

DELIVERING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IN CONSTRAINED FINANCIAL PERIODS

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR HR, HEALTH & SAFETY AND WELLBEING PROFESSIONALS

Across the UK, organisations are navigating sustained financial pressure alongside rising regulatory, workforce and societal expectations. HR, health and safety, and wellbeing teams are being asked to maintain robust compliance and workforce support in an increasingly complex landscape.



It is often said that these functions are simply being asked to “do more with less.” The reality is more nuanced. In many organisations, HR headcount in particular has increased in recent years but scope has expanded even faster. Expectations placed on HR, wellbeing and H&S professionals have broadened significantly, often without corresponding investment in specialist capability, systems or support.

Many practitioners find themselves in rarely realistic and unsustainable roles; expected to operate simultaneously as subject matter experts, trainers, facilitators, communications specialists, data analysts, programme managers and operational problem-solvers.

The challenge facing organisations is not simply resource constraint - but how to deploy finite expertise and capacity in areas that genuinely reduce risk and support performance.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

If organisations cannot add more headcount, tools or specialist support, the question becomes: **how do we maintain statutory confidence with the capability we already have?**

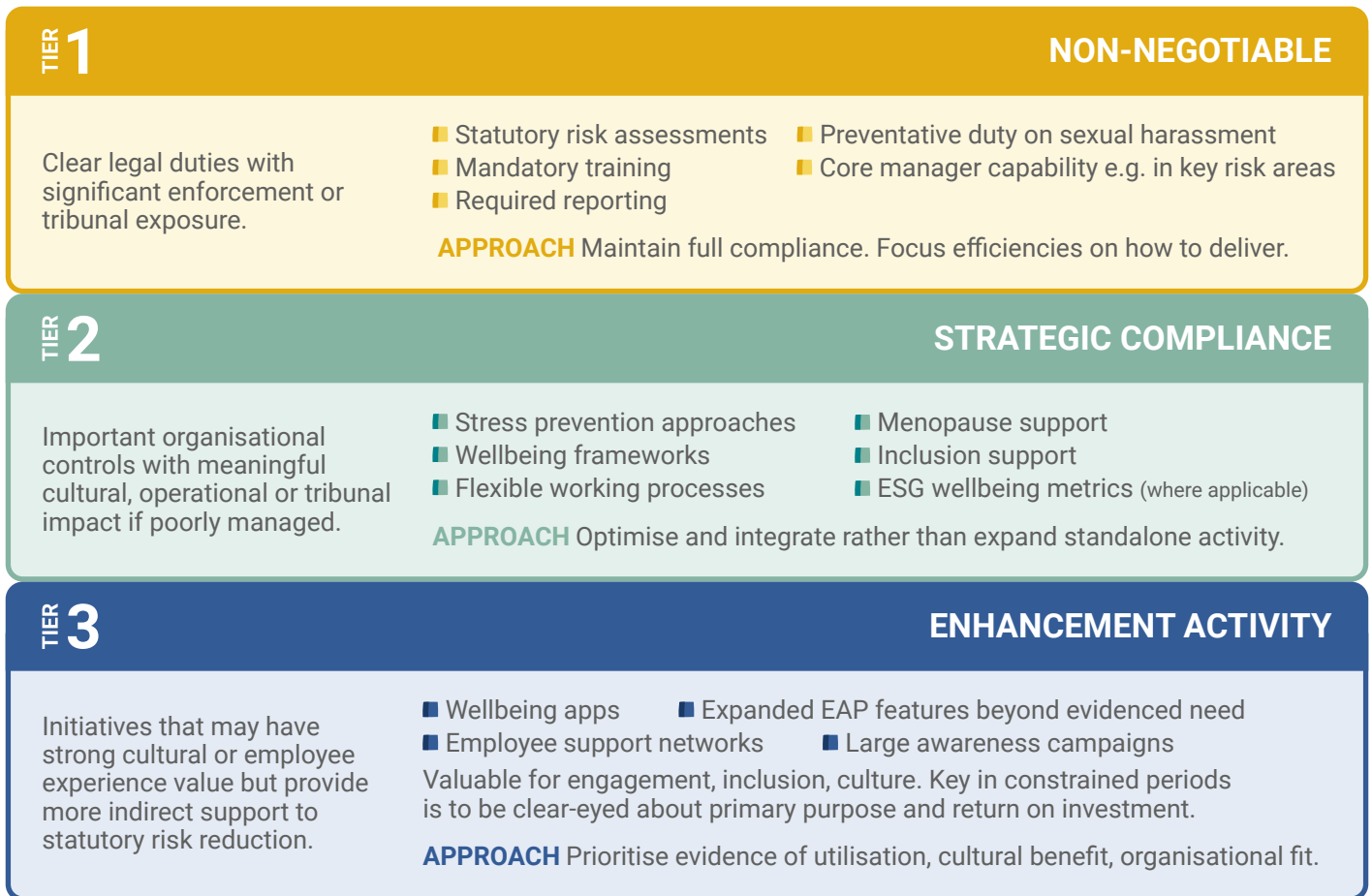
The most promising answers are emerging not from doing more activity, but from **prioritising more deliberately and integrating more intelligently.**

