



The Prince's
Responsible
Business Network



Report

YOUR JOB CAN BE GOOD FOR YOU

2022

Backing business
to revolutionise ways of working
in the UK



BITC
Wellbeing
Leadership
Team





REPORT

YOUR JOB CAN BE GOOD FOR YOU: BACKING BUSINESS TO REVOLUTIONISE WAYS OF WORKING IN THE UK

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YOUR JOB CAN BE GOOD FOR YOU: BACKING BUSINESS TO REVOLUTIONISE WAYS OF WORKING IN THE UK

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“Over the last few years, we have seen a real shift to greater understanding of the importance of mental health and the responsibility we have as employers. The pandemic has demonstrated how flexible we can be and how important it is to put meaningful wellbeing support in place for colleagues. As we move into a post-pandemic world and adjust to hybrid ways of working, it’s crucial we take this once in a lifetime opportunity to re-imagine how best we work; support for our mental health and wellbeing is a key part of that.”
David Oldfield, Group Director, Commercial Banking, Lloyds Banking Group and Chair, BITC Wellbeing Leadership Team

“We face an overwhelmingly fast-moving environment. A tight job market following The Great Resignation, social inequalities exacerbated by recovery from the pandemic, and a climate crisis demanding urgent action are just a few examples of the challenges to grasp. And the talent which will unlock those into future opportunities is crystal clear – your job must be good for you, otherwise I will choose another one.

It is critical that organisations take a clear leadership role and back the narrative with measurable, tangible, well evidenced actions to put thriving individuals at the core of all we do.”
Javier Echave, Chief Financial Officer, Heathrow Airport and incoming Chair, BITC Wellbeing Leadership Team

“We welcome and endorse this report that shines a light on the importance of all these elements of what makes jobs good for us and provides clear calls to action for business on how to make good jobs a reality.” **Peter Cheese, Chief Executive, CIPD**

INTRODUCTION: WAYS OF WORKING THAT SUPPORT WELLBEING MUST BE OPEN TO EVERYONE

By Louise Aston, Wellbeing Campaign Director, BITC

Last summer, while business leaders were reimagining ways of working following the COVID-19 pandemic, we launched our pioneering report, [What If Your Job Was Good For You?](#)ⁱ The report has acted as a convening mechanism for Business in the Community (BITC) business leader members and stakeholders, enabling action and yielding shared insights which inform this sequel report.

‘Your Job *Can* Be Good For You’ also draws on insights from the BITC’s YouGov 2022 survey, roundtables with business leaders, expert interviews, and a review of recent evidence. It sets out how businesses can revolutionise the way employees work while supporting broader responsible business goals.

Traditional models of working have imploded which has caused unprecedented challenges that require urgent action from business leaders, to not just change, but to revolutionise ways of working.

BITC’s YouGov 2022 survey identified that just over half of the UK workforce (54%) is able to co-create their version of a ‘good job’.ⁱⁱ This is a promising start. However, with co-creating ways of working comes the risk of creating a two-tiered system with those with board level roles (72%) and on higher salaries (57% of those earning more than £20k per year) more likely to achieve flexibility.ⁱⁱⁱ Research shows that those who would most benefit from individualised ways of working are least likely to be able to action them.

The UK’s mental health is getting worse,^{iv} and work is a significant factor, with 36% of employees experiencing work-related poor mental health in the past year.^v Working populations have re-evaluated what is important to them based on whole-life horizons, with 65% of people seeking a better work-life balance^{vi} Evidence shows that 28% of UK employees left their jobs in 2021, or planned to

leave in 2022, with 61% citing poor mental health as the reason.^{vii}

An integrated, strategic approach is needed that prioritises the mental health and wellbeing of *all* employees. Ways of working must be integrated with priorities from across the responsible business agenda which include health and wellbeing, equity and inclusion, employment and skills, and the environment.

According to BITC’s research, 84% of employees say they are more productive and 79% feel more creative when they have a sense of wellbeing.^{viii} The business, social, and economic benefits of taking an individualised approach to ways of working are significant. Providing a valuable avenue for co-creating ways of working means that employees can sustain work when health or life circumstances make aspects of work challenging to fulfil without some form of flexibility. It also prevents them from falling out of the workplace, stems the drain of talent, and provides opportunities to unlock a currently under-utilised talent pool.

Ultimately, BITC’s research in this report shows that enabling employees to co-create ways of working can reduce the leading work-related mental health risks (excessive pressure, workload, long hours, and lack of annual leave), while promoting what employees want most out of job-creation (i.e., work-life balance).

