Creating Mentally Healthy Workplaces

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What is MHPP?

The Mental Health and Productivity Programme (MHPP) is collaborating across a range of diverse partners to provide an **evidence informed, cost effective and sustainable resource** that supports good mental health at work, reduces stigma and will ultimately increase productivity.

MHPP supports employers across the Midlands Engine region to **understand the link between mental health and productivity** by galvanising their employees' engagement with a package of **impactful resources** which work towards ensuring that employees are happy, satisfied and able to thrive at work.

MENTAL HEALTH & PRODUCTIVITY PILOT

MHPP

www.mhpp.me

Background

➢ 2009 - Working our way to better mental health: a framework for action (DWP/DH)

➢ 2017 – Independent review of workplace mental health (Lord Dennis Stevenson & Paul Farmer)

➢ 2019 – MHPP awarded £6.8m by Midlands Engine

➢ 2020 onwards

  ➢ Deloitte study: UK employers lose £56 bn per annum (up from £45bn in 2020)

  ➢ Centre for Mental Health study: £119 bn per annum economic and social cost (measured in health spending, output losses and human capital)

  ➢ MHPP survey of 1,900 businesses: Mental health reduces productivity by fifth

  ➢ MHPP research: Fewer Midlands' employees disclose mental health problems to their employer during the pandemic

➢ 2022 – extension funding for 18 months granted

Vision

➢ *To collaborate across a range of diverse partners to provide an evidence informed, cost effective and sustainable resource which will support good mental health at work, reduce stigma and will ultimately increase productivity. It will support employers across the Midlands to understand the link between mental health and productivity by galvanising their employees' engagement with a package of impactful resources which work toward ensuring their employees are happy, satisfied and able to thrive at work.*
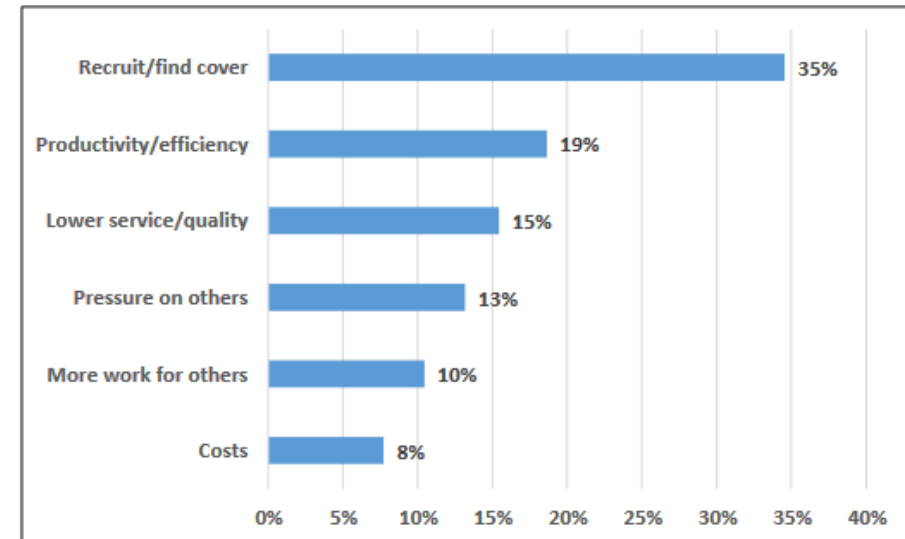
Let's start with what the data says about workplace mental health

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High prevalence and cost of issues, low employer awareness of sources of support

- **61% of employees** have experienced mental health issues where work was a contributing factor (BITC, 2018)

- **Costs of mental health issues** to UK business estimated at £56bn, up 25% since 2019 (Deloitte, 2022)

- **Mental health is the 4th most common cause of sickness absence** in the UK in 2022, with 18.5 million working days lost (ONS, 2023)

- **Firms more likely to seek advice** from HR consultant or the internet than a specialist
  - 21% would go to HR specialist and 18% the internet, only 12% would approach Mind or another MH expert organisation (ERC, 2020)

- **Low awareness** and very low adoption of external MH initiatives in Midlands firms
  - 31% have heard of Mental Health First Aider initiative, only 11% have adopted it
  - 31% have heard of the Health & Safety Executive Stress Mgt Standards, only 7% have adopted them (ERC, 2020)

- Calls to put psychological safety on the same footing as physical safety (BITC, 2023)

Impacts reported, all firms, 2023

| Category	%
Recruit/find cover	35%
Productivity/efficiency	19%
Lower service/quality	15%
Pressure on others	13%
More work for others	10%
Costs	8%

Source: ERC (2023) Workplace Mental Health in Midlands firms 2023: A longitudinal study

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Support provided by Organisations and why?

