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EMPLOYEE

OUTLOOK

EMPLOYEE
VIEWS ON
WORKING LIFE

July 2016

FOCUS

*Mental health in
the workplace*

The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The not-for-profit organisation champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has a community of more than 140,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

Mental health in the workplace

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Foreword from the CIPD

‘The importance of supporting people’s mental health at work has slowly but surely gained recognition in the UK over the past few years, and with very good reason.’

The importance of supporting people’s mental health at work has slowly but surely gained recognition in the UK over the past few years, and with very good reason. The most recent large-scale survey of adults living in England found that nearly one person in four (23%) had at least one psychiatric disorder (Health and Social Care Information Centre 2009). This stark statistic means that a much higher proportion of people in work must be suffering from common mental health disorders, such as anxiety and depression, than has probably been assumed by most employers. A deeper understanding of people’s mental well-being at work has been almost unavoidable given the significant increase in the prevalence of mental health conditions this century: by 2006, according to the Department for Work and Pensions, the proportion of incapacity benefit claimants suffering from a mental health condition had increased to 40% compared with 25% in the mid-1990s (DWP 2006).

Greater awareness of the high proportion of people who experience a mental health problem at some point in their lives has encouraged a broader appreciation of holistic health and well-being approaches that address the psychological, as well as the physical, risks affecting people’s health. The upwards trajectory of stress and mental health conditions as a cause of sickness absence in UK organisations has also

helped to push mental well-being up the workplace agenda. The CIPD 2015 *Absence Management* survey, in partnership with Simplyhealth, reported stress and mental ill-health as two of the three top causes of long-term absence for non-manual workers (CIPD 2015). It also found that two-fifths (41%) of organisations claimed an increase in reported mental health problems in the past 12 months, and identified an association with long working hours and the extent to which operational demands take precedence over employee well-being.

It is against this backdrop that the CIPD commissioned YouGov to survey over 2,000 employees in June 2016 to identify their experiences and attitudes about mental health in the workplace. We carried out a similar survey in 2011, enabling us to compare any changes in employee attitudes and employer action in relation to managing mental health at work over the five-year period.

In this report we present our latest findings and highlight areas where employers can improve their support for people’s mental well-being at work.

Rachel Suff
Public Policy Adviser
CIPD



Foreword from Mind

Over the past few years, employee well-being has been rising up the agenda for employers in the UK. A key aspect of this has been, and is, the mental health of staff. Organisations depend on having a healthy and productive workforce and we know that when employees feel their work is meaningful and they are valued and supported, they tend to have higher well-being levels, be more committed to the organisation's goals and perform better.

Another important aspect of this is how we work. The way we work is changing and in-demand skills such as teamwork, collaboration, joint problem-solving, flexible working, resilience-building and staff development all require employees who are mentally healthy, resilient, motivated and focused. Linked to this are shifts in the views and aspirations of employees. As indicated in Deloitte's 2014 Millennial Survey, millennials (those born in the 1980s and 1990s) have shown very different preferences from their predecessors when it comes to workplace culture, well-being and self-development. Millennials prioritise a healthy work-life balance and a positive workplace culture, and are more likely to turn their back on the business that trained them if these needs are not met.

Despite the fact that we all have mental health, just as we all have physical health, and it operates on

a spectrum, it is often still a taboo subject in the workplace. Of those who have had to take time off due to workplace stress, a staggering 95% cited another reason for their absence as part of a survey we carried out in 2014. This is further supported by the results of this survey, which found that only 43% of respondents have disclosed their stress or mental health problems to their current employer or manager.

It seems we are now at a tipping point. Despite the increased awareness of the importance of addressing this issue, there's still a long way to go, with 42% of respondents in this survey reporting that they don't think that their employer fosters an open and inclusive working environment. In order to create a mentally healthy workplace, we recommend that employers put in place a comprehensive strategy to help people stay well at work, to tackle the root causes of work-related mental health problems and to support people who are experiencing a mental health problem in the workplace.

So what should the future look like? Given the rapidly growing profile of mental health in the past few years, there is an enormous opportunity to harness the public interest and really start to think progressively about what employers can do to push the agenda forward.

A key area of focus going forward is line manager capabilities. Research shows that an effective and supportive line management relationship is one of the key indicators of workplace well-being. Building healthy relationships at work is often a question of managers taking simple steps to support staff – ensuring they factor in regular catch-ups, provide clear priorities, celebrate employee successes, involve staff in decision making and mould their management style to suit the individual's needs.

