

Foreword by the Kingfishers and Navrosa Ladha

This booklet was created by a cross-departmental group called the Kingfishers in June 2017, as part of the Civil Service Local Academy. Our team consisted of representatives from 8 different Government departments (HMRC, HMPPS, NCA, FSA, Home Office, CPS, DfT, and DWP). Tasked with creating a product we felt would contribute in making a Brilliant Civil Service, and after hours spent locked in a room discussing a variety of ideas, it became apparent to us that the majority of the group were not taking their lunch breaks at work. We wanted to change this culture, and started to research the negative impact that not taking lunch breaks can have, on both the individual and the organisation. We presented our idea to our fellow delegates as well as senior Civil Service leaders, one of whom became our mentor throughout the project. Over the year long project we surveyed a number of people from different departments, challenging them to regularly take their lunch, sending out weekly newsletters with information regarding the benefits, along with recipe ideas and activities they could partake in over their lunch break. We even included a diary so they could document their journey. After 3 months, we sent a follow up survey to these volunteers and found for some this small change had made a difference to their own mental and physical wellbeing, as well as improved energy levels at work. Once we had the results of this second survey, we began working on one, easy to read document that could help others across the Civil Service make this change to better themselves and the organisation they worked for.

We don't intend for this booklet to be read cover to cover, but for everyone who reads it to take away something that interests or applies to them, and make this small change to help themselves and those they work with. This can also be used as a live document and as such, not only changed as and when required, but could be tailored to individual agencies and/or departments.

The Kingfishers Team

I had the pleasure of being a 'dragon' at CS Local Academy (ESEL) in June 2017 to hear the fantastic pitches of all the teams. I was immediately drawn to the Learn to Lunch pitch because I was terrible at taking my lunch break - I needed to change my ways! Although I encouraged my team to take lunch breaks, I knew that I was still setting a bad example by taking lunch at my desk while working. So, I pitched to my fellow dragons about why I wanted to support the brilliant Kingfishers in their mission to get us all to take our lunch breaks. Luckily, I got to be their mentor.

The team worked incredibly hard - doing research, carrying out surveys and getting creative to find the best tool to make all us civil servants take our lunch breaks. It wasn't easy given that the team were in different departments, locations and had different IT systems to contend with. But, they didn't give up because this was so important to them.

The key thing of course is that proper lunch breaks away from our desks are good for our well-being. They make us more productive, not less productive. Neurones in our brains get tired and having lunch at your desk isn't a good way to replenish your cognitive stock.

So if you're not good at taking a lunch break then dip into this booklet to get some great tips about how you can incorporate lunch breaks into your working life. And, if you're a manager, please encourage your teams to have a look to get some ideas on how they can take time out for a proper lunch break.

And what about me? Have I changed my ways? Am I practising what I preach? Well, I'm really trying. I have time blocked out in my diary for lunch - I don't always succeed (especially when people put lunch time meetings into my calendar) but the days when I do I'm a different person!

Navrosa Ladha
Deputy Director
Government Legal Department

Introduction

You have all heard of the saying “breakfast is the most important meal of the day?”

Well, there is no denying the fact that breakfast gives you the best start to the day, but that is no reason to skip lunch.

Lunch and a lunch break is the meal that will keep you firing on all cylinders into the afternoon, it will help eliminate that 3pm slump and it will help keep you healthier and fitter. That can only be a good thing, Right?

Read on to see if you can rise to the challenge of taking a meaningful lunch break every day, to help your personal wellbeing, which in turn will help the Civil Service become a Brilliant Place to Work.

This booklet is designed to be read on an ad-hoc basis and not to be read from cover to cover. Just pick the headings and articles that interest you. Maybe that will inspire you to read more or even do further research to help improve your own health and wellbeing.

A number of colleagues who participated in the L2L Kingfisher survey from the same team were all training for a 10k run in London. These same individuals were working throughout their lunch break... once these colleagues joined the survey group, they decided to form a walking club to support their preparation for the 10k run. They used the Active 10 app developed by Public Health England, and were able to engage in a 20 minute walk and still have time to eat lunch. They all reported that this boosted their productivity and concentration each day. They also reported experiencing the physical benefits.

What is a Lunch Break?



It's a simple question, but unfortunately the answer isn't that straightforward!

As a bare minimum, workers are usually entitled to an uninterrupted 20 minute break during their working day, if they work more than 6 hours a day. Part time workers are entitled to breaks too.

