

## **Workplaces are becoming more open to discussing Mental Health**

### **But work is still leading to poor mental health for many**

Mind's Workplace Wellbeing Index recognises and celebrates best practice around the workplace wellbeing. The Index also provides key recommendations on how organisations can improve wellbeing, enabling them to find out what they are doing well and where their approach can be improved to help ensure better mental health in the workplace.

Mind's [Workplace Wellbeing Index](#) is now in its third year and nearly 44,000 employees took part from a range of different organisations in 2018/19. With key changes brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, the need for all employers to prioritise the mental health of their employees has never been more apparent.

The key findings of Mind's 2018/2019 Workplace Wellbeing Index are;

#### **1. Workplaces are becoming more open to discussing mental health**

64% of employees feel that their organisation encourages openness and discussion compared to 53% in the previous year. Many organisations understand that supporting staff mental health is about creating the right culture, rather than one-off actions. There is still work to be done, however.

It's important that all organisations send a clear signal to staff that their mental health matters and that being open about it will lead to support, not discrimination. To encourage this open culture, employers must feel confident about how the information they share will be used and that policies that encourage staff to be open and seek support are clear and fair. This open culture is particularly vital with many employees now working remotely or facing new, additional restrictions and challenges within their working lives.

#### **2. Work is still leading to poor mental health for many**

The number of employees who have experienced poor mental health due to work, or at their current employer workplace, in the past year has increased from 66% the previous year to 71%. Awareness around mental health has increased significantly, with more employees talking about their experiences, but there is still more to be done.

Employers need to address the impact of their working environment on employee mental health. Research shows that a good job is one where;

- People feel in control
- They have some autonomy over their work
- They can build social networks
- They have a healthy work/life balance
- They have opportunities to develop

### **3. More than half of the employees surveyed feel anxious at work**

The number of employees reporting anxiety at work has risen from 49% in the previous year to 52%. Employees say they are experiencing pressure, an unmanageable workload and a lack of support.

Managers need to ensure they are seen as approachable and listen when employees ask for support, particularly bearing in mind the additional pressures of the coronavirus pandemic, and the reactive changes this has brought to roles and workloads. Organisations need to do more to encourage employees to disclose when they're struggling and to sign-post them to effective internal and external support.

### **4. Managers need more support to improve employee wellbeing**

55% of employees feel that their manager supports their mental health compared to 54% in the previous year, but this leaves a lot of room for further improvement. Managers acknowledge that they need to do more but often face other organisational pressures and don't always receive the training or support they need themselves.

Employers can support their managers by taking positive steps such as;  
Providing training on mental health and stress management – including how to spot the signs and how to have supportive conversations with staff, having clear guidelines for managers on managing mental health and encouraging and supporting positive manager behaviours.

### **5. Wellbeing support tools need to improve**

The Index found that of the 41% of employees who accessed support when they were struggling, only 21% found them useful. Employers have made great strides in raising awareness of the support tools they have in place for employees but it is clear that these tools need to be expanded upon and improved. With many people working remotely due to the pandemic, and with that trend predicted to continue, the need for high quality online wellbeing tools is greater than ever.

Organisations should explain what internal and external mental health and wellbeing support is available to employees, and all line managers should receive training on this information so that they can signpost staff to it when they need it most.

### **What can we do from here?**

We all continue to face huge disruption both personally and professionally due to the outbreak, and we are yet to understand the long-term impact that this will have on our mental health. This means there has never been a more important time for employers to prioritise the mental health of staff.

If you are experiencing feelings of distress and isolation, or are struggling to cope, The Samaritans offers support; you can speak to someone for free over the phone, in confidence, on 116 123 (UK and ROI), email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org), or visit the Samaritans website to find details of your nearest branch <https://www.samaritans.org/>

For services local to you, the national mental health database Hub of Hope allows you to enter your postcode to search for organisations and charities who offer mental health advice and support in your area <https://hubofhope.co.uk/>

### **Additional Sources of information and support:**

APPS	<a href="#">Staying Alive</a> – Suicide prevention
	<a href="#">Big White Wall</a> – An online community for people who are stressed, anxious or feeling low
	<a href="#">Calm Harm</a> – Designed for self-harm prevention
	<a href="#">Calm</a> – Meditation App
VIDEOS	<a href="#">The Black Dog</a> video about Depression
	Brene Brown – <a href="#">Empathy vs Sympathy</a> – A short video to explain the difference between sympathy and empathy
	A Mark Henick video about <a href="#">suicide and recovery</a>
	<a href="#">The Stress Container</a> guidance video
PODCASTS	Dr Heather McKee – <a href="#">Bite Sized Habits</a>
	Dr Chatterjee – <a href="#">The Stress Solution</a>
	<a href="#">The School of Life</a> - YT
	Michelle Quaid – <a href="#">make positive psychology work</a>
	And some others to look at are <a href="#">HERE</a>
ONLINE RESOURCE	<a href="#">Action for Happiness</a> – Events and resources to support wellbeing in London
	<a href="#">Headtalks</a> – A range of videos of people who have experienced mental ill-health & their tips
	<a href="#">Food for the Brain</a> – Details about nutrition for better mental health
	<a href="#">Big White Wall</a> – An online support service
	<a href="#">Heads Meds</a> – Information on mental health medication
	<a href="#">Drinkaware</a> – A website to track your alcohol consumption. Also offers an on line chat service to help you manage your own drinking or support those around you
	<a href="#">Liz Atkin</a> – The tube artist “compulsive charcoal”

READING	<a href="#">The School of Life</a> – run courses, workshops and talks all year as well as having some great books
	<a href="#">Awareness is Freedom</a> – on line mindfulness and wellbeing practices
	Mindfulness: <a href="#">A Practical Guide To Finding Peace In A Frantic World</a> by Mark Williams and Dr Danny Penman
	<a href="#">The Chimp Paradox</a> by Professor Steve Peters
	<a href="#">The Stranger on the Bridge</a> : My journey from suicidal despair to hope by Jonny Benjamin
	<a href="#">Reasons to Stay Alive</a> by Matt Haig
	<a href="#">Notes on a Nervous Planet</a> by Matt Haig
	<a href="#">Man's Search for Meaning</a> by Viktor Frankl
	<a href="#">Cure: A journey into the science of mind over body</a> by Jo Marchant
	<a href="#">Rewire your Anxious Brain</a> by Catherine Pittman and Elizabeth Carle
	<a href="#">Learned Optimism</a> ; How to change your mind and your life by Martin Seligman
	<a href="#">Finding Hope in the Age of Anxiety</a> by Clare Hayes
	<a href="#">Get out of Your Mind &amp; Into Your Life</a> by Steven Hayes (Acceptance & Commitment workbook)
	<a href="#">The Inflamed Mind</a> : A Radical New Approach To Depression by Edward Bullmore
	The Shallows: <a href="#">How the internet is changing how we think</a> , read and remember by Nicholas Carr
	<a href="#">Good Reasons for Bad Feelings</a> by Randolph Nesse

**For further information contact the  
BPIF Health & Safety Team**

**STOP ● THINK II ACT ►**  
**YOUR SAFETY IS OUR PRIORITY**

**Disclaimer –**

This document is intended as a useful tool in any health and safety matters, and not stand-alone advice. The information and any commentary in the law contained in these documents are provided for information purposes only. Every reasonable effort is made to make the information and commentary accurate and up to date, but no responsibility for its accuracy and correctness, or for any consequences of relying on it, is assumed by the BPIF.