



# How to engage employees, managers, and directors in safety

Real questions from real safety leaders, with  
practical answers you can use today

[notifytechnology.com](https://notifytechnology.com)

# Contents

Introduction	<a href="#">3</a>
Building and sustaining a strong safety culture	<a href="#">4</a>
Engaging leadership and the board	<a href="#">10</a>
Engaging mobile teams and improving safety reporting	<a href="#">13</a>
Metrics, KPIs, and compliance	<a href="#">16</a>
Behaviour change and the tools that support it	<a href="#">18</a>
Final thoughts	<a href="#">21</a>

# Introduction

Engaging people in safety at work is a challenge for many organisations. Competing priorities, ingrained habits, and perceptions of safety as a compliance task can make it difficult to achieve genuine participation. Yet engagement is critical - because safety only works when the people closest to the work are involved, informed, and confident enough to speak up.

The questions in this guide come directly from health and safety professionals who joined our live webinar, 'How to engage employees, managers and directors in safety.' These aren't generic FAQs. They reflect the day-to-day challenges, frustrations, and goals of people working to strengthen safety culture, improve reporting, influence leaders, and justify investment.

To make this easier to scan and act on, we've grouped the Q&As into key themes - from culture and leadership to mobile engagement, metrics, and behaviour change. For some questions, you'll see two answers. This reflects multiple perspectives shared during the webinar, and is included to add depth and practical detail. So, whether you're building momentum, improving psychological safety, or strengthening your management system, you'll find ideas you can apply immediately.





# Building and sustaining a strong safety culture

## How does employee engagement strengthen safety culture?

Shift from a compliance-only mindset to active participation. Give people easy ways to speak up, such as reporting observations and near misses, close the loop quickly, and recognise positive behaviour.

Notify's mobile-first [Incident Reporting Software](#) is purpose-built to empower anyone to capture safety events in real time, from any location, making it a strong option for supporting active participation. Pair this with visible leadership and Plan Do-Check-Act (PDCA) reviews so reporting genuinely drives change. Behaviour-Based Safety (BBS) provides a useful structure for this approach: define critical behaviours, observe, give feedback, and address latent conditions.

Employee engagement strengthens safety culture by fostering ownership and accountability, encouraging proactive hazard reporting, and driving continuous improvement through frontline insights.

When employees understand the reasons behind safety rules and actively participate in discussions, they are more likely to adopt safer behaviours voluntarily, building trust and open communication.

Engaged workers also positively influence their peers, making safety an integral part of daily operations rather than a compliance task. This, in turn, reinforces a sustainable, organisation-wide safety culture.

## Do you have any positive examples of an organisation that has successfully implemented H&S culture change?

The common success pattern was clear: leaders communicated a strong 'why,' co-designed behaviours and processes with frontline teams, aligned KPIs so production and safety were not in conflict, and used BBS observations to reinforce the right habits. They ran regular PDCA cadence reviews and actively celebrated near miss reporting to surface weak signals early.

## How do we move from a blame culture to a psychological safety culture?

Shift from blame to learning. Define and role-model the behaviours you want, build psychological safety, and hard-wire feedback loops. Run a BBS programme using the ABC model (Antecedents–Behaviour–Consequences), tackle latent conditions as well as frontline errors, and reinforce safe acts. Communicate the 'why,' align targets so people don't have to choose between production and safety, and involve representatives and teams in co-creating solutions.



To move from a blame culture to a culture of psychological safety, organisations must shift their focus from punishment to learning by fostering open communication and trust. Leaders should model transparency, encourage the reporting of errors and near misses without fear, and apply 'Just Culture' principles that distinguish human error from negligence.

Investigations should prioritise root causes and system improvements rather than assigning fault, while training reinforces safe behaviours and the value of speaking up.

Continuous feedback, recognition of proactive safety actions, and clear communication of lessons learned help embed psychological safety, ensuring employees feel respected and empowered to contribute to a safer workplace.

## Are there wider benefits for organisations in engaging employees in safety?

Yes. Fewer incidents, better retention, smoother operations, stronger tender performance (with customers increasingly expecting ISO-aligned H&S), lower insurance risk, and less regulatory pain.

HSE data shows the significant economic impact of ill health and injury - reducing this is a direct boost to productivity.

## How do you change ingrained culture in individuals and teams?

Behaviour change beats slogans. Use BBS: specify critical behaviours, observe work as done, give immediate feedback, and remove friction that drives shortcuts.