But that's where the similarities end. The duration of your break is dependent on your department's specific policy - and it's your responsibility to know it! Just follow the 3 steps below:

1

FIND OUT

Consult the employee handbook, usually found on the department's intranet. Or ask your line manager.

2

MAKE TIME

Allocate time in your schedule for an uninterrupted break, no matter how busy, and stick to it!

3

LEARN TO LUNCH!

Now that you have some me time, find out just how fun and varied your break can be!



A huge 41% of those surveyed only take their entitled break once a week or less.



52% of those questioned weren't encouraged or supported by their management to take their lunch breaks!



Why take a lunch break? See our other factsheets for more ideas and facts!

How Much Have We Lost ?

Workers lost out on more than £33,000 in “unpaid wages” over a lifetime by not taking time off for lunch, a new study reveals.

More than half (56 %) of workers “almost never” take their full lunch break, two out of three saying they have “too much work to do”

A poll of 7,000 workers by website TOTALJOBS found the average worker takes just 27 minutes off for lunch. With the average break meant to last 40 minutes, that is a loss of 1 hour and 5 minutes each week, adding up to more than 6 working days a year. Over a working life of 47 years, that’s nearly 300 days worked for free costing an average of £33,264.

One in four workers told the poll they skipped lunch completely, between 2



and 4 times per week, while 30% said they never took a break for lunch and ate at their desk.

A total of 57% of those aged 16-24 took a proper break compared with 38% of those aged 55-64.

The research highlights the staggering amount of unpaid lunchtime work the average worker will carry out during the course of their career. It is alarming to see how everyday the culture of working through lunch has become in UK.

Two thirds of British workers don’t always manage to take even 20 minutes for lunch according to a new Bupa survey.



Surveys

British workers are sacrificing productivity and job satisfaction by skipping lunch, majority of people are failing to take a break throughout the day.

Two thirds of employees said they are not always able to stop work to eat lunch for 20 minutes, the minimum legal requirement for people working six or more hours, while 28% don’t take a minute to themselves at all during the workday. Just 29% of people manage to take a full hour for lunch every day, according to a Bupa survey of 2,000 full-

time workers, but even those who do squeeze in a break find themselves drawn back to office tasks.

About a third of employees eat at their desk, while four in 10 reply to emails or pick up their work phone while taking a break.

Although 43% of employees believe they have too much work to take a rest, almost half of respondents said they rarely leave the office during their lunch break or use the time to do something relaxing or rejuvenating even though they admit missing the midday meal

detracts from their work later in the afternoon.

Some 30% of workers said skipping lunch makes them physically ill in the afternoon, 40pc said it dampens their productivity and 52% claimed it puts them in a bad mood.

Benefits of Taking Lunch

Stepping away from the office is a great way to clear the mind and could use that time to do something useful in their personal business.

Lunch breaks is a real downtime, properly calendared, and where no workplace activity happens, is essential for re-charging the creative juices and energies of the mind, and enabling the times when you have to be a workhorse.

Eating to keep energy up is essential . It found that almost half (47%) never leave the office for lunch, and 49% rarely take more than 30 minutes, while 8% never take a break for lunch.

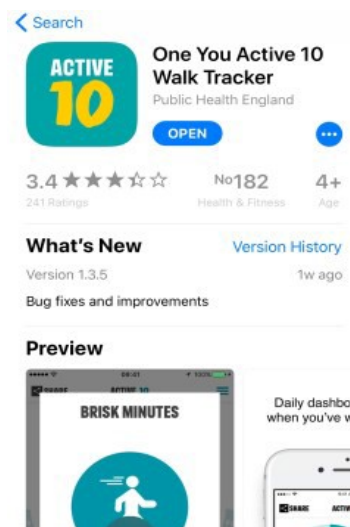


Apps

There are many apps in the market and Active 10 is one of them which tracks your walking and shows you when to increase your pace to benefit your health.

The app is designed to quickly and simply help you do more brisk walking in bursts of ten minutes, known as ACTIVE 10'S. It tracks all your walking and rewards your progress.

Active 10's are simple to fit into your day, from walking the dog to a lunchtime walk to escaping from zombies in a post apocalyptic landscape.



KEY FEATURES

- Breaks your target down into manageable chunks of 10 minutes of brisk walking.
- Shows you when you've walked at the right speed.
- Gives you goals to work towards.
- Rewards your progress

Brisk Walking Benefits



- **Lower Blood Pressure!**
- **Lower Body Fat Levels!**
- **Lower Risk Of Heart Attacks!**
- **Improved Mood!**
- **Protection From Arthritis!**
- **Weight Loss!**

You don't have to join a gym or get a personal trainer, just 10 minutes of brisk walking every day can get your heart pumping and make you feel more energetic, as well as lowering the risks like heart disease or type 2 diabetes. It is also a great way to clear your head before the afternoon grind begins.

