

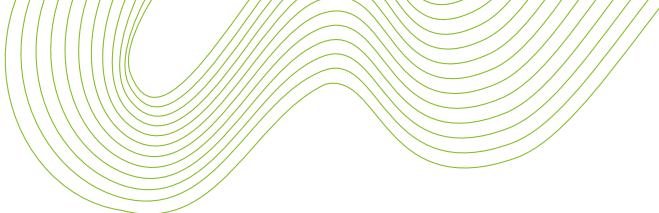


Mental health and employers

The case for employers to invest in supporting working parents and a mentally healthy workplace

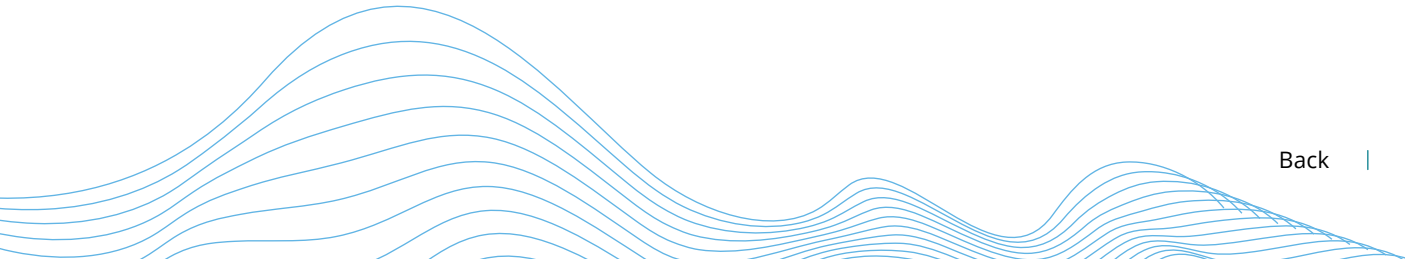
May 2024





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Foreword



Elizabeth Hampson

Life Sciences and Health Innovation
Partner at Deloitte Consulting and leader of
Deloitte's European Health Equity Institute

Over the years, Deloitte's research has recognised the importance of good mental health in the workplace, and how employers can support employees' mental health and wellbeing. It is not only the right thing to do, but it is also good for business.

We are now in the fourth edition in this report series and overall perceptions of mental health in working adults have improved since the publication of our last report. However, while things seem to be looking slightly better for working adults, children and young people's mental health is worsening, with **one in five** having a probable mental health disorder in 2023, up from one in nine in 2017. Mental health is a focus area in our work at the Deloitte Health Equity Institute and we have been working closely with organisations like Place2Be to highlight the challenges and disparities around children and young people's mental health.

For working parents, balancing work and parenting responsibilities is difficult enough, and having concerns over your child's mental health can make this even more challenging. As a working parent, this is an important topic for me as well as many Deloitte colleagues. We decided to take a deep dive into children and young people's mental health, the impact on working parents, and what this means for employers.

When employees were asked about the level of concern of their child's mental health, nearly half (46%) reported being 'very concerned' or 'somewhat concerned'. Of those, half said that their performance at work is impacted to some degree, either through lower productivity at work, needing to take days off to care for children, or leaving their job altogether.

The impact of poor mental health in children and young people is proving costly for businesses. There is an opportunity for employers to do more to support employees and their families' mental health, to promote a mentally healthy workplace, and mitigate the impact on their bottom line.

When reflecting on their own mental health, more people feel supported by their employer than when we last asked two years ago, but 44% still don't. When we asked employees where they turn to for support, nearly two thirds (63%) said they seek support from external sources (regardless of what their employer offers) which may be due to the stigma that still exists around mental health and communication gaps around what their employer offers (35% are uncertain about their employer's support).

We found that people expect more support from leadership, and leaders need to set the tone at the top of their organisation, keep mental health high on the agenda, and consider the requirements of working parents. More needs to be done to monitor and raise awareness in organisations, including identifying stressors and particular difficulties for high-risk groups such as working parents. We recognise different organisations and businesses will have different resources to support employees' mental health and wellbeing, so we outline recommendations for leaders, organisations and employers, and signpost a number of free resources. We hope this report will serve as a valuable resource for employers who are committed to creating a better workplace for their employees.

Foreword



Sarah Hughes

CEO, Mind

UK Employers – I am proud of you.

Times have been tough. The past few years have seen UK employers weathering a cost-of-living crisis, rising costs, the continuing fallout of the Coronavirus pandemic, and devastating world events. It's not been easy for any of us.

But in spite of this, Deloitte's new research has shown an incredible turnaround. The cost of poor mental health to UK employers is now 8% lower than the 2021 figures – suggesting we're starting to make a real difference to the lives and wellbeing of our employees.

We can attribute some of this progress to the dedication and innovation of those employers who are putting mental health and wellbeing at the heart of their people agenda. Mind's own Workplace Wellbeing Index report 2022/23 found that employers are taking big steps to support their people – and as a result, there has been more engagement with wellbeing initiatives from staff and management and mental health at work has improved.

It's important we celebrate these wins. These positive outcomes demonstrate what we as employers can do when we prioritise our people.

But there's still so much more we can do to keep this momentum going. It's time for us to expand our understanding of mental wellbeing and how, as employers, we can affect it.

Work is important. It's not just an employee's way of earning income. It affects every area of our lives - and that includes our ability to participate in our families, perhaps to be a supportive parent, and enjoy spending time with our loved ones.

That's why for the first time, this report considers the interplay between the mental health of children and young people and its influence on their working parents. We know it's critical for businesses to consider ways to better support working parents - considering flexibility, providing additional support, and creating a culture where talking about life's challenges is acceptable.

Deloitte's research has found that parents who are concerned for their child's mental health found themselves struggling to do their best at work, perpetuating a cycle of stress both in their home life and in their working life.

Work makes up such a substantial portion of our lives. While for many of us, good work can be a source of fulfilment and financial wellbeing, we know it could offer so much more. We envision a future where an employer can support the mental and emotional health not just of their own employees, but their families and networks too.

Like thousands of organisations across the UK, you can join us and make a difference at your workplace. By signing the [Mental Health at Work Commitment](#), your organisation can join a community of over 3,000 UK employers who have pledged to put mental wellbeing at the heart of their agenda, working towards a future where mental health is given the attention it deserves. When you sign up, you'll receive all the information and advice you need to champion mental wellbeing in your organisation, no matter how big or small it is.

It's heartening to see the strides made in improving workplace mental health. Let us take a moment to celebrate these achievements - but let's also acknowledge the work that lies ahead. By expanding our understanding of mental well-being and redoubling our efforts to support not only our employees but also their families, we can create workplaces that foster better mental health for all.

Foreword



Catherine Roche

CEO, Place2Be

Good mental health should never be taken for granted. It requires space, understanding and a supportive environment - knowing there is someone we can turn to if we are struggling.

This is why Place2Be has provided expert mental health support in schools for 30 years. By working in partnership, embedded within the school community, our dedicated clinicians build trust with students, their parents and carers, and with school staff. This collaboration creates a culture that supports everyone's mental wellbeing.

Fostering safe and healthy workplaces applies the same principle, recognising that a supportive working environment enables colleagues to balance the competing demands of work and home life.

Sadly, one in five children in England now have a probable mental health condition (NHS Digital, Nov 2023). So it is startling, though perhaps not surprising, that Deloitte's latest survey finds that one in 100 working parents who has left their job said it was due entirely to the mental health of their child.

We know for certain that positive parenting has a major impact on a child's life chances. But children don't come with a manual: parents and carers need support to build their confidence and understanding of emotions and behaviours, so they can parent in a way that fosters resilience and robust mental health. This is why in recent years at Place2Be, we have extended our work with families – and with corporate partners such as Deloitte who are to be applauded for investing time and research into these complex issues – to help find a way forward.

As employers, we have a responsibility to ensure mental wellbeing is understood, supported, nurtured and celebrated. This report makes a compelling case for investing in workplace mental wellbeing and to support working parents. It makes good economic sense. More importantly, it enables our communities to thrive – both in the workplace and in society as a whole.

Executive summary



This report is the fourth edition of Deloitte's 'Mental health and employers' the case for investment report. It considers both the consequences and costs for employers of poor mental health among their staff. In this edition, we also take a deep dive into how the mental health of children and young people affects that of their working parents, and its implications for their work and performance. The findings in this report are based on a survey of 3,156 working adults across the UK, conducted in October 2023 by YouGov on behalf of Deloitte.

Mental health perceptions and impact on work

People's perception of their own mental health has improved over time, but has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, with **62%** reporting their mental health as 'net good', compared to **64%** pre-pandemic.



Despite this positive perception, **24%** of our survey respondents say they have been diagnosed with a mental health condition such as depression or anxiety.

63% of respondents had experienced at least one characteristic of burnout — feeling of exhaustion, mental distance from their job, or decline in performance at work.



People are leaving their job — **16%** have said they were planning to leave a job in the next 12 months, and **11%** had left their job in the previous 12 months. **59%** said it was somewhat, largely or entirely due to personal mental health and wellbeing-related issues.

Half of working parents who are concerned about their children's mental health say this impacts on their work performance.

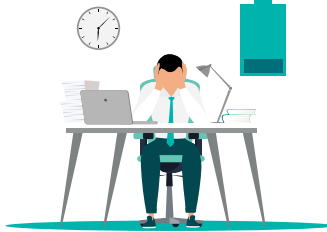


1 in 100 working parents who had left their job said it was due entirely to the mental health and wellbeing of a child.

46% of parents are 'very concerned' or 'somewhat concerned' about their child's mental health, and **29%** named it as a top worry

Cost to employers of poor mental health

Our analysis suggests that poor mental health across the UK workforce can now be costing employers around **£51 billion annually**



Presenteeism is the largest contributor, costing employers around **£24 billion annually**

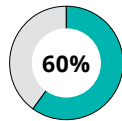


+£8 billion

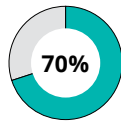
Working parents' concern over their child/ren's mental health is costing employer's an additional **£8bn** (in addition to the **£51bn** for employee mental health).



