

# CASE STUDY

## ANGLIAN WATER GROUP: WAYS OF WORKING TO ENHANCE WELLBEING

Since March 2020, Anglian Water has managed to run successfully with thousands of colleagues working from home instead of travelling each day, and office-based and operational teams have adapted quickly to new working practices. For many at Anglian Water, work has now become a thing they do, rather than a place they go to.

### Introduction

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, organisations globally have been looking at how they might support their people working from home, whilst benefitting from the subsequent reduction in their office estate, Anglian Water had already prioritised a move towards more agile working in their business plan.

### Ways of Working programme

Importantly, Ways of Working is not a one-size-fits-all programme. Anglian Water understands that different roles, different skill sets, and different types of people have different needs, so staying flexible in its approach is crucial.

The programme objectives are to:

- Ensure colleagues have the right tools and skills to collaborate from wherever they are working.
- Adapt and create space in campus buildings and operational sites that meet the needs of a more flexible working culture; fit for purpose spaces for human connection, collaboration, learning and innovation.
- Equip people managers with the right tools and skills to manage teams effectively across multiple locations, ensuring clarity of

responsibilities; quality; productivity; customer experience and employee wellbeing are more focussed than ever.

As a purpose and values-driven organisation, the new ways of working will reflect Anglian Water's values in action – taking personal responsibility for the choices made, building trust with colleagues wherever they are, and exploring new and better ways of doing things.

3,000 employees now work from home and collaborate virtually, supported by transformed IT networks and practical tools such as office chairs and extra screens. Many say they feel an improved work/life balance and Anglian Water is committed to ensure home working is a viable option in the future, by targeting an improved and flexible approach.

During the pandemic, staff have been asked to work from home where possible, unless it has been for a critical need in the following categories:

- Access to equipment (e.g., to carry out their role)
- Physical wellbeing (e.g., their home environment is not fit for working)
- Mental wellbeing (e.g., they are a victim of domestic abuse)



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Flexibility has been key during the pandemic as many employees have been continuing to work along with meeting new challenges such as home-schooling. The wellbeing benefits associated with this will be embedded through the organisation after the pandemic has passed. As there is so much more opportunity to be had, this will be a longer-term programme of work and will run over several years.

## Always exploring – strengthening our health, safety and wellbeing programme

Anglian Water values the health benefits that a connection with nature can bring, so this has been integrated into the new Ways of Working programme. Research shows that nature has a direct positive effect on physical and psychological wellbeing. Outdoors, indoors and integrated green spaces have been brought into the offices to help people connect with nature and to have a positive effect on various issues like depression, improving concentration, memory and attention levels. Biophilia is also part of the annual wellbeing plan and allotments, wellbeing gardens and memorial gardens in unused spaces on its water treatment facilities have been created to provide spaces for its employees and surrounding communities to connect with nature.

Safety has always been the number one priority at Anglian Water and psychological safety is part of the culture. Nothing is so important that the time cannot be taken to do it safely. The Health and Safety strategy has been refreshed to help guide colleagues and Alliance Partners on how everyone can play their part in ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone across the business and supply chain.

This plan is even more critical than ever, as new ways of establishing good safety practices are being explored that will meet the challenges faced by the coronavirus pandemic.

The health, safety and wellbeing strategy is built on developing an understanding of employees' personal relationship to safety so that it positively

impacts their choices and actions. It aims to create space for all to be able to analyse risk-based activities and be empowered to 'speak up' when necessary, to stop anything that might negatively impact safety.

All wellbeing and safety resources, information and documents are easily accessible through the intranet site which employees can access from any device. This means that they can service their own wellbeing needs at any time.

There is a wide variety of internal and external wellbeing resources available to staff, as Anglian Water has a diverse workforce with differing needs. Access to showers for employees cycling to work; ergonomic equipment for good musculoskeletal health; access to an employee assistance programme (EAP) and financial wellbeing support are a few examples of what is provided. Through the employee benefit programme, a cycle to work scheme is promoted, enabling colleagues to enjoy the benefits of fresh air on their commute.

The long-term wellbeing strategy, based on the [BITC Workwell Model](#), focuses on employees being 'healthier, happier, safer'. The ambition is that employees are supported at home and at work and that coming to work has a positive impact on their health and happiness. This goes much further than the original message of mitigating any risks or detriment work might have. This model is followed by making wellbeing central to the organisational strategy, because the ability to perform as a business is linked entirely to the performance of the people within it. Anglian Water has a fundamental belief that looking after colleagues is the right thing to do, but also from a business point of view, if colleagues are fit, well and safe, they are likely to be more productive and deliver a better service to its customers.

## Call to action

**Prioritise agile working as part of your business plan. Staying flexible in your approach is crucial as jobs have different requirements and individuals have different needs.**

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