Presenteeism

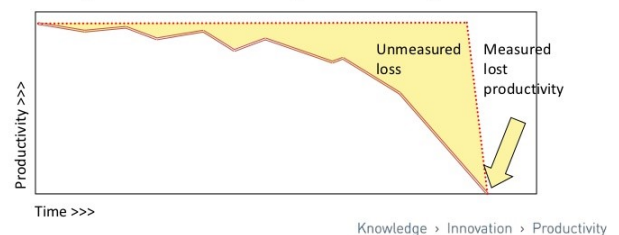
Presenteeism is when an employee is physically at work but is not being productive. While Absenteeism can be obvious and easier to measure, presenteeism is subtle and difficult to pin point. It assumes that unless people are at work and are visible they cannot be doing their job or showing commitment

Research has shown that among FTSE 100 companies, those who prioritise employee engagement and wellbeing outperform the rest of the FTSE 100 by 10%. At these companies, fewer days are lost to sickness absence and there is less 'presenteeism'

Presenteeism



- Red line – perceived productivity before absence
- Purple line – actual productivity



DAYS LOST PER EMPLOYEE PER YEAR:

4

Days lost
to absenteeism

57.5

Days lost
to presenteeism



Almost three
working months

Presenteeism, and working through lunch, values long hours as a sign of dedication and hard work, instead of valuing creativity.

Maintaining a decent work-life balance is important. By leaving on time, taking a lunch break, and proving that your work will be better as a result.

Research has shown, we aren't designed to work constantly without any breaks. Not because we need 30 minutes to consume food, but because we can't function without taking a break mid-work. The human brain can't focus for long periods of time.

Not only does this affect productivity levels, but it can have far wider implications on business performance.

Taking a proper break helps employees to stay alert, focused, and performing at their peak

When you're overworked and have spent your lunch break half working and half eating, you're less likely to notice mistakes, more likely to struggle to come up with ideas. It wrecks your productivity and your mental health.

You'll return from a proper break feeling refreshed, less stressed, and full of new ideas – because you've actually given your brain some time to relax and come back to work refreshed.

Absenteeism

An estimated 15 million working days were lost because of stress, anxiety and depression; a further 0.8 million days were lost to serious mental health problems; mental health-related issues accounted for 8% of all cases of sickness absence and 11% of total working days lost due to illness or injury.

To combat presenteeism is to focus less on the number of days employees are absent and instead turn your attention to the overall wellbeing of your employees

The wellbeing of workers is fundamental to the long-term success of organisations. Happy, healthy and empowered workers are more likely to perform better at their jobs, take fewer sick days, stay with an organisation longer, give better customer service and, ultimately, boost a company's productivity.

Costs of Lost Productivity

Indirect costs and effects of absenteeism include:

- Poor quality of goods/services resulting from overtime fatigue or understaffing
- Reduced productivity
- Excess manager time (dealing with discipline and finding suitable employee replacements)
- Safety issues (inadequately trained employees filling in for others, rushing to catch up after arriving as a replacement, etc)
- Poor morale among employees who have to "fill in" or do extra work to cover absent coworkers

How an employer can reduce absenteeism and presenteeism and Steps to help improve wellbeing in the workplace by promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Keep fit,

eat a healthy diet,

take lunch breaks,

join social events at work.

TOTAL COST - USA, AUSTRALIA AND UK



ABSENTEEISM
USD \$150 BILLION



PRESENTEEISM
USD \$1,500 BILLION

In an effort to reduce absenteeism, some companies offer incentives for going to work.

The logic with this approach is that healthier, happier employees will be more able and motivated to go to work each day, resulting in increased productivity and higher morale for the individual workers as well as the entire team. They can have a net positive effect on a company's bottom line - and that's good for business.

Top Tips for Taking Your Lunch

- Block out 30 minutes everyday on your diary for your lunch break
- Plan to do non-work related activities on your break
- If the weather is nice why not take your lunch outside and enjoy the sunshine!
- Walk away from your desk and find a quiet/comfortable place to have lunch
- Don't eat at your desk, people are more likely to ask you questions or to do something when you are still at your desk
- If you are on your lunch break and someone wants something from you, explain that you're on your break and to see you when you return to your desk
- Look at all the different products we have on offer for you to take a meaningful lunch and try them to see which works best for you.
- Encourage your colleagues, staff, and managers to join you in taking your full entitled lunch break.