52% of firms offer activities to support good mental health, most practice-based

Proportion of firms with strategic initiatives, all firms, 2020 to 2023
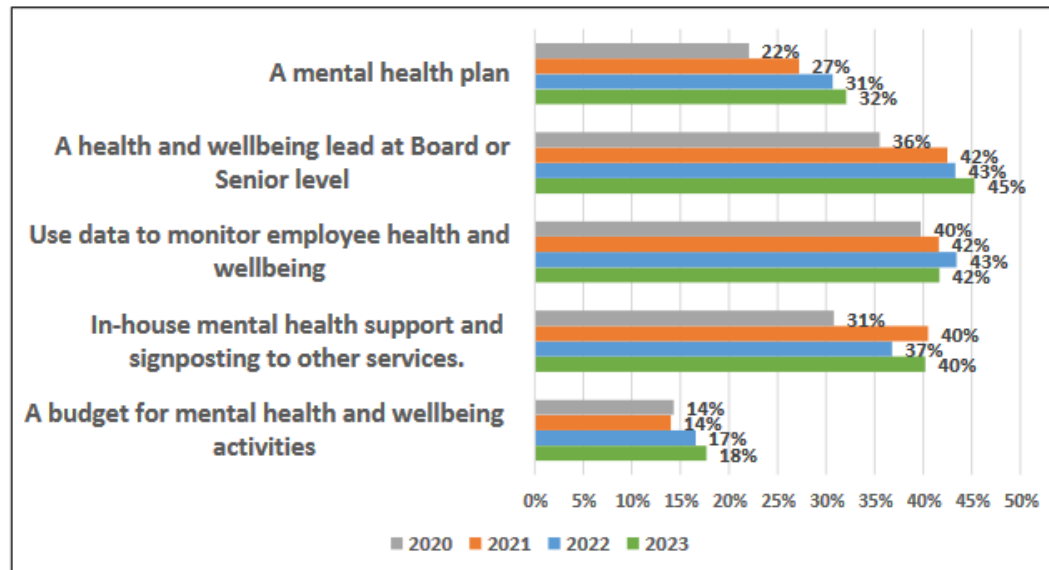

- Early intervention and prevention is key

- 1 in 6 of us will experience stress/depression/anxiety

- Good mental wellbeing at work approaches:
  - boost inclusivity & moral
  - Reduces absenteeism & presenteeism

- Workplace issues will spill into our personal lives and vice versa

Source: ERC (2023) Workplace Mental Health in Midlands firms 2023: A longitudinal study

