

Workplace health
needs assessment
(employee survey)

**Survey template and
guidance**

This survey has been derived from the [Public Health England Workplace Health Needs Assessment template](#), adapted for use in the [East Sussex Wellbeing at Work programme](#).

What is a health needs assessment (or employee survey)?

A Health Needs Assessment (HNA) describes the process of gathering information on a specific population, in this case your employees, to decide where to invest to improve health and wellbeing. Within the context of the Wellbeing at Work Programme, the HNA is a process designed to help employers find out about staff health and wellbeing needs within their organisation and to set a baseline of employee wellbeing. It involves conducting an anonymous employee survey and analysing the results to help you plan health and wellbeing activities that staff will value, and feel are appropriate to their needs.

Why should you do a health needs assessment?

The results of the HNA for your organisation will help you to understand the needs of your workforce better, so that you can inform when time is spent trying to make improvements. The HNA also helps with measuring the impact of health and wellbeing activities that are put in place. That's why the HNA is a mandatory criterion at each award level of the Wellbeing at Work accreditation scheme. Repeating the survey after a suitable period, such as a year, would help to show the difference made by the activities that have been implemented. The questions aim to gather information from employees which can also be compared with national and regional data, so you know how your workplace compares against the wider population.

Tell me more!

Each section of the HNA covers a different aspect of workplace wellbeing and reflects the seven topic areas of the Wellbeing at Work Programme. The HNA, as well as the accreditation programme, aims to provide a holistic framework for improving health and wellbeing in your workplace.

There is more detail below on why the questions are asked. For the full questions, please take a look at the Microsoft Forms template in the section below.

Section	Question number	Why is this important to employers
General health and wellbeing (section 1)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Research suggests that people with higher levels of personal wellbeing make better lifestyle choices – they are more likely to eat healthily, be more physically active and are less likely to smoke. People who are employed tend to have higher levels of wellbeing but this depends on factors such as job quality and security, and the quality of relationships

		<p>at work. A staff team with higher levels of wellbeing are likely to be more productive.</p> <p>For more information, please see pages 9 and 10 in the PHE toolkit.</p>
Smoking (section 2)	6, 7	<p>Smoking is the leading cause of premature death and preventable illness in England. Studies suggest that smokers take between 1 and 2.7 more days off sick per year than non-smokers. Employers who provide smoking cessation support could benefit from reduced sickness absence, increased productivity and contribute to promoting healthy living among the workforce. It has also been found that when smoking cessation initiatives are offered in the workplace they are successful in reducing the number of employees who smoke.</p> <p>For more information, please see pages 11 and 12 in the PHE toolkit.</p>
Healthy eating (section 3)	8	<p>People who have a healthy diet and are a healthy weight are better protected against ill health, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and diabetes.</p> <p>For more information, please see pages 13 and 14 in the PHE toolkit.</p>
Alcohol (section 4)	10, 11, 12, 13	<p>Creating a culture in the workplace that supports employees to drink within the guidelines is important for the health and wellbeing of employees and for your organisation. Drinking above the lower risk guidelines can impact on an employee's ability to work. Drinking too much can increase the risk of a number of illnesses including heart disease, stroke, depression and some cancers, which is bad for health and bad for business. Businesses in the UK lose an estimated £7bn each year as a result of time off work and lost productivity due to alcohol related ill health.</p> <p>For more information, please see pages 15 and 16 in the PHE toolkit.</p>
Physical activity (section 5)	14, 15	<p>The cost of physical inactivity in England has been estimated at £8.2bn a year. Increasing physical activity could lead to many business benefits. Employees are less likely to suffer from major health problems, less likely to take sick leave, and less likely to face an injury at work. They are likely to be more productive. In fact, it has been found that physical activity in the workplace can reduce sickness absence by 20%. Also, physical activity could help protect against musculoskeletal disorders which account for 19% of all sickness absence.</p> <p>For more information, please see pages 17 and 18 in the PHE toolkit.</p>
Sleep (section 6)	16, 17	<p>Sleep has been linked to many benefits to basic human functioning, such as improved memory and immunity. Regular poor sleep puts you at risk of serious medical conditions, including obesity, heart disease and diabetes – and it shortens your life expectancy. Individuals who get insufficient sleep have significantly worse workplace</p>

