

Key insights 2016/17 Index

In 2016/17, 30 organisations took part in our first ever Workplace Wellbeing Index with 15,000 employees participating in the staff survey.

As part of the process, participating organisations submitted their policies for review and completed an employer assessment. These were assessed for how well they address mental health and whether they effectively support and promote employee wellbeing.

In addition, employees completed a staff survey which gave them the opportunity to share their experiences of their organisation's culture and support around workplace mental health.

[Download the full report of key insights from the 2016/17 Workplace Wellbeing Index](#)

One: We all have mental health and it changes over time

This one is obvious. Just as we all have ups and downs in our physical health, our mental health changes over time and is affected by a range of factors both in and outside of work.

The Index survey showed that 6 in 10 employees said their mental health was currently very good or good. However, 6 in 10 also said that they had personally experienced poor mental health at some point in their lives.

Two: Stress at work can lead to poor mental health and time off work

1 in 10 employees rated their current mental health as currently poor or very poor. Of these 26% said this was due to problems at work and a further half said it was due to a combination of problems at work and outside of work. 40% said they had taken time off as a result.

A poor work/life balance can quickly lead to stress and burnout, which may lead to sickness absence. Encouraging staff to work sensible hours, take full lunch breaks, rest and recuperate after busy periods, avoid working at weekends and take their full annual leave entitlement can all help avoid burnout.

Three: We need more open conversations around mental health in the workplace

Overall, only 49% of respondents felt their employer supports their mental health and only 41% felt their organisation encourages openness and discussions about mental health. Only 1 in 4 employees said they would be likely to talk to their manager if they were experiencing a mental health problem.

These figures are low and part of our mission is to encourage employers to have open discussions about mental health in the workplace. Line managers are in a great position to challenge stigma and play a crucial role in making sure employees feel confident that disclosure of poor mental health will lead to support and not discrimination.

Four: There's a discrepancy between how well managers feel they support staff versus how well supported employees feel

Only 54% of respondents felt that their line manager supports their mental health, yet 73% of line managers said they'd feel confident in supporting a member of staff experiencing a mental health problem.

It's encouraging that line managers rate their mental health literacy and skills highly, but far fewer employees feel their line manager actually supports their mental health.

Five: Employers should invest more in workplace wellbeing to benefit their bottom line

Only a third of the participating organisations provided data on how much of their annual operating budget was set aside for workplace wellbeing. Large organisations reported

allocating an average of 11% whilst small and medium organisations set aside less than 0.5%.

Stress and other mental health problems are the second biggest cause of sickness absence, accounting for 70 million lost working days every year. Taking both this and the fact that staff turnover as a result of employees leaving their jobs due to mental health problems costs £2.4 billion each year, it makes good business sense to set budget aside for supporting employee wellbeing.

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