The twin goals of increasing levels of staff well-being and engagement should be a major priority for UK business leaders – you can't have one without the other, as evidenced by our 2013 survey in which 60% of employees said they'd feel more motivated and more likely to recommend their organisation as a good place to work if their employer took action to support the staff mental well-being. In seeking to move rhetoric to reality, employers must mainstream good mental health and make it a core business priority. A mentally healthy workplace and increased employee engagement are interdependent – by looking after employees' mental well-being, staff morale and loyalty, innovation, productivity and profits will rise.

Emma Mamo

Head of Workplace Wellbeing
Mind

Key findings

The state of people's mental health at work

Overall, across the UK, almost three out of four employees (74%) describe their current mental health as good or very good and one-fifth believe it is moderate (21%). Just 5% of employees say their mental health is poor or very poor. However, a much higher proportion have experienced poor mental health at some stage of their life: in response to the question, '*have you ever experienced mental health problems while in employment?*', three respondents in ten (31%) said that they had.

Of those employees who have ever experienced a mental health problem while in employment, more than four in ten (42%) have had a mental health problem over the past 12 months to the extent it has affected their health and well-being. Our findings also indicate that those individuals who report they have experienced poor mental health while in employment are much less likely to say their current mental health is good and much more likely to report that their current mental health is moderate or poor compared with respondents who have not experienced mental health problems previously.

Demographic and sectoral variations in mental health

Women are less likely to describe their mental health currently as very good (28%) compared with men (33%).

The only significant variation according to age is the 55-plus age group, with employees aged 55 and over reporting a lower prevalence of mental health problems (23%).

Workers in the voluntary sector are more likely to report that they have ever experienced a mental health problem while in employment (46%), followed by public sector employees (36%), while private sector employees (28%) are least likely to have experienced poor mental health previously, although the survey did not explore the factors affecting these employee views.

The impact of poor mental health at work

Half (50%) of respondents who describe their mental health as poor have taken time off work for this reason but, conversely, half (49%) of those experiencing poor mental health have never taken time off because of it.

Just 4% of respondents say that poor mental health does not affect their performance at work, with 95% reporting that it does (1% said 'don't know'). Unsurprisingly, the majority of those individuals who are experiencing poor mental health, and have gone into work, are likely to report that their condition affects their performance in a range of ways.

By far the most common impact is finding it difficult to concentrate (85% of respondents), followed by it

taking longer to perform tasks (64%) and difficulty in making decisions (54%). Almost half struggle to juggle a number of tasks (48%) and are less patient with customers or clients (48%) as a result of attending work with poor mental health.

Supporting good mental health

In all, less than half of respondents (46%) report that their organisation supports employees who experience mental health problems very well or fairly well, while one in five (20%) say that their organisation supports such employees not very well or not at all. Almost three respondents in ten (28%) don't know how well their employer supports people who experience mental health problems.

Public and voluntary sector organisations are far more likely to support employees who experience mental health problems, according to our respondents. Almost two-thirds of public sector (65%) and voluntary sector (64%) employees think their organisation supports people who experience mental health problems very well or fairly well, compared with just 39% of employees in private sector organisations.

According to employees, the top five types of provision provided by employers to support people with mental health problems are phased return to work (32% of employees), access to flexible working

(30%), access to occupational health services (27%), access to counselling services (27%) and an employee assistance programme (19%).

The low proportion of organisations that provide training for line managers in managing and supporting people with mental health problems is disappointing: in all just 10% of organisations have this provision in place, according to our survey.

Fostering an open culture around mental health

Almost four respondents in ten (38%) believe that their organisation has an inclusive working environment in which staff are encouraged to talk openly about their mental health problems. However, more than four in ten (42%) don't think that their employer has an inclusive climate in relation to mental health issues.

Public and voluntary sector organisations are more proactive in this area, according to our survey: 55% of employees based in voluntary sector organisations and 51% of those based in the public sector believe that their organisation has an inclusive working environment, compared with 33% of people working for private sector employers.

Building a culture to support disclosure

In all, just over two in five (44%) employees would feel confident disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health problems to their current employer or manager, a similar proportion reported in our 2011 survey (41%).

Among the 101 employees who described their mental health as poor, less than half (43%) had disclosed their stress or mental health problems to their employer or manager.

Among the 38 respondents who had disclosed a mental health problem at work, the majority had received some level of support, with 7 individuals reporting that they had received a lot of support and 20 'a bit of support', but 11 say they had received no support.



Among the 101 employees who described their mental health as poor, less than half (43%) had disclosed their stress or mental health problems to their employer or manager.

Mental health at work

People’s mental health in the workplace

Overall, across the UK, almost three out of four employees (74%) describe their current mental health as good or very good and one-fifth believe it is moderate (21%) (see Table 1).