Employee expectations of support and ROI



Leaders and Managers



Peers and Managers

More people feel supported by their employer than in 2021, but too many still don't (**44%**)

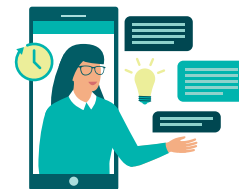
Senior leadership needs to step up - **60%** of employees expect support from senior leadership and managers, but in reality, **70%** of employees say support is coming from peers and managers.

Only **19%** of working parents turn to their employer for support when concerned about their child's mental health, while **63%** seek support from external sources, regardless of what support their employer may offer.

20% of parents feel that the support provided by their employer is inadequate for themselves and their children, while **15%** feel more should be done to support their children.

In terms of mental health support tools, most people are finding and accessing self-education materials and wellbeing apps via free online resources (**55%** and **37%** respectively), though a substantial proportion of employees are paying for the apps themselves (**29%**) and most accessing individual therapy (either remotely or in person) are paying for these services themselves.

50% of employees are interested in digital tools to support their mental wellbeing.

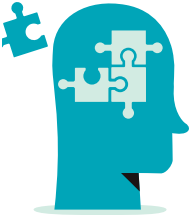


£4.7 for every £1

Our analysis suggests that employers can achieve an average return of **£4.7 for £1** invested in employees' mental health and wellbeing, and early intervention and prevention produces the highest benefits.

Recommendations

Fostering a safe and healthy workplace that promotes and protects the physical and mental health of employees is crucial to an organisation's overall success, and there are number of actions that can be taken across an organisation to drive the necessary change. For example:



Leadership

Leaders should set the tone at the top of their organisation and keep mental health concerns high on their agenda and commit to tackle the stigma, giving consideration to special needs and requirements of working parents. Leaders can sign up to the [UK Mental Health at Work Commitment](#) or the [Global Business Collaboration for Better Workplace Mental Health pledge](#). Many, including Deloitte, have already done so.



Monitoring and raising awareness in organisations

Organisations should recognise and monitor the direct impact of work on their employees' mental health, identifying stressors and particular difficulties for high-risk groups including working parents, and create a positive, well-designed work environment that protects employees' mental health and wellbeing.



Changing culture and increasing support

Employers should have a portfolio of support measures available for the needs of different employees, including those specifically designed to support working parents. Employers should recognise the growing use of digital tools to support mental health, and community networks to support working parents.

Definitions



Mental health

Mental health is defined by the WHO as 'a state of mental and psychological wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, and can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community'. Poor mental health is a state in which thinking, feeling or reacting becomes difficult, or even impossible, to cope with, and could include signs of anxiety, depression, or other significant life stressors that lead to poor sleep, headaches or other physical symptoms. Mental health is determined by a range of socioeconomic, biological and environmental factors.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is defined by the UK Department of Health as 'feeling good and functioning well, and comprises each individual's experience of their life and a comparison of life circumstances with social norms and values'. Wellbeing can be both subjective and objective. A subjective perspective on wellbeing may consider personal feelings, experiences and emotions whilst an objective perspective focuses on other factors including health status, social conditions and income.

Mental wellbeing

Mental wellbeing, as defined by Mind, describes a dynamic mental state where Individuals with good mental wellbeing are able to:

- feel relatively confident in themselves and have positive self-esteem
- feel and express a range of emotions
- build and maintain good relationships with others
- feel engaged with the world in general
- live and work productively
- cope with the stresses of daily life, including work-related stress
- adapt and manage in times of change and uncertainty.

Work-related stress

Work-related stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive as the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them at work. Stress, including work-related stress, can be a significant cause of illness. It is known to be linked with high levels of sickness absence, staff turnover and other issues such as increased capacity for error. Stress is not a medical diagnosis, but severe stress that continues for a long time may lead to a diagnosis of depression or anxiety, or other mental health problems.

Presenteeism

Presenteeism is defined as attending work in spite of illness¹ and so not performing at full ability. Presenteeism can be both positive and negative, due to a variety of factors. In this report we use presenteeism to mean 'mental health-related presenteeism'.

Absence

In this report, we define absence (absenteeism) as days absent from work. Absence can be both positive and negative and due to a number of factors. In this report, we use absenteeism to mean mental health-related 'absence'.

Turnover

In this report, we define turnover (labour turnover) as employees leaving and being replaced in a workforce. We use turnover to mean mental health-related 'turnover'.

Burnout

Burnout is defined by the WHO, as a syndrome 'resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed'. It is characterised by three factors: feelings of exhaustion or energy depletion; increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and reduced performance or efficacy at work.

Definitions



People with caring responsibilities

People with caring responsibilities are individuals who provide unpaid care by looking after a family member, partner or friend in need of help because of illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, and who relies on the carer's support. Where data is available, we also consider working parents with childcare responsibilities during the pandemic. Working women are more often having this dual role of caring and work responsibilities in their lives.

According to Age UK, 68% of people caring for an older relative as well as bringing up a family are women.³ Our survey showed that 56% of carers are women.

Children and young people

Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child a child is "every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child." In the United Kingdom the term 'young person' is defined by the Child and Young Persons Act 1933, where a young person means "a person who has attained the age of fourteen and is under the age of eighteen years."² For the purpose of this report, sometimes we refer to a working parent's child/ren and this includes young people too.

Proactive (type of intervention)

Proactive intervention involves identifying and addressing potential health issues before they become severe or symptomatic. Proactive intervention is delivered early on by focusing on early detection and interventions to prevent or migrate the progression of health problems.

Reactive (type of intervention)

Reactive interventions are planned interventions in response to identifiable behavioural challenges that have arisen. Reactive interventions have the aim of bringing about immediate behavioural change in an individual or establishing control over a situation so that risk associated with the presentation of the behaviour is minimised.⁴

Universal (type of intervention)

Universal interventions are addressed at a general population, regardless of the risk level of the individuals, with the expectation to provide some benefits to all the receiving population.⁵

Individual (type of intervention)

Individual-level interventions seek to change individual behaviours in a setting where one provider works with one client or patient, sometimes referred to as 'one-on-one', used in a wide variety of healthcare practices such as mental health recovery, behaviour change, peer support, self-management and/or health education.

Group (type of intervention)

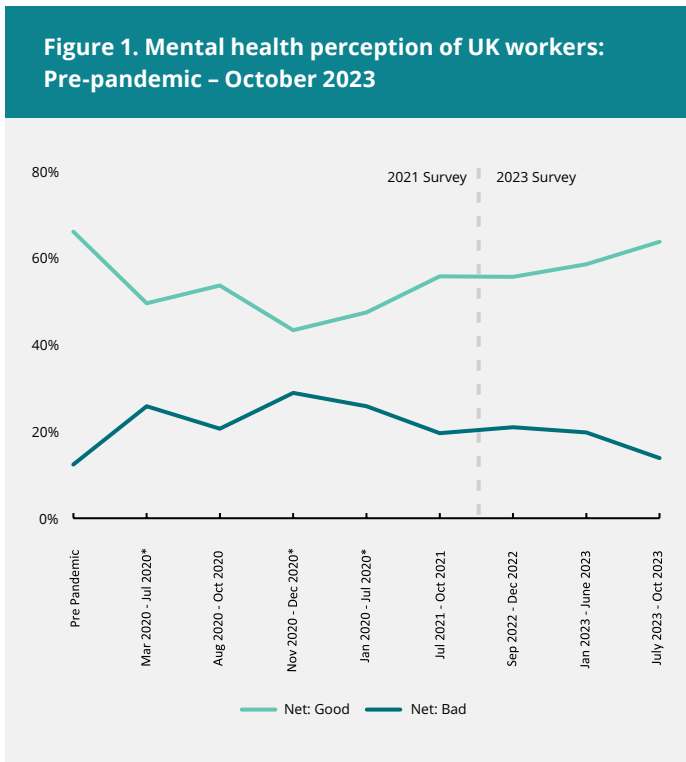
Group interventions are interventions delivered to groups of people rather than to individuals and are used in healthcare for mental health recovery, behaviour change, peer support, self-management and/or health education.⁶

Why employers should strive for a mentally healthy workplace



People’s mental health and wellbeing are affected by various factors, individually or in combination, such as illness, bereavement, social interactions, work, job security, living conditions, and family circumstances, among others.⁷ For most people, work is a significant part of their life, given how much time it takes up and how it affects their livelihood. So it’s not surprising that work can affect mental health and wellbeing, and poor mental health can affect work performance.

In October 2023 we conducted a survey of 3,156 working adults across the UK and we have found that people’s perception of their own mental health has improved over time, in all age groups (as measured by the fall in the proportion of those rating their overall mental health as ‘bad / very bad’), particularly when we compare the numbers with the survey we conducted in 2021 (Figure 1). When we break these percentage numbers down by age groups, we see that individuals aged 55+ have been consistently more positive about their mental health than other age groups. This more positive outlook has not returned to pre-pandemic levels, but the gap seems to be closing (Figure 2).



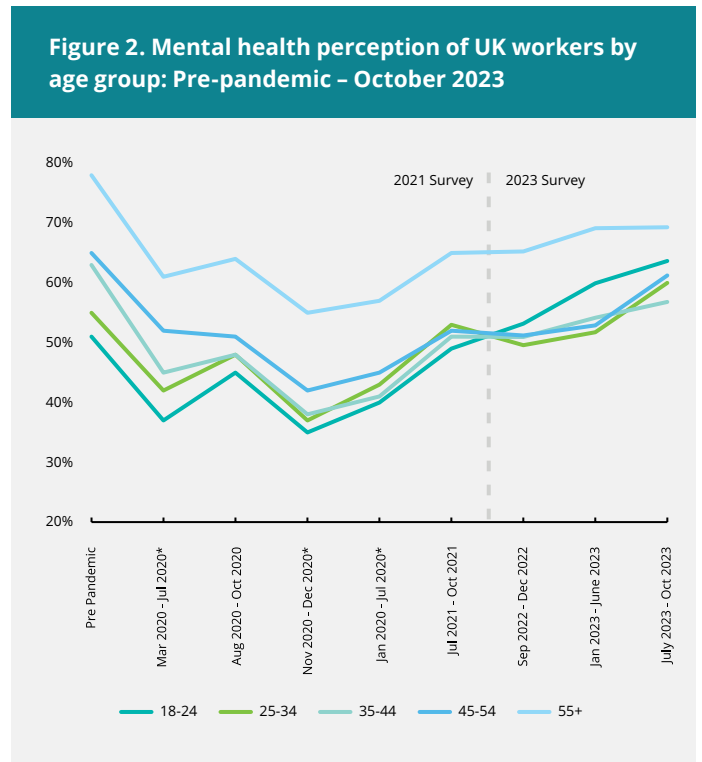
Note: UK Adults 18+ who worked in September 2020 - August 2021 (2021 Survey) and in September 2022-October 2023 (2023 Survey) and not self-employed were asked to rate their overall mental health where "very bad" indicates very poor mental health (e.g., severe depression / anxiety), "neither good nor bad" indicates neutral mood and some minor health concerns and "very good" indicates very good mental health (e.g., strong wellbeing and absence of mental health concerns)

This chart doesn't show results for 'Prefer not to say'

'Net: good' figures include a range of responses – 'I felt good/very good'; Net: bad' figures include a range of responses – 'I felt bad/very bad' when respondents were asked to rate their overall mental health in given time periods.