		<p>productivity, performance and safety outcomes in comparison to people who get enough sleep. Almost half of British people say that stress or worry keeps them awake at night.</p> <p>For more information, please see pages 19 and 20 in the PHE toolkit.</p>
Work and health (section 7)	18, 19	<p>Providing good jobs and ensuring a good social and physical workplace environment will, as well as addressing any health and safety risks, improve the health and wellbeing of employees. When people are happy at work and have good quality jobs they are more likely to be more productive and less likely to leave the organisation.</p> <p>For more information, please see pages 21 and 22 in the PHE toolkit.</p>
Workplace culture (section 8)	20, 21, 22, 23	<p>Improving the organisation's workplace culture can improve employee wellbeing and build staff engagement. Research suggests that a number of factors can increase employee engagement including: clear visible leadership, effective line management, employees feeling they have a voice, and believing that their employer has integrity and is true to values. Conversely a sense of injustice and unfairness arising from management processes or personal relationships can increase stress and risks to mental health.</p> <p>For more information, please see pages 23 and 24 in the PHE toolkit.</p>
Workplace illness and injury (section 9)	24, 25, 26	<p>Poor quality work or poor working conditions can cause ill health. Some employees attend work whilst sick, rather than taking sickness absence. This is known as presenteeism and can be a greater financial burden to businesses than the cost of sickness absence. It is estimated that the costs of presenteeism can be one and a half times greater than that of absenteeism. Presenteeism is on the increase and can result in significant loss of output and productivity.</p> <p>Attending work whilst sick leads to reduced productivity and increases the chances of passing on infectious illness to someone else. Presenteeism has been found to be higher in small organisations and is more likely when work load is high and operational matters take precedence over staff wellbeing.</p> <p>For more information, please see pages 25 and 26 in the PHE toolkit.</p>
Supplementary questions for line managers (section 10)	27, 28	<p>By identifying the barriers faced by line management to promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace, adequate training and systems can be put in place to encourage them to take a more proactive approach.</p> <p>For more information, please see pages 29 and 30 in the PHE toolkit.</p>

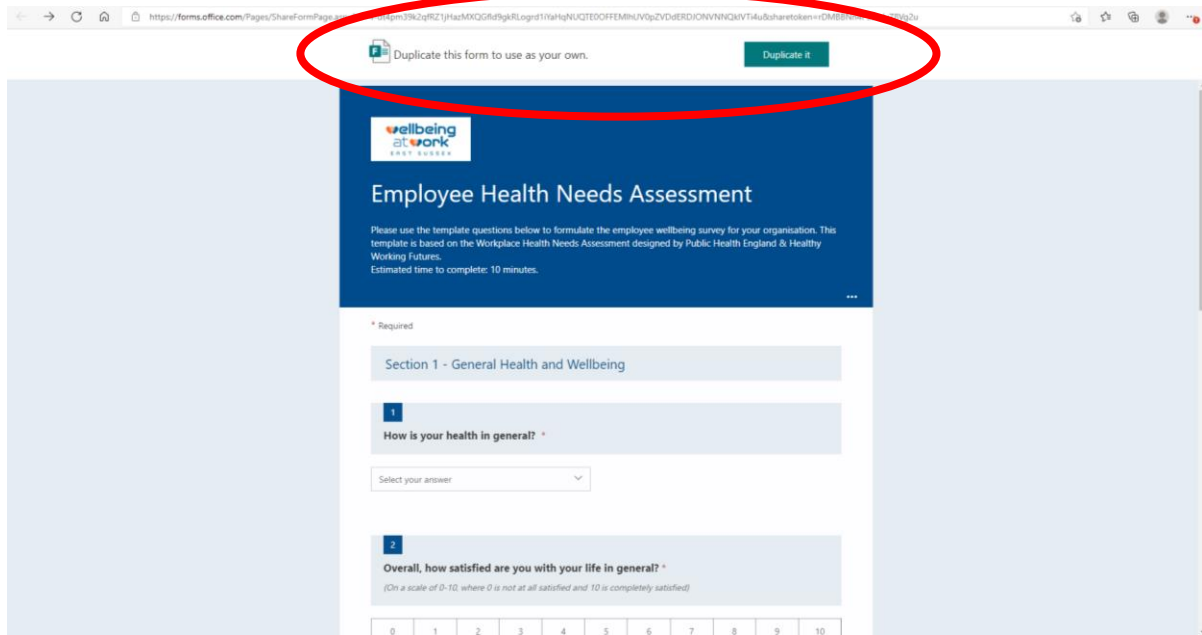
Considerations for undertaking the survey