Align goals so no one has to choose between hitting targets and staying safe.

Training supervisors in coaching skills also helps ensure that safety culture is continually reinforced across the organisation.

**Changing ingrained culture in individuals and teams requires consistent leadership commitment, clear communication of expectations, and reinforcement through actions rather than words.**

**It starts with modelling desired behaviours at all levels, creating psychological safety so employees feel safe to speak up, and replacing punitive responses with learning-focused approaches.**

**Continuous engagement through training, feedback loops, and recognition of positive behaviours helps shift mindsets over time.**

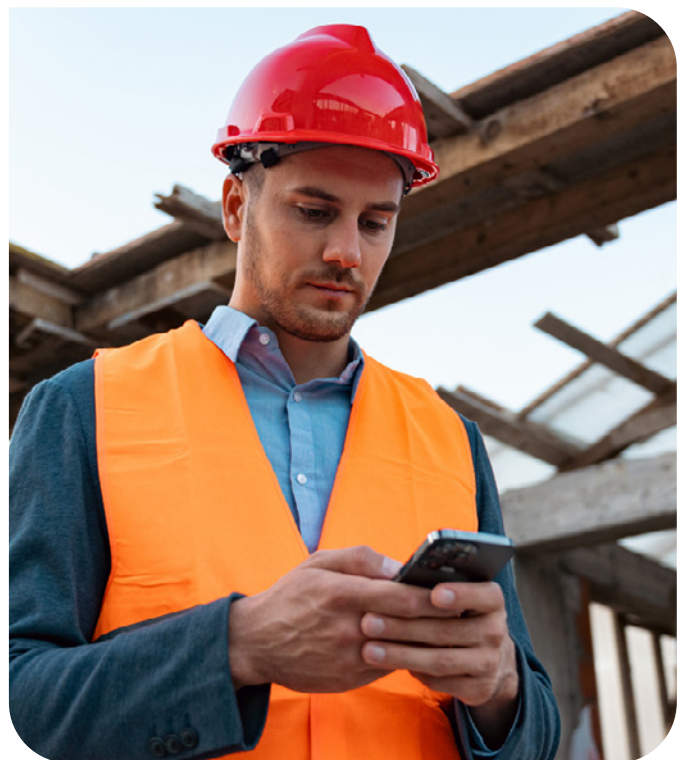
**Embedding these practices into everyday processes and holding everyone accountable ensures cultural change becomes sustainable and part of the organisation's identity.**

**I believe proactive safety practice is better than reactive 'policing.'  
How do we make that shift?**

Reframe safety as enablement. Get ahead of risk using leading indicators, focused audits, and hazard or near miss learning.

Use PDCA to drive improvement sprints, reserving 'policing' for wilful, repeated violations.

Bring supervisors into BBS coaching so safety becomes part of day-to-day leadership.



**To shift from reactive 'policing' to proactive safety practice, organisations need to embed safety into everyday operations rather than treating it as enforcement. This means focusing on prevention through risk assessments, coaching, and engagement, rather than fault-finding after incidents.**

**Safety practitioners should act as partners and advisors, building trust by involving employees in hazard identification and solution design. Leadership must support this approach by valuing early intervention, rewarding proactive behaviours, and integrating safety into performance metrics.**

**Over time, this collaborative, forward-looking mindset replaces compliance-driven policing with a culture of shared responsibility and continuous improvement.**

## How do you keep momentum once the launch 'buzz' fades?

Bake it into everyday rhythms: weekly safety moments, monthly "you said, we did" updates, quarterly PDCA reviews, and regular supervisor BBS observations.

Refresh recognition frequently and rotate focus topics to avoid fatigue.

**Embed safety into everyday routines by making it visible, relevant, and rewarding. This means setting clear goals, tracking progress, and sharing results regularly so employees can see the impact.**

**Leadership must stay actively involved - through site visits, recognition of proactive behaviours, and consistent messaging, to reinforce that safety is a priority, not a campaign.**

**Continuous engagement through toolbox talks, refresher training, and employee-led initiatives helps maintain energy, while celebrating milestones and learning from near misses sustains a sense of purpose and progress.**



## How do we balance production pressure with safety?

Align targets so safety isn't in competition. Leaders must be explicit: no schedule is worth a shortcut. Use capacity buffers and visual controls and measure 'right first time' and safe cycle time, not just volume.



## How do we integrate safety with quality and environment?

Choose software with strong APIs and configurable workflows to unify actions and analytics across domains.