Smaller firms less likely to adopt initiatives to support MH

Adoption of MH budget, MH plan and Line Manager training increases with firm size (no. of employees)
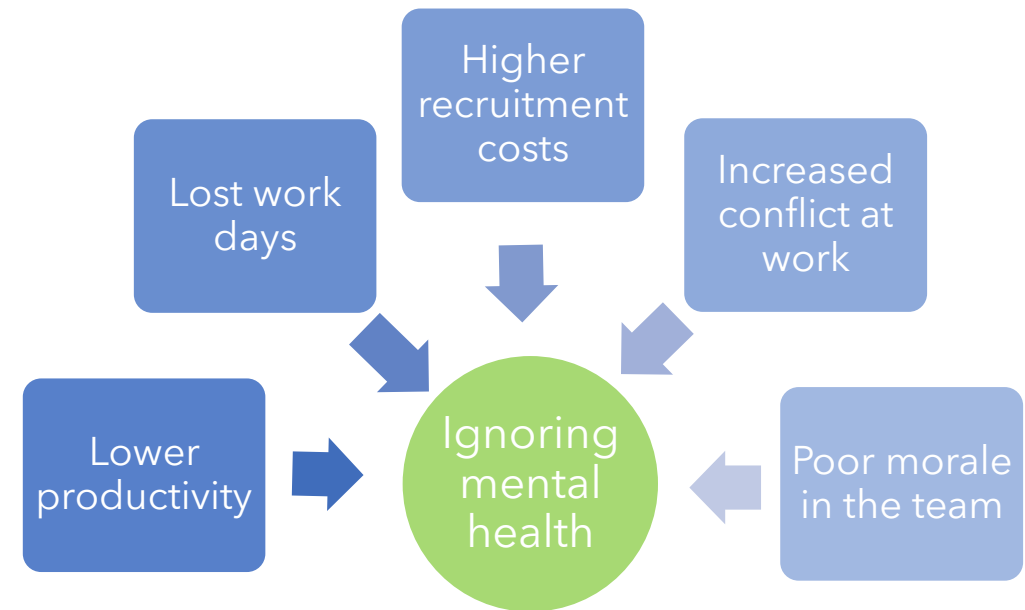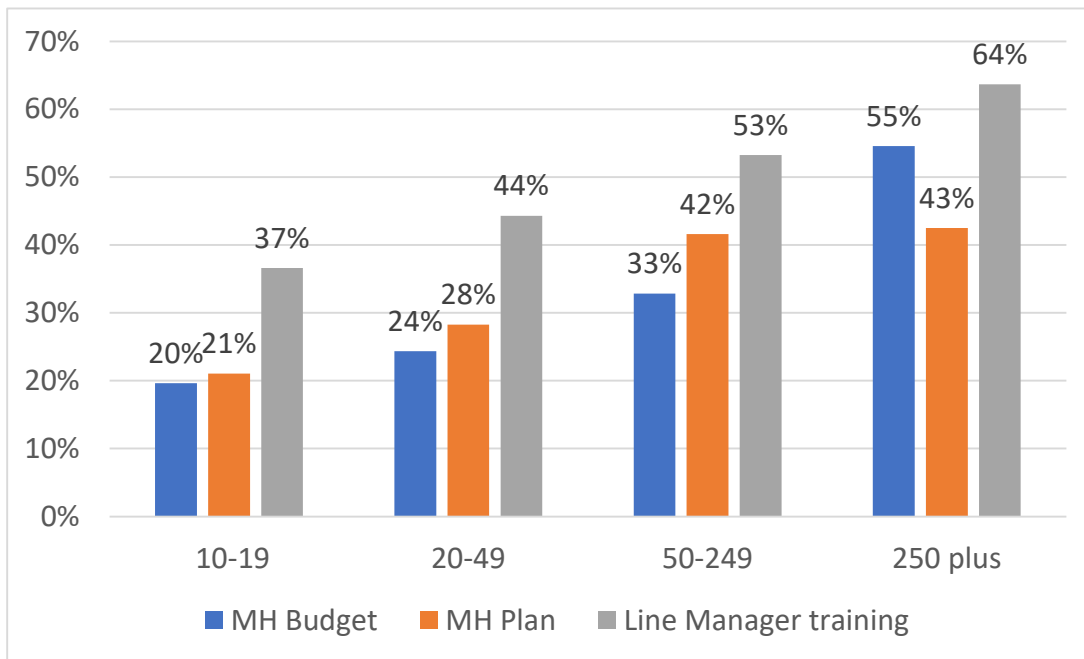
Source: ERC (2021) Workplace Mental Health in Midlands Firms 2021

MHPP Review tool – Measures employer level change over time

Example Enhanced Offer Organisation 1 – steady progress from baseline (M1) through M2, M3 and so on

Standard	Description	M1 baseline assessment Start	M2 Progress	M3 Progress	M4 Progress	M5 Progress
3	Introduced MH as boardroom standing agenda item	Achieved	Working towards	Working towards	Working towards	Not yet underway
4	Promoted employee wellbeing through Senior leaders speaking out	Partially achieved	Working towards	Evidenced	Evidenced	Not yet underway
5	Appointed a senior level MH champion	Achieved	Evidenced	Evidenced	Evidenced	Not yet underway
6	Staff surveys to monitor employee MH & wellbeing and results shared with the staff	Achieved	Evidenced	Evidenced	Evidenced	Not yet underway
7	Used HR and other data to monitor employee MH & wellbeing i.e., exit interviews, occ health and EAP.	Achieved	Evidenced	Evidenced	Evidenced	Not yet underway
8	Created a mechanism for staff feedback	Partially achieved	Evidenced	Evidenced	Evidenced	Not yet underway
8a	Record sickness data and understand the difference between sickness causes	Not assessed	Working towards	Working towards	Working towards	Not yet underway
8b	Share with Board a Review / interpretation of sickness and absence records for the last 12 months	Not assessed	Working towards	Working towards	Working towards	Not yet underway
8c	Establish cost of sickness absence and retention rates in the workplace	Not assessed	Working towards	Working towards	Working towards	Not yet underway
8d	Undertake MHPP Feedback Report (Baseline Assessment)	Not assessed	Evidenced	Evidenced	Evidenced	Not yet underway
8e	Share MHPP Feedback Report with the Board / Executives	Not assessed	Evidenced	Evidenced	Evidenced	Not yet underway