‘Fit’ Lunches

Countless studies report the physical and mental benefits of taking an active lunch break during the working day. Of the many benefits reported, research shows that taking breaks actually boosts a workers productivity. Moreover, long-term health and wellbeing benefits have been recorded for those who take regular active lunch breaks. There are a variety of activities you could take part in, and these don't have to be too time-consuming, and don't have to include running a marathon. We strongly encourage you to take your entitled break, and a 'fit lunch' can be a rewarding way to do this. Below is a list of ideas/activities that you could incorporate into your meaningful lunch break:

- **Active 10 (Highlight):**

Did you know that walking briskly for just 10 continuous minutes counts as exercise? It's easier than you think to fit into your day. Each 10 minute burst of exercise is known as an "Active 10". Brisk walking is simply walking faster than usual, at a pace that gets your heart pumping. Public Health England started this initiative, and to support this activity, they created the popular Active 10 app which shows you how much brisk walking you're doing and how you can do more. Public Health England state that a 10 minute brisk walk can boost your energy, clear your head and lift your mood. It can also help people with lower back pain and those at risk of high blood pressure. It's also good for long-term health, reducing your risk of serious illnesses like heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Perhaps you and few colleagues could ensure that you complete a 10 minute brisk walk every day, and track your progress using the app?



- **Walking/Running/Cycling Clubs:**



Leading on from the active 10 activity above, perhaps you could create a walking club in your office. Many people enjoy taking social lunches, but also want to undertake physical activity. A walking club is a great way to bring people together in the shared goal of raising fitness levels. For those who wish to take on a higher intensity activity, perhaps you could form a running or cycling club with like-minded colleagues.

- **Exercise classes/gym:**

If you're fortunate enough to have a gym, or studio space, at your workplace perhaps you could attend an exercise class.

According to a recent study, 50% of UK workers had access to a gym close to their office, but only 8% regularly take advantage of it. Increasingly, gyms are advertising shorter classes especially designed for people's lunch breaks. An active class will boost your energy for the afternoon ahead, while a yoga class could relieve any tension that has built up over the morning.



- **Making Use of the Civil Service Sports Council (CSSC)**




Within the civil service, the CSSC positively promotes individual health and wellbeing and helps make that goal a reality for its members. The CSSC organise a huge range of events for all abilities at local, regional, national and even international level. We recommend that you have

a look at the CSSC website and find out whether there are any events nearby that you can take part in. You may find sports activities that you'd like to take part in (e.g., 5 a side football or netball). These activities may also be run by your local unit.

- **The importance of a balanced diet**

When taking an active lunch, it's important to allow yourself some time to eat healthily. What we eat and drink affects not just our health but our work performance too. If we don't eat regular well-balanced meals or drink enough water, we may get headaches, feel sluggish, or have difficulty concentrating. Whether you buy your lunch from a sandwich shop, café, supermarket or work canteen, there are usually plenty of healthy lunch options available. Bringing your own lunch is also a good idea – you know exactly what's in your lunchbox and it'll save money. For healthy eating ideas, check out the healthy eating section of the NHS website.



My colleague joined a new team and struggled to integrate and socialise with her new colleagues due to the existing close relationships. After a few weeks, she suggested a 'team lunch' out of the office once a month to ensure the team had a 30 minute break together. She found that this represented an opportunity to get to know her colleagues better. This activity also helped to create a culture within the team of taking lunch breaks. The improved team relationships meant that she was able to more confidently approach colleagues with questions, and she felt her performance had improved.

Come Lunch With Me

It's easy to get bored bringing the same lunches to work every day. You look around and see all the different things others in your work place have brought in and you think "I wish I had that instead!"

Why not make it happen! All you have to do is start a weekly group of co-workers that nominate one person each week to provide their favourite lunch for the rest of the group. You each have a week where you create your favourite lunch for your colleagues, you can sit together and enjoy the food and good company, you can swap recipes and ideas to improve on the dish. This will allow you the opportunity to try many new things that you might not have made for yourself.

Exciting Recipes

Salad

It can be seen as one of the most boring lunches, plain and unsatisfying, however it doesn't need to be just lettuce and tomato, with a few tweaks I've found many new ways to make my salads satisfying and tasty!