Surface common causes (for example, housekeeping and training) and run joint PDCA reviews.



1

Create a unified management system where all three elements share common goals, processes, and accountability.

2

Start by aligning policies and objectives so safety, quality, and environmental performance are treated as interdependent rather than separate silos.

3

Use integrated audits, risk assessments, and reporting systems to identify overlaps and streamline compliance.

4

Embed these principles into operational procedures, training, and leadership communications so employees understand that safe work, high-quality output, and environmental stewardship are part of the same standard.

**This approach reduces duplication, improves efficiency, and strengthens overall organisational resilience.**



### How do we make 'lessons learned' stick?

Translate findings into specific behaviours, update SOPs, brief them in toolbox talks, and verify through observations.

Track whether controls are actually used in real work conditions.



### How do you keep people from cutting corners?

Fix the system drivers (tools, time, layout), reset targets, and reinforce safe behaviour immediately.

Supervisors must intervene consistently and recognise the right choices.



### What role should unions or employee representatives play?

A significant one. Involve them early, co-review risks and controls, and partner on campaigns and observation drives.

Shared ownership builds legitimacy and reach.

**We must combine clear, practical procedures with strong leadership visibility and consistent messaging that safety is non-negotiable.**

**Address root causes such as time pressure or inadequate training and involve employees in designing safer processes to build ownership.**

**Reinforce positive behaviours through recognition, use technology and supervision for real-time monitoring, and apply fair consequence management for repeated non-compliance.**

**This balanced approach - engagement, accountability, and system improvement ensures safety becomes a shared responsibility rather than an optional extra.**





# Engaging leadership and the board



## What's the best way to effectively engage senior management?

Start by anchoring the conversation in the 'why': moral, legal, and economic drivers.

Leaders respond to risk, reputation, and results, so show how safer work reduces lost time and costs while protecting people and the brand.

Use the PDCA framework to make it practical: set direction, introduce systems, monitor leading and lagging indicators, and review performance at board level.

Visible leadership, two-way communication, and integrating safety into business decisions are non-negotiables.

Point to sentencing guidelines that link fines to turnover, the potential for director prosecutions, and the public nature of enforcement to sharpen attention.

## How can organisations shift the perception of H&S from a compliance tick-box to a value driver?

Tie safety to outcomes leaders care about (delivery, quality, margin), show the cost of non-compliance, and present leading indicators (such as observations and hazards fixed) alongside lagging ones.

Integrate safety decisions into operations using PDCA and make wins visible on the floor through quick fixes and recognition.





Embed safety into core business objectives and demonstrate its impact on performance, reputation, and profitability. This means positioning safety as a strategic enabler - reducing downtime, improving productivity, and protecting brand integrity - rather than a regulatory obligation.



Leadership must champion safety as part of operational excellence, integrate it with quality and environmental goals, and communicate success stories that link safety initiatives to measurable business outcomes.



When employees see safety driving efficiency, customer trust, and long-term sustainability, it becomes a shared value rather than a checklist.

### What does good look like form board oversight?

A living PDCA cycle with clear ownership: quarterly board reviews, visible targets (both leading and lagging), spot-checks of 'work as done,' and integration of safety into investment and operational decisions.

Directors must understand their personal liabilities and set the tone by example.

### How do we select KPIs that drive the right behaviour?

Balance leading indicators (observations, hazards closed, action SLAs) with lagging ones (TRIR, LTIFR) and tie them to PDCA.

Avoid perverse incentives (for example, 'zero reports'); instead, reward quality reporting and timely interventions that proactively reduce workplace risk.

**Focus on leading indicators rather than just lagging ones. Instead of measuring only injury rates or lost time - which reflect past events - choose KPIs that encourage proactive actions, such as the number of near miss reports, completion of safety observations, the percentage of corrective actions closed on time, and participation in safety training or toolbox talks.**

**Align KPIs with organisational values and make them meaningful at every level, ensuring they are achievable and linked to positive reinforcement rather than punitive measures.**

**Finally, review and adjust KPIs regularly to confirm they drive safe behaviours and continuous improvement, not just compliance.**

## How do we convince supervisors this won't slow them down?

Show how quick mobile reporting, such as that offered by Notify, cuts admin, how timely fixes reduce re-work, and how fewer incidents mean fewer disruptions.

Let supervisors pilot the approach and co-design forms so it works for work as done.

