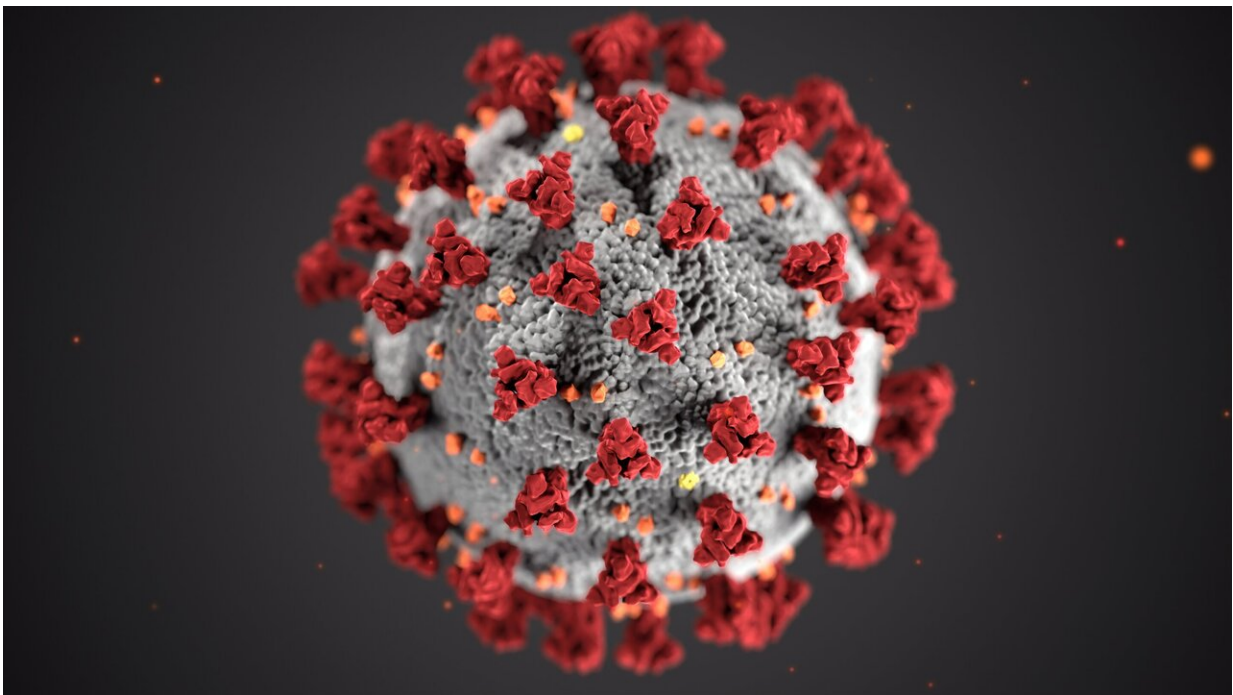


A new resource has been launched to help employers and frontline workers as they recover from the impacts of COVID-19

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A new resource has been launched to help employers and frontline workers as they recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

The upheaval from the pandemic has threatened the security of

businesses and employment, and placed new pressures on managers and employees, as well as exacerbating old inequalities—factors which impact on both the wellbeing and performance of workers at all levels.

In response, the University of East Anglia (UEA) and Norwich Good Economy Commission—a collaboration between Norwich City Council, UEA and other organizations in the [local economy](#)—launched 'The Good Jobs Project' to find ways to support managers and employees embed good experiences of work into the way they build back after the crisis.

The project brings together academic findings on what supports wellbeing and performance with first-hand accounts of the challenges and successes facing organizations and their staff.

In particular, it focusses on the issues for workers in areas such as care, hospitality and retail, which have been badly hit by the pandemic and face a recruitment and retention crisis.

The results feed into a new [resource](#) to help managers and employees influence their own and others' job quality for the better. It includes an infographic, handbook and video on '4 Boosts for Frontline Workers', all launched today by UEA's research partners at the [PrOPEL Hub](#)—a national initiative to help boost productivity, and wellbeing, through supporting the growth of better workplaces in the UK.

The materials show how paying attention to [job quality](#) can impact on wellbeing, [job satisfaction](#), attracting and keeping staff, reducing absence, improving performance and encouraging innovation—that working to boost the quality of frontline work can be a "win-win".

The '4 Boosts' are:

- Give frontline workers the time, support and flexibility they need to be able to connect with customers and feel pride in their work;
- Get to know workers and show care for their needs and goals, e.g. around childcare, working hours or learning;
- Ensure workers feel safe and are trained and supported to deal with difficult situations;
- Involve workers in discussing decisions that could impact their lives, ensuring managers are open and approachable.

Dr. Helen Fitzhugh led the team of researchers from UEA's Norwich Business School specializing in workplace wellbeing and productivity. She said: "Working in sectors like retail, hospitality and care has always had its tough moments, but the pandemic has made this even harder.

"Our work at the Good Jobs Project highlights practical ways that employers and line managers can improve the employee experience of work. During the current recruitment and retention crisis in frontline work, employers can really make themselves stand out as attractive prospects in the job market by paying attention to worker needs and goals.

"Fortunately, we know from research that taking action to improve employee wellbeing can be a win-win as it has also been linked to better customer service, performance and [worker](#) engagement."

Pre-COVID research suggests that jobs in areas such as care, hospitality and retail are often more precarious, more likely to involve variable management practices and more subject to intensification and swift dismissal. Therefore the project aimed to make a difference to groups who were already facing tougher working conditions.

The research involved interviews with representatives of local infrastructure organizations in Norwich, such as the local authority, local

enterprise partnership and chamber of commerce, as well as employers and frontline workers.

Chair of the Norwich Good Economy Commission, Catherine Waddams, said: "The Norwich Good Economy Commission was pleased to support the underlying local research, and welcomes these four boosts for businesses and employees, which not only promote the Commission's aim to enrich the lives of all who live and work in Norwich, but could also help other communities."

Dr. Fitzhugh led the project for UEA as part of her 'knowledge exchange' role for Norwich Business School. Knowledge exchange aims to take the university's research out directly into the community and feed back community experiences and needs to influence research.

While the Good Jobs Project is active in Norwich in 2021, the method could be highly relevant to other areas in the future, with the aim being to extend the project into neighboring communities, as well as offering local companies researcher-supported 'hacks' on how to implement the '4 Boosts'.

The 4 Boosts for Frontline Workers resource is available at:

<https://www.propelhub.org/how-to-improve-frontline-work-4-boosts-for-frontline-workers/>

Provided by University of East Anglia

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