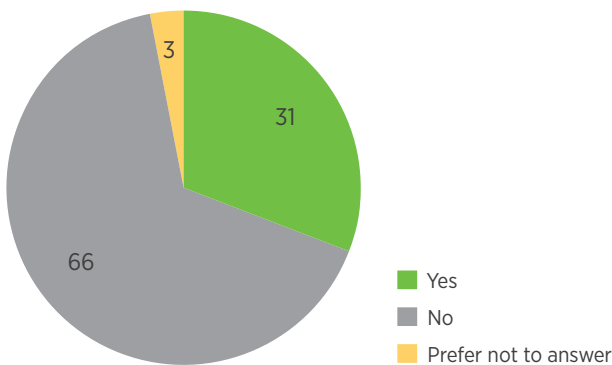
However, while a small percentage of employees in our 2016 survey describe their mental health as

poor or very poor, a much higher proportion have experienced poor mental health at some stage of their life: in response to the question, ‘have you ever experienced mental health problems while in employment?’, three respondents in ten (31%) said that they had (see Figure 1). This finding is not surprising, and demonstrates how people’s mental health can fluctuate; even if an individual has

a common mental health problem, such as anxiety or depression, for example, the condition and symptoms are not necessarily static and can change over time.

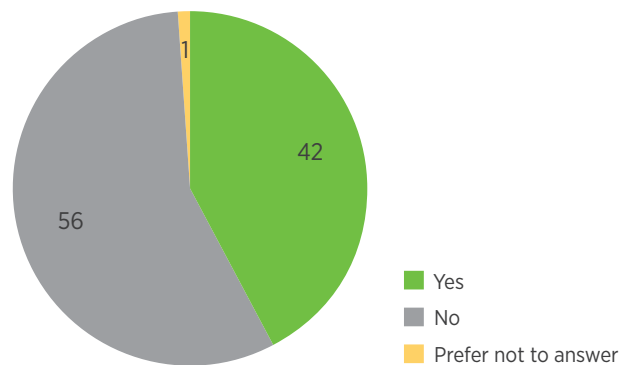
Of those employees who have ever experienced a mental health problem while in employment, more than four in ten (42%) have had a mental health problem over the past 12 months (see Figure 2).

Figure 1: Have you EVER experienced mental health problems while in employment? (%)



Base: All employees (n=2,056)

Figure 2: Have you experienced mental health problems while in employment OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS to the extent it has affected your health and well-being? (%)



Base: All employees who have ever experienced a mental health problem in employment (n=644)

Note: Figures may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Table 1: How would you describe your mental health currently? (%)

	All	Men	Women
Very good	30	33	28
Good	43	43	43
Moderate	21	18	23
Poor	4	3	5
Very poor	1	1	0
Don't know	1	1	0
Prefer not to answer	1	1	0

Base: All: 2,056; Men: 1,008; Women: 1,048.

Note: Figures may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Our findings reveal a slight increase over the past five years in the proportion of people who have experienced a mental health problem while in employment: three in ten (31%) employees in 2016 compared with one in four (26%) in 2011, although it should be noted that this is not a matched sample (see Table 2).

Our findings also indicate that those individuals who report they have experienced poor mental

health while in employment are much less likely to say their current mental health is good and much more likely to report that their current mental health is moderate or poor compared with respondents who have not experienced mental health problems previously (see Table 3).

Of the 4% of the overall sample (85 employees) who describe their mental health as poor, 85% are respondents who have experienced

mental health problems previously in employment, and just 13% are individuals who have not experienced such problems.

Conversely, of the 30% of the overall sample (622 employees) who report that their mental health is very good, 85% are respondents who say that they have no previous history of mental health problems while just 14% have experienced mental health problems in the past.

Table 2: Have you ever experienced mental health problems while in employment? (%)

	2016	2011
Yes	31	26
No	66	71
Prefer not to answer	3	2

Base: All employees (n=2,056)

Base: All employees (n=2,068)

Note: This is not a matched sample.

Table 3: Proportion of respondents who have experienced mental health problems while in employment who report that their current mental health is good, moderate or poor (%)

Description of mental health	Have experienced problems while in employment	Have NOT experienced problems while in employment	Prefer not to answer	Base
Very good	14	85	1	622
Good	25	73	1	894
Moderate	56	38	6	425
Poor	85	13	2	85
Very poor	100	0	0	10

Note: Figures may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Demographic and sectoral differences in people's mental health

There are slight variations in people's experience of mental health problems based on demographics such as gender and age. Our 2016 findings reveal that women are less likely to describe their mental health currently as very good (28%) compared with men (33%) (see Table 1) and are significantly more likely to have ever experienced a mental health problem while in employment compared with their male colleagues (women: 36%; men: 26%) (see Table 4). Women are also more likely to say that they have experienced mental health problems while in employment over the past 12 months to the extent that it has affected their health and well-being (45% compared with 38% of men; see Table 5).