One of my favourites at the moment has all the following ingredients:

- Lettuce
- Spring onions
- Sweetcorn
- Olives – pitted
- Feta cheese
- Avocado
- Bell peppers

I try to vary it but this is a great foundation for a salad, I also add other things to it, a convenient and tasty addition is the John West tuna fusion pots, (personally I like the Jalapeno one) or if I've had the time to make steak or turkey breast the night before I will add them. You'll find a lot of the time all

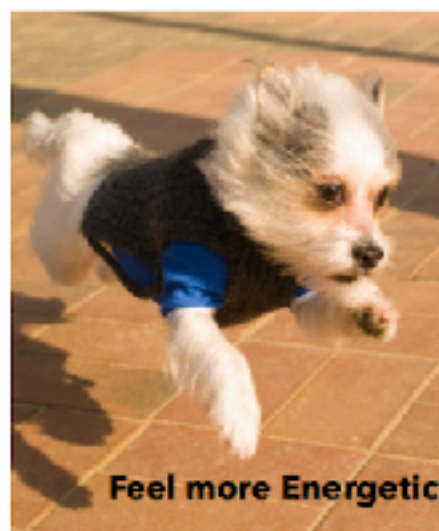
these different flavours in one bowl you won't want to add any Salad dressing.

If you are after something a little warmer why not make your own soup to take in, you can bulk cook so that you are easily able to portion it out for the week. There are plenty of recipes online but if you want to try something different I would recommend the below Red Thai soup, it has a little kick to it but is tasty and will warm you in the winter.

www.olivemagazine.com/recipes/vegetarian/red-thai-curry-noodle-soup

For those who would like a more substantial lunch to keep them going you can try a number of different dishes, baked potatoes with cottage cheese (onion and chive from Sainsbury's is great) or a nice rice dish like Jambalaya, having only recently tried this it has become a firm favourite to cook on a Sunday evening and portion out for the week. Most supermarkets will stock the Jambalaya paste or seasoning packets which provide clear instructions on how to cook it, however I personally replace the Chicken for Turkey breast as it has less fat on it.

For further recipe ideas why not visit the BBC good food website that will provide you with lots of recipes to suit everyone's tastes.



Feel more Energetic



Time for Yourself

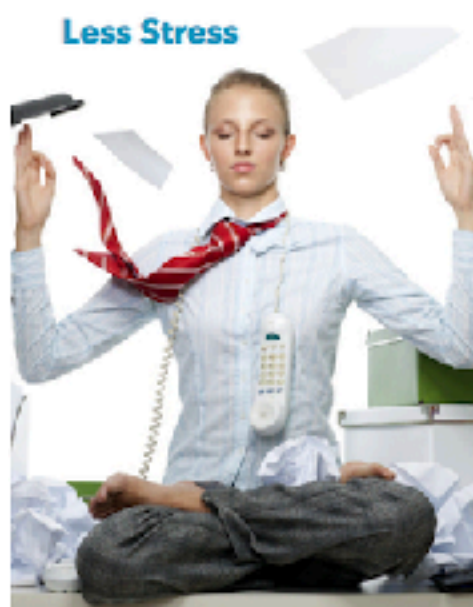


Time to Socialise



Take up a Hobby

Benefits of Lunch Breaks



Less Stress

Time is precious. So why would you want to take an uninterrupted lunch break?



Take up Exercise



Life Admin Time

Peaceful Lunches

QUIET SPACES

Quiet Area

Most Government Offices have a Break Out area. Try and see if the management would dedicate an area in a building and / or specific time for being quiet.

Outside Area

If you have time at lunch go for a walk, there are many Green Spaces in London, check out this website

<https://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/londons-hidden-gardens-and-green-spaces>. Obviously if you work somewhere else, just google your local area.

People Watching

Step outside the office door and onto the street, put your headphones in playing some soothing music, find a comfortable spot and watch the people go by and wonder what they do, where are they going, where are they coming from?

Canteen

Consider just sitting in the canteen, but outside of core lunch hours.

Relaxation

Exercise

Take a class in Yoga / Pilates, for the less mobile there are classes on sitting down versions that can be tailored to differing levels of mobility.

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/yoga.aspx>

Meditation

Now obviously we can't mention Yoga or Pilates without mentioning meditation and mindfulness! This website will introduce to 5 of the best free apps for meditation and mindfulness <https://www.mindful.org/free-mindfulness-apps-worthy-of-your-attention/>

Walking

Go back to the park or your favourite people watching spot and exchange roles, let people see you striding purposefully and let them wonder who you are, where you are going etc.

Why not create a walking club? Easier when there are more than one of you to keep the momentum and enthusiasm going.

Bad Weather Lunches

Reading

Take a book to work (at a push an Ebook or a Kindle) a real-life page turning book, when you have read it you could start a book recycling area, put a book in, pay 50p take a book out, read & repeat. All money raised could go to an office agreed charity.