*Denotes Periods of National Lockdown

Source: **Deloitte analysis**



Note: UK Adults 18+ who worked in September 2020 - August 2021 (2021 Survey) and in September 2022-October 2023 (2023 Survey) and not self-employed were asked to rate their overall mental health where "very bad" indicates very poor mental health (e.g., severe depression / anxiety), "neither good nor bad" indicates neutral mood and some minor health concerns and "very good" indicates very good mental health (e.g., strong wellbeing and absence of mental health concerns)

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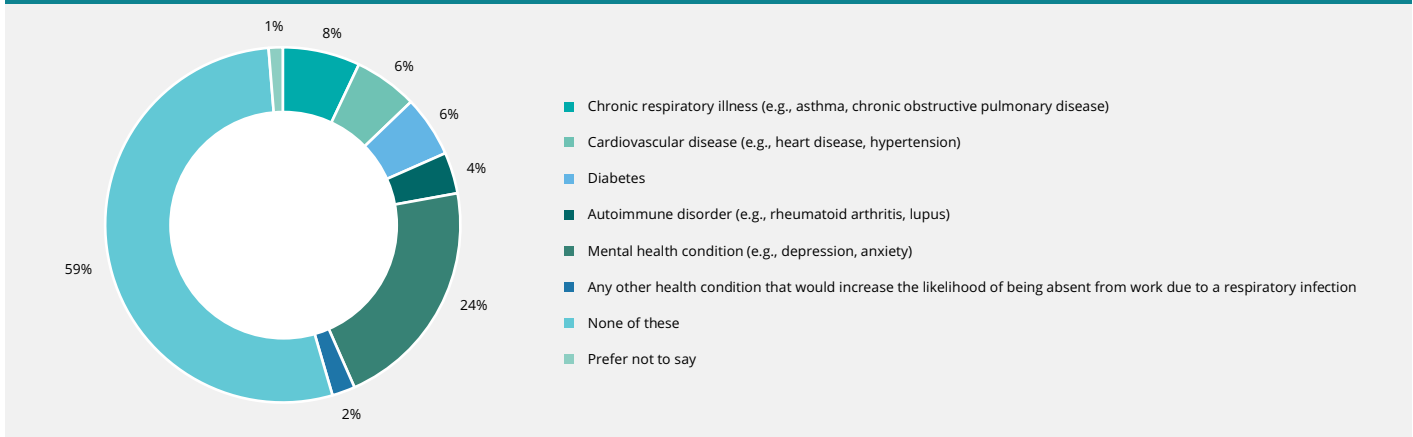
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*Denotes Periods of National Lockdown

Source: **Deloitte analysis**

Despite this positive perception of mental health among UK workers, 24% of our survey respondents say they have been diagnosed with a mental health condition such as depression or anxiety (Figure 3). This is in line with the current estimates from NHS England.⁸

Figure 3. Diagnoses of health conditions affecting work



Note: UK Adults 18+ who worked in September 2022-October 2023 and not self-employed were asked whether they have been diagnosed with any of the health conditions.

N=3156

Source: **Deloitte analysis**

Though ONS respondents say that they are taking fewer days off work due to mental health-related concerns (Figure 4), there has been a recent rise in the reported level of mental health stigma, which may mean people are not disclosing mental health as the reason for their absence. There is evidence that the average number of days lost due to sickness in general is rising, which likely includes undisclosed mental health-related reasons (Figure 5).

Figure 4. Reported percentage of days lost due to mental health-related reasons (% of total absence days)

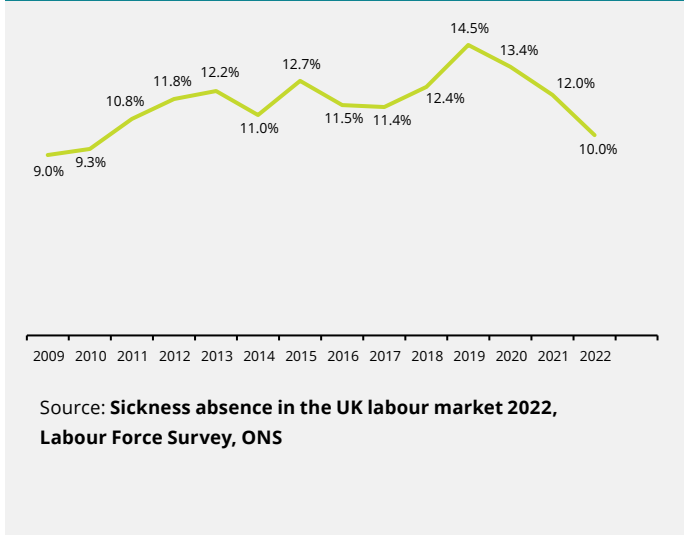
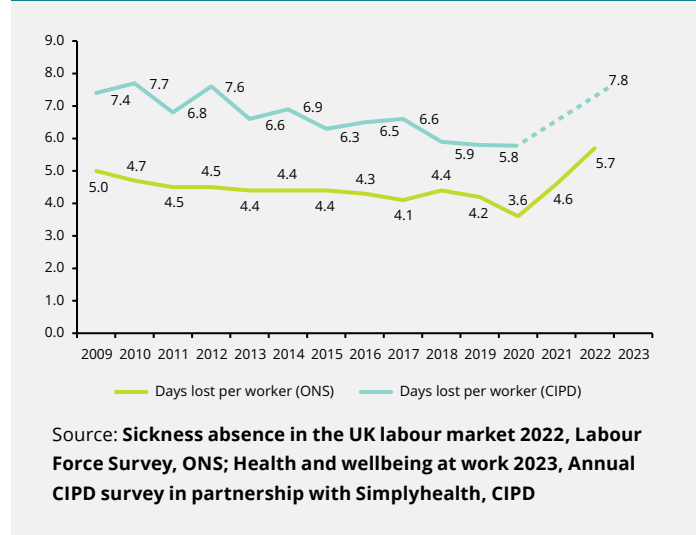


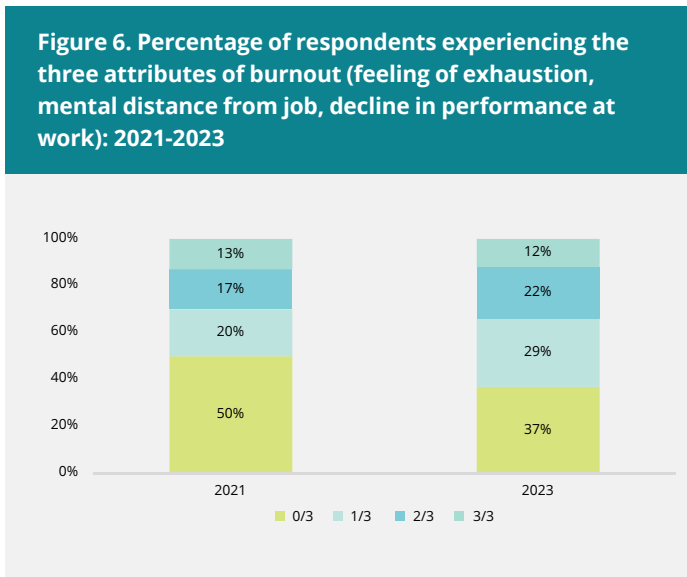
Figure 5. Average number of days lost due to sickness per worker (all reasons)



Stress at work, worries and workload, among other factors, can also lead to what is known as burnout. Burnout is defined as an occupational phenomenon in the WHO's International Classification of Diseases, and is a syndrome 'resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed'.⁹ It has three characteristics:

- Feelings of exhaustion or depletion of energy.
- Mental distance from the job, or feelings of negativity or cynicism related to the job.
- Reduced performance or efficacy at work.

Factors outside of work may also contribute to burnout, such as the demands of looking after a loved one who is in need of care and support.¹¹ Symptoms of burnout include emotional exhaustion, lack of energy, loss of satisfaction with work, difficulty in concentrating, frustration and irritability with co-workers. Our survey found that 63% of respondents had experienced at least one characteristic of burnout - feeling of exhaustion, mental distance from their job, or decline in performance at work (Figure 6), which indicates the situation overall has worsened since 2021, when the percentage figure was 51%. Given the implications of burnout on job performance and productivity, as well as employees' overall wellbeing, there is a clear case for employers to recognise and address this issue.