This opportunity to personalise ways of working will differ across sectors and roles. However, job co-creation in some form can be applied to nearly every role, at every level. An estates and facilities manager might not be able to regularly complete their work from home but might benefit from flexible shift patterns. An entry level office worker might have less autonomy over their tasks than the company CEO, but both would gain mental health benefits from a culture that supports them to be physically active during the working day.

One year on, the world of work continues to evolve at speed. As consumers, investors and communities re-evaluate their priorities based on whole-life horizons, businesses must respond swiftly to unlock

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sustainable value by enabling their people to perform at their very best. This presents an unprecedented opportunity to achieve a post pandemic reset. Our vision is to create new ways of working that enable thriving people, thriving businesses, thriving communities, and a healthier planet.

Our ambition is that all employees are enabled to co-create ways of working that support personal wellbeing, benefitting both individuals and businesses.

This report outlines the immediate actions businesses should take to begin their post-pandemic reset of their employee wellbeing agenda, and what BITC can do to help, through BITC's THRIVE recommendations for business leaders.



THRIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEADERS TO REVOLUTIONISE THE WAY WE WORK

Tackle inequalities to achieve an inclusive culture of wellbeing.

Harness organisational purpose and values to attract and retain the best talent.

Recognise and balance business and employee needs by providing flexibility in how, where, and when people work.

Innovate, pilot and integrate new approaches to respond effectively to fast-changing employee and business needs.

Value the wellbeing benefits of the natural environment as a key strand of your wellbeing strategy.

Enable employees to switch off outside their agreed working hours.

The THRIVE recommendations in more detail

Tackle inequalities to achieve an inclusive culture of wellbeing

With co-creating ways of working comes the risk of a two-tiered system. BITC's research suggests that employees who would most benefit from individualised ways of working are least likely to be able to access them. With non-management employees, on-site workers, and employees that have experienced work-related poor mental health feeling less able to co-create ways of working with their organisation. Board-level management and those on higher salaries feel more able to access co-creation than those with lower incomes.

Work-related poor mental health is higher for employees from a Black, Asian, Mixed Race or other ethnically diverse backgrounds, women, younger people (18-35), employees who have experienced disability and LGBTQ+ people.

Overall, 58% of employees in the UK feel comfortable talking about stress in the workplace.^{ix}

This drops to 47% for Black employees and 44% for Asian employees. It also drops to 50% for those who have a disability that limits them a lot, and 44% for those on temporary or zero hours contracts.^x

Caring responsibilities create further disparities. The majority of women (6 in 10) with caring responsibilities have found they cannot apply for a job or promotion because of the challenge of combining paid work with their other responsibilities.^{xi} Over 15 million people live with a long-term health condition,^{xii} including long COVID,^{xiii} many of whom would be able to stay in and thrive in work if they were afforded to work in ways that enable them to balance their work and health.

Take action on this recommendation by:

- Ensuring Chief Executives to sign up to, and refresh their commitment to, the expanded [Race at Work Charter](#).
- Considering caring the norm, not the exception, by ensuring [equitable access to care across genders](#).
- Creating partnerships that connect people from disadvantaged groups to your job vacancies through the BITC [Opening Doors campaign](#).

How can BITC help?

- Our offer ranges from diversity and inclusion workshops and training, to engaging senior leaders and staff, through to long-term strategic projects and partnerships. Speak to your Relationship Manager or [email BITC's Advisory Services](#).

[CASE STUDY: Costain](#)

Learn how Costain is achieving parity between physical and mental health and safety.

Harness organisational purpose and values to attract and retain the best talent

BITC defines business purpose as “articulating why the business exists, beyond making a financial return, and how that benefits wider society”. A purpose-led business is one which states the positive difference it aims to make in the world. It also ensures this is embedded in the organisation’s strategy and planning.

It is no longer satisfactory to simply state your company’s purpose. Public trust that business will deliver on their social and environmental ambitions is low.^{xiv} Against the backdrop of so-called ‘greenwashing’ and ‘purpose washing’, it is never more important that your purpose is truly embedded into your core business decisions and actions. BITC’s [research](#) highlights that two-fifths of UK employees are motivated by their organisation being purpose-led.

Take action on this recommendation by:

- Embedding purpose across the areas of people, culture, and structure using BITC’s report *Embedding Purpose: lessons from business*, which outlines actions that are helping BITC member companies in their purpose journeys. The report contains inspiration and practical lessons to help, wherever your organisation is on its purpose journey.