Start a book club, read a book, meet once a month, discuss the merits of the book, an easy way to start a book club

<https://www.realsimple.com/work-life/start-book-club-checklist>

Start a cross department network to collect and distribute newsletters from each department.

Download a news app on your phone and take the time to keep up to date with current affairs.

Puzzles

Dee's Word Searches

Top of my list for lunchtime puzzles is Dee's Word Searches! (time to make a fortune Dee, make some up, put them in a book and sell them to the Civil Service Wellbeing Champion to distribute) Obviously you could cheat and go to a shop and buy them.

Sudoku's & Crosswords

The mind-bending number and word puzzles.

Brain teaser Apps

Just search your devices app store.

Plan a Holiday

Exotic Foreign Trip

Plan your next exotic foreign trip, read up on trip advisor, prepare to see the world. Then when you have detailed the trip to the last detail, GO! And when you get back do a talk to your colleagues, show pictures, enthuse about the sights, tell them how nice the staff were, in effect, inspire your colleagues to go and see the world.

Plan a weekend Trip

Use Travelodge (or if you are a member of HASSRA, Hilton Hotels) for cheap UK weekend breaks. Go on the Travelodge website, pick a hotel and then read about that hotel on the website and it tells you what attractions are nearby, there are usually loads of things to do within a 5 -10 mile radius.

<https://www.travelodge.co.uk/>

Why not set up a lunch time club?

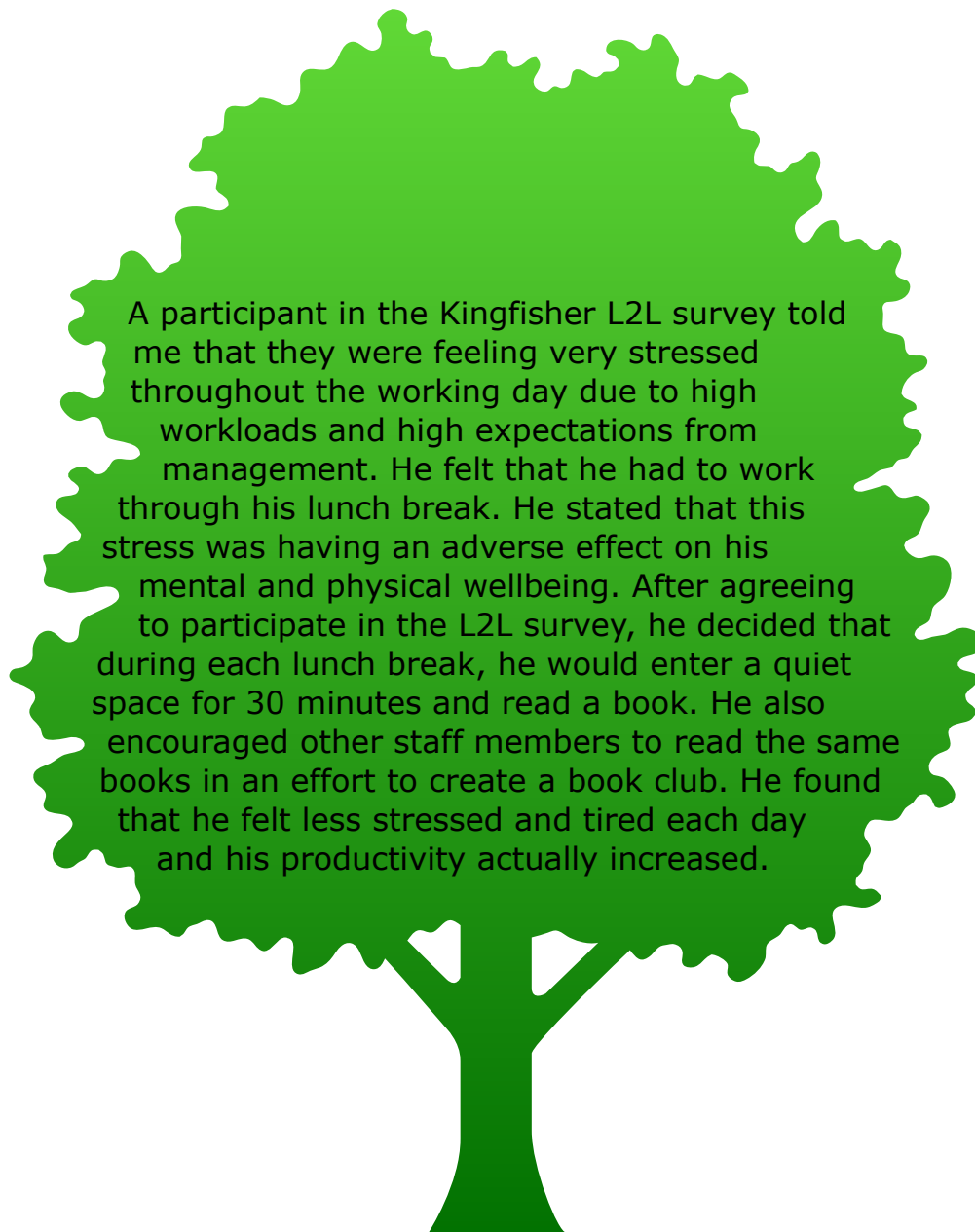
Staff clubs can operate on an individual basis.

