

Social Outcomes

UK Concrete has been working with MPA members to produce a framework for developing social outcomes within the concrete sector. Providing social outcomes is one of the four pillars of the refreshed UK Concrete Industry Sustainable Construction Strategy Framework. The aim of the framework is to build positive social outcomes through the manufacture and use of concrete and comprises four areas of focus: Helping communities to flourish; Natural capital and the environment; Building skills through equity, diversity and inclusion and Health & Wellbeing. This position paper focusses on Health & Wellbeing and includes examples of good practice and initiatives adopted by members with a view to encouraging further widespread adoption and improvement.

What is Health & Wellbeing?

Good Health & Wellbeing is identified as one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It encompasses mental, physical, emotional and social wellbeing and is strongly linked to happiness and satisfaction. In the workplace this relates not only to employees but those directly impacted by the work carried out. Health & Wellbeing can be affected by many factors and supported by simple actions alongside more strategic initiatives.

Health & Wellbeing is part of the UK concrete industry's commitment for providing positive social outcomes. It includes:

- Supporting the Health and Wellbeing of employees, partners and communities
- A focus on vulnerable groups
- Supporting the use of concrete to create a healthy built environment

Additionally:

- As part of a local supply chain the concrete industry provides the opportunity to create positive social outcomes through working with local charities, communities and providing access to nature.
- Health & Safety is prioritised through commitment to 'Vision Zero'.
- There are numerous examples of good Health & Wellbeing practice, creating a supportive work environment.
- The UK concrete industry is committed to continued improvement and is developing a set of metrics to report progress.

MPA member Health & Wellbeing commitments

The concrete sector is a key part of a combined mineral products industry, which contributes around £22bn to the UK's GDP and directly employs 80,000 people, supporting a further 3.2m jobs. The UK Concrete social outcome framework is aligned with the MPA Charter which includes measures to help members deliver better Health & Wellbeing outcomes for employees, partners and communities, with a focus on disadvantaged groups.

Health & Wellbeing outcomes in the MPA charter include:

- Prioritising Health & Safety, by committing to 'Vision Zero' and the principle of ensuring everyone goes home safe and well every day.
- A built environment which supports the Health & Wellbeing of internal and external stakeholders.
- Supporting individuals and groups to deliver positive social outcomes which are meaningful and inclusive.
- Empowering employees to take part in volunteering opportunities for the benefit of their Health & Wellbeing.

Health & Wellbeing strategies for business

The Health & Wellbeing of employees is critical to the success of any business. The benefits of a wellbeing strategy include greater engagement, promotion of an inclusive culture and reduced absenteeism. It can help an organisation reduce staff turnover and be an employer of choice. It's about creating a supportive environment where colleagues can thrive physically, mentally, and socially.

An effective wellbeing strategy can benefit any size of organisation. Examples of activities adopted by MPA members are wide ranging and include:

- Company wide reviews of Health & Wellbeing priorities leading to the development of strategies and supporting action plan
- Health & Wellbeing strategy on executive agendas
- Health & Wellbeing action groups
- Health, Wellbeing and Safety days
- Health & Wellbeing awareness training
- Mental Health first aider or awareness training
- Men's health networks
- Free sanitary products in welfare facilities
- Volunteering days in the community
- Participation in national campaigns for Health & Wellbeing
- Review of human resource policies to include flexible working arrangements, enhanced paternity/maternity leave, menopause training/policies, bereavement support etc.
- Employee assistance programmes providing financial, legal and Health & Wellbeing support
- Employee feedback surveys
- Mentoring and reverse mentoring programmes
- Commitment to employee development through training opportunities

CASE STUDY SUMMARY

Wellbeing Strategy Group

CEMEX UK

Cemex UK has expanded its focus on Health and Safety to include Wellbeing by establishing a dedicated Wellbeing Strategy Group. It includes representation from every part of the business with the objective of providing an environment which is conducive to engaging with people's wellbeing. Employees, families and contractors are encouraged and supported to take personal responsibility for their own wellbeing by being signposted to appropriate online support services, resources and giving them the time and encouragement to participate. Topics covered have included mental Wellbeing, smoking cessation, menopause, musculoskeletal, work life balance, prostate cancer and many more.



CASE STUDY SUMMARY

'Hey Girls' initiative

CEMEX UK

Providing sanitary products for women in the workplace can make the difference between a good day at the office and a really bad one. This initiative championed equality and diversity by recognising and addressing the need to support female employees. Working with 'Hey girls' improves corporate social responsibility (CSR) and helps to reach sustainability goals. Also, orders are matched as donations to people facing period poverty.



Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of local communities and charities

The concrete used in the UK is typically produced domestically, using locally sourced materials. Concrete producers therefore have the opportunity to engage directly with stakeholders and local communities and charities to create positive local outcomes.

