

Guide

Is your wellbeing programme inclusive?



Guide

When it comes to workplace wellbeing, a one-size-fits all approach will not work. Organisations need to step up and be mindful of employees with different needs and backgrounds.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are foundational to building an organisational culture that improves the employee experience and advances positive health outcomes. Investing in a wellbeing solution that scales across your global workforce while providing an experience tailored to the needs, lived experiences, and personal identities of everyone is crucial. This means developing local and global content – offering solutions in multiple languages, ensuring all members of your workforce can see themselves and feel represented, and giving employees a voice regarding your organisation's DEI and wellbeing initiatives.

At Virgin Pulse, we are dedicated to amplifying DEI within our own organisation and encouraging other organisations to do the same. Inspired by our DEI team, this overview will walk you through essential areas to consider for evaluating your organisation's wellbeing program through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Doing so ensures you're reaching your teams in a way that is inclusive of age, location, cultural background, ability status, race and ethnicity, gender or sexual identity, economic status, and health status, among other identities.

At Virgin Pulse, we are dedicated to amplifying DEI within our own organisation and encouraging other organisations to do the same.



Utilise inclusive language and imagery

Take a step back and look at the whole picture. Ask yourself are the imagery and assets in your wellbeing programme inclusive?

You need to make people feel celebrated and valued at work. Helping to bring the best versions of themselves can help employee satisfaction, innovation, and productivity to soar. Whether it's onsite signage, company communications, or content embedded in your wellbeing platform, choosing inclusive images and language is paramount. This facilitates a sense of acceptance and equality that allows people to bring their best selves to work each day. Think about it: engagement levels will suffer if your organisation only utilises imagery of fit, non-disabled, light-skinned people and relies on language that ignores minoritised populations. A direct or indirect exclusion of certain workforce members will discourage employees from interacting with your wellbeing programmes and leave them feeling disconnected from workplace culture. By making health and wellbeing relatable, your employees will be more apt to and even participate in an organisation-wide wellness challenge, sign up for an appointment with a health coach.

Offer a personalised experience

Health is personal. No two people are on the exact same wellbeing journey with the exact same set of life circumstances. Creating a highly personalised experience is the key to delivering and improving individual health outcomes.

People with chronic conditions may have different activity recommendations as opposed to those without chronic health conditions. People dealing with acute or long-term illnesses, like COVID-19, cancer, or autoimmune disease, may focus their health and wellbeing efforts on managing their condition and improving overall quality of life rather than optimising steps or sleep. At the same time, other conditions like diabetes may require more frequent and proactive tracking of health metrics. Be sensitive to these conditions to help your organisation successfully engage with people experiencing health challenges.



Provide accessibility to programmes



Age, economic status, and many other identities play a significant role in how a user relates to and interacts with your employee wellbeing program. Creating an experience that can adapt to each user's personal needs and goals is critical to ensure all employees feel confident navigating their wellbeing journey.

There are several reasons why your digital wellbeing programme may be running into a roadblock. You should be mindful and considerate of employees' age, economic status and other socio-economic differences, all of which can impact accessibility. As mentioned above, a personalised approach is vital, and that is not only centred around the content they consume. However, it should also be about one's physical ability to access the programme, possibly due to lack of tech know how, affordability to tech products, or simply being from a different generation.

As an employer, you should be mindful of the digital divide. Despite the growth of

the internet, digital literacy is still lagging behind. Figures from the UK government have indicated that an estimated [11.7 million \(22 per cent\) people in the UK are without the digital skills needed for everyday life](#); [9 million \(16 per cent\)](#) are unable to use the internet and their device by themselves. [Numbers from the ONS shine a light on marginalised communities](#); for example, those who identify as disabled make up 56% of adult non-internet users. These indicate the growing divide and digital inequality amongst communities. It can be seen as a hindrance for many to access the requisite tools needed to join a workplace wellbeing programme or simply tap into basic health information for themselves.

To understand the accessibility of your wellbeing programme, consider the following:

Is it easy for users to find customer support in a language they can communicate in and understand?

Are Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) displayed prominently?

Are instructions clear and thorough?

Do you offer written, video, live guides, or other forms of onboarding support to help users learn how to navigate the platform and access all its features?

Is the content available in a variety of global languages?

Does your program structure make it possible for all users to achieve milestones and reach incentives?

Can users connect while using basic devices, like simpler, more affordable phones, computers, and fitness tracking devices?

Is the content personalised in a way that is culturally sensitive and relatable?

Does the platform offer suggestions tailored to the individual's socio-economic situation?



If you answered “No” to any of these questions, it might be time to reflect on and reevaluate your programme design. Building it in a way that makes your employee wellbeing program approachable is critical to engaging those hard-to-reach populations that are often also at higher risk of suboptimal health outcomes. Give your employees a voice and gain meaningful insight by utilising anonymous surveys to gather candid feedback and suggestions from your employees. This will ensure your people feel heard and that your wellbeing initiatives resonate with your workforce’s needs.



Enable engagement

Your digital wellbeing platform should have the capability to create connections across your workforce. A wellbeing programme with high user engagement will see employees logging on five to seven days a week to interact with in-platform content, tools, and resources, making it the ideal place for you to connect with your people and encourage them to connect with each other.

A robust employee wellbeing platform should:

Be utilised as another channel to send out all-company messages.

Create opportunities for employees to interact beyond work-related topics.

Be leveraged for regular feedback surveys.

Remind employees of the available employee benefits, resources, and important events. Embedding multiple communication streams within your employee wellbeing programme enhances social connectivity between your organisation and your people. This asynchronous communication eliminates geographical

barriers to unify dispersed teams and provides another layer of employer-employee correspondence that bolsters trust and loyalty.