How can BITC help?

- If you would like to assess how your business is performing in each of these areas of responsible business, participate in the [Responsible Business Tracker](#)[®], a measurement tool available to all BITC members, and for a cost to non-members.
- BITC’s Wellbeing Advisory offer includes a new ‘Your Job *Can* Be Good For You’ workshop, in which your line managers can explore tips, techniques, and best practice, enabling them to feel confident and equipped to co-create ways of working that

support wellbeing. To find out more about BITC’s Wellbeing Advisory service, including support with organisational policies, speak to your Relationship Manager or [email BITC’s Advisory Services](#).

Recognise and balance business and employee needs by providing flexibility in how, where, and when people work

No one size fits all. A personalised approach must be taken to enable employees to co-create ways of working, supported by managers, and aligned with organisational practices and policies.

Although line managers recognise that their team’s wellbeing is part of their role and remit, two thirds say they have had to put the organisation’s interests above their team’s wellbeing.

Currently, less than half of employees feel they can negotiate unrealistic deadlines. Managers must be trusted to co-create ways of working that balance the needs of both employee wellbeing and business needs.

There are many ways that work can be adapted and shaped to benefit personal wellbeing and business needs. These fall within six broad categories, although the way in which work can be adapted will differ for each job, and many can be actioned without the need for contractual changes.^{xv xvi xvii}

Take action on this recommendation by:

- Making the right to request flexible working a day-one right.
- Co-creating ways of working that support wellbeing, using the examples below, and starting with a simple question, ‘What way of working supports your wellbeing?’.

WAYS OF WORKING THAT SUPPORT WELLBEING	WHAT CAN BE DONE?
Schedule	Flexible working opportunities, such as adjusting start and finish times of work, job-sharing opportunities, or working from home.
Task	Adapting, adding, or dropping tasks from an employee's job, reviewing tasks connected to excessive pressure, workload, and deadlines are key to reducing poor mental health at work.
Mindset	Changing how the employee thinks about their job in relation to contributing to the shared purpose of the business.
Relational	Changing the person with whom the employee interacts with and how they do so to build social connection and wellbeing. For example, allocating an employee a new line manager, or providing an additional contact outside their team who energises them.
Environmental	Make changes to the social or physical environment of the work location according to employee preference, such as through access to nature and opportunities for active travel.
Developmental	Continuously review employee skills depending on their desired career path. Engage in opportunities to develop new skills through helping colleagues or managers in non-core tasks, seeking out extra training opportunities, or joining working groups.

Line managers can start co-creating with a simple question, 'What is the one thing that would make your job better?'

How can BITC help?

BITC's Wellbeing Advisory offer includes a new **'Your Job Can Be Good For You' workshop**, in which your line managers can explore tips, techniques, and best practice, enabling them to feel confident and equipped to co-create ways of working that support wellbeing. To find out more about BITC's Wellbeing Advisory offer, speak to your Relationship Manager or email BITC's [email BITC's Advisory Services](#).

CASE STUDY: RHA Wales

Learn how RHA Wales is enabling all employees to agree ways of working that support wellbeing, benefitting both individuals and businesses.

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[CASE STUDY: Heathrow](#)

Read how frontline employees at Heathrow airport access flexibility through choices, co-creating ways of working that meet individual and business needs.

[CASE STUDY: PwC](#)

Learn how PwC is enabling employees to co-create ways of working that support wellbeing through their employee value proposition - The Deal.

Innovate, pilot and integrate new approaches to respond effectively to fast changing employee and business needs

BITC's research highlights that 36% of UK employees experienced a work-related mental health problem in the past year.^{xviii} Of those who reported this, the leading underlying causes are excessive pressure, targets, workload or having to work overtime and/or rarely taking leave. This is understandable given that two thirds of employees say that work-life balance is important to them when asked to reflect on their job.^{xix}

While work can be part of the issue, it is also part of the solution by unlocking resources and performance through better ways of working. This requires creativity and demands businesses to adopt a test and learn approach, finding the solution that meets the needs of employees and the business.

Research shows that, as opposed to overall policies, decisions about flexible working need to be managed at the local level and based on what makes sense for the business.^{xx} What works for one person, might not work for others; what works for an individual, might not work for the team and the organisation; and what works today, might not work next week or in six months' time. Where something doesn't work, this is not a failure but an opportunity to try something different.