Example Enhanced Offer Organisation 2 – slow progress from baseline (M1) through M2, M3 and so on

Standard	Description	M1 baseline assessment Start	M2 Progress	M3 Progress	M4 Progress	M5 Progress
Standard 1	Prioritise mental health in the workplace by developing and delivering a systematic programme of activity					
1	Produced a Mental Health at Work / Thrive at Work organisational plan	Not evidenced	Working towards	Not yet underway	Not yet underway	Not yet underway
2	Designated person on senior leadership or board level with responsibility	Not evidenced	Working towards	Not yet underway	Not yet underway	Not yet underway
3	Introduced MH as boardroom standing agenda item	Achieved	Not yet underway	Not yet underway	Not yet underway	Not yet underway
4	Promoted employee wellbeing through Senior leaders speaking out	Not evidenced	Evidenced	Not yet underway	Not yet underway	Not yet underway
5	Appointed a senior level MH champion	Not evidenced	Evidenced	Not yet underway	Not yet underway	Not yet underway
6	Staff surveys to monitor employee MH & wellbeing and results shared with the staff	Not evidenced	Evidenced	Not yet underway	Not yet underway	Not yet underway
7	Used HR and other data to monitor employee MH & wellbeing i.e., exit interviews, occ health and EAP.	Not evidenced	Working towards	Not yet underway	Not yet underway	Not yet underway
8	Created a mechanism for staff feedback	Not evidenced	Evidenced	Not yet underway	Not yet underway	Not yet underway
8a	Record sickness data and understand the difference between sickness causes	Not assessed	Not yet underway	Not yet underway	Not yet underway	Not yet underway
8b	Share with Board a Review / interpretation of sickness and absence records for the last 12 months	Not assessed	Not yet underway	Not yet underway	Not yet underway	Not yet underway

Team level - support required to improve mental health at work

Employers need to spend some time to focus on how the team operates.

Key determinants of workplace wellbeing where culture drives delivery and happiness:

- Workload
- Control
- Work life balance
- Role Clarity
- Open culture
- Colleague support
- Managers support

	Positive experience	Moderate experience	Negative experience
Interpretation	Employees generally regard this area as positive. Monitor to see if this changes, or whether there are specific risks for particular groups of employees.	Employees generally regard this area as moderate – neither good nor bad. Consider whether certain groups are more effected. Review and act to protect health and wellbeing where appropriate.	Employees generally regard this area as negative. This could present a risk to health and wellbeing if not properly managed. Action is required to protect and promote employee health and wellbeing.

In the same way that organisations are required to manage physical risks to health, such as slips and trips, employers are also required to protect the mental health and wellbeing of staff through good work. Where work is not well managed it can present a risk to health.

Work area	Description of area of work	Positive experience	Moderate experience	Negative experience
Workload	Where employees have high levels of job demands, unreasonable or excessive workload, insufficient workload and conflicting priorities.	50%	33%	17%
Control	Where employees experience low job control at work, they would have little autonomy or say over how, when or where they do their work and when they are able to take breaks and annual leave.	67%	17%	17%
Work life balance	Where employees' have a positive work life balance they are likely to feel able to balance the demands of work and home, and contribute to each area of life effectively.	71%	25%	4%
Role clarity	Where employees experience a lack of job clarity, they would be uncertain about what was expected of them, what their responsibilities are and how their work contributes to the overall business goal.	71%	25%	4%
Open culture	Where employees' feel free to express their opinions and ideas they are likely to feel confident and safe to say things without fear of reprisal.	63%	25%	13%
Colleague support	Where employees experience poor support, they are unlikely to be able to rely on those around them to help them out practically or emotionally when they needed it.	59%	23%	18%
Manager support	Where employees experience poor support, they are unlikely to be able to rely on their manager to help them out or give them time to listen to their concerns and issues.	77%	23%	0%

Where employees have identified that they experience an area of work as negative, organisations have an obligation to take reasonable action to address foreseeable risks to health and wellbeing and monitor progress. This is outlined in the Health and Safety at Work Act. Where preventative action cannot be taken, efforts to promote mental health by developing positive aspects of work and by developing employee strengths and resources to cope should be put in place.