The only significant variation according to age for 2016 is the 55-plus age group, with employees over 55 reporting a lower prevalence of mental health problems (23%) compared with other age cohorts. This is a slightly surprising finding as it could be assumed that, as people in this age group are older, they may be more likely to have experienced a mental health problem at some stage of their life.

A breakdown of our findings according to broad sector also reveals a significant variation in people's experience of mental health: workers in the voluntary sector are more likely to report that they have ever experienced a mental health problem while in employment (46%), followed by public sector employees (36%), while private sector employees

(28%) are least likely to have experienced poor mental health previously (see Table 4).

Causes of mental health problems

Among people who describe their mental health as poor, 7% say this is the result of problems at work and 37% believe this is due to problems outside work in their personal life; however, the majority (54%) attribute their poor mental health to a combination of problems at work and outside work in their personal life (see Table 6).

Impact of poor mental health in the workplace

Half (50%) of respondents who describe their mental health as poor have taken time off work for this reason (see Table 7).

Table 4: Have you EVER experienced mental health problems while in employment? (%)

	All	Men	Women	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Private sector	Public sector	Voluntary sector
Yes	31	26	36	30	35	35	36	23	28	36	46
No	66	71	62	64	60	62	62	75	69	62	51
Prefer not to answer	3	3	2	6	6	3	2	2	3	3	4

Base: All: 2,056; Men: 1,008; Women: 1,048; 18-24: 184; 25-34: 198; 35-44: 431; 45-54: 565; 55+: 678; Private sector: 1,626; Public sector: 172; Voluntary sector: 226.
Note: Figures may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Table 5: Have you experienced mental health problems while in employment OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS to the extent it has affected your health and well-being? (%)

	All	Men	Women	Private sector	Public sector	Voluntary sector
Yes	42	38	45	43	45	30
No	56	61	53	55	55	69
Prefer not to answer	1	1	2	2	0	1

Base: All who have ever experienced a mental health problem while in employment: 644; Men: 268; Women: 376; Private sector: 470; Public sector: 61; Voluntary sector: 105.

Note: Figures may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

It is noteworthy that half (49%) of those experiencing poor mental health have never taken time off because of it. As well as challenging the assumption that an individual with a mental health problem will necessarily experience a significant level of sickness absence, this finding highlights the importance of employers having in place a good

framework to support people's mental health on a day-to-day basis in the workplace.

Table 8 shows the high frequency with which people attend work while experiencing poor mental health, with 44% always going into work and a further 52% sometimes doing so.

Never taking time
off work

49%

It is noteworthy that half (49%) of those experiencing poor mental health have never taken time off because of it.

Table 6: Would you say your mental health is poor as a result of problems at work, problems outside of work in your personal life or a combination of both? (%)

	All
Problems at work	7
Problems outside work in personal life	37
A combination of problems at work and outside work in personal life	54
Don't know	2

Base: All whose mental health is poor (n=101)

Table 7: Have you ever taken time off from work as a result of poor mental health (for example stress, anxiety or depression)? (%)

	All
Yes	50
No	49
Don't know/can't remember	1

Base: All whose mental health is poor (n=101)

Table 8: How often have you gone into work when experiencing poor mental health (for example stress, anxiety or depression)? (%)

	All
Always	44
Sometimes	52
Rarely	2
Never	1
Don't know/can't remember	1

Base: All whose mental health is poor (n=101)

'It's not surprising that individuals who are experiencing poor mental health, and have gone into work, are likely to report that their condition affects their performance in a range of ways.'

As Figure 3 shows, it's not surprising that individuals who are experiencing poor mental health, and have gone into work, are likely to report that their condition affects their performance in a range of ways. Just 4% of respondents say that poor mental health does not affect their performance at work.

Among the overwhelming majority of people who report that their poor mental health does affect

their behaviour if they have gone into work at this time, by far the most common impact is finding it difficult to concentrate (85% of respondents), followed by it taking longer to perform tasks (64%) and difficulty in making decisions (54%). Almost half struggle to juggle a number of tasks (48%) and are less patient with customers or clients (48%) as a result of attending work with poor mental health.