It's also worth being explicit: if a supervisor (or one of their direct reports) becomes involved in a health and safety incident, the resulting criminal and/or civil investigations will slow them down far more.

## What should we include in our board paper to unlock funding?

Baseline metrics and costs; risk and legal exposure (including case studies of similar organisations that have been prosecuted), user pain points, and a clear delivery plan (PDCA, milestones, and behaviour change).

Demonstrate ROI through adoption, action closure rates, and incident reduction - and include a clear approach to change management and training.





# Engaging mobile teams and improving **safety reporting**

## Any tips on getting engagement from mobile workers?

Meet workers where they are. Use a native mobile app with offline capture so people can report hazards, incidents, and observations on the spot, attach photos, and receive acknowledgement.

Adoption rises when reporting is quick, intuitive, and truly 'in their pocket,' and when people see issues acted upon.

Look for configurable forms, permissions, automated actions, and analytics that provide real-time insight.

Engagement increases further when workers understand that their line managers genuinely care about health and safety and take safety discussions seriously.

## How can we motivate staff to report near misses consistently?

- Make reporting fast (mobile and offline), safe (no blame), and worthwhile (visible fixes, feedback, and recognition).
- Use a simple taxonomy and allow photos or voice notes.
- Share "you said, we did" updates monthly to close the loop.

**Simplify the process with user-friendly tools, such as apps or quick forms like Notify, and offer anonymity options to remove fear of blame.**

**Reinforce the value by explaining how near miss data helps prevent serious incidents and improves working conditions.**

**Recognise and celebrate proactive reporting through positive feedback or incentives, and share success stories where near miss reports led to tangible improvements.**

**Finally, embed reporting into daily routines and leadership conversations so it becomes part of the culture, not an extra task.**



## Any tips for engaging contractors and suppliers in our safety culture?

Set clear expectations in contracts, onboard contractors to your reporting app and processes, and require the same observations and permits as for employees.

Carry out planned and unannounced audits, provide feedback, and share PDCA learnings both ways.

Use QR codes on site to make reporting and access to safety information quick and easy.

## How do we choose the right incident categories and fields?

Keep it simple but extensible. Capture the who, what, where, and when quickly; then add root cause, contributing factors, and corrective or preventive actions. Optimise for fast mobile entry and enrich the record later during investigation.

## What's the quickest way to improve reporting quality?

Remove friction by limiting required fields and enabling photos or voice notes, provide clear examples, and give instant acknowledgement.

Use in-app prompts or pre-defined pick lists to capture consistent, accurate data from frontline workers.

## How do we quantify benefits for the CFO?

Convert waste into pounds: incident costs, lost time, overtime, admin hours, insurance, negative PR, and regulatory exposure.

Model expected reductions against implementation costs and include gains in 'time to insight'.

## What does a good observation and near miss programme look like?

Clear definitions, mobile capture in under a minute, rapid triage, automated actions, supervisor feedback within 48 hours, and monthly learning shares.

Track participation, closure rates, and common themes.

**Make it simple, accessible, and focused on learning rather than blame. Provide easy reporting tools, clear guidance on what constitutes a near miss, and anonymity where needed.**

**The programme should include training to build awareness, timely investigation and closure of actions, and transparent communication of outcomes so employees can see the impact of their reports.**

**Positive reinforcement through recognition and shared success stories encourages participation, while trend analysis and leadership engagement ensure continuous improvement and integration into daily operations.**