N = 3156

Note: Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with each of the following statements based on their current experience:

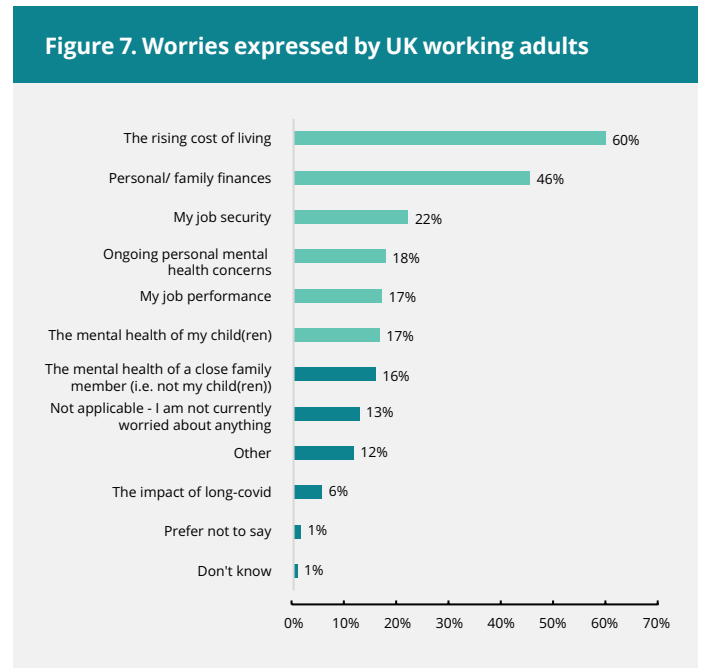
- a) Feelings of exhaustion or energy depletion
- b) Mental distance from your job or negativism or cynicism related to your job
- c) Declined performance or efficacy at work

0/3 indicates respondents who are not experiencing any attributes of burnout

Includes responses that selected 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree'

Source: **Deloitte analysis 2021 & 2023**

We also found that the top concerns affecting the mental health of working adults are the increasing cost of living (60%), personal/family finances (46%), job security (22%), followed by ongoing personal mental health concerns (18%), job performance (17%) and the mental health of their children (17%) (Figure 7). It is worth highlighting the interrelationship between poverty and mental health and that the top three concerns are finance-related.



N=3156

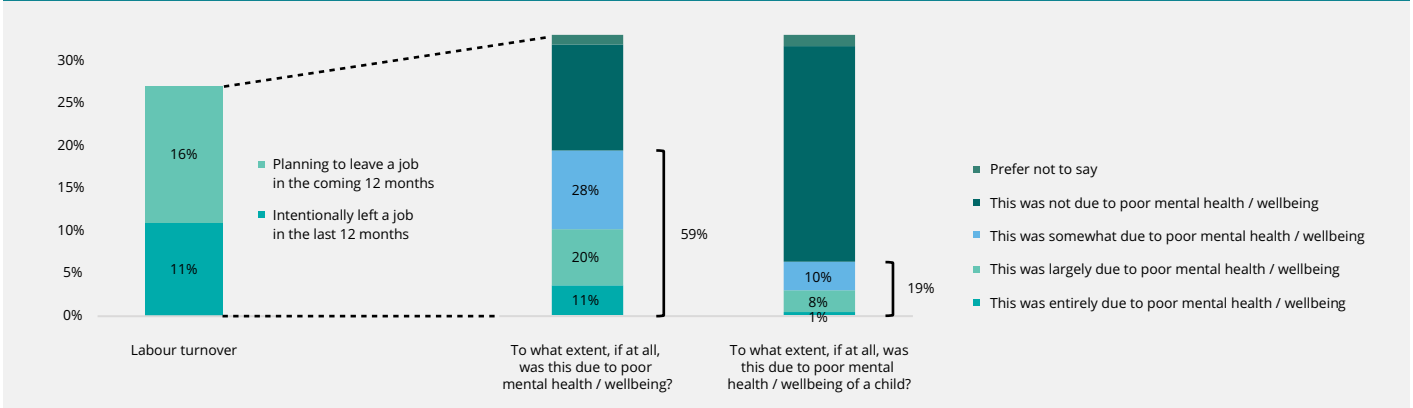
Note: UK Adults 18+ who worked in September 2022-October 2023 and not self-employed were asked which, if any, of the following are they currently worried about

Source: **Deloitte analysis**

People are also leaving their jobs: 16% of our respondents said they were planning to leave a job in the next 12 months and 11% had left in the previous 12 months (Figure 8). Overall labour turnover rates have decreased slightly by 1 percentage point since the survey in 2021, but there has been an increase of 3 percentage points in those planning to leave their job in the next 12 months, but a 4 percentage point decrease in those who had left a job in the previous 12 months.¹⁰

In the 2023 survey we asked respondents to what extent their decision to leave their job in the previous 12 months was due to mental health: 59% said it was somewhat, largely or entirely due to personal mental health and wellbeing-related issues and 19% said it was due to poor mental health and wellbeing of a child (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Labour turnover affected by mental health issues



Note: UK Adults 18+ who worked in September 2022-October 2023 and not self-employed

N=3156

Source: Deloitte analysis

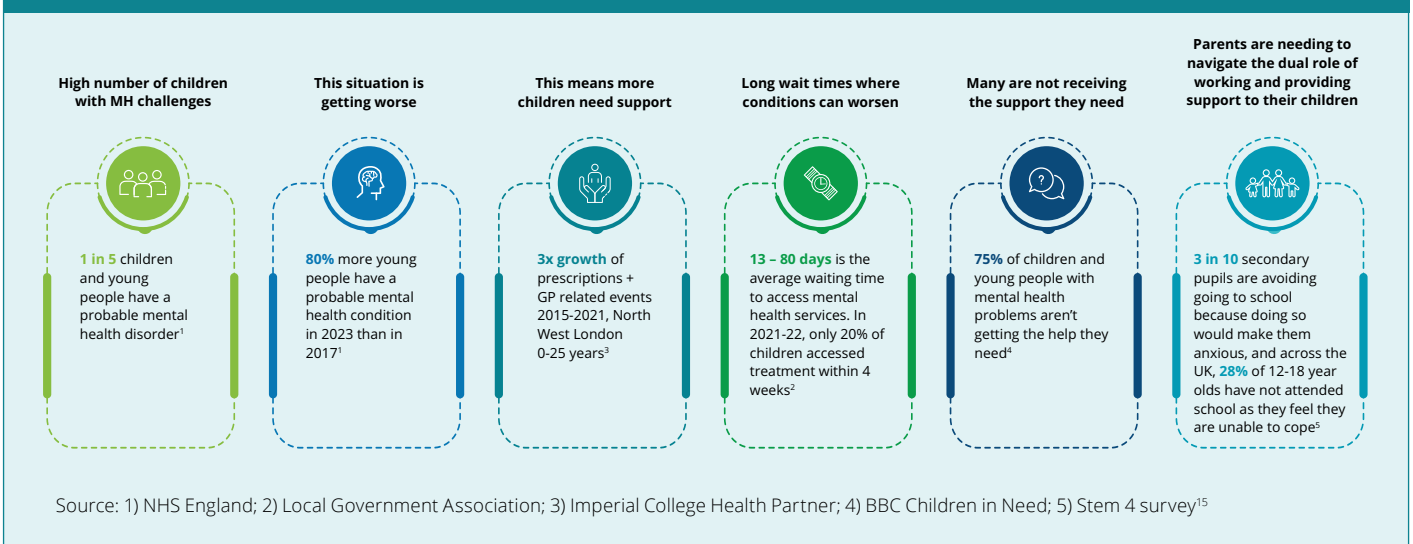
According to our survey results one in 100 working parents who had left their job said it was due entirely to the mental health and wellbeing of a child.

In this report we also take a deep dive into the effects of children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing on working parents. Balancing work and parenting responsibilities poses significant challenges for working parents. Time constraints, feelings of guilt, navigating financial pressures and setting boundaries between work and family life all contribute to the difficulties, and caring for children with additional needs and having concerns over a child’s mental health can further compound the struggle. Despite improvements in perceived mental health among UK workers, NHS England reports that 1 in 5 children and young people are now experiencing mental health difficulties (an increase from 1 in 9 in 2017, and 1 in 6 in 2020).¹² The mental health of children and young people has been a high priority on the UK government’s policy agenda for a number of years.¹³ And parents, a growing and significant proportion of the labour market (according to ONS data, 76% of mothers and 92% of fathers are in work), need help in the workplace so they can support their children and thrive at work.¹⁴

Deep dive: Mental health of children and young people and working parents

Recent trends show a significant increase in mental health issues among children and young people (Figure 9). Demand for support in schools and the NHS is outweighing capacity.

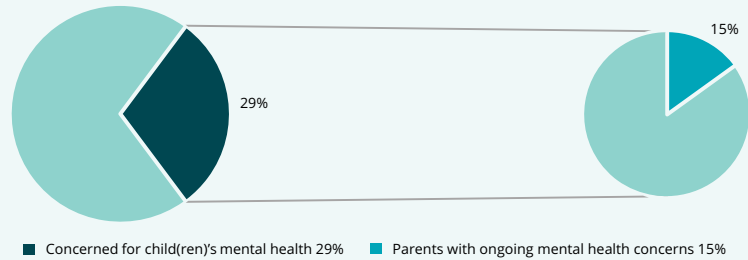
Figure 9. Growing concern for children’s mental health



Source: 1) NHS England; 2) Local Government Association; 3) Imperial College Health Partner; 4) BBC Children in Need; 5) Stem 4 survey¹⁵

Supporting a child with poor mental health can have a significant impact on parents and potentially on their work performance.¹⁶ Among the working parents who took part in our survey, 29% expressed concern for their child(ren)'s mental health and wellbeing, amongst other concerns. Of these respondents, 15% have ongoing personal mental health issues to deal with too (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Impact of children and young people's mental health on parental wellbeing



Note: UK Adults 18+ who have children and worked in September 2022-October 2023 and not self-employed were asked to select all that apply from 8 categories of worry (see Figure 7).

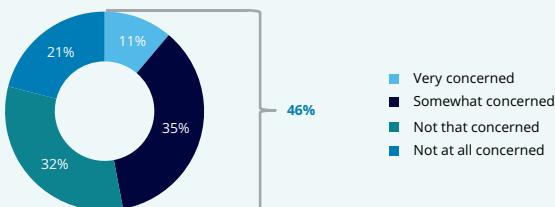
Source: **Deloitte analysis**

Our survey found that parental concern for their child(ren)'s mental health is impacting their work performance. When asked about the level of concern, 46% of working parents said they were 'somewhat concerned' or 'very concerned' for their children's mental health, and half of them say that their work performance is affected to some degree (Figure 11). Of the parents who expressed concerns about their children's mental health, 20% took days off to care for them, 21% reported lower productivity at work, and 15% sought job changes for better hours or proximity to home.

