

Whitepaper: Transforming Public Sector Wellbeing

Maria Paviour

www.wellbeingwithcari.co.uk

Leveraging the EME Approach to Enhance Employee Wellbeing and Performance

Introduction

Public sector organisations face unique and ongoing challenges that impact employee wellbeing and overall performance. High stress levels, limited resources, and the difficulty of achieving measurable outcomes are just a few of the hurdles that need addressing. This whitepaper introduces the EME (Engage, Measure, Empower) approach, a framework built to provide structured, sustainable support. Drawing from extensive research, including our own studies and peer-reviewed literature, this paper explores how the EME approach can effectively transform public sector workplaces.

1. The State of Public Sector Wellbeing

Key challenges:

- **High stress levels and burnout:** Public sector employees often report higher rates of stress and burnout compared to their private sector peers ([CIPD, 2023](#)).
- **Limited resources for wellbeing programmes:** Budget constraints and limited funding make it difficult to implement comprehensive wellbeing strategies.
- **Difficulty achieving measurable outcomes:** Many existing programmes lack the means to track tangible improvements in employee engagement and wellbeing.



Research insights

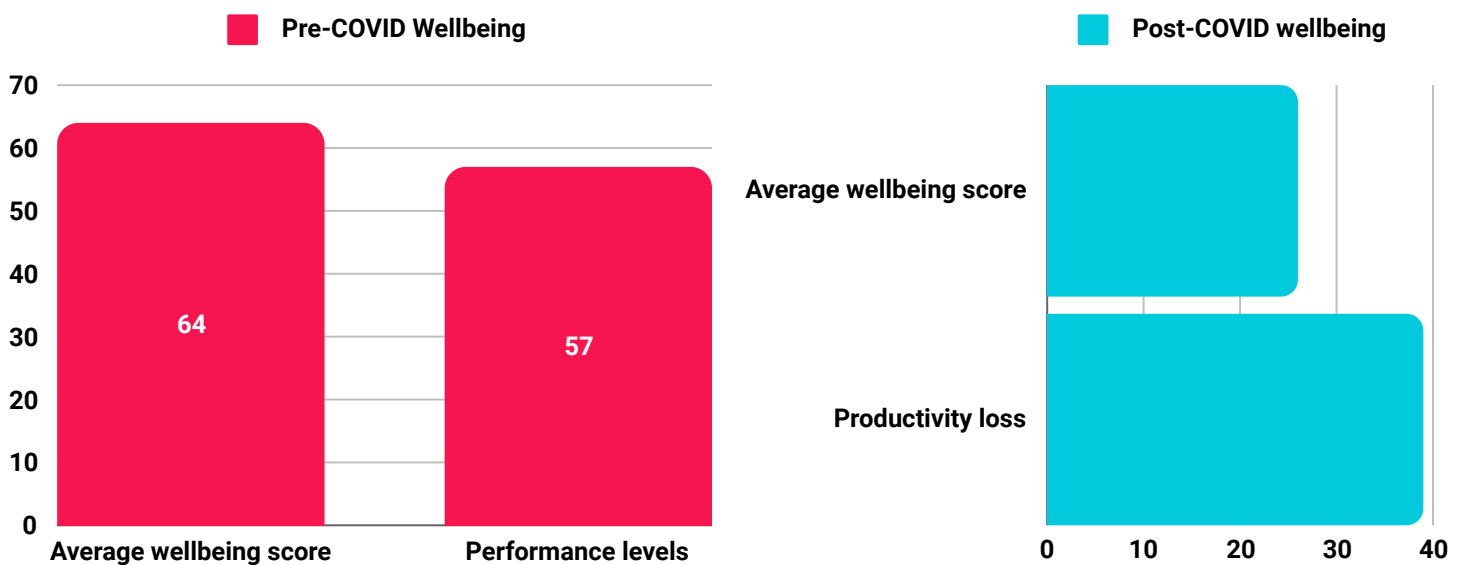
In 2020, we conducted a significant study involving over 4,000 public sector employees, representing approximately 29% of the invited participants. The findings revealed a pressing need for approaches that support both mental health and workplace performance.