## How do we handle remote or field sites with patchy connectivity?

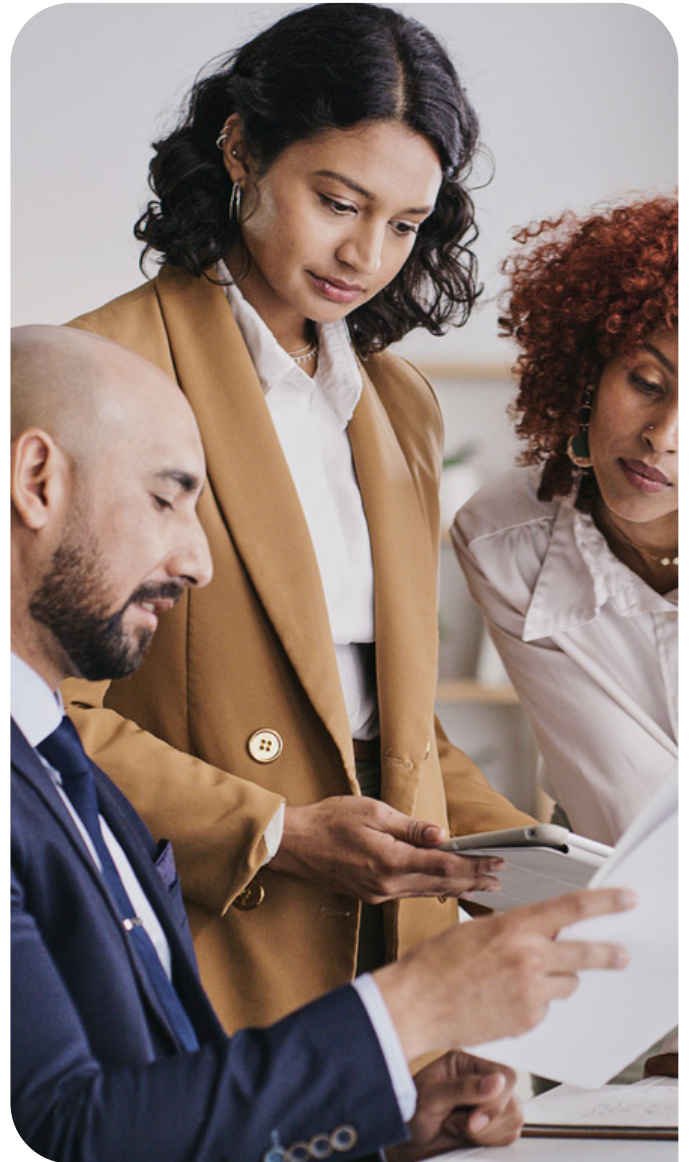
Use native mobile apps with offline capture and sync, lightweight forms, photo and voice logging, and local device storage until connectivity is restored. Sync rules should prevent data loss and duplicates.

Use mobile apps or digital forms that work offline and sync automatically when connectivity returns (such as Notify), to ensure data isn't lost. Provide paper-based backup options for critical reporting and train staff on how to transfer data later.

Keep procedures simple and prioritise essential safety checks that can be logged quickly.

Schedule regular calls or check-ins during periods of better connectivity and use SMS or other low-bandwidth channels for urgent alerts.

Finally, review connectivity challenges during audits and invest in solutions such as portable Wi-Fi or satellite devices for high-risk locations.



## How do we avoid 'initiative fatigue'?

- Keep it small and consistent: focus on one behaviour per month, use short huddles, and provide fast feedback.
- Rotate champions and celebrate real fixes.
- Tie everything into existing rhythms.



# Metrics, KPIs, and compliance

## What's the best way to embed learning from incidents?

Investigate beyond 'who' to 'why' by identifying latent conditions, publish concise learnings, push targeted actions, and track both completion and effectiveness.

Celebrate near miss reporting - early capture of weak signals helps prevent the next event.

## What's the regulatory must-know for managers?

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASWA) sets out duties for employers and individuals (including sections 7 and 37), alongside the HSE's enforcement powers, and RIDDOR reporting thresholds and timelines.

Managers must ensure risk assessments are suitable and sufficient, training is effective, emergency plans are in place, and documentation is robust enough to stand up to scrutiny.

Make learning part of everyday operations rather than a one-off exercise. This means conducting thorough root cause analysis, sharing lessons openly across teams, and translating findings into practical changes to procedures, training, and equipment.

Use toolbox talks, visual reminders, and digital platforms to communicate key takeaways quickly and consistently.

Recognise teams that apply lessons effectively and integrate these insights into audits and performance reviews, so learning becomes measurable.

Finally, leadership must reinforce that reporting and learning are valued - not punitive - creating a culture where continuous improvement is the norm.

Where appropriate and with consent, short videos of injured parties sharing what happened, the impact, and key learnings can be particularly powerful.

### What does 'reasonably practicable' actually mean for us?

- It's the legal balance between the level of risk and the time, trouble, and cost of further controls.
- Document your assessment, use competent advice, and follow ACOPs and recognised best practice unless you can clearly justify a better alternative.

### How should we handle anonymous reporting?

Allow it to support psychological safety, but encourage named reports by demonstrating fair, consistent responses.

Either way, close the loop publicly with "you said, we did."

### How do we avoid 'gaming' the metrics?

- Balance measures and audit behaviours, not just numbers.
- Reward quality and learning rather than simple counts.
- Cross-check leading and lagging trends and carry out periodic deep dives.