Central to this recommendation is integrating learning through continual monitoring, review, and

then adapting organisational strategy, practices and policies to embed the approaches that work.

Take action on this recommendation by:

- Innovating and piloting new approaches at a team level.
- Integrating learning into organisational wellbeing strategy to ensure all employees have access to positive outcomes of piloting.
- Sign up to BITC's Wellbeing Strategy Services to embed wellbeing into organisational culture.
- Join BITC's Advisory peer learning forums to learn best practice from business to inform your wellbeing strategy through Chatham House collaboration.

[CASE STUDY: Anglian Water Group](#)

See how Anglian Water Group has implemented the Workwell Model.

Value the wellbeing benefits of the natural environment as a key strand of your wellbeing strategy

At the heart of this recommendation is the recognition that what is good for our mental health and wellbeing is also good for our planet. Nature-based solutions can be used both to tackle climate change, as part of a green recovery, and to strengthen our resilience as individuals, teams and businesses, and as such must be established as a key pillar of integrated wellbeing strategies.

BITC's Toolkit [The Power of Nature for Employee Wellbeing](#) outlines the compelling evidence to support the wellbeing benefits of connecting with nature, biophilic design, and active green travel. It provides some great examples of how businesses are taking practical action on harnessing the power of nature for wellbeing. The examples prove that designing nature into business does not have to be expensive and can be fun for people and communities.

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Take action on this recommendation by:

- Embedding the natural environment into your wellbeing strategy using BITC's Toolkit, [The power of nature for employee wellbeing](#).

CASE STUDY: Anglian Water Group

Discover how Anglian Water Group has integrated the health and wellbeing benefits that nature can bring into their New Ways of Working programme.

CASE STUDY: Santander

Learn how Santander UK is embedding environmental wellbeing as a core objective for the build of its new office project.

Enable employees to switch off outside their agreed working hours

Less than 50% of employees feel able to 'switch off' from work (e.g., do not feel pressure to check emails or calls outside working hours).^{xxi} There has been a rise in the proportion of employees resigning as a result of a work-related poor mental health.

Be a switch off employer and encourage employees to disconnect from work outside their agreed working hours, improving their wellbeing and productivity.

Enable employees to co-create ways of working. This can reduce the leading work-related mental health risks (excessive pressure, workload, long hours, and lack of annual leave) while promoting what employees want most out of job-creation (i.e., work-life balance).

Consider mirroring Ireland's recent move to protect work life balance through the '[Right to Disconnect](#)'. Enabling employees to switch off includes three key elements:

- Employees not routinely working outside their normal working hours;
- Employees not being penalised for refusing to attend to work matters outside of normal working hours;
- Respecting another person's right to disconnect (for example: by not routinely emailing or calling outside normal working hours).

Take action on this recommendation by:

- Embedding 'switching off' practices into ways of working

TAKE ACTION NOW

If you are interested in improving the working lives of your employees, you can [register your interest in our Wellbeing Campaign](#).

We'll capture your details, understand a bit more about your current situation (confidentially), and ensure you then have what you need to start taking action.

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WHAT BUSINESS LEADERS SAY

Leaders are putting mental health at the centre of business decisions in response to the changing economic, social, and environmental landscape.

“It is integral for business leaders to demonstrate to all stakeholders just how serious we are about responsible business. Organisations need to consider the mental health of their colleagues as much as the other metrics by which we monitor performance – share price, profits, customer satisfaction – and evolve their culture and their strategies to support this shift.” **Jonathan Lewis, Chief Executive Officer, Capita and Chair of BITC’s Employment and Skills Leadership Team**

Leaders are taking an interconnected approach to realise individual and business benefits, bringing together health, inclusion, diversity, social good, and environmental sustainability.

“We need to be careful not to end up with a situation where we have a two-tiered workforce, where the people who come into work more progress more quickly. We need to think about why people don’t want to come into the workplace and consider whether for some ethnic minority groups, this is to avoid micro-aggressions.

We also need to consider the difference between what people want and what is potentially good for them, so that they don’t miss out on important learnings or opportunities that will benefit their goals and career progression in the long run.” **Naeema Choudry, Partner, Employment, Labour and Pensions, Eversheds Sutherland and member of BITC’s Race Equality Leadership Team**

“The social agendas around equity, diversity, inclusion, fairness, respect, decent work, are really amplified. A conversation around mental or physical health, it’s aiming at the same thing; it is human performance, and our priority is in

maintaining a safe system of work.” **Keith Chanter, Chief Executive Officer, EMCOR UK**

Leaders are moving beyond lip-service, translating words into action.

