

Case Study

Principality Landscapers Ltd



Healthy Working Wales Gold Small Workplace Health Award

Principality Landscapers Ltd (PLL) is a small workplace employing around 48 staff most of the year but, as a seasonal business, this increases to around 58 in the summer.

PLL works with several large employers looking after their outside areas. Clients include the DVLA, Valero and Amazon as well as a number of local councils and housing associations.

Highlights

- Good communication and engagement has always been a priority for PLL, however throughout these uncertain times it has been seen as paramount and prioritised by management. Catch ups with staff are carried out on a weekly basis, however they can also be carried out daily when required by either staff or management.
- All employees are individually risk assessed based on their medical questionnaires and employee inspections records which are frequently undertaken.
- The Baglan depot has been split into sections with chains restricting people wandering into areas where they are not permitted such as office staff in the fitters' area. The office building windows and available doors are left open when possible to increase fresh air flow through the building.
- The company provides all teams, office staff and fitters with hand sanitiser, anti-bacterial hand wipes and hand wash, and hot water is available at the Baglan depot.
- Toolbox Talks covering all aspects of Covid-19 and the pandemic are delivered and regularly refreshed to include relevant health topics.
- The effects have been good for PLL as the organisation has created a full risk assessment process, streamlined work processes, identified patterns and trends in relation to sickness absence, and retained key staff.
- We have become more efficient in effectively communicating with staff whilst many processes have been streamlined for the better. We have grown as a company and are better prepared to deal with future challenges which may present themselves.
- Engagement with the Healthy Working Wales programme prior to the pandemic had increased our resilience as a company and embedded strong foundations for the continuing support and development of our staff and business.

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Staff communication and engagement

The importance of good communication and engagement has always been a priority for PLL, however throughout these uncertain times it has been seen as paramount and prioritised by management. During the pandemic, it has been acknowledged by management how important it is for them and staff to get together and keep in touch on a regular basis. Catch ups are carried out on a weekly basis, however they can also be carried out daily when required by either staff or management. A range of mechanisms are utilised to keep channels of communication open and flowing: telephone, email, as well as Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) which are small hand held devices we use to carry out duties such as site specific risk assessments. Microsoft Teams is used for team meetings and other countrywide meetings.

Employee wellbeing

All employees are individually risk assessed based on their medical questionnaires and employee inspections records which are frequently undertaken. Where necessary control measures are implemented such as staff working from home due to the need to be isolated and shielding or caring for others at home due to Covid restrictions.

Tracking systems on vans are used to ensure everyone is accounted for which is important for their health, safety and wellbeing. This also allows the Test, Trace and Protect system to function whilst in work.

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The company provides all teams, office staff and fitters with hand sanitiser, anti-bacterial hand wipes and hand wash, and hot water is available at the Baglan depot. Customer facilities are also available where permissible, many providing sanitising areas.

Toolbox Talks covering all aspects of the pandemic, including symptoms of Covid-19 and what to do if you suspect you have Covid-19, are delivered and regularly refreshed to include relevant health topics. This provides another mechanism to allow staff working from home to be included in the day-to-day running of the company whilst trying to minimise the effects of self-isolation and increase their mental health and wellbeing.

Giving back

Giving back to the community is an integral part of the culture and ethos of the company. It enables us to support our local residents and school, easing pressure on the local authority and raising our profile as a responsible company which cares about our local communities. Community work includes cutting overgrown land within housing estates and donating 5-tonne bags of bark to a local school for their newly created play area. These activities also provide a feel good factor for employees and management. Although we are under pressure as a company, we still prioritise the community elements of our work.

We value our staff and want to make sure they feel acknowledged for continuing to work through the pandemic. For all the hard work and commitment shown by the staff, all team members received a monthly bonus during April, May and June 2020. Further to this, any overtime worked was enhanced by 50%.

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Impacts

The effects have been good for PLL as the organisation has created a full risk assessment process, streamlined work processes, identified patterns and trends in relation to sickness absence, and retained key staff. Business has improved during this period and resulted in an increase in profits.

Lessons learnt

Keeping staff involved and up-to-date on the progress of the company has been vital to steering us through these uncertain times.

The health and wellbeing of our staff is kept at the forefront of the business and keeping in touch is fundamental at all times not just during pandemics. We have become more efficient in effectively communicating with staff whilst many processes have been streamlined for the better.

We have grown as a company and are better prepared to deal with future challenges which may present themselves. Having engagement and being supported by the Healthy Working Wales programme enabled us to reach the Gold Small Workplace Health Award. This has enabled us to support our employees' wellbeing through a raft of wellbeing policies, practices and procedures.

Engagement with the HWW programme before the pandemic had increased our resilience as a company and embedded strong foundations for the continuing support and development of our staff and business. We keep up-to-date with HWW support and guidance via the Workplace Health Advisors, the HWW website and e-bulletin.

“The effects of the pandemic have been good for PLL.....the organisation is now working like a well-oiled machine.”