# Behaviour change and the tools that support it

**I've been asking this question for some time now...  
what's the simplest path to building a business case?**

- Build a baseline (incidents, LTIs, action close-out times, audit pass rates, and admin hours), cost the waste, and model the potential improvements with software and BBS.
- Map the benefits to board KPIs and include legal and reputational risk.
- Bring in frontline voices and conduct a short demo, showing 'days saved per month,' not just 'compliance.'

## How can training actually change behaviour?

Make it scenario-based and supervisor-led, embed BBS coaching, and reinforce learning on the job through observations and quick feedback.

Track behaviour change, not just attendance.



Training builds the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to work safely, while reinforcing the importance of compliance and risk awareness.

Effective training goes beyond rules, helping employees understand why safe practices matter and how they protect themselves and others. It also shapes attitudes by promoting a proactive mindset, encouraging hazard identification, and fostering accountability.

When training is practical, engaging, and regularly refreshed, it drives consistent safe behaviours, reduces shortcuts, and embeds safety as a core value.



## What's the role of audits - aren't they just backward-looking?

Done right, audits are forward-looking: they test controls before failure and feed improvement sprints.

Use configurable checklists, mobile capture, action workflows, and trend analytics to proactively prioritise improvements before work is carried out.

And of course, when done properly, they also help ensure compliance.

## When should we consider replacing our EHS system?

Red flags include low adoption, rigid configuration, poor integrations, weak analytics, limited mobile or offline capability, and weak post-implementation support.

These issues undermine ROI and stall culture change. If you're experiencing several of these, it's likely a good time to consider replacing your current EHS system.

## What are the top pitfalls to avoid when rolling out software to support H&S?

Clunky user experience, rigid configuration, weak integrations, lack of mobile capability, and vendor-dependent reporting. If users can't self-serve, adoption collapses. Choose configurable forms and workflows, robust APIs, offline mobile capability, and ad-hoc analytics out of the box.

## How do we ensure actions don't die in spreadsheets?

Use a system with automated workflows, clear ownership, SLA reminders, and dashboards. Review overdue items weekly and escalate them systematically.

## What's the simplest way to start a BBS programme?

Pick five to seven critical behaviours, train supervisors to observe and give two-minute feedback, log observations in the app, and review themes monthly.

Expand once the habit sticks.

## What does 'good' documentation look like if the HSE visits?

Clear risk assessments, training records, incident investigations with evidence-based conclusions, action logs, RIDDOR records where applicable, and PDCA review notes.

Above all, documentation should show that decisions were proportionate and acted upon.

## If we could only change one thing, what would it be?

Make it easy, and safe for people to speak up, then act quickly and visibly on what they raise. That single loop (report → action → feedback) changes behaviour, trust, and outcomes.



# Final thoughts

Engaging people in safety is all about building the habits, systems, and leadership behaviours that make safe work the easy, normal choice every day.

## Across the questions in this guide, a few themes come up again and again:

First, shift from compliance to participation. Safety improves when the people closest to the work are actively involved - reporting hazards and near misses, sharing observations, and helping shape practical solutions. The strongest cultures make speaking up simple, welcomed, and worthwhile.

Second, close the loop quickly and visibly. Whether it's a hazard report, a near miss, or an audit finding, the real trust-builder is follow-through. A consistent "you said, we did" rhythm reinforces that reporting leads to action, and that learning leads to improvement.

Third, leadership sets the pace. When managers and directors treat safety as a value driver, not a tick-box, it changes how the whole organisation prioritises risk. Clear governance, meaningful KPIs, and a steady PDCA cadence help keep momentum long after the initial 'launch buzz' fades.

Finally, remember that sustainable safety performance is built through behaviour, capability, and practical tools. Training needs reinforcement on the job. Observations need coaching. And actions need ownership and visibility.

If you take one thing from this guide, let it be this - make it easy (and safe) for people to speak up, and act quickly on what they raise. That loop is where engagement, trust, and outcomes improve.

## Want to see how Notify can help?

If you'd like to see how Notify's health and safety software can help you increase workforce engagement, improve reporting quality, and close the loop faster, you can [book a demo](#) with our team. We'll show you how organisations use Notify to simplify reporting, automate actions, and gain real-time insight - so you can drive meaningful improvement, not just collect data.



# On a mission to create a safer, healthier world of work



Talk to the team

[hello@notifytechnology.com](mailto:hello@notifytechnology.com)

(+44) 0330 390 0530

[notifytechnology.com](https://notifytechnology.com)

