SECTION 1.

THE STATE OF WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

55%

In the UK, over half of workers overall say they are experiencing, or have previously experienced, mental health issues (globally 52%)

26%

Are experiencing ongoing mental health issues (globally 21%)

56%

Are or have been concerned about their mental health (globally 68%)
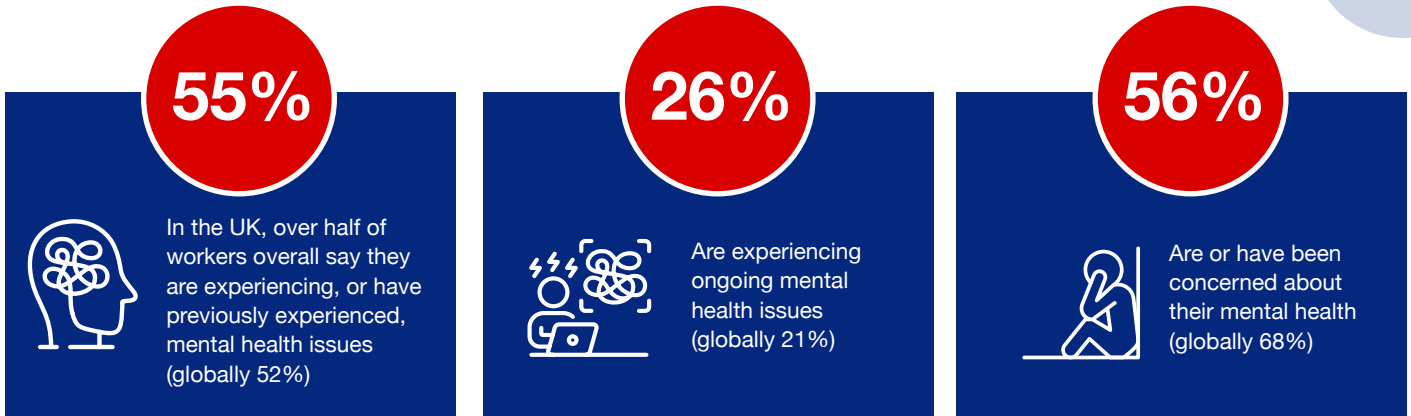
ISSUES EXPERIENCED IN THE PRIOR MONTH:

50%
CONCERNS ABOUT MONEY
(globally 50%)

45%
STRESS AT WORK
(globally 52%)

34%
CONCERNS ABOUT OWN HEALTH
(globally 39%)

FEELINGS AT WORK IN THE PRIOR MONTH:

LACK OF INTEREST, MOTIVATION, OR ENERGY — **40%** GLOBALLY 41%

DIFFICULTY FOCUSING — **32%** GLOBALLY 33%

NEGATIVE THOUGHTS — **26%** GLOBALLY 29%
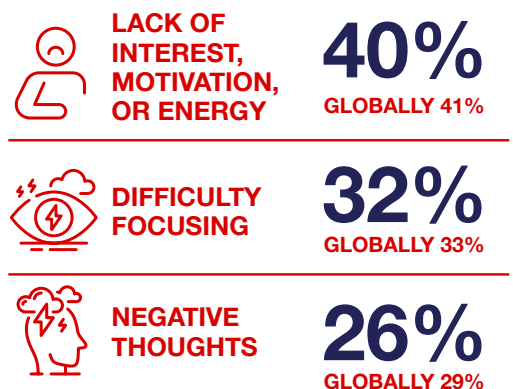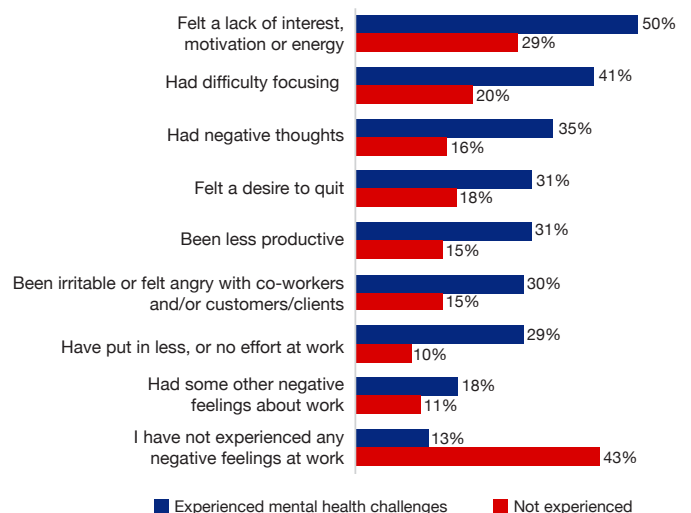
At 55%, UK workers' experience of mental health issues at work is only slightly higher than found globally (52%), but a lower proportion (56% compared with 68% globally) are concerned about their mental health. When asked whether they had felt negative emotions at work over the previous month, 87% of workers with mental health issues in the UK said they had felt one or more (compared to 56% of employees who have not experienced mental health issues).

