

Thriving and High Performing

A resource for managers



Introduction

Thriving at work is about feeling energised, learning, doing meaningful work, and growing our skills.

High performing is about clarity of direction of travel and surpassing stakeholder expectations.

Bring thriving and high performing together and we have people, teams and organisations adapting quickly, enhancing reputations, and having an impact.

And yet, only 55% of UK workers report high levels of wellbeing, a pre-requisite of thriving. Sickness absence is rising (CIPD reports 10.5 days lost per employee per year) and productivity has been declining for the last 10 years. There's a need for change.

Supporting people to thrive isn't just good ethics—it's good business.

The aim of this resource is to provide a starting point for thinking about how you can strengthen thriving and performance in your workplace.

"If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got." Henry Ford

How to use this resource

Use this resource as an informal audit to identify what's currently working well for your team/department/organisation and what could be improved. Use what works for you and your organisation. If sickness absence or staff turnover are currently high in your area, it's likely there are a number of improvements that can be implemented.

Step 1.

The table below is a list of characteristics and behaviours which contribute to thriving and high performing workplaces. This is not an exhaustive list and the aim is to assist your thinking. Complete the table below.

Characteristics and behaviours contributing to thriving and high performing workplaces	Currently a strength in my work area	Improving this characteristic is a quick win	Improving this characteristic is a longer term goal
Preventing stress. It's important to manage the factors which can lead to stress and burnout.			
I'm clear about what's expected of me			
My team are clear about what's expected of them			
I'm clear about how my work fits into the overall aims of the organisation			
My work deadlines are all achievable			
The people I'm responsible for all have achievable deadlines			
I take regular breaks in my working day			
People I'm responsible for take regular breaks during their work day			
People treat each other with respect			
When implementing change I consult with those affected by the change at the planning stage			
Senior leaders are encouraging			
I'm confident in recognising and supporting those with poor mental health			
I'm able to support people I'm responsible for when they ask for adaptations to be able to work effectively			
Promoting thriving			
People are supported to learn and use new skills			
Each person in my team is comfortable with the level of stretch in their work			
I'm comfortable in asking for feedback from others to help me improve			

Characteristics and behaviours contributing to thriving and high performing workplaces	Currently a strength in my work area	Improving this characteristic is a quick win	Improving this characteristic is a longer term goal
I provide my direct reports regular supportive feedback on their work			
I promote collaboration and teamwork			
I'm confident in supporting neurodiversity in the teams/projects/groups I lead			
I celebrate achievements and progress			
Promoting psychological safety. For high performance it's important that everyone is able to contribute fully in meetings and discussions			
In meetings people listen attentively to each other			
In meetings people build on others' contributions			
When people inform me about mistakes/errors I respond positively			
I intervene promptly and appropriately to others' inappropriate behaviours			
I role model positive conflict management			
My team regularly meets to review how we're working together			
Promoting high performance			
When work is allocated success outcomes (eg time, quality, cost, collaborations, links with other work) are agreed			
When allocating work I ask what support is required for others to deliver successful outcomes			
Those involved in a project discuss roles, responsibilities, ways of working and potential barriers before starting the work			
My team regularly celebrates progress and successes			

Characteristics and behaviours contributing to thriving and high performing workplaces	Currently a strength in my work area	Improving this characteristic is a quick win	Improving this characteristic is a longer term goal
We care about each other and readily step up to provide support			

Step 2: Consider strengths. Celebrate, appreciate and encourage more of these behaviours (if appropriate).

Step 3: Consider a quick win you can implement. It might be you start to role model behaviours or introduce new ways of working. Ask for feedback so you can check it's working for your context.

Step 4: Once some of the quick wins are implemented and working well, consider other actions which can be implemented. If the action you're implementing is very different to the organisation's current ways of working and might meet with significant resistance from more senior leaders. Longer term planning might be required.

Find out more: Why not subscribe to 'Thriving' monthly [newsletter](#) to find out more about how to enhance thriving and high performing. Or email karen@aspirecc.co.uk for the subscribe link.

Further reading

The State of Employee Wellbeing in the Workplace 2024: <https://uk.greatplacetowork.co.uk/workplace-wellbeing-report>

Thriving at Work: the Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers, 2017
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82180e40f0b6230269acdb/thriving-at-work-stevenson-farmer-review.pdf>

Mind: Thriving at work support for those with mental health conditions
<https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/campaigns/mental-health-at-work-commitment/resources/thriving-at-work-everything-you-need-to-get-started/>

CIPD Health and Wellbeing at work, 2023

<https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/reports/health-well-being-work/>

About the author, Karen Wills

With over 5 years working as a middle manager Karen's familiar with the complexities of management and leadership. Karen blends her experience, knowledge in organisational psychology and leadership development to support managers and management teams in taking time out to reflect on the 'how' rather than the 'what' of working life.

Karen is a chartered psychologist, an accredited coach and trained workplace mediator.

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