

Dublin Bus / KeepWell Mark Case Study

The Journey Towards Wellbeing in the Workplace



Driving Force

Dublin Bus was founded in 1987 and is Ireland's largest public transport provider, supporting over 2.7 million passenger journeys each week across the Greater Dublin Area.

Dublin Bus currently has an international workforce of over 4,000 people from over 81 countries. More than 3,000 of these workers are bus drivers operating a fleet of over 1000 buses.



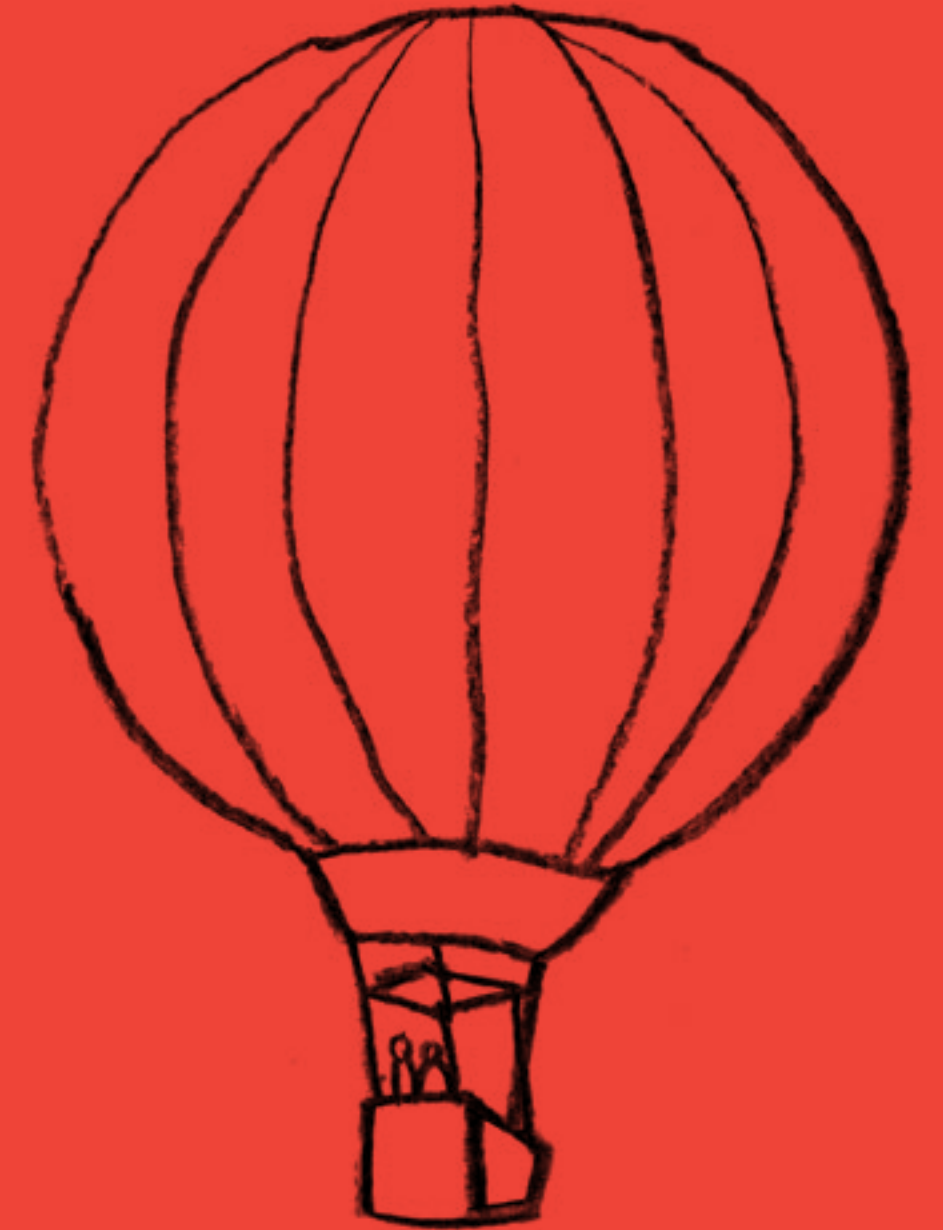
Roadmap for Success

In 2019, Dublin Bus, like many companies, was beginning to recognise the importance of employee health and wellbeing as a key performance indicator for employee retention, productivity, and recruitment.