Figure 3: Ways in which poor mental health in the workplace affects performance (%)



Base: All who have attended work while experiencing poor mental health (n=99)

Supporting good mental health

Organisational support for employees with mental health problems

In all, less than half of respondents (46%) report that their organisation supports employees who experience mental health problems very well or fairly well, while one in five (20%) say that their organisation supports such employees not very well or not at all (see Table 9). Although the perceived level of organisational support for people with mental health problems is disappointingly low, the findings still represent a slight improvement compared with our 2011 survey, when 37% of respondents said that their organisation supported employees with mental health problems very well or fairly well.

It is notable that almost three respondents in ten (28%) don't know how well their employer supports people who experience

mental health problems – this could imply that there is an absence of support, or it could mean that the support is there if needed but it is not adequately communicated across the workforce. Although individuals are more likely to have a detailed knowledge of the provision on offer if they reach a stage where they need to access it, it's important that all employees know what kind of support is available should they need it, because that knowledge is a key element determining whether or not employees feel supported in their mental health.

Public and voluntary sector organisations are far more likely to support employees who experience mental health problems according to our respondents. Almost two-thirds of public sector (65%) and voluntary sector (64%) employees think their organisation supports people who experience mental

health problems very well or fairly well, compared with just 39% of private sector organisations.

This finding chimes with the results of the CIPD 2015 *Absence Management* survey, in partnership with Simplyhealth, in relation to how proactively organisations in different sectors manage stress and mental health (CIPD 2015). For example, it found that 72% of public sector organisations and 64% of non-profit organisations that rank stress among their top five causes of absence are taking steps to address it, compared with 54% of private sector organisations.

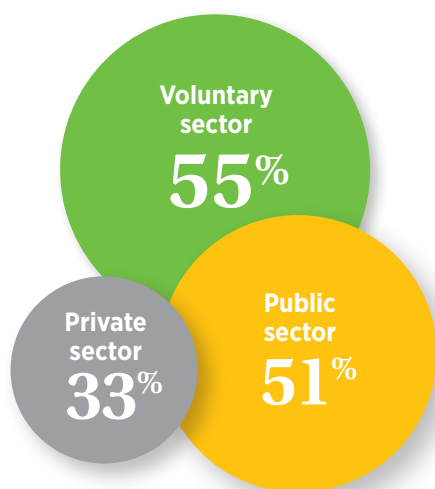
Our 2016 *Employee Outlook* survey finds that employees working in large organisations are more likely to think that their organisation supports people with poor mental health, while those working in small organisations are least likely to think that this is the case (see Table 9).

Table 9: In your opinion, how well does your organisation support employees who experience mental health problems? (%)

	All	Private sector	Public sector	Voluntary sector	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Very well	11	10	11	16	13	8	8	12
Fairly well	35	29	54	47	26	24	33	41
Not very well	13	12	14	16	6	12	14	14
Not at all well	7	7	5	2	5	8	9	6
Don't know	28	32	16	17	22	33	34	27
Not applicable	7	9	0	1	29	15	2	0

Base: All: 2,056; Private sector: 1,626; Public sector: 172; Voluntary sector: 226; Micro: 258; Small: 310; Medium: 316; Large: 1,138.

Note: Figures may not sum to 100 because of rounding.



According to our survey: 55% of employees based in voluntary sector organisations and 51% of those based in the public sector believe that their organisation has an inclusive working environment in which staff are encouraged to talk openly about their mental health problems, compared with 33% of people working for private sector employers.

Fostering an open and inclusive working environment around mental health is a vital step in reducing the stigma and misconceptions that are still evident in many sections of society. It's encouraging that there is a slight improvement in the proportion of respondents who report that such an environment exists in our 2016 survey compared with five years ago when we asked the same question of respondents. As Table 10 shows, almost four in ten (38%) employees believe that their organisation has an inclusive working environment in which staff are encouraged to talk openly about their mental health problems. This compares with just a quarter (24%) of respondents in 2011.¹

However, given that an open culture around mental health is the first fundamental step in raising awareness about mental health issues and creating an environment where people feel comfortable to disclose their own experience of poor mental health,

it's disappointing that, in 2016, more than four respondents in ten (42%) don't think that their employer has an inclusive climate in relation to mental health issues.

Again, it is public and voluntary sector organisations that are more proactive in this area, according to our survey: 55% of employees based in voluntary sector organisations and 51% of those based in the public sector believe that their organisation has an inclusive working environment in which staff are encouraged to talk openly about their mental health problems, compared with 33% of people working for private sector employers. There is not a marked variation in employees' perceptions of an inclusive working environment in relation to size of organisation, although those respondents working in micro and large organisations are more likely to report that their workplace climate encourages people to talk openly about their mental health problems.

