or a health condition.

Get help and funding

WorkWell can help managers understand and access a wide range of free support available both nationally and locally to support their employees.

Make your business stand out

Diversity in the workplace inclusive of people with disabilities and/or health conditions is a win-win. Different perspectives and experiences aid workforce understanding and cohesion. Consideration of people with disabilities can make businesses more appealing for consumers and for prospective talent in the labour market.

Employee benefits

Gain insight

When an employee joins WorkWell, they will be allocated a Work and Health Coach who understands both health and work and the impact they can have on each other.

Time to talk

Your employees can discuss the impact their health condition has on their life as well as any challenges they face with managing their health in work. Their Work and Health Coach will listen and talk through any concerns or questions they may have in confidence. The aim is to understand their needs and hopes for the future so they can be better supported.

A personalised plan

Their Work and Health Coach will work with them to identify and agree realistic and appropriate next steps as part of a tailored action plan. It will be up to them to decide whether they take up these suggestions. It will not be shared without consent and their participation in WorkWell will not impact their benefit entitlement in any way.

Ongoing support

Their Work and Health Coach can continue to provide support as needed and help them understand and access the services or resources that are available. This could include healthcare professionals, community sector services, health promotion programmes, more intensive employment support, and much more.

Conversation starters

Fit notes

When your employee produces a fit note, WorkWell support is available. A conversation starter might be:

“Thank you for providing your fit note. We would like to better understand how we can support you back into work.

Would you consider a voluntary referral to WorkWell? A Work and Health Coach will be able to talk through your role, your current health concerns and suggest ways we can help make your return to work a success.”



Conversation starters

Creating a positive environment

Having an open discussion with all employees about WorkWell can create a more positive environment around physical and mental health difficulties. This may encourage your employees to feel more able to discuss their concerns.

“Colleagues can access WorkWell, a new service available to anyone who is struggling at work with a mental or physical health condition. If you would like the chance to talk through the issues you are facing in a confidential and supportive environment, you can either self-refer or ask your manager to put you in touch. A Work and Health Coach will tell you about any relevant support and you will get your own personalised action plan. This could be something you decide to share with your manager if you think it is useful.”



Conversation starters

Early support

WorkWell provides early support and could help your employees explore how they can prevent further deterioration or injury.

“Thank you for making me aware of your concerns. I would like to understand ways we can support you and get some ideas on how we can make sure your work is not affecting your health. Would you be interested in a referral to WorkWell? A Work and Health Coach will tell you about support available to help you at work, including suggestions that we could put in place for you, as an employer.”

