

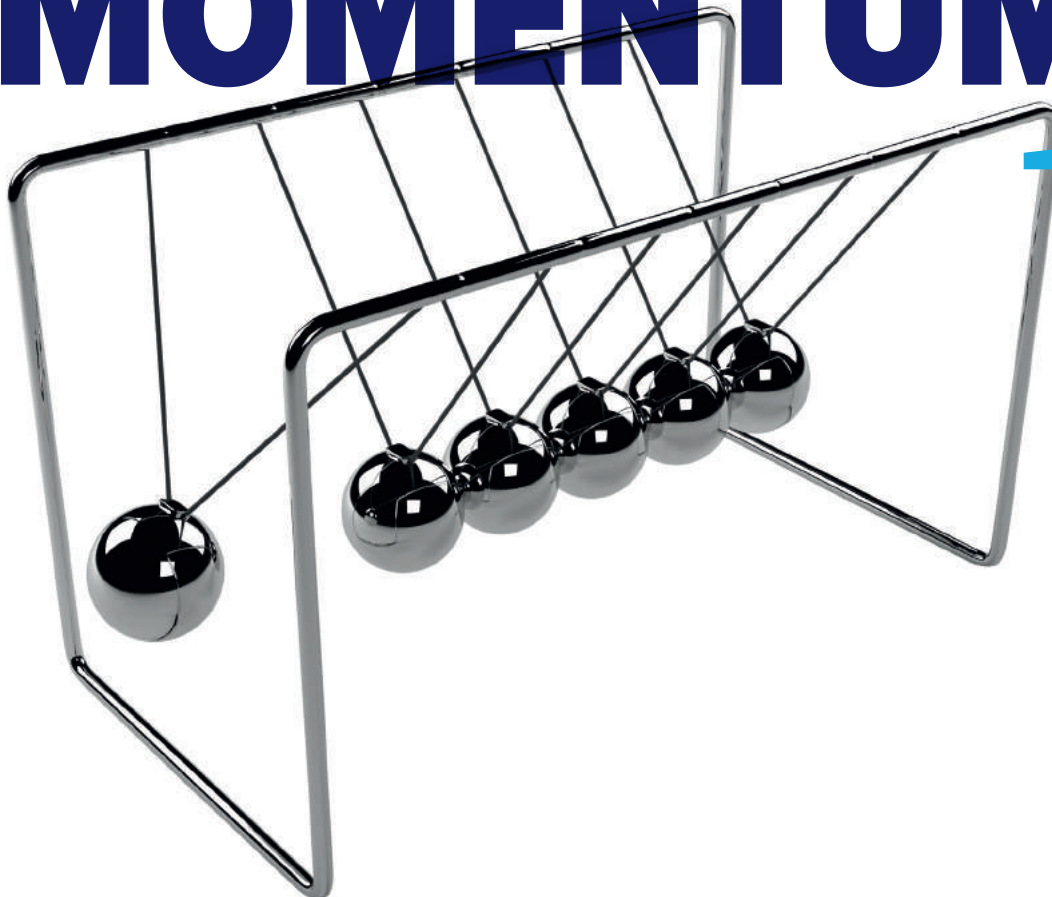


The Prince's  
Responsible  
Business Network



Mental Health at Work 2018 Summary Report

# SEIZING THE MOMENTUM



In conjunction with



Survey partner



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## MENTAL HEALTH HAS A MUCH HIGHER PROFILE THAN IT DID A GENERATION AGO, BUT THE JOB IS FAR FROM DONE

We have made huge strides in both awareness and action, and employers are increasingly taking an active role in supporting good mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. However, as our third national mental health at work survey, part of a three-year collaborative project with business and eight national partners, demonstrates, the prevalence and impact of mental health issues is severe, and employers need to urgently ramp up the breadth and quality of support they're providing.

**Unlike physical health, the foundation building blocks for mental health are not yet well established. It is vital these are put in place if real progress is to be made.**

There is a lack of measurable evidence of what interventions are effective and no consensus yet regarding guidance on reasonable adjustments for mental health at work. Employers are still ill-prepared to accommodate or make reasonable adjustments for those with mental health issues as they do for people with physical health.

Employers need to work together to urgently increase the speed of action to ensure mental health is truly embedded into organisational culture and all employees are fully supported.