At this stage, in the journey, health and wellbeing sat across departments and roles.

“But when Health and Wellbeing is owned by everyone, it is owned by no one.”

A collective decision was made to become more streamlined and strategic, and to create a dedicated Health and Wellbeing Executive role.



The Journey Begins

Dublin Bus already had Health and Wellbeing Initiatives and Programmes in place.

- **Their Employee Assistance Programme had been established and utilised for 20 years**
- **They had created an online Wellbeing Hub**
- **There were yearly Health Screening Programmes and Healthy Living Drives**
- **They had gyms in every depot**
- **They supported social groups; from football to hillwalking**

But the focus now was to integrate Health and Wellbeing at a Corporate Strategy Level.

“At this time, we came across the Ibec KeepWell Mark and Accreditation. We decided to take part because it gives you a benchmark of all the areas and your performance within them.”

“It helps you identify where you need to put your focus and gives you information and suggestions around that.”

The Timeline

2019

Decision to bring Health and Wellbeing front and centre

2019-
2020

Gathering of information for Ibec KeepWell Accreditation

2021

Health and Wellbeing given priority, moved to one department – Environmental Health and Safety

Dedicated Health and Wellbeing Role created

Ibec KeepWell Accreditation awarded

2022

Health and Wellbeing Strategy developed and rolled out

Wellbeing champions appointed in every depot

Employee-Led Health and Wellbeing Vision and Mission agreed

2023

Re-accreditation of Ibec KeepWell Mark



Unique Challenges

We now have more than 3,000 bus drivers. Effectively that results in a workforce of predominantly remote-workers. Many of these operate shifts, during unsociable hours, and around the clock. In a big organisation, this makes communication difficult and brings up particular challenges around mental and physical health.

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Whistle Stop Tour of Key Steps



Step One Commitment at Every Level

Agreement across departments to set Health and Wellbeing as a strategic priority. Resources of time, money, and commitment given support across all levels of the business – essentially, a top-down approach.

“It was time to show the importance of Health and Wellbeing through a continuous and strategic approach.”

Step Two Strategic Thinking

Health and Wellbeing was moved into one department and a Dedicated Health and Wellbeing Executive was put in place to establish a continuous strategy.

The strategy consisted of three main drivers:

- It had to be employee-driven
- It needed to be evidence-based
- It must align with the Environmental, Social, and Governance Strategy

“The Ibec report definitely helped inform our strategy. It provided a lot of real-time information and suggested initiatives to implement.”

Step Three

Introduction of Wellbeing Champions

One of the first key steps, towards the design of a holistic wellbeing strategy, was to ensure it was employee-driven and supported. Many workers have served 40 years or more, people's needs are generational. To create a culture shift around health and wellbeing, it was imperative to engage directly with the workforce within that culture. Wellbeing Champions were appointed, in every depot, amongst drivers and mechanics. These Champions were brought together to draw-up their own Vision and Mission.

Vision:

Support employees, at every stage, in their journey and enable them to become happy, committed, and to fulfil their role to the best of their abilities.

Mission:

Provide employees with resources and access to health protection and prevention. Promote all available resources and initiatives.

“Being a Wellbeing Champion suits me. I’m a people-person. Looking after your staff is essential. Protecting people is the way forward. When people come to us with a problem, we can say ‘yes’ there’s a resource for that.”

Step Four

Evidence-Based

To understand the challenges facing their workforce across Key Wellbeing Drivers, Dublin Bus drilled into available data sources. Developing the strategy incorporated a comprehensive review of evidence-based and best practice guidance documents, such as:

- WHO guidelines on Mental Health at Work, 2022
- WHO Healthy Workplace Framework and Model, 2010
- Department of Health, Sharing the Vision, 2020
- Department of Health, Tobacco Free Ireland, 2013
- Healthy Ireland, The National Physical Activity Plan, 2016
- Healthy Ireland, A Healthy Weight for Ireland, 2016

Additionally, a health and wellbeing needs assessment and gap analysis was undertaken to provide crucial data and feedback on health and wellbeing within Dublin Bus.