PRIORITISATION HAS BECOME CRITICAL

As expectations have expanded across health, safety, wellbeing and people management, many organisations have accumulated layers of well-intentioned activity over time. In financially constrained periods, maintaining everything at the same level of investment is rarely sustainable. The organisations responding most effectively are those making **explicit, risk-informed decisions** about where effort must be protected and where it can be streamlined.

RISK-BASED APPROACH TO COMPLIANCE INVESTMENT

Not all activity contributes equally to statutory confidence or organisational risk reduction. High-performing organisations use tiered prioritisation to focus resources and avoid well-intentioned overextension.



WHERE INTEGRATION DELIVERS REAL VALUE

A key efficiency gain is reducing duplication across HR, wellbeing and health and safety activity. Importantly, this does not mean replacing task-specific risk assessments, which must remain targeted and robust. Instead, the greatest gains come from integrating organisational intelligence, data and routine management processes.

Prioritisation directs limited resources; the next challenge is delivering efficiently without adding programmes, systems or administrative burden.

Thoughtful integration - though rarely straightforward to implement - can better align HSE, HR, wellbeing, and occupational health to reduce duplication and improve organisational risk visibility.

INTEGRATION SOUNDS OBVIOUS, BUT IS HARD IN PRACTICE

Most professionals recognise the potential to better integrate health, safety and wellbeing activity. However, in practice, many organisations find this difficult to implement. The barriers are rarely technical. More often they are structural and cultural: functions have evolved separately, budgets sit in different places, accountabilities differ, and professional ownership is firmly held.

In many organisations, silos have developed for understandable historical and regulatory reasons. However, where organisations do manage to work more cohesively across HSE, HR and wellbeing, the efficiency and risk-visibility gains can be significant.

UNIFIED RISK INTELLIGENCE

Many organisations still run multiple overlapping surveys covering engagement, stress, culture and safety climate. A well-designed unified survey can provide shared insight across functions, reducing survey fatigue while improving visibility of emerging risks.



TRAIN YOUR MANAGERS IN AN INTEGRATED WAY

Don't compromise on this important area, but be smarter about pooling requirements and resources to create integrated, sustainable training measures.

PROXIMITY TO RISK

Line managers and supervisors are closest to the day-to-day reality of workload pressure, safety risk, performance drift and team dynamics. They spot early warning signs first - making them critical to prevention. Strengthening their capability is one of the most reliable ways to improve risk management and workforce outcomes. So much reliable evidence and research points to this being your single greatest lever to improve etc.

INTEGRATION OF CORE SKILLS

Many of the capabilities organisations train separately - safety conversations, wellbeing check-ins, performance discussions, learning from failure, just culture - draw on a shared set of conversational and leadership skills. Often delivered in silos, they create duplication and miss the chance to build coherent manager capability.

Organisations gaining most traction are increasingly asking: Where are we teaching the same core skills multiple times under different functional labels?

SERVICE PORTFOLIO RATIONALISATION

Many organisations are unknowingly paying for overlapping provision across Employee Assistance Programmes, Occupational Health, Virtual or online GP services and insurance-linked support. A structured review of utilisation, pathways and outcomes can reduce duplication and improve employee clarity. However, savings are not automatic and must be clinically and operationally assessed.



REAL WORLD EXAMPLE - NHS TRUST

A midsize NHS Trust facing a 15% budget reduction needed to maintain compliance while strengthening workforce support.

