Workplace wellbeing has become an important public health priority, due to working days lost and the economic cost of ill-health. Evidence for effective workplace interventions, however, remains inconsistent. Plymouth City Council (Public Health) prioritised workplace wellbeing as the inaugural focus for their ten-year inequalities programme ‘Thrive Plymouth’ (Nnoaham, 2014).

Four cases were analysed: two large businesses and two third sector organisations. All had broad views of workplace wellbeing, including physical and mental health constructs. Reasoning for, and experience of wellbeing, varied between them and their employees. Barriers to engagement with campaigns (e.g. Thrive Plymouth) were identified as a balance between employer responsibility and employee agency, exacerbated by cultural requirements of an ageing workforce. Further themes affecting employees wellbeing in and outside of work, included; the nature of work, emotional labour, shift patterns and job (in)security.

This study shows that wellbeing is important to employers and ‘Thrive Plymouth’ was affirmed as a potential catalyst for engagement in lifestyle change. Barriers were highlighted by employees, however, that require further investigation. Recommendations are made for future intervention design and evaluation to be cognisant of workplace wellbeing complexities and external socio-cultural realities.

**Table 1. Methods employed for workplace wellbeing evaluation**

| Multiple case study approach consisting of: | • Documentary analysis (wellbeing documents)  
• 6 employee focus groups (n=41)  
• HR Manager interviews (n=4) |
| Standardised questions were asked across cases, which considered: | i. general wellbeing (in and outside work)  
ii. awareness of wellbeing campaigns  
iii. ‘Thrive Plymouth’ knowledge (deliberately delayed to eliminate bias). |

Cases were analysed individually, using inductive content analysis, then cross-case analyses determined similarities and differences. Two researchers cross-checked thematic coding, for transparency.

**RESULTS**

Four cases were analysed: two large businesses and two third sector organisations. All had broad views of workplace wellbeing, including physical and mental health constructs. Reasoning for, and experience of wellbeing, varied between them and their employees. Barriers to engagement with campaigns (e.g. Thrive Plymouth) were identified as a balance between employer responsibility and employee agency, exacerbated by cultural requirements of an ageing workforce. Further themes affecting employees wellbeing in and outside of work, included; the nature of work, emotional labour, shift patterns and job (in)security.

**CONCLUSIONS**

This study shows that wellbeing is important to employers and ‘Thrive Plymouth’ was affirmed as a potential catalyst for engagement in lifestyle change. Barriers were highlighted by employees, however, that require further investigation. Recommendations are made for future intervention design and evaluation to be cognisant of workplace wellbeing complexities and external socio-cultural realities.

**References:**