Statistics

- **Pre-COVID Wellbeing:** The average wellbeing score was 64%, categorising most employees as operating at a reactive level.
- **Performance Levels:** Employees demonstrated a 57% performance score, indicating compromised decision-making, problem-solving, creativity, and cooperation.

Post-COVID Wellbeing

- **Overall Drop:** Post-pandemic results showed a drop in wellbeing, with only **26%** of employees maintaining robust health.
- **Struggling and At-Risk Levels:** The percentage of employees categorised as struggling increased by **13%**, and those at significant risk rose by **2%**, tripling previous figures.
- **Brain Capability:** Performance scores dropped to **56%**, reflecting a productivity loss of **39%**.



2. The EME Approach: Engage, Measure, Empower

Overview:

The **EME approach** provides a structured framework that incorporates engagement, real-time measurement, and empowerment strategies. Unlike traditional models, such as MHFA, that focus primarily on crisis response, EME offers a proactive and comprehensive way to promote workplace wellbeing and resilience.

Components of EME:

1. Engage:

- **Concept:** Building a culture of peer support is fundamental to improving workplace wellbeing.

- **Practice:** Public sector organisations can train **Wellbeing First Responders (W1Rs)**, who act as peer supporters, creating an environment of trust and early intervention.
- **Outcome:** Increased employee morale and a sense of belonging, fostering resilience and reducing burnout.

2. Measure:

- **Concept:** Data-driven insights are key for understanding and tracking wellbeing.
- **Practice:** Employing tools such as **Cari** can provide real-time data, helping organisations identify where employees are on the **mental health continuum**.
- **Outcome:** Improved decision-making and targeted interventions based on accurate data ensure that wellbeing strategies are effective and adaptable.

3. Empower:

- **Concept:** Providing employees with the tools and knowledge they need to support each other.
- **Practice:** W1Rs are equipped with strategies for responding to colleagues based on their position on the continuum (e.g., robust, reactive, struggling, at significant risk).
- **Outcome:** Employees become proactive in maintaining their own and their peers' wellbeing, fostering a supportive and resilient workplace.

How Research Supports the EME Approach

● Peer Support:

Studies have shown that peer support significantly enhances mental health outcomes. According to *BMC Medicine*, peer support interventions can lead to improvements in recovery and symptom reduction ([BMC Medicine, 2024](#)).

● Measurement:

Regular assessment of employee wellbeing is critical for understanding needs and the effectiveness of interventions. The *Journal of Business and Psychology* highlights that data-driven measurement helps organisations track and adjust strategies effectively ([Journal of Business and Psychology](#)).

● Empowerment through training:

Training programmes that focus on resilience and stress management have been proven to significantly improve employee wellbeing. Research in the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* supports that empowered, well-trained employees contribute to better organisational performance ([Hintsa](#)).

3. Addressing Public Sector Challenges with EME

● High Stress and burnout

The EME approach provides early intervention through peer support, reducing the risk of stress turning into burnout. This proactive engagement can lead to higher retention rates and improved employee satisfaction.

● Limited resources

By leveraging peer support networks, the EME approach maximises the impact of existing resources. Training W1Rs ensures that wellbeing support is integrated into the organisational culture without heavy reliance on external services.

● Measurable outcomes

Real-time data collection through measurement tools like Cari allows organisations to demonstrate the ROI of their wellbeing initiatives. Data-driven insights inform better strategic decisions,

contributing to higher productivity and performance.

4. Conclusion

The EME approach is a comprehensive, evidence-based strategy that effectively supports public sector organisations in overcoming workplace wellbeing challenges. By engaging employees, measuring wellbeing with reliable tools, and empowering peer support networks, the public sector can foster a culture of resilience and enhanced performance.

Next steps: To learn more about implementing the EME approach in your organisation, schedule a personalised consultation by [contacting us!](#)

References

1. *BMC Medicine*. Peer support interventions in mental health: [Link](#)
2. *Journal of Business and Psychology*. Importance of regular wellbeing assessment: [Link](#)
3. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*. Impact of training on resilience and stress management: [Link](#)
4. *CIPD Health and Wellbeing Report 2023*: [Link](#)