Emerging Learning

1. General perception is that interventions are making a difference.

2. So many offers in the marketplace make it difficult for organisations to choose what is evidence based and effective.

3. Implementation requires more that e-learning. Early indications suggest hand holding is needed to support the journey particularly for SMEs .

4. Data driven insights are not routinely used effectively to inform decisions or interventions.

Reported impacts of MH activities, all firms, 2020 to 2023
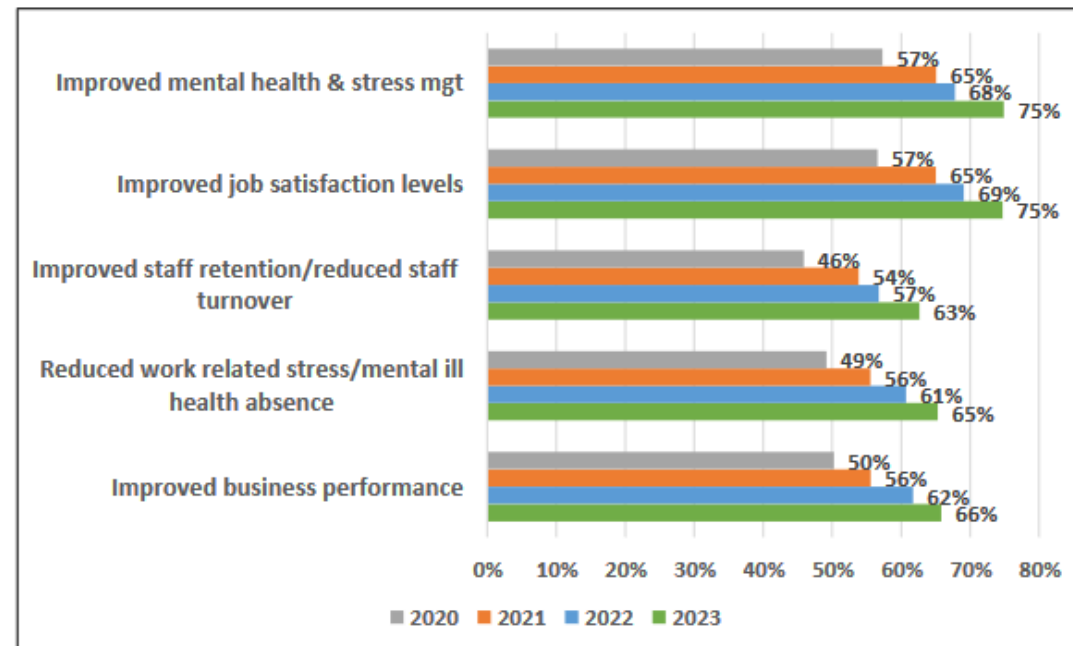
Source: ERC (2023) Workplace Mental Health in Midlands firms 2023: A longitudinal study

Things to consider

Our intervention with organisations to date suggests:

- **Businesses need support:**
  - **Organisations do not want extra legislation** to manage psychosocial risks, but need to be shown what good looks like and need resources to be available to assist in implementation
  - **EAP usage remains stubbornly low** - Only 5% of UK employees have accessed their company's EAP provider [53 employee assistance programme (EAP) statistics for 2023 (spill.chat)](#)
  - There is still **significant stigma** around mental health in the workplace:
    - Executives worry that if they focus on mental health in the workplace "I am worried it will open the floodgates to sickness absence that is difficult to prove"
  - There is an **increasing push back into the workplace:** this is driving a wedge between employer and employee – "We managed ok during lockdown – don't they trust us now"

- This agenda needs a **longitudinal research approach to measure the impact** on employees
  - Great evidence of employer change over time but potential limited impact in the short term on employees.

Key Takeaways

1. **Implementation** needs a top down and bottom-up approach: delivery of a good workplace mental health strategy requires coproduction from all levels within the organisation.

2. Although the **moral and economic case is clearly made**, enabling organisations to identify what the right interventions to implement, requires employer and employee data to create a bespoke offer.

3. **There isn't a one size fits all approach** for workplace mental wellbeing – But we can do more health creation with employees at little or no cost.

Workplace health system

Opportunity for health creation

Sickness — Hospital Care & Specialist Services

Distress — Psychiatry Psychotherapy

Advocacy

Stress — Psychologist Counselling Coaching

Wellness — Keep Learning / Connect / Be Active / Take Notice / Give

Human & Financial Costs — High / Low

Self Care & Help Seeking Behaviour

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Any Questions?