

Case Study

Transport for Wales



(Working towards) Healthy Working Wales Bronze Corporate Health Standard Award

Transport for Wales (TfW) employs around 350 staff and exists to drive forward the Welsh Government's vision of a high quality, safe, integrated, affordable and accessible transport network of which the people of Wales can be proud.

Highlights

- TfW responded swiftly to lockdown by closing our headquarters immediately and ensuring that communications to all staff were informative.
- Regular Covid-19 staff bulletins have been an essential companion providing updates on support, current guidance, helpful tips and sources of information.
- We have emphasised our commitment to ensure that 'nobody is left behind' by providing practical and emotional support for anyone who is struggling with the physical or psychological demands of lockdown and having to work from home.
- Recognising the need to ensure stability and provide a strategic response to changing circumstances, a Tactical Contingency Group was formed to provide leadership, planning and resources to maintain not only TfW's business integrity but proactive measures to keep our colleagues safe.
- There can be no doubt that the pandemic interventions have instigated a positive cultural effect: colleagues are looking out for each other; line managers are understanding the important role they have to play in their team members' mental health; and there has been a demonstrable commitment at a senior level to an organisational response which puts our people first.
- Being part of the Healthy Working Wales programme has given us an evidenced based framework to structure our existing health and wellbeing initiatives. During the pandemic we have been able to utilise and develop existing support structures to meet the needs of our workforce.

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Ensuring 'nobody is left behind'

The term 'unprecedented' is often used in unique and challenging circumstances. No more so than in this battle with Coronavirus; and sometimes as an excuse for being ill-prepared in response. TfW responded swiftly in closing our headquarters immediately and ensuring that communications to all staff were informative.

We have responded to the challenge through 4 key areas:

Information

Regular Covid-19 staff bulletins have been an essential companion throughout the pandemic providing updates on support, current guidance, helpful tips and sources of information. The Communications team has worked tirelessly and produced quality focused information.

Our health and wellbeing intranet site has been an invaluable hub of information featuring links to World Health Organisation, Welsh Government and Public Health Wales advice. It also publishes useful hints and tips, plus links to the support available through TfW and outside organisations.

Support

We have provided practical and emotional support for anyone who is struggling with the physical or psychological demands of lockdown and having to work from home. This has included delivering office chairs, monitors and laptop risers, and signposting to our Employee Assistance Programme, Occupational Health Services and our extensive network of Mental Health Champions and Mental Health First Aiders.

The health and wellbeing intranet site is at the forefront of promoting the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' concept as a tool for everyone to adopt a healthier lifestyle during lockdown. It has also provided anyone with private concerns to log their feelings through a confidential online feedback form for immediate response.

Our Staff Wellbeing Action Group is at the heart of running campaigns to support staff and keep them engaged and active. This has included various exercise challenges, a monthly book club and an all-company 'pub' quiz.



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Risk management

Considerable work has been undertaken on risk management including working with the Facilities team to put Covid-19 measures in place so staff can return to the office when appropriate and safe.

Everyone has undertaken a Display Screen Equipment self-assessment and actions identified have been addressed. There has been mandatory online training on Covid-19 management backed by an individual 'working from home' assessment.

All our premises and places of work are risk assessed for Covid-19 mitigation, and office work guidelines have been published for a return to the physical workplace including a requirement for everyone to have a 1:1 'return to the office' risk assessment in collaboration with their line manager.

All employees, irrespective of the role they undertake, are issued with 2 reusable face coverings. We aim to recruit and train a number of volunteer Covid-19 Champions prior to the anticipated move to our new headquarters in Pontypridd.

Flexible working and regular working from home is the norm at TfW and all line managers undertook a 'check in' day to assess what flexibility is required or likely to continue into the future.

Strategic planning

Recognising the need to ensure stability and provide a strategic response to the changing circumstances, a Tactical Contingency Group was formed to provide leadership, planning and resources to maintain not only TfW's business integrity but proactive measures to keep our colleagues safe. The twice-weekly meeting of key sectors in the organisation provides a swift response to Welsh Government guidelines and regulations and any changes in terms of how they may impact TfW employees.

Lessons learnt

There can be no doubt that the pandemic interventions have instigated a positive cultural effect: colleagues are looking out for each other; line managers are understanding the important role they have to play in their team members' mental health; and there has been a demonstrable commitment at a senior level to enshrining an organisational response which puts our people first.

Staff and clients alike have commented on how TfW is an organisation like no other in placing health, wellbeing and mental health at the forefront of its agenda. New starters are taken aback by how embedded and positive the wellbeing culture is, some comparing their experience with previous employers and stating they have "never seen an organisation so committed to looking after everyone."

We don't believe that we could have done anything differently and we are confident that we have the controls and support mechanisms in place to continue to engender positivity, engagement and a sense of safety.

There's no doubt that like all businesses, Covid-19 took us by surprise and created a catalogue of challenges. Success can only be judged on positive actions which benefit the people affected by it. We are satisfied that our response has been robust, focused and ensured that nobody has been left behind.

Being part of the Healthy Working Wales programme has given us an evidence based framework to structure our existing health and wellbeing initiatives. During the pandemic we have been able to utilise and develop existing support structures to best meet the needs of our workforce.

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