A lack of interest, motivation or energy – symptoms often associated with burnout - was the most commonly experienced by those affected by mental health challenges (50% vs 29% amongst those not affected). Difficulty focusing came second (41% vs 20%). Worryingly, 31% considered their productivity was reduced, and three in ten felt angry or irritable towards co-workers or clients (30%), or felt a desire to quit their job over the previous month (31%) – showing the extent to which mental health can influence behaviours and mindsets in the workplace.

Feelings at work

	Experienced mental health challenges	Not experienced
Felt a lack of interest, motivation or energy	50%	29%
Had difficulty focusing	41%	20%
Had negative thoughts	35%	16%
Felt a desire to quit	31%	18%
Been less productive	31%	15%
Been irritable or felt angry with co-workers and/or customers/clients	30%	15%
Have put in less, or no effort at work	29%	10%
Had some other negative feelings about work	18%	11%
I have not experienced any negative feelings at work	13%	43%

THE GLOBAL BUSINESS COLLABORATION
for Better Workplace Mental Health

Forty-five percent of workers in the UK mention they have experienced stress at work in the month before the survey – making it the highest-ranking issue behind concerns about money.

SECTION 2.
STIGMA AND THE BARRIERS TO PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AT WORK

In the UK, stigma is still holding people back from sharing mental health issues at work: less than half of respondents (45%, equal to the global average) feel that people would not be adversely impacted if they shared their thoughts and emotions in their place of work.

Thirty-five percent of UK respondents overall feel there is stigma in their workplace around mental health (37% globally). In those workplaces, 57% of those affected by mental health challenges say they have felt stigma personally as a result of those issues (with the global proportion also being 57%.)
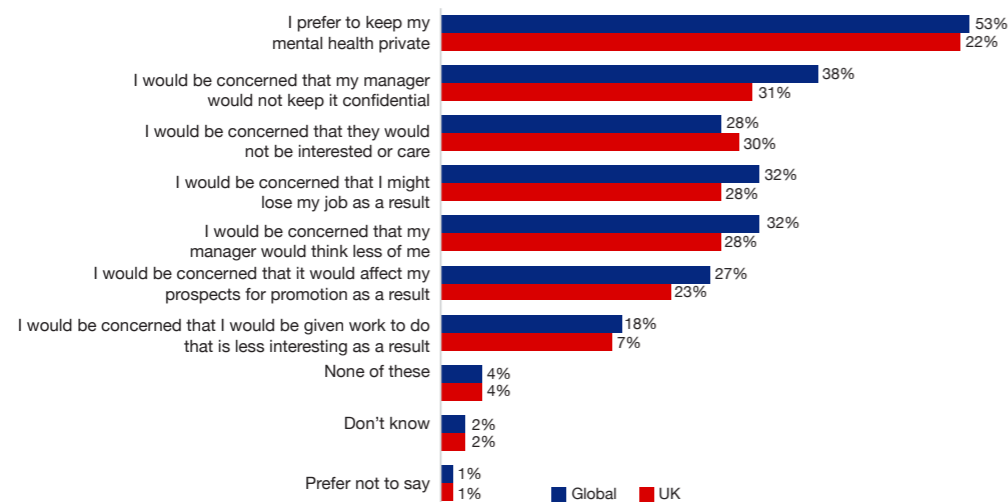
Among those affected by poor mental health in the UK, 52% have told their managers about their issues, broadly in line with the global figure of 53%, and 47% of those have been discriminated against as a result, only slightly lower than the global figure of 50%. This proportion is markedly higher in under-represented groups (71% neurodivergent and 66% with a disability.)