Some activities are not appropriate and are prohibited on official premises:

- Gambling and other speculation – but not including lottery syndicates, sweepstakes etc which would not normally be organised as a staff club.
- Trading on official premises, including events like book clubs.
- Any activity which appears incompatible with the aims and objectives or which may result in adverse criticism of your area of the Civil Service.

The planning and organising of events and the events themselves should not normally take place in official hours nor use official resources and equipment.

Clubs must be conducted responsibly and with integrity and not bring the Civil Service into disrepute or breach the Civil Service code of conduct.



With the official part clear the world is your oyster

There are many suggestions for different clubs it just needs one leader or a group of people to get together who are like minded and away you go.

As an example in our office we have a lady who has set up a crafting class once a week. We meet every Wednesday lunch time for an hour and so far have made paper beads, air drying clay Christmas decorations, felt making, paper flowers and so on. I even had a go at leading a painting class every one made very nice landscape watercolour paintings.

Some suggestions: a reading club, swop books, walking club, lunch out the office, chess club, these can happen weekly, monthly etc you decide.

Wellbeing and Lunch Activities

1. Hold “read at work” book clubs: Staff volunteer to read and discuss a particular book in a work book club and schedule to meet weekly to discuss a chapter or two. Staff take turns leading the discussion about the chapter. A second staff leads the discussion about the implications of what they are reading.

2. Challenges for charity or volunteer for charity as a group: Whether running for charity, collecting food for people without food, or a one-off visit to someone in hospital or joining a befriending scheme for an hour a week can put work stresses into perspective. Proceeds from the event are donated to the charities. Contact your local charity or hospital or phone CSV for nationwide volunteering opportunities or www.csv.org.uk

Save a life: Become a blood donor and help save someone's life in an emergency and provides a vital service for the NHS. To find your nearest drop-in session, go to the National Blood Service website at www.blood.co.uk or tel: 0845 7711 711.

Learns for employees. An outside speaker or a staff with a hobby, interest, or particular knowledge or skill meets with a group of staff to share information and experience.

Staff bring their own lunches and the speakers are encouraged to make their sessions interactive to encourage team building.

3. Provide group mentoring: One-on-one mentoring is important, staff learn new skills and approaches while furthering their relationships with co-workers.

A second type of group mentoring involves using a staff who has a particular skill set that other staff member want to learn to teach them. The staff member can mentor groups of employees to gain the skill or knowledge with the same impact on team building.

Learn something new: The National Gallery host themed lunchtime talks. University and Colleges across the UK offer similar programmes.

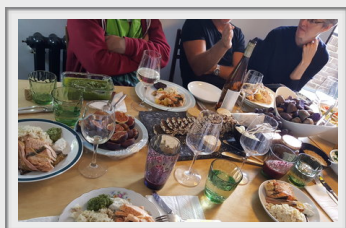
4. Fun classes and events on-site.

Examples of cheese making, beer making, cooking classes of all kinds.

Across the Civil Service

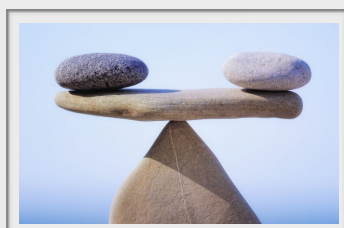
What can you do during your entitled break? Here are some initiatives across the Civil Service:

Meetups



The Cabinet Office holds regular meet ups during lunch, across different teams.

Wellbeing Sessions



Mindfulness workshops are hosted by the Department for Transport for its staff.

Sports Events

HMRC organise casual sports events for staff to let off some steam!



A Brilliant Civil Service

Most Civil Service departments have health and wellbeing representatives. Visit your department's intranet to find out their contact details, and learn what they have to offer!



