



**UK & INTERNATIONAL**  
HEALTH COACHING ASSOCIATION

A hand holding a blue pen is pointing at a bar chart on a document. The chart has several bars in red, yellow, and blue. The x-axis is labeled with 'APR' and 'MAY'. The background is a blurred office setting with a desk and a computer monitor.

# **Beyond Engagement Scores: Rethinking How We Measure Workplace Wellbeing**

# Beyond Engagement Scores: Rethinking How We Measure Workplace Wellbeing

Why a broader perspective on measurement helps organisations understand the true impact of wellbeing initiatives.

Many employers understandably look to indicators such as engagement scores, sickness absence, retention or return on investment. These metrics can provide useful insights and help organisations understand the operational and financial effects of wellbeing initiatives.

Yet no single measure can fully capture wellbeing. Much like individual health behaviours, wellbeing and its effects emerge across multiple dimensions and over different timescales.

Within the [UKIHCA Workplaces ecosystem](#), workplace health and wellbeing is viewed through a **whole person, whole system lens**. This perspective recognises that wellbeing influences not only measurable outcomes, but also the conditions that enable people to perform well, collaborate effectively and sustain performance over time.

In this reflection, UKIHCA Workplace Whole Health and Wellbeing Ambassador [Kate Moran](#) explores the role of measurement in workplace wellbeing and why looking beyond any single metric can help organisations develop a deeper understanding of impact.

## Reflecting on Measurement: Health Behaviour and Workplace Wellbeing

Measurement plays an important role in helping us understand impact. This is true both when we reflect on our own health behaviours and when organisations seek to understand the effects of workplace wellbeing initiatives.

There are useful parallels between the two.

### The Limits of a Single Outcome

One way to think about measuring health outcomes is to focus on a single outcome of a particular health behaviour.

For example, if we decide to start running, one possible way to measure its impact would be to track weight loss. If weight reduction is our primary goal, this would provide a clear indicator of progress.

However, running rarely affects only one outcome.

Regular physical activity can also improve cardiovascular health, metabolic health, sleep quality, and overall energy levels. Some benefits appear relatively quickly, while others – such as reduced long-term health risks – develop gradually over time and may not be directly visible through short-term measures.

There are also outcomes that are inherently subjective: feeling more energised, more confident, or more capable in daily life. These experiences may not be captured by measuring changes in weight, yet they remain meaningful indicators of positive impact.

Different measures illuminate different aspects of change. A single metric may tell us something useful, but it cannot capture the full range of effects that a health behaviour can produce.

## The Same Principle in Workplace Wellbeing

A similar dynamic exists when organisations invest in workplace wellbeing.

It is natural to focus on key metrics such as engagement scores, sickness absence, retention, or return on investment (ROI). These indicators provide useful insights and help organisations understand the financial and operational impact of wellbeing initiatives.

However, as with individual health behaviours, these measures do not necessarily capture the full picture.

Workplace wellbeing is multi-dimensional. It reflects not only outcomes that can be quantified, but also the conditions that enable people to work, collaborate and adapt effectively over time.

Wellbeing initiatives may also influence wider aspects of organisational culture – for example, how supported people feel, whether they experience psychological safety, and how they perceive workload, stress, and their ability to sustain performance.

These cultural and experiential dimensions are not always visible through traditional metrics alone. They are often better understood through qualitative insights, employee voice, and deeper exploration of how people experience their work environment.

Taken together, quantitative and qualitative perspectives can provide a richer understanding of how wellbeing initiatives influence both individual wellbeing and the wider organisational system.

## Wellbeing as a Resource

When we view wellbeing as a resource rather than simply an outcome, its role within organisations becomes clearer.

Employee wellbeing contributes to the capacity of individuals and teams to:

- perform effectively
- adapt to changing demands
- sustain productivity over time

- manage pressure and uncertainty

These capabilities rarely emerge from a single initiative or appear instantly within one metric. Instead, they develop gradually within a wider organisational system.

## Time, Context and Multiple Measures

The impact of wellbeing initiatives often unfolds across different timescales.

Some effects may be visible in short-term indicators such as engagement scores or participation levels. Others contribute to longer-term outcomes, including reduced health risks, improved retention, stronger workforce capability and greater organisational resilience over time.

Context also matters. The same initiative may produce different effects depending on organisational culture, leadership practices, and the wider working environment and organisational systems.

Because of this complexity, no single metric can capture every dimension of wellbeing - and it does not need to.

What matters is clarity about what a particular measure is designed to capture, and an awareness of what may sit beyond its scope.

## The Role of Employee Voice

Alongside quantitative indicators, qualitative insights play an important role in understanding workplace wellbeing.

Employee voice – gathered through conversations, focus groups, open feedback and lived experience – can help illuminate aspects of wellbeing that may not be visible in numerical data alone.

These insights provide valuable context for interpreting metrics and understanding how wellbeing initiatives are experienced in practice. They can also highlight emerging issues, identify unintended effects, and reveal how organisational culture influences wellbeing.

Listening to employee voice therefore strengthens the ability of organisations to interpret data meaningfully and respond in ways that support both individual wellbeing and organisational effectiveness.

## Measuring With Intent

Effective measurement in workplace wellbeing is not about collecting as much data as possible. It is about measuring with intent.

This involves asking:

- What outcomes are we seeking to support?
- What indicators can help us understand progress?
- What limitations do those indicators have?
- How do they sit within the wider organisational system?

When measurement is aligned with the outcomes organisations genuinely value, it can become a tool not only for evaluation, but for learning - helping organisations reflect on how wellbeing is developing within their systems over time.

## Looking Beyond Immediate Results

Wellbeing initiatives often have wider and evolving effects. Some will appear in short-term metrics, while others contribute to longer-term capability, resilience and sustainable performance.

By recognising the multi-dimensional nature of wellbeing and interpreting data within its wider context, organisations can gain a clearer understanding not only of immediate outcomes, but also of the capability and resilience they are building for the future.

## From Measurement to Meaning

Measurement plays an important role in helping organisations understand the impact of workplace wellbeing initiatives. At its best, it supports learning, informs decision-making and helps organisations refine their approach over time.

However, wellbeing is inherently multi-dimensional. Quantitative indicators can highlight important trends, but they are most meaningful when interpreted alongside qualitative insights and employee experience.

By measuring with clarity and intent, organisations can move beyond short-term metrics to better understand the broader capabilities they are building within their workforce including sustained performance, adaptability and long-term wellbeing.

Developing this richer perspective is an important step in creating healthier, more sustainable workplaces.

## From understanding to doing

Start by reviewing the metrics you currently use and ask: what story are they telling, and what might they be missing? Combine quantitative indicators with employee insight to strengthen both individual wellbeing and organisational performance.

Use measurement as a tool for learning, not just reporting. Listen to employee voices, interpret data in context, and adapt initiatives to build lasting capability and resilience.

Consider wellbeing as a strategic resource, not just an outcome. Measure with intent, reflect with insight, and embed a healthier, more sustainable workplace culture through ongoing learning and refinement.

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### Author

This reflection was written by [Kate Moran](#), a UKIHCA Workplace Whole Health and Wellbeing Ambassador, contributing to the UKIHCA Workplaces initiative supporting organisations to develop healthier, more sustainable working environments through whole person, whole system approaches to workforce health and wellbeing.