Fifty-five percent of workers in the UK are willing to share mental health issues with their managers (in line with the global average of 56%) and 60% would be comfortable disclosing them as the reason for taking time off (61% globally).

While the reasons behind a person's mental health issues are often complex, the data shows that work-related causes play a significant role. Forty-five percent of workers in the UK mention they have experienced stress at work in the month before the survey – making it the highest-ranking issue behind concerns about money. The proportion of employees affected by work-related stress reaches 55% amongst Gen Zs and 51% among millennials.

Thirty-six percent of Gen Z workers in the UK also mention experiencing difficult relationships at work – higher than the global average of 28%. UK Gen Zs are also more likely to have negative thoughts (42%

in comparison to a 26% UK overall average and 38% of Gen Zs globally), and consider they have been less productive (34% against 31% globally).

In considering the impact of various work-related aspects on mental health and in line with global numbers, more people in the UK believe their workload undermines their mental health (28%) than supports it (23%). The most supportive aspects for workers in the United Kingdom are the management style of their manager (35%), the culture at work (33%), and the working hours (31%), although those numbers are slightly below global averages.

47%
(globally 50%)
Discriminated when telling manager

Key factors in disclosure
Manager not caring 30% (globally 28%), **or not keeping confidential** (31% vs 38% globally)

Stigma in the workplace
35%
(globally 37%)

55%
(globally 56%)
Willing to share experience of mental health issues with manager

47%
(globally 42%)
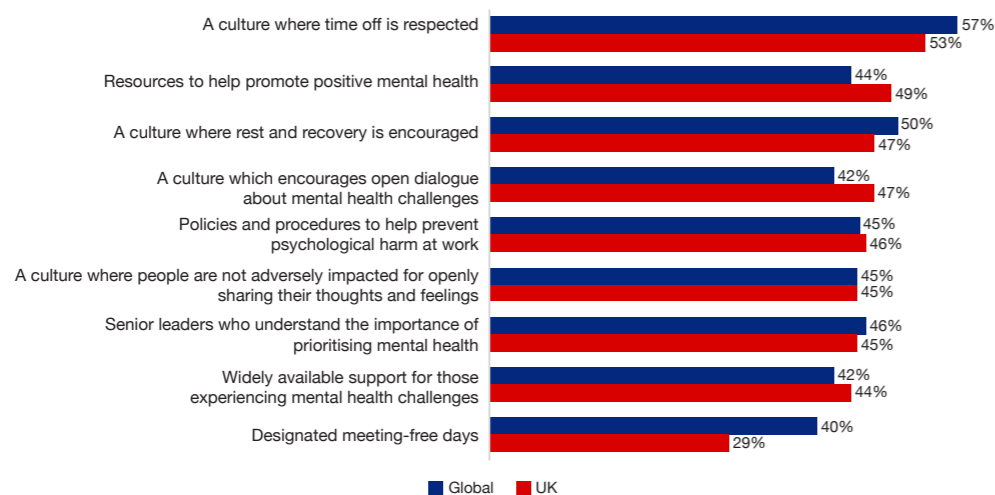**Culture that encourages open dialogue about mental health**

In terms of reasons for not disclosing mental health issues as the cause of people's absence, a preference for privacy (52%) comes first. But other reasons point to stigma: three in ten feel that their manager would not care (30%) or keep their mental health challenges confidential (31%), while over a quarter (28%) would fear losing their job as a result. There are marked differences between workplace generations: for example, privacy is a much higher concern for Boomers (70%) than Gen Zs (40%).