**Despite progress, too many employees continue to suffer in silence at work, unable to fulfil their potential through a fear of prejudice and exclusion.**

Financial wellbeing is an urgent concern. The rise of the gig economy, the increase in self-employment and temporary or zero hours contracts, the prevalence of in-work poverty and the uncertainty of Brexit, are all increasing the challenge of maintaining and improving employee mental health.

Three out of five employees (61%) have experienced mental health issues due to work or where work was a related factor. This has remained consistent throughout the three years of the project.

One in three of the UK workforce have been formally diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point in their lifetime, most commonly depression or general anxiety. Six per cent of employees have been living with a formally diagnosed condition for more than 10 years (including depression, general anxiety, panic attacks and eating disorders).

There is still a disconnect between what senior leaders believe about the support provided and the reality of employees day-to-day. CEOs and board members are more likely than those with no managerial responsibility to believe that their organisation supports its staff.

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# 61%

of employees have experienced mental health issues due to work or where work was a related factor

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# 64%

of managers have had to put the interests of their organisation above staff wellbeing at some point

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# 54%

of employees feel comfortable talking generally in the workplace about mental health issues

Just 60% of employees feel their line manager is genuinely concerned for their wellbeing, although this is rising (58% in 2017, 55% in 2016). 64% of managers put the interests of their organisation above staff wellbeing at some point (and 12% do so every day). Lack of high-quality mental health training for line managers continues to be a pivotal issue.

### **Good employee mental health is crucial to running a successful, sustainable organisation.**

Those companies taking bold, innovative action to foster good mental health at work are reaping the benefits, through improved staff recruitment and retention. But more must be done to ensure that these practices and the positive impact they have are adopted across all employment sectors, particularly by small and medium-sized enterprises.

Places of work mirror issues in today's society, including the shift towards self-employment in the gig economy. Anxiety over financial wellbeing is clearly prevalent, reflecting job insecurity as well as broader concerns about the UK economy. This is having an impact on workplace mental health, and employers must adopt inclusive approaches that work for all.

### **Intersectionality increasingly features as a focal point in discussions about workplace mental health, and our survey emphasises the need for a targeted approach by employers to make a connection.**

Differences between the genders and between generations are striking. Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) employees are less likely to talk openly at work and seek help from colleagues or line managers, and BAME managers feel they are less likely to be given the support they need to help employees. Similarly, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and other (LGBT+) employees are disproportionately more likely to have mental health issues, and are less likely to talk about them.

### **Now really is the time for employers to do everything they can to support the mental health of their employees.**

The profile of mental health issues has never been higher. Public Health England is planning a three-year mental health marketing programme called 'Every Mind Matters' which will launch next Spring, to raise awareness of the fact that looking after mental health is as important as physical health.

There is also the [Heads Together's Mental Health at Work gateway portal for employers](#), and momentum is building with the [Where's Your Head At?](#) campaign to call for change to health and safety law so it protects mental health in the same way as physical health – a call which BITC is pleased to support.

In this report you'll find compelling evidence of the scale of the challenge we face on mental health in the workplace, alongside the positive impact progressive employers are making to tackle it. We have also provided three key calls to action and fuller recommendations. If every employer took these three steps, we would deliver the change in mental health at work we need.

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# 6%

of employees have been living with a formally diagnosed condition for more than 10 years

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# 1 in 3

of the UK workforce have been formally diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point in their lifetime

# SUMMARY OVERVIEW

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## POSITIVE IMPROVEMENTS ARE BEING MADE BUT THE PACE OF CHANGE IS TOO SLOW

2018

**71%**

of employees say they have the confidence to recognise the signs of poor mental health

2016

**64%**

2018

**45%**

of employees believe that their organisation does well in supporting those with mental health issues

2016

**40%**

2018

**49%**

of employees experiencing a mental health issue reported that there had been no resulting changes or actions taken

2016

**56%**

2018

**60%**

of employees feel their line manager is genuinely concerned for their wellbeing

2016

**55%**

2018

**30%**

of line managers have taken part in mental health training

2016

**22%**

2018

**85%**

of managers now acknowledge that employee wellbeing is their responsibility

2016

**76%**

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## URGENT CHANGE IS STILL NEEDED

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**61%**

of employees have experienced a mental health issue due to work or where work was a contributing factor

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**11%**

of respondents who disclosed a mental health issue subsequently faced disciplinary action, demotion or dismissal

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Just

**16%**

of employees felt able to disclose a mental health issue to their manager

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**30%**

of managers report not having any workplace facilities or services that could help wellbeing and mental health

