



Mental Health at Work 2020: building back responsibly

It goes without saying that the last few months have been some of the most challenging organisations have faced in a generation. This year's summary of key findings from our annual mental health at work study, developed in partnership with Bupa UK Insurance, surveyed 3,614 UK workers, and provides unique insight into how these challenges are affecting both organisations and their employees at a pivotal time for business and the economy.

The survey, which has charted the changing attitude towards mental health for the past five years, shows the changing priorities of the UK workforce this year, at a time when many remain working from home, and prospects appear uncertain.

This year's results reveal the scale of the impact of the massive change and interruption on employees' mental health, but also the impressive progress that employers have continued to make in the face of more than six months of disruption.

This creates optimism for the future as the nation's businesses continue to navigate through this evolving crisis, and build back responsibly.



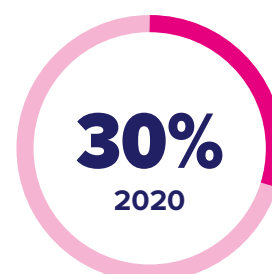
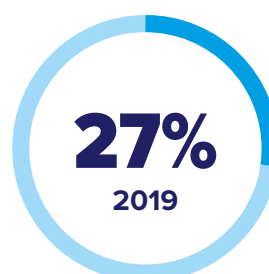
The state of the nation

41% of employees have experienced mental health symptoms caused, or worsened, by work this year

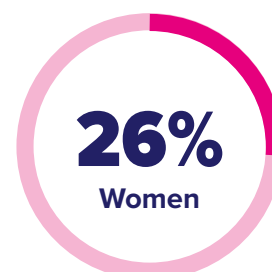
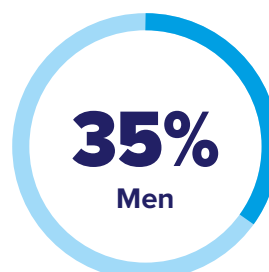
51% of poor mental health caused by work this year was due to pressure

76% say colleagues are considerate of their mental wellbeing, and a further 69% believe the same of their managers

Employees are increasingly telling no-one about their mental health issues:



Men are more likely to keep work-related mental health problems to themselves:

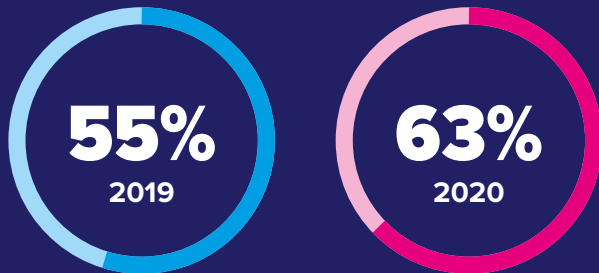


Whilst employees feel supported by colleagues and managers, they do not always feel HR departments (39%) and CEOs and boards (37%) are as considerate of employee mental wellbeing. 62% of managers also say that, at times, they have had to put the interest of the organisation above the wellbeing of their colleagues.

Building back responsibly

The way that organisations manage mental health has improved; of the employees who reported a mental health issue to their employer, 63% experienced a positive outcome.

The number of employees who feel that their organisation supports their mental health is on the rise:



56%

of employees now feel comfortable talking about mental health in the workplace

62%

of employees now feel comfortable talking about stress in the workplace

Of those who had experienced work-related poor mental health, 14% spoke to their line manager.

Employees report that managers are increasingly aware of their responsibility to their team's wellbeing: 58% felt their manager recognises that providing emotional support to their team is part of their job.

"The pandemic has acted as a catalyst to elevate mental health on a parity with physical health. The progress made and the reduction of stigma in the face of unthinkable challenges this year shows that companies can do more to support their employees' mental health.

"For Business in the Community, the findings from this survey forms one element of our efforts to encourage employers to build back responsibly by taking on board the lessons learned from the pandemic. Positioning wellbeing at the heart of business planning and job design will promote long-term mental health benefits."

Louise Aston, Wellbeing Director at Business in the Community

"This research is a temperature check of frontline employees' wellbeing and how they are really dealing with seismic changes to their working life. It also shines a spotlight on the additional support they need from

employers. They have been met with new ways of working, isolation from colleagues, and the growing uncertainty of the future impacting the mental health of many. Therefore organisations need to urgently address the gaps, relieve the pressure and have wellbeing strategies, preventative care and mental health support in place for employees."

Mark Allan, Commercial Director of Bupa UK Insurance

"The Mental Health at Work Commitment has laid the foundations for the improvements we can see in this research and will be a crucial tool for all organisations in the real test to come: how to make this year's results the start of a trend, not an exception."

David Oldfield, chair of BITC's wellbeing leadership team and group director of commercial banking at Lloyds Banking Group

Employer calls to action



Elevate mental health and safety on a par with physical health and safety, using the six standards set out in the Mental Health at Work Commitment as a framework for action.



Redesign jobs that promote long-term mental health, building on the new ways of working since COVID-19. Avoid employee burn-out by recognising pressure and workload are the biggest drivers of work-related poor mental health.



Do not shy away from challenging issues; update your policies on domestic abuse, suicide and bereavement.