In the past year, the Civil Service has held their second Physical Activity Week, encouraging people to make small changes to their lifestyle and taking part in fun activities with friends and family, making a huge difference to their physical and mental health. Other events include walking challenges and awareness workshops. Finally, there is a wealth of information on the CS Learning website.

Wendy Crayton Interview (18/05/18)

Mik Chevis) Ladies and Gentlemen, this lady has had a lifelong career in the Civil Service, starting in 1980 as an admin assistant for the Department of Health and Social Security, working her way up to SEO grade, looking after hundreds if not thousands of staff along the way.

Currently she an Area Manager for the Food Standards Agency, working in the East of England and is the Staff Engagement Lead for that area too. Staff Wellbeing is of high importance to this lady and it gives me the utmost pleasure in welcoming Wendy Crayton to the Lunch Box!

Good morning Wendy and before we start may I take this opportunity to thank you for agreeing and taking the time out for this interview.

W) Thank you and It's my pleasure

M) What was it that made you want to be involved with this project, Learn to Lunch?

W) The main reason is I wanted to support the Civil Service Academy and my staff involved in the academy and the work they are doing on their project. The other reason was to have better lunch breaks.

M) So true, this really is an area we could all learn to improve in.

M) Was the project explained clearly to you? Could you briefly describe the project to the audience?

W) Yes, it was, The project, although simple, had very clear objectives. I understood it was to have an initial trial phase that would require myself and other volunteers to sign up for 3 months to actively take a lunch break every day.

Throughout the trial period we would be supported with newsletters, lunch diaries, and tutorials on the benefits of taking a meaningful lunch break. The word meaningful was emphasised on many occasions.

M) That's great, talking about before taking part in the project, would it be fair to say your lunch habits were a bit hit and miss?

W) Yes, ever since joining the FSA my role requires me to work from home, attend meetings and a lot of travelling, so it is very easy to get engrossed in my work and forget to take my lunch break

M) Ha ha! I think we can all relate to that!

Would you please, describe briefly an average lunch before the project?

W) My lunch breaks were either non-existent or eating and drinking on the hoof, grabbing the odd bite between meetings or a quick snack in a Service Station.

M) hmmm not good for the taste buds or your digestion.

M) I see, so did the project change your outlook on taking a meaningful lunch break? And do you think you would have changed without the project?

W) Oh yes it has had a positive effect and changed my outlook. It has made me much more aware of the benefits of taking a lunch break and to be honest I really don't think I would have changed my lunch break habits without this project.

M) That is a very honest answer!

In what way have your lunch breaks changed? Are they more regular? More active?

W) I am now very conscious of taking a break during the day and with the trial I have found by taking a break my productivity in the afternoon increases and instead of flagging at about 3pm I can push on until 5pm with no problems.

I have also downloaded an App, Active 10, from Public Health England which is a simple tracking app and rewards you when you achieve certain activity goals. This is great when meeting with friends or walking to meetings etc.

M) Ok, we are nearing the end, only a couple of more questions,

What do you think staff and managers could do differently to encourage meaningful lunch breaks?

W) Managers don't need to just raise awareness for staff, they also need to have personal awareness of taking a break for their own wellbeing. This is an initiative from which everyone would benefit. By getting away from the desk

for 30 mins it is possible to clear the head, gather thoughts, recharge the batteries and build resilience.

By demonstrating they take a lunch break, managers are leading by example and making staff aware of their entitlement and wellbeing benefits. This will reduce absenteeism by everyone feeling better, it will reduce presenteeism by more productive afternoons, and it will highlight to staff that personal wellbeing is of paramount importance to staff, leading to an increase in engagement with staff

M) Can you see benefits for staff if this project was rolled out across the Civil Service?

W) Yes, for all of the reasons I have just talked about.

M) Thank you, Wendy, you've been an amazing advocate for this project and I am sure you will help inspire others to take their full Civil Service lunch break.

Ladies and Gentlemen.....Wendy Crayton.



Break diary

Below is a template for recording your lunch breaks during work, to help keep track of your progress.

Week 1 w/c 03/06/19

Day	Time	Activity
Monday	30 min	Walk in the park
Tuesday	20 min	Learn a few phrases on a language app
Wednesday	30 min	Break with colleagues
Thursday	20 min	Reading
Friday	30 min	Plan for the weekend

Week 2 w/c 10/06/19

Day	Time	Activity
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

Week 3 w/c 17/06/19

Day	Time	Activity
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		



**GONE TO
LUNCH**