- Review of internal surveys/documents
- Ibec KeepWell Mark Accreditation and Report
- Work Positive Survey
- Employee Feedback

“There is not much formalisation around Health and Wellbeing. External accreditation, from Ibec, gave us a benchmark, showed us a GAP Analysis and gave us gravitas, in terms of evidence and data.”



Step Five

Effective Communications

When most of your workforce is on the road, working 24 hours, every day of the week; ensuring strategy, programmes and initiatives are communicated effectively can be a challenge.

“Our communications have to be multi-dimensional – we use an online, internal network, posters and plasma screens, and our Wellbeing Champions. For the bigger initiatives we host Roadshows, visiting every single depot in person.”



Health and Wellbeing in Action



As an organisation, Dublin Bus understands now, more than ever, the importance of supporting the health and wellbeing of its employees.

Health and wellbeing initiatives aim to thread through as many dimensions as possible, from healthy eating, physical activity, mental health, alcohol and drugs, smoking, health and safety, through to leadership and development. Some of the leading initiatives within Dublin Bus included:

- **Establishing and training 20 Wellbeing Champions across the company**
- **Launching exercise programmes and interdepartmental competition Spring into Action**
- **Information roadshow for Men's Health Week**
- **Partnering with Mental Health Ireland during World Mental Health Month**
- **Focus groups with female representatives across the whole company**
- **Launching a 'Health and Wellbeing Strategy' to be delivered over a 3-year period from 2023 to 2025**
- **Hosting March-a-Thon in conjunction with NTA**
- **Psychosocial risk assessment created by Work Positive and HSA**
- **Smoking cessation programme for employees and their families**
- **Health screening and mental health training**

“Sometimes keeping it simple reaches a greater variety of people. Some people get really competitive but there's a common goal. It gets us going and creates lovely banter.”

The Journey Ahead

Embedding a strong Health and Wellbeing culture takes time and commitment from senior leadership, employees, and key stakeholders. Its success depends on a collective company effort.

“You definitely hear more people around the organisation talking about mental health and wellbeing.”

The vision and mission, created in collaboration with the Wellbeing Champions, alongside a continuous, aligned strategy, highlights the importance of health and wellbeing within Dublin Bus.

“Health and Wellbeing is now a strategic priority and informs business decisions. The vision is for Health and Wellbeing to be organically health promoting, from one worker to the next.”

The Value of Ibec's KeepWell Accreditation



“Ibec was always there to provide advice and support. You can see how other companies are doing it and learn from one another. You have more information sources to quickly draw from. External reassurance is key.”

Ibec's KeepWell accreditation places you and your workforce at the forefront of Ireland's collective efforts to improve workplace health and wellbeing. It gives you invaluable data to make evidence-based decisions and provides a roadmap towards a holistic, embedded wellbeing strategy. Organisations that go through the process benefit in many ways:

- **Auditing and benchmarking against an established set of standards**
- **Developing strategies and plans**
- **Improved reputation and employer brand**
- **Legal compliance**
- **National recognition**
- **A supportive network of like-minded wellbeing-focused organisations**
- **A strengthened business-case for continued investment in wellbeing**

“If I was looking for a job, I’d be looking for what the company’s giving back and providing for me. When you actively look out for people they work harder and are more productive. There’s an expectation that you, as a company, are doing positive things.”



Ibec's KeepWell™ Mark programme helps companies take a strategic approach to wellbeing for improved business performance.

We do this through our wellbeing accreditation; The KeepWell™ Mark, and via the KeepWell™ Community programme which offers training on building effective wellbeing strategies, along with clinics, webinars and networking events.

Discover your company's existing strengths with this quick and easy, online mini assessment: ibec.ie/keepwell-mini-assessment

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