“People are an organisation’s greatest asset, which is why retaining top talent is absolutely vital.

Talented people aren’t going to settle for a company which invests less in them than they invest in themselves. Leaders must practice what they preach by investing in and upskilling their people, and creating opportunities for both new and present talent to thrive.” **Richard Iferenta, Partner and Vice Chair, KPMG**

Leaders recognise that this flexibility must be inclusive, not just available to those in certain roles, and share practical insights into how they are taking action in their organisations.

“We looked at the language in job adverts for operational roles and changed the language about the skills and knowledge needed for the role. By making the wording in our frontline Process Technician job adverts less ‘masculine’, the proportion of female applicants for the Process Technician role rose from 8% to 46%.

Sometimes it is difficult to flex roles in operational jobs, but our frontline teams are looking at shift patterns and we’ve been exploring innovation and new technology that opens up traditionally very manual jobs to a whole range of mixed abilities.” **Sarah Bentley, Chief Executive Officer, Thames Water and Chair of BITC’s Gender Equality Leadership Team**

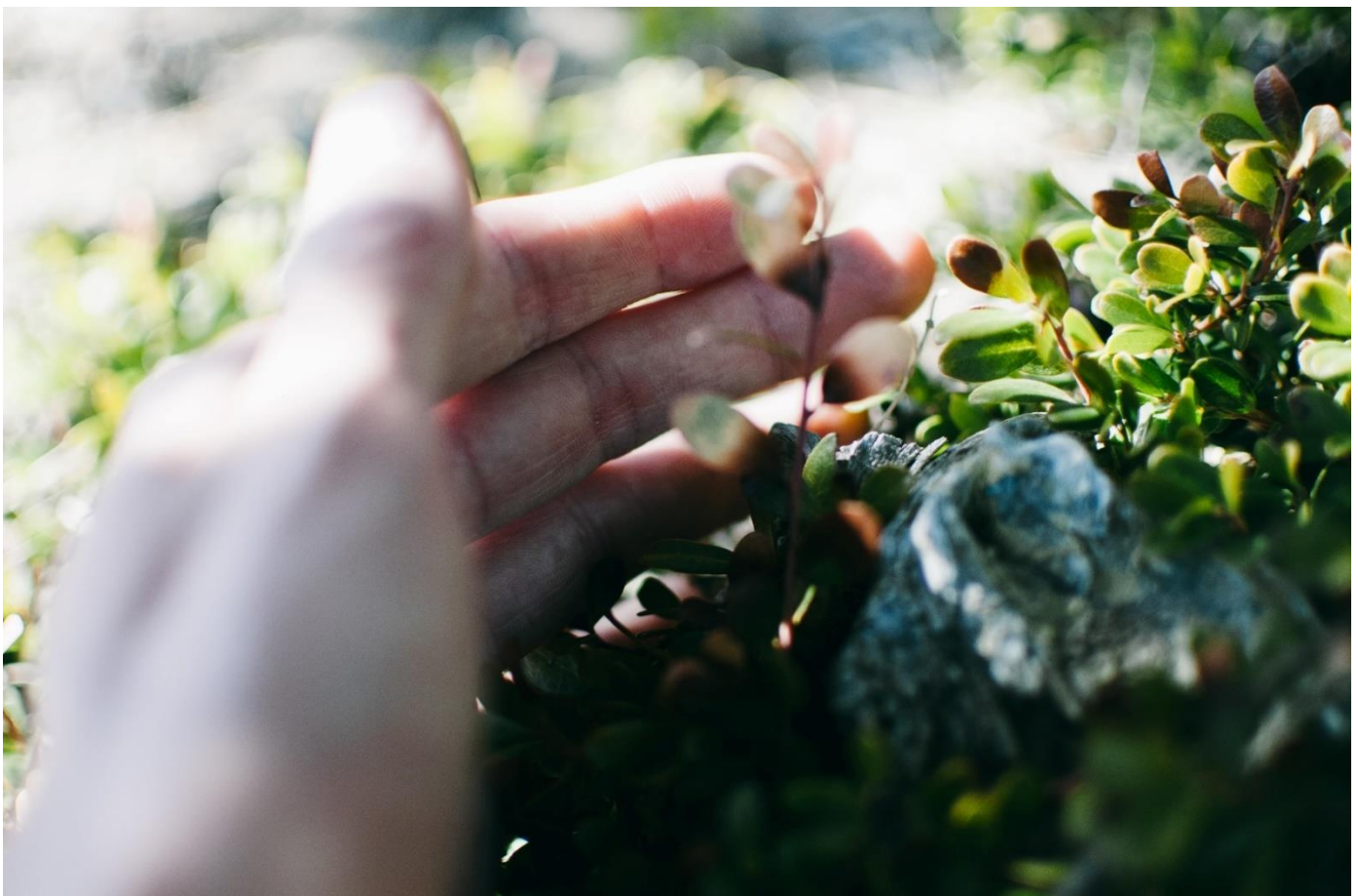
“We understand as an exec team we need flexibility because of the demands that come with the role. But we want it to be a business-wide approach, so everybody is included, and we completed a full review of our Ts and Cs. Everyone has now switched to a nine-day fortnight with complete flexibility. Our main