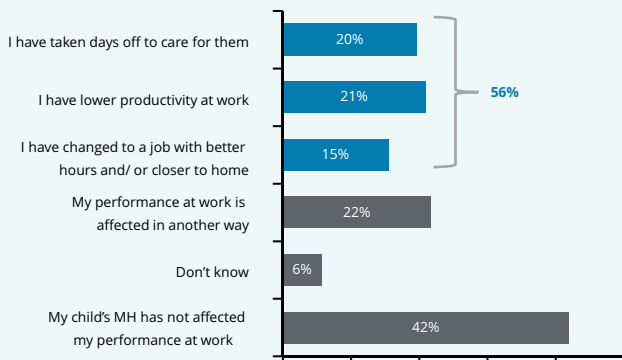
Juggling the demands of work with the responsibilities of caring for a child with mental health difficulties leads to parents taking time off work to care for their children, with most utilising 1 to 5 days of leave each year. However, taking time off due to poor personal mental health was considerably more prevalent, impacting 37% of respondents (Figure 12).

Figure 11 . Parental concerns for their children's mental health and its impact on work

Parental level of concern regarding their children's mental health



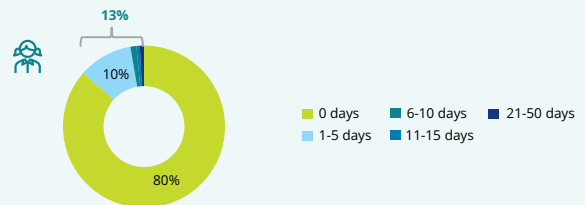
The impact on work performance when concerns about children's mental health are present



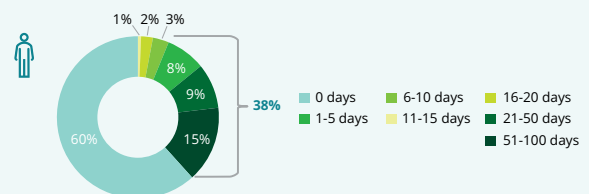
Note: UK Adults 18+ who have children and worked in September 2022-October 2023 and not self employed were asked how concerned, if at all, were they about any of their children's mental health. In the bottom chart respondents who said they are concerned about the mental health of their child(ren) were asked, if any, of the following ways have these concerns affected their performance at work
Source: **Deloitte analysis**

Figure 12. A balancing act for working parents leading to increased absenteeism

Parents taking time off to care for children's mental health



Parents taking time off due to poor personal mental health



Note: UK Adults 18+ who have children and worked in September 2022-October 2023 and not self-employed were asked how many working days of sickness absence did they take to care for their child(ren) with poor mental health. In the bottom chart respondents were asked what percentage of overall sickness absence days were due to poor mental health
N = 3156
Source: **Deloitte analysis**

Poor mental health in the workplace: the cost to employers

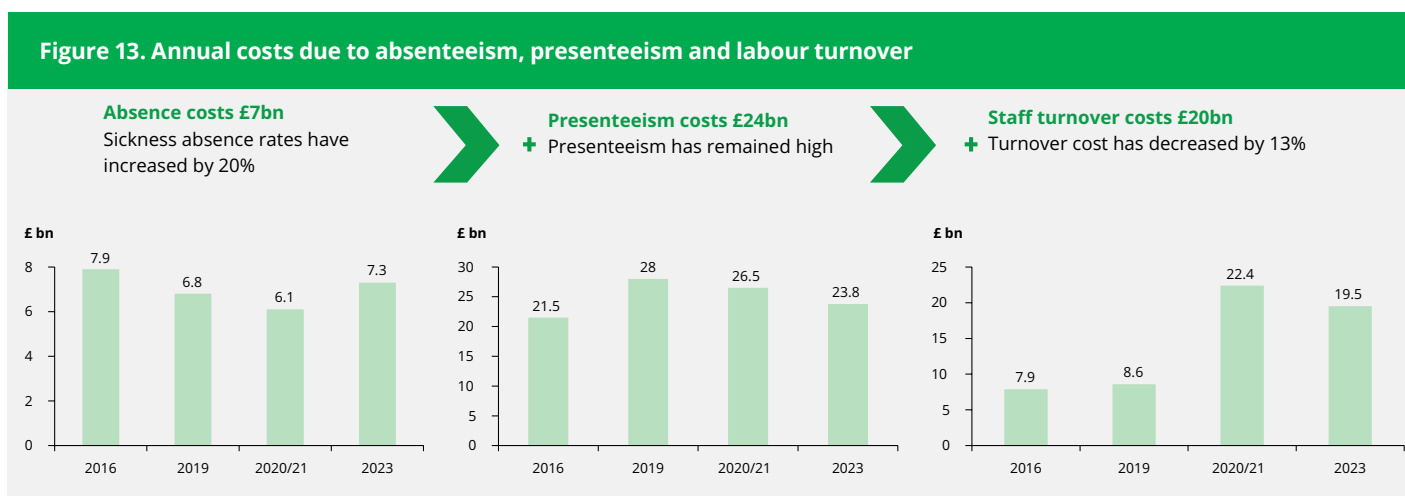


Poor mental health among the workforce imposes substantial costs on employers, and investing in promoting and protecting a mentally healthy workplace yields valuable returns. Having a mentally healthy workplace is not just good for people, it's good for business. Investing in employee mental health and wellbeing can lead to better employee engagement, reduced absence, higher performance and increased productivity. And when an organisation or company takes appropriate action to protect employee mental health and wellbeing, it says a lot about their values and culture.

The benefits of supporting employees' mental health and wellbeing are clear and compelling, but employers need real-world evidence to make informed decisions about how to invest in workplace mental health programmes and maximise benefits, including financial returns. This report is designed to inspire employers to take stock of mental health in the workplace and act by making a financially-sound investment in supporting their employees' mental health and wellbeing.

Our analysis suggests that the costs of poor mental health to employers from absenteeism, presenteeism and labour turnover in 2022-2023 are 8% lower than the post-pandemic 2021 figures (£51bn compared to £55bn in 2020/2021). This fall in costs is attributable to a decrease in presenteeism and turnover costs.

According to the World Health Organization, depression and anxiety cost the global economy US \$1 trillion each year, predominantly from reduced productivity.¹⁷ For the purpose of this report, the annual costs to UK employers of poor mental health are estimated as the combined costs of mental health-related absenteeism, presenteeism and labour turnover. Our analysis suggests that poor mental health across the UK workforce can now be costing employers around £51 billion per annum, with presenteeism remaining the highest contributor (Figure 13).



Note: UK Adults 18+ who worked in September 2022-October 2023 and not self-employed
N=3156

Source: **Deloitte analysis**

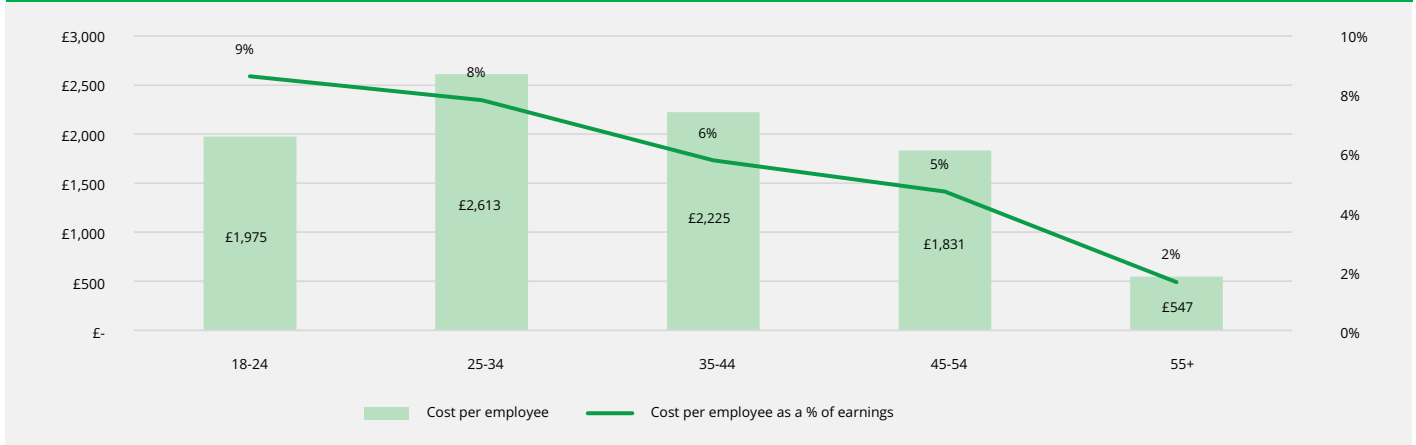
The 20% rise in mental-health absenteeism costs (reaching £7.3 billion in 2023 from £6.1 billion in 2020/21) can be attributed to various factors including, the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic uncertainty. Furthermore, challenges in accessing mental health services, and the cumulative effects of stress and burnout may have played roles in driving this trend.

Although there is evidence that hybrid working is beneficial for employees' mental health, it is also likely that people feel more pressure to work even while unwell.¹⁸ This ties in with the numbers we see for mental health-related presenteeism, as it remains the largest contributor to employer's costs, at around £23.8 billion. This is roughly three times the cost of mental health-related absenteeism, which is not markedly different from the estimated £26.5 (25-28) billion in our previous report.

Even though current economic conditions may be a contributing factor in people leaving or wanting to leave their jobs for better opportunities, our estimate is that mental health-related turnover costs have fallen to about £19.5 billion in 2023 from £22.4 billion in 2020/21, although along with presenteeism it is still a large portion of overall mental health-related costs in 2023.

Our estimates also show that poor mental health has a bigger impact on costs to employers of younger workers, particularly those aged 25 to 34 (Figure 14). This is in line with our survey findings on perceptions of mental health which are more positive among those aged 55+ (Figure 2). The overall mental health-related costs per employee broken down by UK regions are shown in Appendix 1.