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## A DISCONNECT PERSISTS BETWEEN THE VISION AND REALITY

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**58%**

of senior leaders think that their organisation supports its staff

*but only*

**42%**

of employees with no managerial responsibility said that staff with mental health issues are supported

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**85%**

of managers acknowledge that employee wellbeing is their responsibility

*but only*

**30%**

of line managers report that they have received any training

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## KEY CONCERNS

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**34%**

report that their financial situation negatively affects their mental health

*however*

**56%**

of employees do not feel comfortable talking about money issues at work

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**37%**

of those aged 18-29 have been formally diagnosed with a mental health condition

*compared to*

**29%**

of employees over 50

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**81%**

of LGBT+ people have experienced a mental health condition

*with*

**72%**

having experienced mental health issues as a result of work

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**68%**

of managers still believe that there are barriers to providing support for the mental wellbeing of those they manage

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# CALL TO ACTION

## EMPLOYERS MUST WAKE UP TO THE PREVALENCE AND IMPACT OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN THE WORKPLACE AND MAKE IT THEIR PRIORITY TO ESTABLISH PARITY BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

While the government and others are putting in more resources and developing new initiatives, businesses have the opportunity to step up and make direct changes to the way they think about and tackle mental health issues, starting with the core and enhanced standards outlined in the Stevenson / Farmer review.

In the third year of Business in the Community's National Mental Health Survey, we celebrate the progress that has been made. Good practice exists in some organisations. But for the vast majority of employees, mental health is still a no-go area. The subject cannot be shared with colleagues or managers for fear of discrimination and victimisation.

Managers must reset their approach to make the same reasonable adjustment for mental health as physical health to enable people with mental health issues to remain in or return to work.

**We urge employers to implement three calls to action that will give new purpose to campaigning for equality for mental health:**

**We have made progress, but we still have a long way to go. We call on all employers to build on the significant contribution they already make to the nation's mental health and wellbeing.**

Tony Wood, Partner and UK Managing Director, Mercer Marsh Benefits

**I would encourage all businesses to challenge themselves on what more they can do to support their colleagues, and ensure that a positive approach to mental health and wellbeing is embedded in the culture of the organisation.**

David Oldfield, Chair, BITC Wellbeing Leadership Team, CEO, Commercial Banking, Lloyds Banking Group

### CALLS TO ACTION FOR EMPLOYERS:

#### TALK

Break the culture of silence that surrounds mental health by signing the **Time to Change Employer's Pledge**

#### TRAIN

Invest in basic mental health literacy for all employees and first aid training in mental health to support line manager capability

#### TAKE ACTION

Implement practical actions from our **Mental Health Toolkit for Employers**

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## FOR EMPLOYERS, SENIOR PRACTITIONERS, BUSINESS LEADERS AND LINE MANAGERS

We have used the results from the survey along with the available best practice to produce a series of recommendations for employers on how they can radically improve the support provided in the workplace, from the leadership at the top through to support on the ground. Every employer is at a different stage so we have included a range of recommendations under each section, from the basic building blocks that all employers should be putting in place to the more ambitious and progressive.

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### IN THE BOARDROOM

Senior leaders need to lead from the front, creating a supportive culture that encourages employees to feel comfortable about mental health issues, providing the right resources, acting as role models and setting the right example:

- **Sign the Time to Change Employer Pledge**, a public commitment to tackle the culture of silence that surrounds mental health.
- **Use the Business in the Community and Public Health England Mental Health Toolkit for Employers.** It will help you take simple, positive actions to build a culture that champions good mental health.
- **Send a clear message** that mental health and physical health have the same priority.
- **Adopt a zero-tolerance approach** to stigma.
- **Appoint a mental health champion** to your senior team, to drive better mental health and encourage all leaders to act as role models.
- **Adopt a targeted approach:** one size does not fit all.
- **Ensure that leadership and management teams lead by example** by attending mental health training to develop awareness, confidence and capability in managing mental health.
- **Embed wellbeing at the heart of your organisational culture** by adopting Business in the Community's **Workwell Model**.
- **Make employee wellbeing a core objective** for the organisation and report on your progress internally and externally.

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### END THE DISCONNECT

As this report shows, many more employers have to walk the talk and not be complacent about how they are supporting employees on mental health issues. They need to close the gap between what senior managers think and what is really happening on the ground and give line managers the permission and tools they need to better support employees. Start by challenging the mental health support on offer in your workplace; it may not be as good as you think it is. Don't wait to be told. Find out what your teams think and be prepared to make changes.