Table 10: Do you think your organisation has an inclusive working environment in which staff are encouraged to talk openly about their mental health problems? (%)

	All	Private sector	Public sector	Voluntary sector	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Yes - very much	10	10	8	18	18	9	6	9
Yes - a little	28	23	44	37	22	20	24	32
No - not very much	24	24	24	31	15	24	24	27
No - not at all	18	20	12	7	12	23	27	16
Don't know	15	17	12	7	11	14	18	15
Not applicable	5	6	0	0	24	9	1	0

Base: All: 2,056; Private sector: 1,626; Public sector: 172; Voluntary sector: 226; Micro: 258; Small: 310; Medium: 316; Large: 1,138.
 Note: Figures may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

¹ The 2011 survey asked, 'In your opinion, does your organisation encourage staff to talk openly about mental health problems?'

Organisations that provide support to manage and help people with mental health problems adopt a number of approaches, according to the employees taking part in our survey (see Table 11). The top five types of provision are phased return to work (32%), access to flexible working (30%), access to occupational health services (27%), access to counselling services (27%) and an employee assistance programme (19%).

However, several types of support are rarely provided, including resilience or mindfulness training for employees (10%), training for line managers in managing and supporting people with mental health problems (10%) and having mental health champions to raise awareness of the importance of mental health at work and the support available (5%). Employers

should consider implementing these more preventative types of steps to promote good mental health, as well as reactive approaches that come into play when people are already experiencing poor mental health. Investment in prevention techniques, as well as building an open and supportive culture around mental health, could help to enhance people's mental well-being.

Line managers are pivotal in shaping employees' experience of work and promoting their well-being but do not always benefit from the right training, as our findings show. As a consequence, they often lack the ability or skills to implement policies and promote health and well-being, particularly in relation to stress management and mental health. The low proportion of organisations that provide training for line managers

in managing and supporting people with mental health problems is disappointing: in all, just 10% of organisations have this provision in place, according to our survey.

The results also indicate that a significant proportion (26%) of employees don't know what support is provided by their employer and five in ten (21%) report that their organisation does not have any provision in place to help people with poor mental health.

In line with our earlier findings in relation to sector differences in the level of support provided to employees with mental health problems, our findings show that public and voluntary sector organisations are more likely to provide every type of support compared with private sector employers.

Table 11: What support, if any, does your employer provide to manage and help people with mental health problems? (%)

Type of support provided	All	Private sector	Public sector	Voluntary sector
Phased return to work	32	22	61	51
Access to flexible working	30	25	45	45
Access to occupational health services	27	17	60	32
Access to counselling services	27	18	56	46
Don't know	26	30	15	15
None – my employer does not provide support	21	28	3	8
Employee assistance programme	19	15	33	25
Resilience training/mindfulness training for employees	10	5	30	18
Training for line managers in managing and supporting people with mental health problems	10	6	26	11
Mental health champions – often senior members of staff who raise awareness of the importance of mental health at work and the support available	5	2	15	3
Mental health first aiders – people trained in understanding mental health problems who people can go to for support	3	1	7	4

Base: All: 2,056; Private sector: 1,626; Public sector: 172; Voluntary sector: 226.

Note: Figures may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Building a culture to support disclosure

‘Among the 101 employees who described their mental health as poor, less than half (43%) have disclosed their stress or mental health problems to their employer or manager.’

Confidence and direct experience relating to disclosure at work

In all, just over two in five (44%) employees would feel confident disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health problems to their current employer or manager, a similar proportion reported in our 2011 survey (41%).

There is no variation in people’s level of confidence according to gender and only slight variation according to sector, although 57% of employees based in the voluntary sector would feel confident in

making such a disclosure compared with 47% of public sector employees and 43% of those working in the private sector (see Table 12).

Among the 101 employees who described their mental health as poor, less than half (43%) have disclosed their stress or mental health problems to their employer or manager (see Figure 4). This means that these individuals won’t have been able to access any of the support that may be available to help people with mental health problems in their organisation.

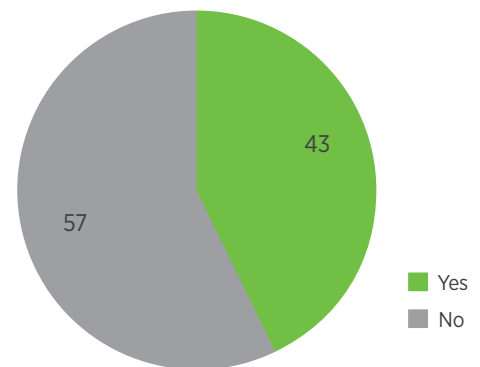
Table 12: Would you feel confident disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health problems to your current employer or manager? (%)

	All	Men	Women	Private sector	Public sector	Voluntary sector
Yes	44	44	44	43	47	57
No	43	43	43	43	42	31
Don't know	13	14	12	14	10	12

Base: All: 2,056; Men: 1,008; Women: 1,048; Private sector: 1,626; Public sector: 172; Voluntary sector: 226.