Reasons for not disclosing mental health as the reason for taking time off

	Global	UK
I prefer to keep my mental health private	53%	22%
I would be concerned that my manager would not keep it confidential	38%	31%
I would be concerned that they would not be interested or care	28%	30%
I would be concerned that I might lose my job as a result	32%	28%
I would be concerned that my manager would think less of me	32%	28%
I would be concerned that it would affect my prospects for promotion as a result	27%	23%
I would be concerned that I would be given work to do that is less interesting as a result	18%	7%
None of these	4%	4%
Don't know	2%	2%
Prefer not to say	1%	1%

■ Global ■ UK

When reflecting on the policies and cultural aspects which support mental health in their organisation, half (49%) say they have resources to help promote positive mental health (vs 44% globally) or a culture which encourages open dialogue (47% vs 42%). Cultures where time off is respected (53% vs 57% globally) and meeting-free days (29% vs 40%) are less commonly available in the UK than seen globally.

Workplace culture and policies that are in place

	Global	UK
A culture where time off is respected	57%	53%
Resources to help promote positive mental health	44%	49%
A culture where rest and recovery is encouraged	50%	47%
A culture which encourages open dialogue about mental health challenges	42%	47%
Policies and procedures to help prevent psychological harm at work	45%	46%
A culture where people are not adversely impacted for openly sharing their thoughts and feelings	45%	45%
Senior leaders who understand the importance of prioritising mental health	46%	45%
Widely available support for those experiencing mental health challenges	42%	44%
Designated meeting-free days	40%	29%

■ Global ■ UK

SECTION 3.
SETTING THE TONE: THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF LEADERSHIP ON MENTAL HEALTH

Sixty-five percent of workers in the UK feel that it's extremely or very important for employers to look after the mental health of their workforce, compared to 73% globally. But only 47% believe that supporting employee mental health is a priority for their leaders (globally 56%), and 45% consider they have senior leaders who understand the importance of prioritising mental health. When asked whether the head of their organisation talks about mental health four in ten workers (38%) answer positively, in line with the global average (40%).

Within organisations where leaders do not vocally address mental health, 48% of respondents think they should. This number is lower than the global average (59%).

Yet the research shows a clear improvement in perceptions and attitudes to work when heads of organisations choose to speak about mental health: in organisations where they do speak, 85% of workers feel their organisation cares about their mental wellbeing, whereas only 34% do when their leaders do not address it.

A clear narrative from senior leaders on mental health also correlates with more people opening up about their own issues: where heads of organisations speak about mental health, 72% of people are willing to disclose their issues to their managers, compared to 38% where they don't.

Crucially, whether senior leaders speak about mental health or not seems to impact workers' feelings about their place of work: those in organisations where senior leaders do not speak up are more likely to feel a desire to quit (32% vs 22%).

38%
Heads of organisations speak out (globally 40%)

48%
Would like their head of organisation to speak out, where they do not already (globally 59%)

WHERE THE LEADER SPEAKS OUT:

- The view of whether their "Employer cares about mental health" increases from **34% to 85%**

- Workers' desire to quit reduces from **32% to 22%**

In organisations where the head of organisation speaks out, workers are more likely to report that support is available, and there is a greater tendency for that support to be used. For example, provision of resources on ways to reduce stress rises from 26% to 74%, and the use of counselling or therapy support increases from 5% to 29%.