Social connections are critical to mental and physical health and are a vital component of the social determinants of health. Providing opportunities for a dispersed workforce to connect in ways they might not otherwise, through interest groups, challenges, and shoutouts, can bring people together and motivate them to be part of something bigger than themselves.

While diversity among teams is one key aspect of employee engagement, it's essential that all members of the workplace feel included within the workplace culture. **Numbers from Deloitte's Global Human Trends Capital Report indicate a positive correlation between diversity and inclusion in a workplace and employee engagement. Research has shown that better DEI practices increased by 74%, leading to an upturn in better engagement, performance, and profits.**

Beyond promoting health equity, an employee wellbeing platform that enables communication across all populations supports better business outcomes. A wellbeing platform should keep employees aligned with the company's vision and goals to encourage intrateam collaborations and reinforce social connections. By encouraging social connectivity and teamwork, organisations help foster an inclusive workplace culture.



Acknowledge the social determinants of health

Health and wellbeing are influenced by an individual's environment, access to information and services, genetics, intergenerational trauma, and history of prejudice and discrimination in healthcare systems, among other factors. This all falls under the umbrella term social determinants of health (SDOH). It's important to note that SDOH is a global issue – and though its effects impact everyone, they often disproportionately impact minoritised populations. Recognising that individuals of all backgrounds do not fully control their health – nor do they start from the same point – is an essential aspect of an inclusive wellbeing strategy.

Lower-income individuals and families often lack the same level of time, economic, or community resources to dedicate to health and wellness as wealthier individuals. For example, individuals living in large, multigenerational households, apartments, or other living situations where noise travels may struggle to get the recommended amount of sleep each night. Marginalised populations often face more intense stressors as well – greater financial stress, less access to nutritious and satiating

foods, anxiety around personal safety in one's neighbourhood, and lack of understanding of how to or inability to participate in regular exercise all factor into an inclusive wellbeing experience.

Organisations must build employee wellbeing programmes around the notion that health and wellbeing – from the starting point, to the steps each member needs to take to reach their optimal health – varies for each person. Personalisation, along with a combination of high-tech and high-touch tools, is vital to guiding each member towards the right path for their unique goals. No two individuals are on the same journey; therefore, their wellbeing programme experience should not look the same. A health and wellbeing solution not only has to understand each user deeply but also have comprehensive programming, tools, and support. Combining a robust platform with a highly personalised experience ensures that the unique needs of every member of the workforce are addressed, and they find value in the programme.

You can help your employees better navigate their health journey by:

Asking users to complete a baseline survey that helps tailor content, resources, and suggestions to their specific wants, needs, and life circumstances.

Utilizing AI-learning to build a truly personalised experience that learns and grows with the individual as they interact with the platform.

Offering live support services like health coaching or guides that acknowledge the environmental factors that are impacting health outcomes and explore effective solutions built for the individual.

Using a platform that periodically conducts internal reviews of in-platform content to ensure it is inclusive of individuals of all races, gender identities, socio-economic statuses, locations, education level, and religious beliefs.

Requesting regular anonymous feedback to continually improve upon the employee wellbeing experience for all members.





Empower members to own their health journey

No one knows your employees' goals, motivators, personal history, and engagement styles better than they do. Giving your people the power to guide their own wellbeing journey with the help of an inclusive, personalised, multi-faceted holistic wellness program is the best way to ensure improved health outcomes are possible for all populations.

The definition of wellbeing has evolved, and your organisation's wellness benefits must grow right along with it. Simply promoting physical activity is no longer enough – great wellbeing programmes address the full range of health and wellness concerns employees face today.

Your diverse workforce has diverse needs, so the people making decisions about your organisation's wellbeing initiatives must come from [diverse backgrounds themselves](#). Employees require various tools and resources to manage challenges related to physical health, mental health, financial wellbeing, social connectivity, chronic

conditions, nutrition, family health, sleep, mindfulness and stress management, work-life balance, musculoskeletal health, tobacco cessation, and more. By diversifying your team of decision-makers to ensure that the way the members of your workforce access and interact with these tools is taken into account, your organisation will see higher programme utilisation and improved health and business outcomes over time.

How do you make it easy for employees to access solutions that meet their specific needs? By offering an [all-in-one digital platform](#) that can learn and adjust to employees' ever-changing needs. This will yield higher engagement, support stronger, healthier organisational cultures, and foster a sense of unity and inclusion – while there are steps organisations can take to drive health equity, it's important to note that this work requires a concerted effort among multiple stakeholders including the organisation, the community, public health officials, and institutions.

Changing lives for good.®

No one knows their health better than themselves. And at Virgin Pulse, we genuinely believe that. We understand that each lived experience and each person has a nuanced approach to health and wellbeing. However, that looks like to them. We want to give every user agency over their mind and body.

Our platform allows users to achieve their goals by hitting small incremental goals and focussing on habit formation. By weaving relevant and trusted nudges into our member's daily, established routines, we are able to drive meaningful change and measurable health outcomes through sustained empowerment.

Our features can be personalised and built to suit your needs. This includes being able to create a wellbeing programme that brings together every individual in your organisations, regardless of their socio-economic background, age, health, creed and culture. Virgin Pulse looks to help you and your business tackle any health challenges you may have and help build a wellbeing culture that puts diversity, equity and inclusivity at its forefront.

● Checking in

Hi Aubrey, how are you feeling today?





Do you want to build a diverse and inclusive wellbeing programme? Help all your employees embark on their wellbeing journey, reach out to one of our experts and find out how.

Contact Us

Learn more at virginpulse.com
Find us on [facebook](#) | [twitter](#) | [linkedin](#)



Learn more at virginpulse.com
Find us on [facebook](#) | [twitter](#) | [linkedin](#)