Note: Figures may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Figure 4: Have you disclosed your stress or mental health problems to your employer or manager? (%)

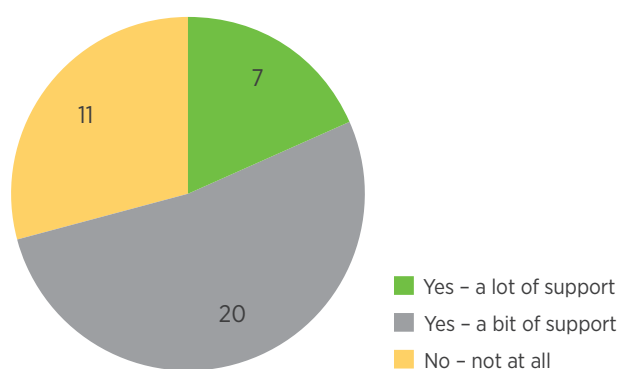


Base: All whose mental health is poor (n=101)

Among the 38 respondents who had disclosed a mental health problem at work, the majority had received some level of support (see Figure 5). Disappointingly, 13 of these 38 employees say

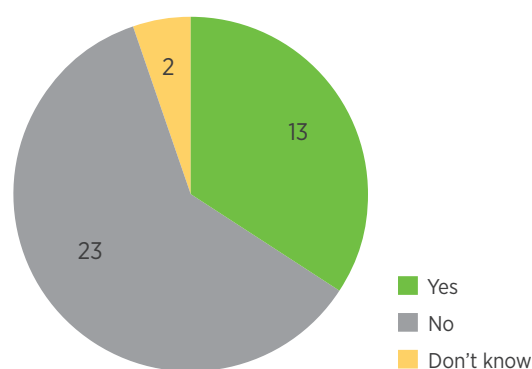
they have experienced adverse treatment from their employer or manager as a result of disclosing stress or mental health problems, although this does represent a very small sample (see Figure 6).

Figure 5: Did you receive any support from your employer or manager to manage your mental health and the demands of your job?



Base: All who have disclosed their poor mental health to their employer: n=38

Figure 6: Did you experience any adverse treatment from your employer or manager as a result of disclosing stress or mental health problems?



Base: All who have disclosed their poor mental health to their employer: n=38

Conclusion

Employers cannot afford to ignore people's mental health in the workplace. Our survey finds that more than three people in ten (31%) have ever experienced mental health problems while in employment. This figure rises to 36% in the case of female employees and 46% in respect of people working in the voluntary sector.

We have seen a considerable increase in the number of people experiencing poor mental health at some stage of their life over the past two decades in the UK. This trend is not surprising. Complex changes in the world of work and society mean that individuals are now at risk from a range of organisational and environmental pressures. People's work and domestic lives have become more entwined and there is strong evidence pointing to an intensification of work. This wider backdrop affecting people's mental well-being is reflected in our findings, with well over half of respondents (54%) who describe their mental health as poor attributing this to a combination of problems at work and outside in their personal life.

Employers have a duty of care in respect of the people they employ, which also applies to looking after employees' mental health. However, the reasons why organisations need to act now to promote good mental well-being

and support people who experience poor mental health goes way beyond the legal imperative. Aside from it being the right thing to do in the modern workplace of the twenty-first century, fostering more mentally healthy organisations makes good business sense. The Centre for Mental Health (then called the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health) estimates the total cost to employers of mental health problems among their workforce at £26 billion a year (Centre for Mental Health 2007). This figure includes £8.4 billion in sickness absence costs and £15.1 billion in reduced productivity.

Our findings indicate that a considerable proportion of people attend work when they are experiencing mental health difficulties, with 44% always going into work and a further 52% sometimes doing so. On one level this finding challenges the assumption that people with poor mental health typically take large amounts of time off sick. However, this finding also raises concern about the potential level of presenteeism associated with poor mental health. Presenteeism can be a hidden issue in the workplace, but is nonetheless just as important for employers to recognise and manage as mental-health-related sickness absence.

The overwhelming majority of people experiencing mental health difficulties who go into work report

that it affects their performance, another compelling reason why employers need to understand and support people who are in this situation. Many individuals find it difficult to concentrate, or take longer to perform tasks, or have difficulty in making decisions. If an employer is aware of the challenges faced by individuals, and there is a supportive dialogue between the employee and their line manager, it should be possible for the organisation to put in place helpful measures, such as adjustments to workload or a small change in working hours. It is therefore disappointing that less than half of respondents (46%) report that their organisation supports employees who experience mental health problems very well or fairly well, according to our survey.