Figure 14. Mental health related costs by age group



Note: UK Adults 18+ who worked in September 2022-October 2023 and not self-employed
N=3156

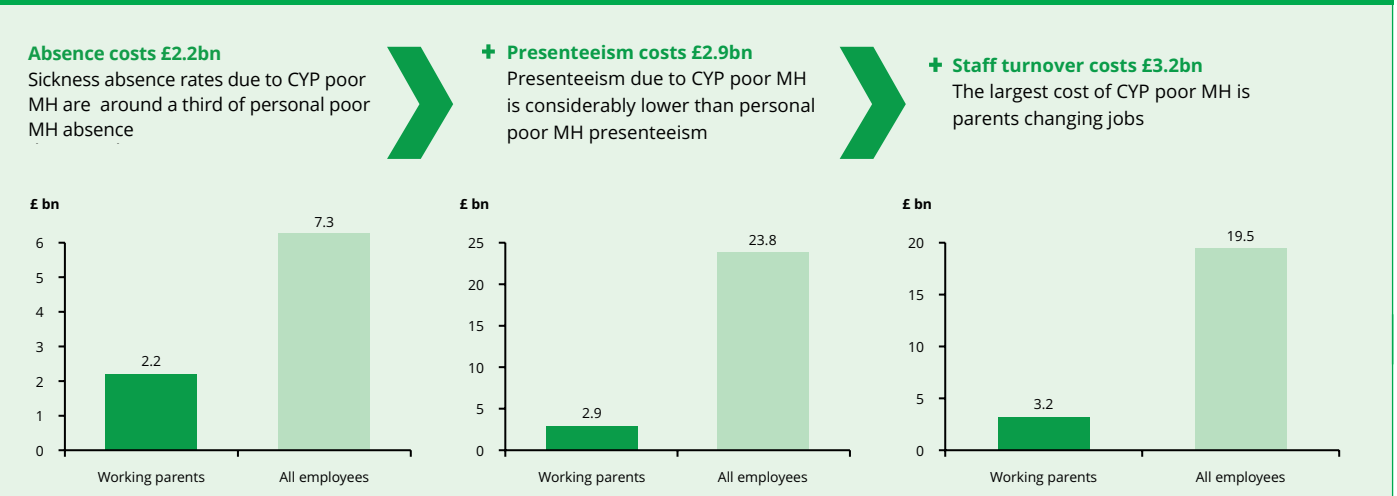
Source: **Deloitte analysis**

Deep dive: Impact on costs to employers of working parents concerned about their children

With the rising concerns about the mental health of children and young people, we have looked into the associated costs. Our estimates suggest that overall, such concerns are costing employers about £8.3 billion annually, representing an additional 16% on top of the total employee mental health-related costs (Figure 15).

Staff turnover costs make up the largest proportion of overall working parent costs who are concerned for their children's mental health, followed by presenteeism. Remote work may be exacerbating presenteeism, particularly for parents balancing working responsibilities whilst caring for their children at home.

Figure 15. Impact on costs of working parents concerned with their children



Note: UK Adults 18+ who worked in September 2022-October 2023 and not self-employed
N=3156

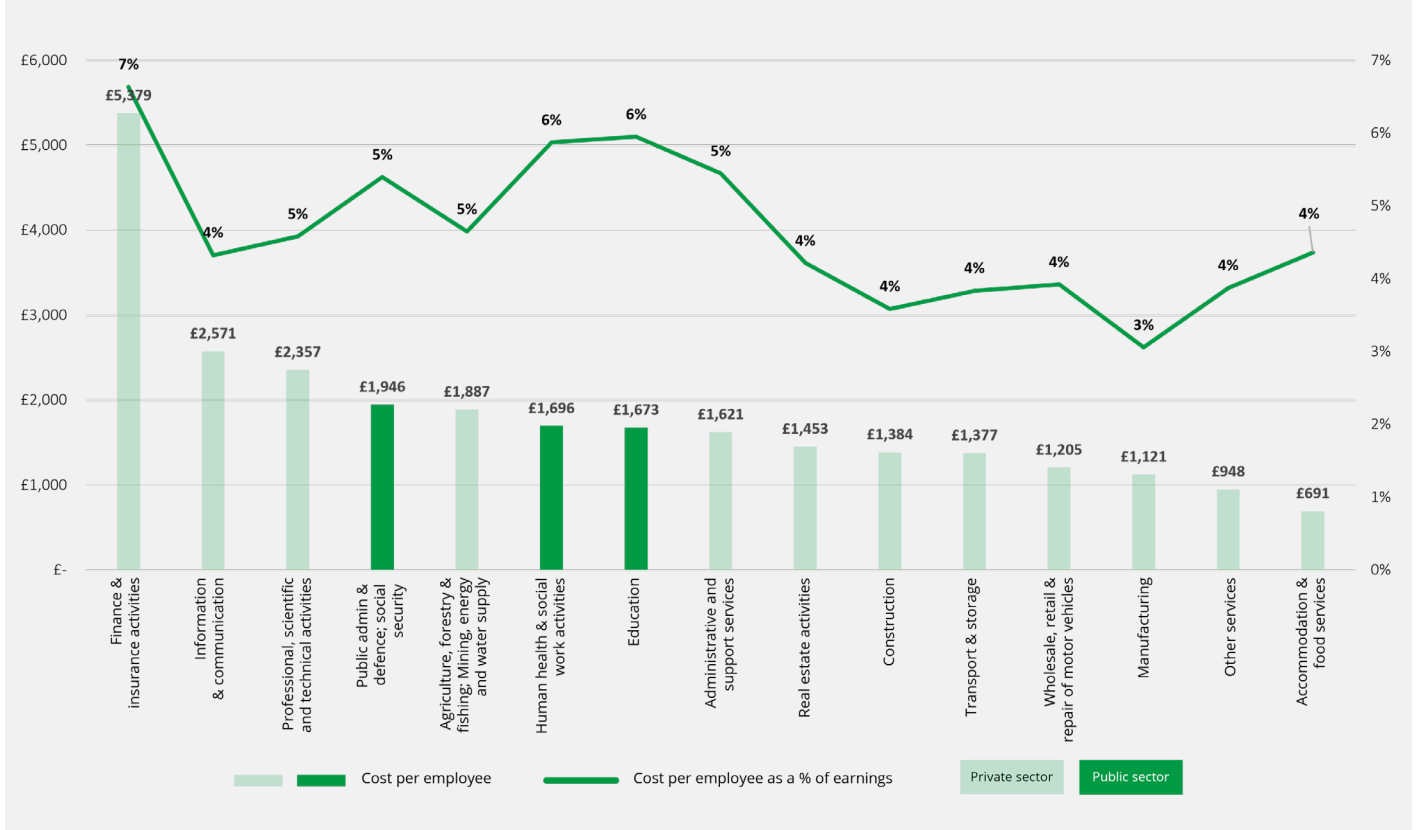
Source: **Deloitte analysis**

Overall, the message seems clear: poor mental health in the workplace is costly for employers. And given that lower absenteeism, presenteeism and turnover are linked to greater productivity, employers can not only mitigate the costs of doing nothing but may also augment productivity by investing in employee mental health in the workplace.

Costs to employers of poor mental health by sector and industry

Taken as a whole, estimated costs to employers in the private sector were around £33 billion in 2023 and £18 billion costs in the public sector. Our analysis finds significant costs per employee with poor mental health across the board, but there are differences across sectors and industries. Finance and Insurance, Education and Human Health and Social Work Activities have the highest costs for employers as a percentage of earnings (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Cost per employee with poor mental health, by sector and industry



Note: UK Adults 18+ who worked in September 2022-October 2023 and not self-employed
N=3156

Source: **Deloitte analysis**

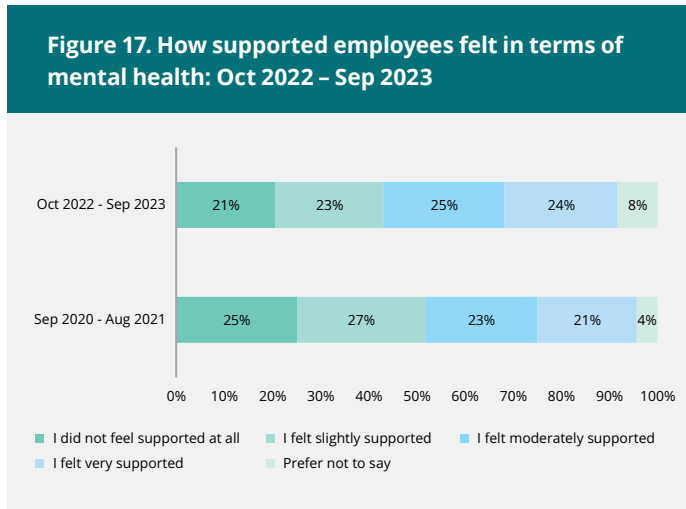
Our survey found that the highest percentage of absence days attributable to mental health was highest in Human Health and Social Work (34%), followed closely by Wholesale and Retail (33%) and Accommodation and Food Services (30%).

Supporting employees' mental health: not only the right thing to do, employees expect it



Having an organisational culture that centres around the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce helps to build trust and fosters a more positive work environment, with higher employee engagement and job satisfaction. This, in turn, can have a positive impact on talent retention and attraction, and build resilience among the workforce, as well as boost brand recognition.^{19 20} Many employees now expect more support from their employer to support their mental wellbeing. There is also a growing acceptance and use of digital mental health support by employees.

When we asked how supported employees felt in terms of their mental health in the period October 2022 to September 2023, 44% of respondents either did not feel supported at all by their employer or only slightly supported in relation to their mental health (Figure 17). This is a slight improvement from our 2021 survey results, when 52% of respondents expressed the same sentiments about lack of support from employers.