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principle is ensuring the service levels are not compromised for tenants and that we demonstrate delivery through our performance measures.

Our 'walk in my shoes' sessions led by colleagues and tenants have enabled us to share real-life stories and experiences across the business which has really opened people's eyes as to how someone's life experiences are often impacted by other factors.

From a governance perspective we have seen far greater focus on evidence of social impact from funders, particularly with the introduction of ESG reporting. We have been an early adopter of these principles ensuring we can demonstrate our approach to environmental sustainability, improving communities and ensuring strong governance is in place with the right culture to support this." **Luke Takeuchi, Chief Executive Officer, RHA Wales**



WHAT UK EMPLOYEES SAY

Data from the BITC YouGov 2022 study, a representative survey of 4,225 employees across the UK, provides rich insights into wellbeing and work.

There has been a slight fall in work-related mental ill-health, but we have a long way to go

- 36% of all employees experienced a work-related mental health problem in the last year vs 41% in 2020.^{xxii}

The disproportionate impact on minority groups must not be overlooked. Employees under 40, Black, Asian, Mixed Race and other ethnically diverse employees, women, and those with a disability, were more likely to experience a work-related mental health problem. LGBTQ+ employees are more likely to cite bullying from a manager as a cause than heterosexual employees (27% vs 22%).

- Over a third report that feeling alone or isolated has caused their non-work-related mental health problem. The effect of lockdown, marital problems, bereavement, long-term illness, or financial difficulties are each contributors for around a quarter of respondents.

Employees are less comfortable talking openly at work. Just over half of employees (51%) feel comfortable talking about mental health issues in the workplace (vs 56% in 2020)^{xxiii}

- Only 35% of employees experiencing a work-related mental health problem had told someone in their workplace, and 29% had not told anyone at all.^{xxiv}

Employees are more uncomfortable than they were in 2020 when talking about age, physical conditions, stress, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs, or financial difficulty too.

Businesses are failing employees when they most need support

Very few employees accessed support in managing their mental health problem at work: only 4% accessed an internal job move, 3% received coaching and mentoring, 7% received support with workload reduction and 3% had regular conversations with someone at work as a result of work-related mental health problem.^{xxv}

- 12% of employees who experienced a work-related mental health problem were forced out, demoted against their wishes, not promoted, or disciplined. For employees at Board level, this rose to 20%.^{xxvi}

“NOTHING WOULD BE ACTED ON AND COMPLAINING WOULD COUNT AGAINST ME.” *Employee, BITC YouGov 2022*

Work-life balance is the number one priority, but many businesses are not delivering on this

Work-life balance, salary, security, and flexibility feature in the top four for all employees, providing a clear steer on what businesses need to deliver to retain employees.

What is most important to you when thinking about your current job?

- 65% having a work life balance
- 63% the salary and benefits of a job
- 56% having job security
- 37% being able to work flexibly^{xxvii}

Yet, fewer than half of UK employees have access to flexible ways of working. Only 45% are able to ‘switch off’ from work, indicating that businesses need to do more to remove the pressure to check emails or take calls after hours.^{xxviii} While 40% can work from home in normal working hours, only 29% can choose when they start or finish their working day.^{xxix}

We must mitigate against the leading wellbeing risk, transforming our ways of working for good

Over the last six years that BITC has been running wellbeing research, excessive pressure and workload have been the leading causes of poor mental health at work. These factors represent the biggest barrier to creating ways of working that support wellbeing. Interestingly, our findings show that employees are rarely enabled to take positive action on this systemic cause.