Our survey also shows that well under half (44%) of employees would feel confident disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health problems to their current employer or manager. Creating an open culture around mental health is the first fundamental step in raising awareness about mental health issues and fostering an environment where people feel comfortable to disclose their own experience of poor mental health: if individuals don't disclose their mental health problem at work, they will not receive any organisational support if it is available.

In 2011 the CIPD published joint guidance with the mental health charity Mind that includes disclosure tools for managers (CIPD and Mind 2011). The guide points to growing recognition on the part of employers that they need to act on mental health – ‘but they feel ill equipped to do so’, with disclosure seen as the biggest barrier, creating a ‘vicious circle’ for both employees and employers. It is therefore not encouraging that, in the five years since we surveyed employees in 2011 about their attitude to disclosure, there has been a tiny increase of just three percentage points (from 41% in 2011 to 44% in 2016) in the proportion of employees who would feel confident disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health problems at work.

Much of the day-to-day responsibility for managing the mental health of employees falls on line managers, including implementing stress management initiatives and encouraging those with problems at work or home to seek appropriate help and support. Training in this area is vital to ensure that managers have the confidence and competence to implement policies sensitively and fairly, and can hold difficult conversations with individuals when needed. Training line managers to have an open and supportive dialogue with staff, and having the knowledge to signpost people to specialist sources of mental health support if necessary, are fundamental elements of how an employer should address the psychological aspects of supporting people’s health and well-being at work.

Our 2015 *Absence Management* survey, in partnership with Simplyhealth, which surveyed employers on the type of mental health support they have in place, found that 30% of organisations provide training to help managers effectively manage and support staff with mental health problems. This is a more encouraging finding compared with our 2016 *Employee Outlook* results, which show that just 10% of employees say their employer provides line manager training in this area. However, both surveys indicate that there is a lot of scope for more employers to introduce such training for their managers. In terms of what mental-health-related training for line managers should cover, our 2015 survey found that it most frequently includes spotting the early warning signs of possible issues, followed by where to signpost employees to for support, how to have good-quality conversations with staff who are experiencing mental health issues, and how to treat everyone as an individual with different needs.

Despite greater awareness about the need to pay attention to the psychological, as well as the physical, aspects of people’s health and well-being at work, our survey shows that there is some way to go before the majority of employers develop a robust framework in this area. If people have good mental health, and feel supported during times of poor mental health, it is not a leap to assume that they will feel more motivated, engaged and productive at work. The urgency with which employers should be addressing this agenda will only increase, and not abate, in the years to come.

‘If people have good mental health, and feel supported during times of poor mental health, it is not a leap to assume that they will feel more motivated, engaged and productive at work.’

Background to the surveys

2016

On behalf of the CIPD, YouGov undertook this 2016 research among UK employees. The survey was conducted online via the YouGov panel and was administered to members of the YouGov Plc UK panel of more than 350,000 individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys.

The fieldwork was carried out among 2,056 working adults between 12 and 27 June 2016, and the sample was selected and weighted to be representative of the UK workforce in relation to sector (private, public, voluntary), size and industry type. The sample profile is normally derived from census data or, if not available from the census, from industry-accepted data. Size of organisation was classified in the following way: sole trader (one-person business), micro business (2–9), small business (10–49), medium (50–249) and large (more than 250).

2011

In 2011, YouGov conducted a quarterly online survey for the CIPD of 2,068 UK employees from 16–21 September 2011. This survey was administered to members of the YouGov Plc UK panel of more than 285,000 individuals who had agreed to take part in surveys. The sample was selected and weighted to be representative of the UK workforce in relation to sector (private, public, voluntary), size, industry type and full-time/part-time working by gender. The sample profile is normally derived from census data or, if not available from the census, from industry-accepted data.

Panellists who matched the sample profile (as explained above) were selected at random from the YouGov Plc UK panel and were sent an email inviting them to take part in the survey. Respondents were drawn from a mixture of public, private and voluntary organisations. Size of organisation was classified in the following way: sole trader (one-person business), micro business (2–9), small business (10–49), medium (50–249) and large (more than 250).

Note: YouGov's raw data is produced to two decimal places and within the data tables each percentage is rounded to the nearest whole number. The nets are calculated using the raw data (that is, two decimal places) and then also rounded to the nearest whole number. As a result of this rounding process, there may be instances in the report where figures do not add up to the expected total.

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