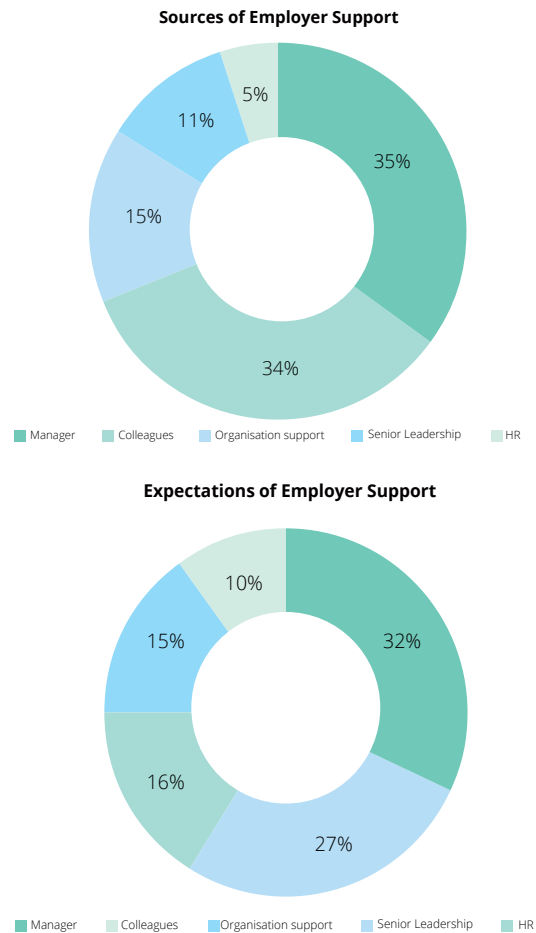
N = 3156

During the year-long period of October 2022 – September 2023. Respondents were asked how supported did they feel by their employer in terms of their mental health. (If they had more than one employer during this time, they were asked to think about the one they had for the longest period of time.) 'Net' figures include a range of responses – 'I feel slightly/moderately/very supported'

Source: **Deloitte analysis**

We also found that most people expect support in relation to their mental health from their leadership and managers, whereas in reality people are finding much-needed support from their colleagues and managers (Figure 18). This highlights the importance of senior leadership taking a more active role in supporting their employees' mental health and wellbeing.

Figure 18. Where people have found support in the workplace versus where they expect it to come from



N = 2245

The respondents who said they felt supported by their employer in terms of their mental health were then asked by whom they felt most supported by

N = 650

The respondents who said they did not feel supported by their employer in terms of their mental health were then asked from whom they expected more support

Note: UK Adults 18+ who worked in September 2022-October 2023 and not self-employed

Source: **Deloitte analysis**

Deep dive: Supporting working parents will mitigate the impact on business

A substantial number of parents at work (63%) seek support from external sources (regardless of what their employer may offer) to manage their children’s mental health challenges, rather than approaching their employer for additional support. Most parents prioritise seeking external help before resorting to measures that could impact their employment, such as reducing work hours or quitting their jobs altogether (Figure 19). Employers need to consider options to protect the wellbeing of their employees and provide channels for working parents to access support for their child’s mental health. Proactively supporting working parents will limit business disruption and will also demonstrate genuine care and support for employees.

Figure 19. Actions taken when concerned about the mental health of child(ren)/family members



Note: UK Adults 18+ who are parents and who worked in September 2022-October 2023 and not self-employed were asked which, if any, of the following actions they would consider taking if they were concerned about the mental health of their child(ren)

N=3156

Source: **Deloitte analysis**

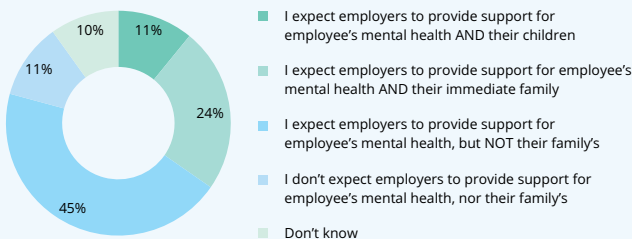
There is a growing expectation among employees for their employers to provide more support for their personal and their family’s mental health. Our survey found that 35% of respondents expect support for themselves and their children / immediate family (for example by providing an employee support line, childcare support, or flexible working arrangements) (Figure 20, left chart). However, only 26% of parents feel the support provided by their employer is adequate for themselves and their children. Twenty per cent of parents feel that the support provided by their employer is inadequate for themselves and their children, while 15% feel more should be done to support their children (Figure 20, right chart).

However, there is some divergence of opinion in expectations of support when it comes to family, with 45% of respondents favouring support for themselves only and 35% expecting it for both themselves and their families (including children) (Figure 20, left chart).

A concerning 35% of respondents are uncertain about their employer’s support, signalling potential communication gaps (Figure 20, right chart).

Figure 20. Employee expectations of employer mental health support versus what they actually receive

Opinion about what support employers should provide for employees and their families' Mental Health



Note: Respondents were asked which of the following best describes their personal opinion about what support employers should provide for employees and their families' mental health

Source: **Deloitte analysis**

The amount of support employers provide to employees and their children's Mental Health



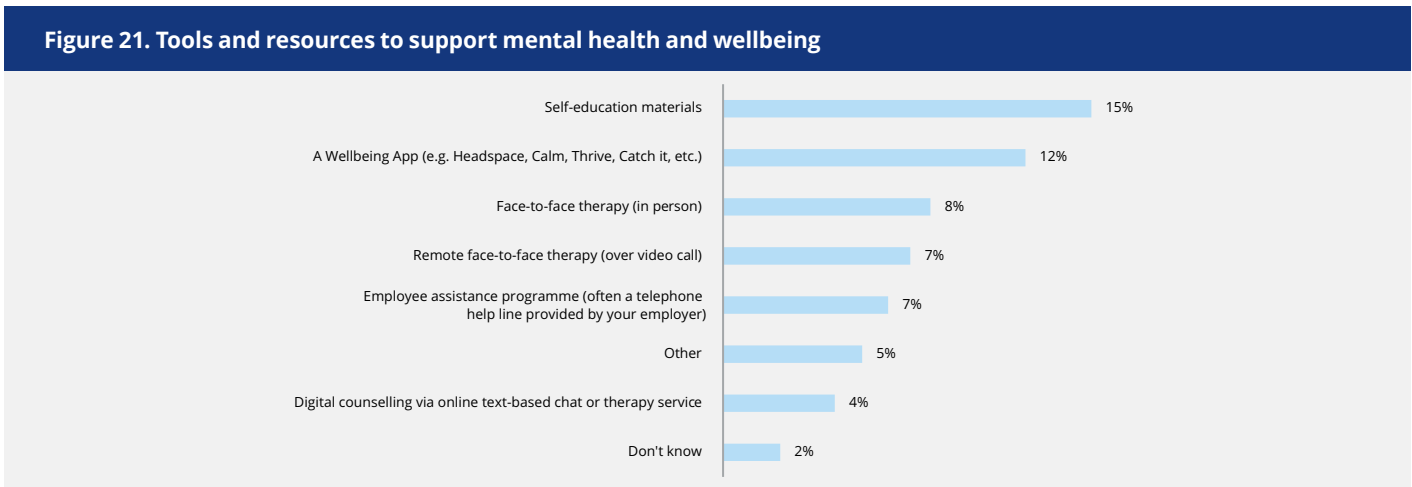
Note: Respondents were asked which of the following statements best describes the amount of support their employer provides for them and their children's mental health



Tools and approaches to providing support for mental health

To rise to the challenge of offering more support, there is a wide range of tools and resources that organisations can use, both digital and non-digital, including communities and support networks (see Citigroup case study). These can be crafted to address the needs of various demographics and individual preferences within their workforce. Our survey found that the most used mental health support tools are: self-education materials (15%), wellbeing apps (12%), and in-person face-to-face therapy (8%) (Figure 21).

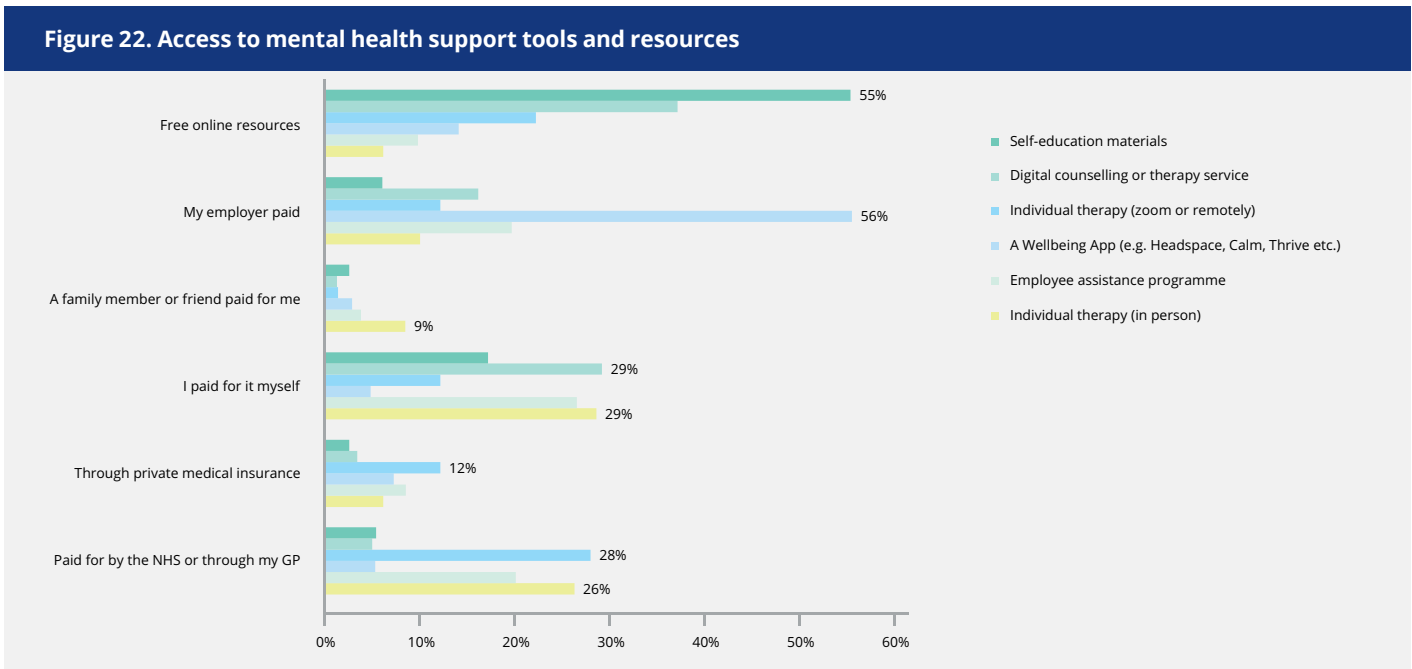
Most respondents are finding and accessing self-education materials and wellbeing apps via free online resources (55% and 37% respectively), though a substantial proportion of employees paying for the apps themselves (29%) (Figure 22). Most employees accessing individual therapy (either remotely or in person) pay for these services themselves.