- **Identify and remove organisational barriers** preventing line managers from effectively managing and supporting colleagues with mental health issues.
- **Commit to making very real improvements whatever the starting point.** Take action to build on successes and use these to prioritise and drive improvements. Challenge colleagues to be as ambitious as you about mental health.
- **Seek employee feedback** with a range of informal and formal mechanisms to understand where your gaps exist, including annual and pulse surveys, focus groups and employee forums. Report back with findings and communicate what you are going to do in response to them.
- **Take part in the free annual Britain's Healthiest Workplace initiative**, with questions aligned to Business in the Community's **Workwell Model**, providing both employer and employee feedback on health and wellbeing.
- **Take part in Mind's Workplace Wellbeing Index**, a benchmark of best policy and practice in workplace mental health which allows your organisation to find out from the staff perspective how effective your policies and practices are and receive Mind's recommendations on areas to improve. You will also be benchmarked against other organisations participating in the Index and receive public recognition for the work you are doing.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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## ON THE GROUND

Creating a supportive culture means reaching out to all employees across your organisation, so they are informed and empowered on mental health.

- **Signpost external guidance and support** to all employees.
- **Instil an understanding that everyone has a state of mental health**, just as they do physical health. Use awareness campaigns to communicate this message, such as Time to Talk Day, Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day.
- **Share Business in the Community's Listen Up: Let's Talk Mental Health** with all employees. This guide contains practical tips on how to start a conversation with someone you are concerned about and how to talk about your own mental health.
- **Support employees to have the confidence** to start a conversation about mental health with colleagues they are concerned about.
- **Empower line managers through training** and resources to develop their skills, knowledge and mental health literacy.
- **Provide as much first aid training for mental health** as you do for physical health and make sure all employees know who has been trained.
- **Create a network of mental health champions** who can lead by example, raise awareness and share information to promote positive messaging about mental health. Supporting and developing this network will help it to flourish.

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## CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF FINANCIAL WELLBEING ON MENTAL HEALTH

Our survey demonstrates a two-way causal relationship between financial wellbeing and mental health; issues in one area can create problems in the other. One solution to improving mental health is to tackle one or more of the underlying causes, of which financial wellbeing is an important one.

- **Integrate financial wellbeing into your organisation's Health & Wellbeing policy** and be explicit about what's available or acceptable within your organisation to people with financial issues – e.g. pay advances, hardship loans, time off to sort financial issues, travel loans, access to EAP, money counselling or other support services.
- **Additionally, there are lots of financial wellbeing interventions that can now be made via the workplace** – e.g. financial education to target improving employee financial understanding or how to make best use of existing benefits; making available salary deducted savings, in order to create a financial buffer; or offering salary-deducted lower cost loans to help employees who are in debt or have unexpected expenditure but no savings. One or more of these initiatives might be appropriate for your workforce, either as part of a financial wellbeing strategy or modification to your employee benefits package.
- **Include awareness of financial issues in line manager employee wellbeing training** and equip them with information about what solutions are available as part of the overall employee benefits package.
- **Signpost colleagues** (staff, line managers and HR) to organisations that offer free help and guidance on money issues such as:
  - Money Advice Service (general money issues)
  - The Pensions Advisory Service (for pension specific issues)
  - Step Change (personal debt counselling)
  - Christians Against Poverty (debt support and general money support)
  - Citizens Advice (online information and personal counselling)



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## EMPOWER LINE MANAGERS

Line managers are the most important link in the chain when it comes to supporting good mental health in the workplace. Good line managers will be proactive, empathetic and know how to build relationships and trust so employees feel they can talk about any mental health concerns.

- **Give managers the support they need to manage their own wellbeing**, with appropriate resources and training. Help them free up time in their day to manage employee mental health.
  - **Regularly promote to line managers** the support at their disposal to foster good mental health.
  - **Improve the confidence and capability of managers** to have conversations about mental health.
  - **Train as many line managers as possible** in how to make mental health part of the conversations they have with the people they manage and build their ability to notice changes in their team members and take the right action.
  - **Introduce training about performance and mental health**, emphasising the importance of being supportive and flexible.
  - **Empower managers to develop skill sets within their teams**, to ensure there is first aid provision for mental health.
  - **Encourage line managers to seek support** when managing a colleague with mental health issues, from HR, Occupational Health, an EAP or their own line manager.
  - **Make flexibility and empathy the watch words** for being a good line manager and empower them to support employees through changes to working practices such as flexible working.
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## BE PROACTIVE NOT REACTIVE

Mental health issues have a huge impact in the workplace, so it is in the interests of all employers to be proactive in fostering better mental health and wellbeing in their workplaces so they can reduce that impact.