“POOR COMMUNICATION, LAST MINUTE DEADLINES (24 HOURS’ NOTICE), LACK OF TRAINING, TASKS ARBITRARILY TAKEN AWAY FROM ME.” *Employee, BITC YouGov 2022*

Only 41% of employees with no management responsibility and 50% of managers are able to negotiate a reduction in unrealistic deadlines and excessive workloads.^{xxx} Employees describe work-life balance as the most important factor to making their job ‘good’ for them, but less than half of employees feel able to switch off from work (e.g. do not feel pressure to check emails/ calls after working hours) and 10% of employees have not been able to take their annual leave entitlement.^{xxxi} And, even if managers want to support their employees, 65% of them say that they are forced to put their organisations’ interests above their team or individual wellbeing (on a daily, often, and sometimes basis).^{xxxii}

65%

of employees say that they are forced to put their organisations’ interests above their team’s or individual wellbeing^{xxxiii}

Managers who have put the organisation’s interests above their team’s wellbeing are:

- Less likely to be comfortable talking about mental health at work (55% vs 64% who rarely/ never put the organisation’s interests above wellbeing).^{xxxiv}
- Less likely to think their own manager is genuinely concerned about their wellbeing (54% vs 68%).^{xxxv}
- Less likely to think their own manager recognises that providing emotional support is part of the job (50% vs 61%).^{xxxvi}

Confronting the elephant in the room

The ability to work flexibly is one of the most important features of work for 37% of employees, and in the top four important ingredients of a job for all employees.^{xxxvii} Yet, flexibility cannot be accessed fully if the volume of work and deadlines associated with them remain a constant concern and employees are not able to address issues around unmanageable workloads and deadlines.

WHAT OUR PARTNERS SAY

Mental health has deteriorated across the globe as the deep and long-term impact of the pandemic continues to unfold.^{xxxviii} In the UK alone, poor mental health costs between £53-56 billion, an increase of 25% since 2019, with 80% of the burden of these costs falling on the private sector.^{xxxix}

Echoing the BITC YouGov 2022 research, work is a cause of mental ill-health for too many. For those experiencing mental health problems, 54% cite the cause as too much work pressure, with too many priorities and targets, while 41% cite workload,^{xi} while just over a third (34%) said that in a normal week, their workload was 'too much'.^{xii}

The need for workplaces to develop comprehensive provision to protect, support and sustain their mental health has never been greater. According to a recent study by AXA, fewer than a quarter of people believe that the public health system in the UK provides adequate support for mental health and only 40% of employees were happy with their mental health provision.^{xiii} There is an urgent need for businesses to review how they protect, promote and support the mental health of their employees, and to accelerate preventative action by tackling the causes of work-related stress at source.

Taking action to retain employees makes good business sense

The Great Resignation is a reality for many businesses.^{xliii} Employees are reassessing what they want from their work and life, and many are no longer prepared to tolerate work that negatively impacts their mental health.

It takes, on average, 28 weeks for an employee to reach an 'optimum productivity level'. After accounting for lost productivity and recruitment costs, each employee replacement costs employers over £30,000, or between 10-30% upwards of salary costs.^{xliv}

Businesses must make connections between the multiple interconnecting priorities to realise synergistic benefits

Employees are looking for a renewed sense of purpose and meaning in work and crave social connection following the pandemic.^{xlv} BITC's [Embedding Purpose: Lessons from Business](#) report notes the importance of truly embedding purpose into a company's core business decisions and actions. BITC provides practical insights into how this can be achieved through people, culture, and structure to deliver on environmental and social commitments.^{xlvi}

In the context of increasing inequities, with a cost-of-living crisis set to place unprecedented pressures on so many of our population, we must not forget the critical importance of security, fair pay and opportunities for skills and development.^{xlvii}

Our connection with natural spaces is ever more important, with growing numbers experiencing eco-anxiety^{xlviii} and evidence highlighting the restorative and protective qualities of nature. Practical steps on how businesses can realise synergistic benefits of action on health and climate, such as through active travel and the greening of our environment, are outlined in BITC's Toolkit [The Power of Nature for Employee Wellbeing](#).^{xlix}

"We have always believed that wellbeing should be a key outcome of work and therefore that jobs can and should be good for you. Good work and good jobs are therefore good for individuals, will drive better organisational outcomes, and are supportive of our economies and our societies. But we also know there is a lot to do. Authentic and visible leadership, combined with strong people management capabilities and practices, are the pillars that support a healthy workplace. These are cornerstones of supportive and inclusive cultures which we should all be striving for." **Peter Cheese, Chief Executive, CIPD**

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“The last two years have had a profound impact on the mental health of us all. At work, we had to quickly adapt the way we lead and manage our organisations and deliver our activities, services and products. We have seen incredible innovation, creativity and compassion from leaders in the targeted and comprehensive support they have made available for employees and customers in response to increasing need.