Examples of strategies adopted by members to support local communities include:

- Ensuring business decisions promote Health & Wellbeing outcomes.
- Collaborating with local communities to implement effective Health & Wellbeing programs, tailored to address specific community needs, fostering stronger relationships and achieving greater impact.
- Engaging stakeholders in decision-making processes to understand and address Health & Wellbeing concerns effectively, facilitating co-creation of projects that enhance wellbeing, such as supporting community-led initiatives to restore green spaces or partnering with environmental organisations for habitat restoration.
- A focus on vulnerable groups and being guided by their specific needs. Engaging local authorities or local community organisations can be an effective way of identifying relevant groups.

CASE STUDY SUMMARY

Volunteering Partnership

HEIDELBERG MATERIALS UK

Girlguiding Central Glamorgan is a charity which is run by local volunteers to support hundreds of children with additional needs and has been supported by Heidelberg Materials as part of its 2030 volunteering commitments. The charity's 5.5-acre site at Gorwelion in Porthcawl had fallen into disarray with storm damage, overhanging trees, an unsafe driveway and walls and fencing in urgent need of repair. It was unsafe for the children to attend. Throughout the summer of 2022 and 2023 the HR and South Wales operational and commercial teams provided 50+ volunteers to provide support with maintenance, labour and materials to help get the site back to a fit state. Heidelberg Materials have committed to working alongside the charity with their STEM ambassadors to support with development and opportunities with other Girl Guides across the UK.



INSIGHTS

Charitable Causes

Supporting charities can be an effective way of providing focused activity. For instance, a company emphasising mental wellbeing can actively support charities dedicated to mental health through fundraising initiatives, employee volunteering, awareness campaigns, or direct donations.

A funded partnership approach can be medium to long term, and offers several advantages, including the ability to set clear metrics and ensure improvements in community-focused Health & Wellbeing initiatives.

Local good causes are at the coalface of community action, made up almost entirely of workers or volunteers directly involved in frontline services.

Rising social consciousness is making employees and customers increasingly adept at spotting attempts at CSR box-ticking or 'purpose washing', so it's crucial that businesses are ensuring their donations are making the impacts they're intended to make. If they don't look after the local community around them and the health and prosperity of the environment in which their customers and employees reside, their business will be negatively impacted. Healthy local communities ultimately enable everything else to function successfully in society.

Corporate donations: The Power of Local (Neighbourly, 2022)

INSIGHTS

Access to nature

The creation of green spaces can enhance community and individual wellbeing at all scales of operation. Restored quarries or green spaces within smaller operations can play an important role in providing safe access to nature and facilities for recreation to deliver better Health & Wellbeing outcomes.

Greenspace, such as parks, woodland, fields and allotments as well as natural elements including green walls, roofs and

incidental vegetation, are increasingly being recognised as an important asset for supporting Health & Wellbeing.

Evidence shows that living in a greener environment can promote and protect good health, and aid in recovery from illness and help with managing poor health. People who have greater exposure to greenspace have a range of more favourable physiological outcomes. Greener environments are also associated with better mental Health & Wellbeing outcomes including reduced levels of depression, anxiety, and fatigue, and enhanced quality of life for both children and adults.

(Public Health England, 2020)

CASE STUDY SUMMARY

Bee Apiary

HEIDELBERG MATERIALS UK

Bees are vital to biodiversity but their numbers have been declining in recent years. At the Ketton Cement plant a new home for 30,000 bees has been created. Three beehives were donated by an employee and with the support of the site manager a 'safe' space away from the main offices was identified, where the bees could be kept and not disturbed. With the support of 12 volunteers from the Cement and Packed Product teams, bushes and trees were cut back and recycled aggregate material was used to make a pathway to provide human access to the beehives.

Heidelberg Materials are trialling the bees at Ketton with a view to introducing them at other sites. The honey harvested from the hives will be sold locally with the money raised being donated to local charities and they are hoping to offer site tours to local children.



Metrics and data collection

For the concrete sector to continue to develop and improve the Health & Wellbeing of its employees, partners, and communities, a defined and consistent approach to collecting data is required. The MPA and its members are developing an agreed set of metrics that can be evolved over the coming years to demonstrate sector performance.

Metrics already being used across the industry include:

- Health, Wellbeing & Safety programmes, campaigns, and activities
- Health & Wellbeing training e.g. mental health first aider or awareness training, diversity and inclusion training etc.
- Employee assistance programmes
- Community engagement through employee volunteering and supporting charitable causes

Concrete's contribution to a healthy built environment

The potential of development to support Health & Wellbeing is measured in building accreditations and standards, such as the WELL standard and BREEAM. It is encouraged through the planning system, with minimum standards set by building regulation. While the selection of building materials is just one part of a broader spectrum of considerations, the use of concrete and concrete products can contribute positively and meaningfully to the Health & Wellbeing of building occupants and communities.

Concrete's inherent properties can be used to provide thermal comfort, sound insulation, fire safety, and support good indoor air quality. It can also be used to effectively

reduce the impacts of floods, heat waves and wildfires, embedding passive climate change resilience within our built environment through simple design choices.

For further guidance on these topics refer to The Concrete Centre's Health & Wellbeing compass web page. (concretecentre.com)