- **Ensure every employee has access** to (and knows where to find) appropriate support to stay well and to help manage mental ill health. Issue regular reminders.
  - **Prevention is better than cure.** Create a work environment that promotes mental wellbeing using a framework like Business in the Community's Workwell Model.
  - **Give employees a clear and positive wellbeing offering**, starting at induction, and reinforced on a regular basis, including resources to support employee resilience and mental wellbeing.
  - **HR and any additional specialist support functions must proactively engage with employees**, so that they feel they have a safe space to discuss mental health.
  - The nature of employment continues to change, with more people working on a self-employed or zero hours basis. **Organisations should treat people fairly regardless of contract type and aim to build an inclusive workplace.**
  - **Marginalised groups can be disproportionately affected by mental health issues** so create a more inclusive culture and be aware of the specific needs different people have.
  - **Ask employees** to help create and adapt solutions to their mental health support needs.
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# RECOMMENDATIONS

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## SUPPORT PEOPLE TO STAY AT WORK OR RETURN TO WORK

Work absence is a huge drain on businesses and other organisations so it makes sense to do everything you can to help employees remain at work and do their jobs, or return as soon as they can.

- **Be ready to take steps to enable people to remain in work when possible**, and take a phased approach to return to work after a period of ill health.
- **Be aware of the link between mental and physical health issues** and take a holistic approach to promoting physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Make changes to the workplace** to better support someone dealing with a mental health issue so they can remain productive and at work if appropriate.
- **Always seek the full agreement of an employee** for any changes you want to make.
- You'll find guidance on the types of changes you can make in the **Thriving at Work Annex** which include:
  - Adapting the work environment
  - Providing flexibility in working hours
  - Transferring to a different position (temporary or permanent)
  - Allocating some duties to another person to lighten the workload
  - Allowing absence for treatment or rehabilitation
  - Providing the opportunity to work from home
  - Extra training

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## REINFORCE AND TAILOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR MINORITY GROUPS

The evidence shows that young people, BAME and LGBT+ employees are at a particular disadvantage at work, with their own unique sets of challenges.

- **You should identify and address barriers** that exist in your own organisations specifically for LGBT+ and BAME employees.
  - **Be explicit about the responsibility of line managers** towards younger employees, BAME and LGBT+ employees and educate them around these unique challenges.
  - **Ensure all line managers are able to address the mental health issues of an employee** no matter their gender, orientation or background.
  - **Use induction courses** to emphasise the importance of mental health and wellbeing with the organisation, and to signpost ways in which support is provided. Highlight specific support and networks for LGBT+ and BAME colleagues.
  - **Challenge Mental Health champions** to create links with their LGBT+ and BAME networks or sponsors, to create targeted awareness and support.
  - **Embed mental health and wellbeing into apprenticeship schemes** and give apprentices opportunities to contribute to policies around health and wellbeing.
  - **Use the Business in the Community Diversity Benchmark and/or Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index** to help evaluate your progress on inclusion for LGBT+ and BAME staff, and inform evidence-based decision-making around workplace diversity.
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## SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ORGANISATIONS

All employers, whatever their size, can do more to promote better mental health at work and it doesn't need to take a huge amount of time and resources.

- **Use the free resources produced for awareness days** like World Mental Health Day to promote better mental health on a regular basis.
- **Seek out the free support and information** available through resources like the Business in the Community and Public Health England **Mental Health Toolkit for Employers**.
- **Encourage senior people to lead by example** through being open and encouraging conversations about mental health.
- **Provide one person with first aid training in mental health** and encourage them to share what they have learnt with others.

**It's an exciting time for mental health. We've reached an unprecedented tipping point of public awareness. Business is at its best when people are at their best. A positive approach to mental health at work is a key determinant in becoming an employer of choice.**

Louise Aston, Wellbeing Director  
Business in the Community

**Read the full report 'Mental Health at Work 2018 Report – Seizing the Momentum' at:**  
<https://wellbeing.bitc.org.uk/MHAW2018>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Supported by BITC Wellbeing Leadership Team:



### National partners:





The Prince's  
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