Types of support available

	Head of organisation does not speak about mental health	Head of organisation does speak about mental health
Flexible working hours/ability to choose when you work	36%	74%
Being encouraged to catch up with my manager to talk about my wellbeing	31%	78%
Resources/information on ways to reduce stress	26%	74%
Access to mental health apps and digital services	26%	71%
A network of mental health support buddies/champions	23%	70%
Ability to choose where you work	23%	65%
Access to paid for mental health counselling/therapy	18%	63%
Access to discounted/subsidized therapy as part of health benefits	15%	59%
Daily, weekly, or monthly sessions that focus on mental wellbeing	11%	65%
Wellbeing days	13%	62%
Specific mental health leave days	13%	57%

Types of support used

	Head of organisation does not speak about mental health	Head of organisation does speak about mental health
Flexible working hours/ability to choose when you work	22%	45%
Being encouraged to catch up with my manager to talk about my wellbeing	10%	41%
Resources/information on ways to reduce stress	6%	36%
Access to mental health apps and digital services	6%	30%
A network of mental health support buddies/champions	6%	29%
Ability to choose where you work	13%	42%
Access to paid for mental health counselling/therapy	5%	29%
Access to discounted/subsidized therapy as part of health benefits	3%	27%
Daily, weekly, or monthly sessions that focus on mental wellbeing	2%	33%
Wellbeing days	5%	35%
Specific mental health leave days	4%	30%

- Head of organisation does not speak about mental health
- Head of organisation does speak about mental health

SECTION 4.
TRUST AND PROXIMITY: THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF LINE MANAGERS

Besides the instrumental role that senior leaders can play in speaking about mental health, the personal behaviours and attitudes of those with line management responsibilities are likely to be a key factor in supporting people's wellbeing. Employees in the UK who consider their direct manager well-equipped to hold conversations about mental health report even fewer negative feelings at work – including desire to quit - than when they have a senior leader who speaks about mental health.

Conversely, UK workers who feel their manager is not equipped to have supportive mental health conversations report markedly worse experiences. Forty-nine percent have felt low levels of motivation (vs 37%), 29% have felt irritable or angry with colleagues or customers (vs 20%) and 35% report having felt a desire to quit in the month before the survey (vs 18%).

Feelings at work

	Well-equipped	Not well-equipped
Felt a lack of interest, motivation or energy	37%	49%
Had difficulty focusing	32%	35%
Had negative thoughts	23%	34%
Felt a desire to quit	18%	35%
Been less productive	23%	30%
Been irritable or felt angry with co-workers and/or customers/clients	20%	29%
Have put in less, or no effort at work	17%	29%
Had some other negative feelings about work	13%	18%
I have not experienced any negative feelings at work	28%	19%

- Well-equipped
- Not well-equipped

Extent manager is equipped to have supportive conversations on mental health

Managers who haven't had training on mental health conversations report much lower levels of confidence in their ability to support people in their teams (51% vs 88% of those who have been trained). Similarly, only 51% believe their manager is equipped to hold conversations that would help someone with mental health issues (vs 48% globally), although 63% of workers overall feel their manager would be supportive if they shared their mental health challenges with them (in line with the global figure of 62%).

Despite this, many employers are under-investing in their managers' skills on mental health, with the UK figure of 45% having had training only a little above the global average of 41%. Even amongst those who have had training, 42% say this training was a 'one off' (globally also 42%).

51%
OF MANAGERS ARE EQUIPPED FOR SUPPORTIVE CONVERSATIONS (GLOBALLY 48%)

45%
OF MANAGERS HAVE HAD TRAINING ON MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATIONS (GLOBALLY 41%)

WHERE THE MANAGER IS WELL-EQUIPPED TO HAVE THOSE CONVERSATIONS:

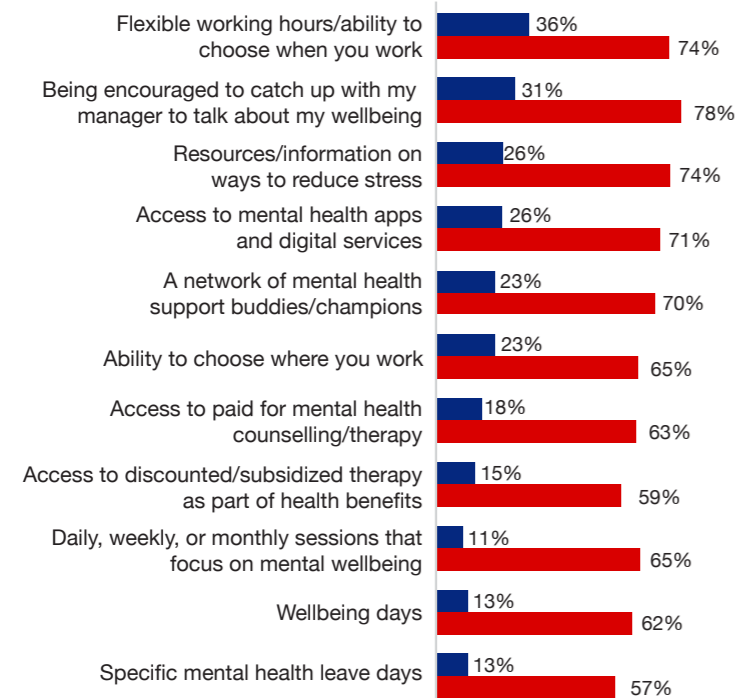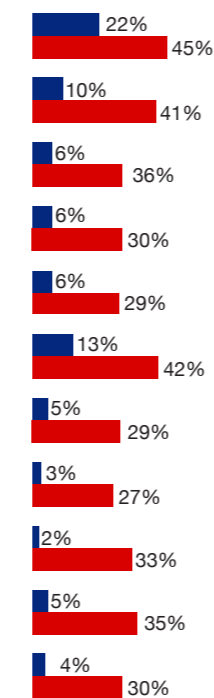FEELINGS OF LACK OF INTEREST, MOTIVATION OR ENERGY REDUCED FROM
49% TO 37%

EXIT DESIRE TO QUIT REDUCED FROM
35% TO 18%

SECTION 5.
WORKPLACE SUPPORT:
EXPECTATIONS VERSUS REALITY

65%
employees consider it important that workplace mental health is prioritised (globally 73%)

47%
of employers make mental health a priority (globally 56%)

63%
% of employers provide mental health support (globally 53%)

33%
have access to specific mental health leave days (globally 42%)

15%
use paid-for counselling where available (globally 18%)

38%
who have not used regular sessions focusing on mental well-being would be willing use them (globally 45%)

Whether mental health issues stem from work-related causes or not, it is clear that workers look to their employers to provide support. When asked about what can make the most positive impact on them personally at work, 47% of people mention employers looking after their mental health – ranking it highest, above providing a safe working environment (45%) and ensuring that employees can manage work and home lives effectively (39%), which themselves are both conducive to mental wellbeing.

Encouragingly, in the UK, a higher proportion of workers feel that their employer provides that support: 63% versus 53%. Yet, most types of support are available for fewer than half of workers in the UK, and the support is generally used by fewer than half of those for whom they are available.

Types of support available   Types of support used   Not used but willing to

Legend: ■ Global ■ UK

	Available (Global / UK)	Used (Global / UK)	Not used but willing (Global / UK)
Flexible working hours/ability to choose when you work	51% / 56%	33% / 34%	48% / 46%
Being encouraged to catch up with my manager to talk about my wellbeing	52% / 55%	27% / 25%	36% / 36%
Resources/information on ways to reduce stress	45% / 50%	23% / 20%	44% / 38%
Access to mental health apps and digital services	39% / 49%	19% / 17%	45% / 41%
A network of mental health support buddies/champions	38% / 45%	18% / 16%	41% / 37%
Ability to choose where you work	43% / 43%	26% / 26%	49% / 40%
Access to paid for mental health counselling/therapy	39% / 38%	18% / 15%	48% / 39%
Access to discounted/subsidized therapy as part of health benefits	39% / 37%	19% / 14%	47% / 39%
Daily, weekly, or monthly sessions that focus on mental wellbeing	36% / 36%	19% / 16%	45% / 38%
Wellbeing days	39% / 36%	21% / 19%	51% / 45%
Specific mental health leave days	42% / 33%	23% / 15%	51% / 47%