- Ensure that the senior management team is engaged with and committed to the HNA and to improving the health and wellbeing of staff. It is essential they are committed as they will need to endorse its use and promote it to staff.
- Ensure employees are involved in the planning of the HNA as this will help them engage with it and to show employees that you are supportive of their health and wellbeing; this may include trade union involvement, wellbeing champions or Mental Health First Aiders involvement.
- Decide who is collecting the information (e.g. wellbeing lead, HR, Occupational Health professional, senior leader, business owner etc), the timescales for collecting the data and have plans for circulating the findings.
- Consider if you would like to add any additional questions. If so, we recommend you use those validated from national surveys. Questions can be added into the Microsoft Forms template we have provided, if you would like further guidance on how to do this, please get in touch.
- Consider what demographic information you may want to collect. Demographics are characteristics of a population and could include age, gender, occupational group and working hours, for example shift work. Think carefully about what to include. If your organisation is small, employees may feel that giving their age and gender for example will identify them.
- Have a clear statement to explain why the information is being collected, how the information will be used, how the privacy of staff will be assured and how their data will be used.
- Be clear about how the results will be used.
- Talk to staff about the HNA and explain that it is anonymous. You may wish to ask staff to not write their names anywhere on the survey and emphasise that that you will not reveal any potentially identifying information.
- Distribute the surveys to staff and stress that participation is voluntary.
- Provide information on how to complete the survey, how to return it, and who to return it to.
- The survey can be done electronically (either using the template on Microsoft forms that we provide – or your own survey tool), or paper based should you prefer.
- People may be suspicious about the motives behind the survey. Proper explanation, and support from staff representatives will help overcome this.
- Although the survey is anonymous, in a small workplace people may feel that they could be identified from their replies. Think carefully about whether this will be a problem for your organisation and ensure that measures are taken to ensure anonymity.

Undertaking the survey via Microsoft Forms

The [survey template can be found here on Microsoft Forms](#), ready to for you to duplicate, and distribute to your workforce for completion.

IMPORTANT: When accessing the link for use in your organisation, it is vital that you click **'Duplicate It'**, which should appear at the top of the webpage. This is to ensure that your organisations results are sent through to you, not to us! See below:



Once you have pressed 'Duplicate it' – you will have access to your survey landing page. Make sure you keep a copy of the link to this page, so you can access and keep track of your survey responses.

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Forms design page for the 'Employee Health Needs Assessment (Copy)'. The page has a teal header with 'Forms' and 'Employee Health Needs Assessment (Copy) - saved'. Below the header, there are two tabs: 'Questions' and 'Responses'. A red arrow points from a callout box to the 'Questions' tab, which contains the survey content. Another red arrow points from a callout box to the 'Responses' tab. A third red arrow points from a callout box to the 'Share' button in the top right corner. The 'Share' button is part of a 'Send and collect responses' section that includes a dropdown menu for 'Anyone can respond', a text input field with a 'Copy' button, and a 'Shorten' checkbox. Below the 'Share' button, there are options to 'Share as a template' and 'Share to collaborate', each with a '+ Get a link to...' button.

Question tab: Copy of the survey questions

Responses tab: Live responses to your survey

Here you can find the 'share' button

Underneath is a link to share the survey with your workforce

You can run the survey on your own survey platform if you prefer. If this is the case, please get in touch for a word copy of the questions that you can use to input into your tool (healthy.workplace@eastsussex.gov.uk).

What to do with the results

Collate the raw responses. Using a programme such as Excel, will allow you to analyse the data to give an overview snapshot of employee health and wellbeing. You are unlikely to get 100% of employees responding to the survey, however a sample of reasonable size should enable you to put in place a programme that is appropriate for your staff group.

Turn the responses into a report - we will provide a template report to input your results into. The template report supports you to compare your findings with local or national figures (where available), so that you can benchmark your workforce against the wider population. The data could be explored further by seeing if there are any differences across, for example, gender, age or occupational group (depending on what you collected) if you wish.

Consider the results and think about what types of interventions you would be willing to implement to make improvements. Discuss with staff or wellbeing champions what they would be interested in doing. Then implement and monitor the effectiveness of the initiatives. After a year, ask staff to complete the HNA again, in line with best practice. You can then compare these results with the results from the first survey. That's why the HNA is a mandatory criterion at each award level of the Wellbeing at Work accreditation scheme. This will show the impact of the initiatives in terms of improving the health and wellbeing of employees.

If you have any questions or need any support to undertake the survey, please get in touch with the Wellbeing at Work team: healthy.workplace@eastsussex.gov.uk