ACTIONS TAKEN

- Integrating physical & psychosocial risk review
- Training Mental Health First Aiders from existing staff
- Moving 80% of mandatory training online
- Consolidating 5 policies into 2 frameworks
- Negotiating shared occupational health provision

RESULTS

- ✓ 30% reduction in compliance costs
 - ✓ 18% reduction in sickness absence
 - ✓ Improved staff perception of organisational care
- Key lesson:** Improvement from disciplined integration/prioritisation, not blanket cuts.

WHERE NOT TO CUT CORNERS

Financial discipline is essential – but some areas remain core risk controls. Organisations that weaken these often experience higher long-term cost and exposure.

Protect in particular: competent professional advice; critical risk controls; manager capability; and monitoring and evidence systems.

SECURING LEADERSHIP BUY IN

To secure leadership buy-in during financial constraint, compliance and wellbeing proposals must be positioned in commercial terms, as well as moral or regulatory language.

Influence is strengthened by translating risk into measurable business impact, quantifying ROI using internal and sector data, identifying short-term wins to build credibility, and presenting tiered options that allow leaders to consciously choose their level of investment and risk exposure.

FRAME IN BUSINESS LANGUAGE

Translate compliance into productivity, retention, cost avoidance and risk mitigation.

QUANTIFY THE RETURN

Compare cost of inaction vs cost of compliance using data and benchmarks.

DEMONSTRATE QUICK WINS

Highlight initiatives that deliver visible impact within 3-6 months.

PRESENT OPTION & TRADE-OFFS

Offer tiered solutions with clear implications, enabling informed executive decisions.



CALL TO ACTION

START WITH WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE

In constrained financial periods, the most powerful first step is often not new investment, but better alignment of existing capability.

Bring together colleagues across Health & Safety, HR, Wellbeing and Occupational Health and ask:

1. Where are we solving the same problem more than once?
2. Where is ownership unclear or duplicated?
3. Where could pooled expertise reduce friction and cost?

The opportunity to integrate is clear. The challenge is organisational - but potential gains significant.



HEALTHY WORK COMPANY

Healthy Work Company helps organisations meet health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities in ways that are commercially realistic, evidence-based and operationally practical.

With more than 30 years experience working across HR, health and safety and organisational wellbeing, Heather Beach, the MD, supports organisations that are under pressure to deliver more with finite resource - and need approaches that work in the real world, not just on paper.

OUR WORK FOCUSES ON

- Strengthening manager capability where risk first appears
- Integrating safety, wellbeing and people practices
- Reducing duplication across functions
- Supporting organisations through complex compliance pressures
- Building scalable learning solutions that stick

We work across public, private and third sectors, specialising in complex, operational environments.

WHERE WE SUPPORT CLIENTS

- Manager Conversations for Wellbeing programmes
- Integrated psychosocial and safety approaches
- Cost-effective compliance and capability reviews
- Tailored e-learning and blended learning solutions
- Strategic advisory for HR, H&S and wellbeing leaders

TO DISCUSS HOW THIS COULD APPLY IN YOUR ORGANISATION



REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

HSE - Managing for Health and Safety (HSG65)

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg65.htm

HSE - Sensible Risk Management

www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm

HSE - Work-related Stress Management Standards

www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/

CIPD - Health and Wellbeing at Work Survey

www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/reports/health-well-being-work/

CIPD - Show Me The Money Report

www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/evidence-reviews/reward-decisions/

Deloitte - Mental Health and Employers Report

www.deloitte.com/uk/en/services/consulting/research/mental-health-and-employers-the-case-for-employers-to-invest-in-supporting-working-parents-and-a-mentally-health-workplace.html

ACAS - Flexible Working Guidance

www.acas.org.uk/flexible-working

ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems

www.iso.org/standard/63787.html

ISO 45003 Psychological Health and Safety at Work

www.iso.org/standard/64283.html

NHS Employers - Health and Wellbeing Resources

www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/health-and-wellbeing-programmes/nhs-health-and-wellbeing-framework/case-studies/

Nielsen & Noblet (2018) Organisational Interventions for Health and Wellbeing

www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9781315410494/organizational-interventions-health-well-being-karina-nielsen-andrew-noblet