But with the cost of mental health related sickness absence at a record high of £53-56 billion per year, staff wellbeing must be at the heart of our recovery moving forwards. Our research into the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on mental health found two in three (65%) adults surveyed said their mental health had become worse since the first national lockdown, while one in four (26%) had experienced mental health problems for the first time.

The scale of poor mental health within the workforce presents a huge challenge to employers – making sure they and their people managers are able to provide effective and appropriate support for employees experiencing new or worsening mental health problems.

Mind believes that we all have a role to play in helping close the disability employment gap, especially the UK Government and employers. People with mental health problems face many barriers to entering and staying in the workplace, including stigma, discrimination and outdated assumptions and misconceptions about mental health and how it can affect someone’s ability to do their job.

We know that feeling valued positively correlates with mental health and the right kind of work – that is a job suited to our unique abilities, skills and aspirations, with a supportive and forward-thinking employer – can benefit our mental health. We know that many people do not receive this due to the huge number of people who fall out of the workplace each year following a period of poor mental health.

We are now presented with the opportunity for a reset, and to fundamentally redesign the way we work and put employee wellbeing at the heart of this. This is the time to create workplaces where people can be their authentic self and be supported to thrive.” **Paul Farmer CBE, CEO, Mind**

“In the last decade, we’ve witnessed a sea-change in the approach employers are taking to the issue of mental health in the workplace. For some, the spur to action was the realisation that poor mental health was a driver of both absenteeism and presenteeism. Others took a more far-sighted view, driven by the insight that creating a psychologically safe workplace was key to improving not just the resilience of individual colleagues and their teams, but the entire performance of the organisation.

The pandemic has now caused a paradigm shift, and no wise business will ignore the emerging social contract, with employees realising work should not come at the cost of their wellbeing. While nobody would have wanted to go through this experience to discover it, it’s possible the pandemic has triggered change that progressive and intelligent employers will embrace, so that work can be good for everyone.” **Brian Dow, CEO, Mental Health UK**

“Before COVID-19, working from home was the most frequently requested workplace adjustment. The pandemic has shown that flexible working is possible for many roles and benefits many people. Yet too many employees still fall out of work as the result of inflexible and rigid workplace structures and rules: a colossal waste of talent. Workplace adjustments are so often the key to someone thriving, rather than just surviving, at work – or worse, falling out of the workplace altogether. Adjustments related to mental health and wellbeing are often cost-free, yet too often employers lack the confidence to have the conversation and to find creative solutions. I hope that this report helps to give them that confidence and to create a culture where employees feel able to ask for the support

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they need.” **Diane Lightfoot, CEO, Business Disability Forum (BDF)**

“Employers need Occupational Health (OH) to provide specialist support and advice to ensure they create healthy workplaces. OH works with HR and colleagues to deal with challenges on helping employees return to work, such as those with long COVID. Also, OH assists people with disabilities and long-term health conditions to maintain employment. With the current cost of living crisis, a focus on a culture of health, compassion and flexibility has never been as important.” **Nick Pahl, CEO, Society of Occupational Medicine (SOM)**

“Businesses of all shapes and sizes are competing for talent in a notoriously tight labour market. And so, job satisfaction, job design and your employee value proposition has never been more important. Placing health and wellbeing support and provision at the heart of that proposition is now table stakes for many firms. Beating The Great Resignation will be very difficult to achieve without it.” **Jordan Cummins, Health Director, Confederation of British Industry (CBI)**

How was the report put together?

This report draws on insights from the BITC YouGov 2022 survey, roundtables with business leaders, expert interviews, and a review of recent evidence.

The focus of the report was shaped by insights from our collaborative movement of BITC members and stakeholders, all of whom are concerned with revolutionising ways of working to support wellbeing (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, Mind, Society of Occupational Medicine, Mental Health UK, Business Disability Forum, and Confederation of British Industry).

Sections of the report are supplemented by expert inputs from interviews with senior business leaders from across all the BITC Leadership Teams, who together represent the full spectrum of responsible business (Wellbeing, Race, Gender Equality, Employment and Skills, Climate Action, and Global Goals Leadership Teams).



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