N =3156

Respondents were asked which, if any, of the following support tools/resources did they use to help manage their mental health or wellbeing over the last year. This chart doesn't show results for 'Not applicable - I have not used any tools/resources to help manage my mental health or wellbeing during this time'

Source: **Deloitte analysis**



N =3156

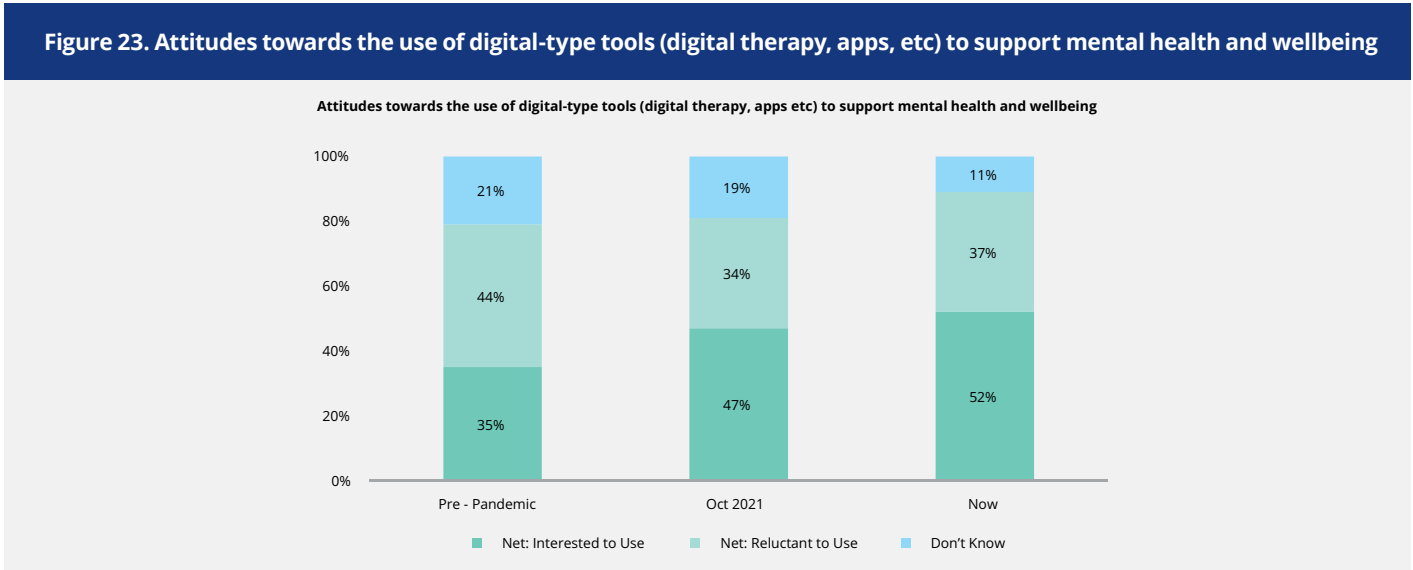
The respondents that said they have used support tools / resources in the past year to help manage their mental health or wellbeing were then asked how they first found out about these resources

Source: **Deloitte analysis**



An employee assistance programme (EAP) is an employer-financed voluntary programme for providing free confidential assessments and counselling, and follow-up services to employees who are experiencing problems that are causing them stress and affecting their attendance or performance at work. However, with only 7% of our respondents making use of this resource, EAPs are used less than self-education materials and apps (Figure 21). Indeed, there is growing demand for, and provision of, digital support options to help individuals manage their mental wellbeing. For some people, wellbeing apps are often more easily accessible and cheap to use for maintaining wellbeing and dealing with emerging mental health issues.

Attitudes around the use of digital-type services supporting mental health have changed over recent years. Employees are now more interested in and less reluctant to use digital tools to support their mental health and wellbeing (52% in 2023, up from 47% in 2021 and 35% before the pandemic) (Figure 23).



N =3156

Respondents were asked that if they were experiencing mental health challenges, how interested, if at all, they would be in using a digital-type services such as digital therapy and / or wellbeing apps

'Net' figures include a range of responses. 'Not at all Interested', 'Not Very Interested', 'Somewhat Interested', 'Very Interested'

Source: **Deloitte analysis**

Deep dive: Ways to support working parents

There are a number of free resources online (see reference list in recommendations) to support parents and carers dealing with their children's mental health, but employers can be doing more to support working parents navigate this challenge. Mind have developed a toolkit for employers on how to support parents in their organisation which highlights the importance of extending mental health support options to families of employees for a more holistic approach to supporting the whole family.²¹

We have heard from working parents the power of community groups and support networks to allow a safe space for them to share and learn from each other's stories and ways to support their children's mental health. Place2Be's Parenting Smart is an evidence-based online course designed to provide parents with a comprehensive set of resources to help deal with everyday parenting challenges, written with mental health in mind. Parents are able to interact with others in their training cohort through a family practitioner-moderated discussion forum to share experiences and strategies.²²

Company case study: Citigroup²³

How are parents supported?

Citi's Family Network plays a pivotal role in fostering an inclusive workplace culture where employees are supported to integrate their professional and personal lives, acknowledging the challenges and stages of family life, which allows employees to develop their careers.

The Families Matter Network offers a range of forums for people to connect, including virtual and in-person events, career management sessions and expert-led workshops to support employees in both their family and work life. Issues across the experience of family are covered, including supporting parents navigate child social media use and online safety, bullying and eating disorders.

What has the outcome been?

Through collaboration between HR and senior leadership, as well as other networks, the network drives positive change by providing feedback and ideas to promote continuous improvement in diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

The network also actively engages with employees, and has been successful in enhancing policies and practices which has led to improvements in multiple areas, including: fertility funding, bereavement policy, adoption policy, maternity and paternity leave, increase in child care days and the securing of free access to expert-led resources for all employees globally.

The case for investment



Our analysis shows that investing in employees' mental health mainly yields positive financial returns for employers. From a financial standpoint, we estimate that by investing in improving the mental health of their workforce, employers can obtain a return (on average) of £4.7 for every £1 spent.

The studies we have used throughout our series of 'Mental health and employers' reports assess the published return on investment (ROI) studies from a variety of interventions and programmes across a wide range of organisation sizes, from EAPs, long-term mental health programmes, awareness and education, leadership training, use of internet- and mobile-supported occupational stress-management strategies, screening staff for more targeted approaches to providing individual therapy.^{24, 25, 26} Our assessment of ROI in this report includes analysis of four additional new studies since our previous edition, *Mental health and employers: The case for investment – pandemic and beyond (2022)*.²⁷

Our analysis of the literature estimates that by investing in workplace mental health, employers can achieve an average return of £4.7 for every £1 invested, but the size of the return varies with the nature of the intervention (see Appendix 3 for ROI methodology). We acknowledge that there needs to be more published studies on the ROI of employer interventions to increase the evidence base used for our analysis and the confidence in these financial return numbers.

The nature of employer interventions

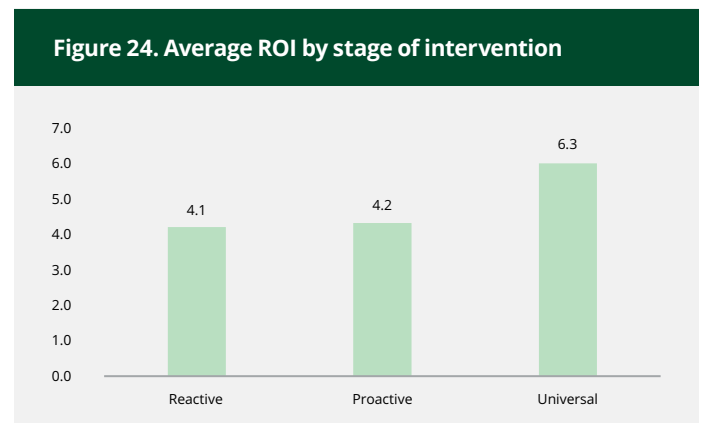
We have categorised the financial returns from interventions by employers in three ways, according to:

- the stage at which the intervention is offered
- the type of intervention offered
- the size of the recipient group

Our research has found that, in the vast majority of cases, employers can see positive financial returns from investing in workplace mental health initiatives, although they vary according to the type of approach. When analysing interventions by the stage at which they are offered, we found that on average organisation-wide (Universal) early interventions, such as culture change and raising awareness of mental health issues, provide the highest ROI, at £6.3 for every £1 invested. Proactive interventions, which support employee mental health at an

early stage, yield an ROI of 4.2:1, whilst reactive interventions that provide support only after a deterioration in an employee's mental health has occurred provide an ROI of 4.1:1 (Figure 24).

The findings indicate that there can be returns from investment in addressing existing mental health challenges in the workplace. Furthermore, proactive and reactive approaches need not be mutually exclusive, as both can bring value depending on the circumstances.

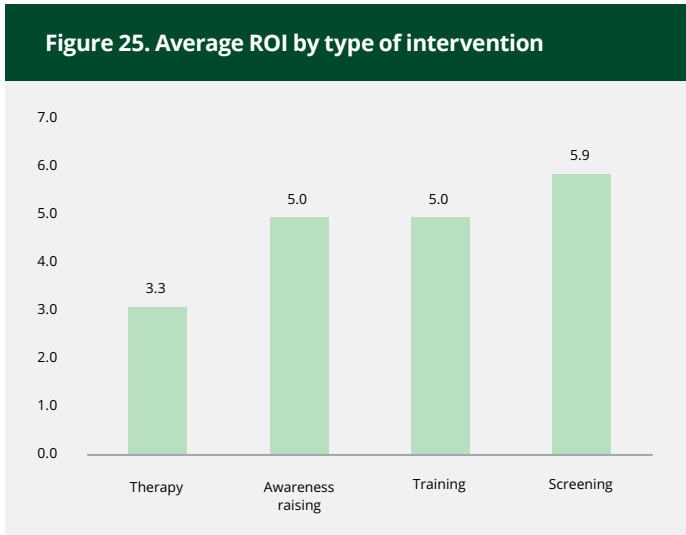


Source: **Deloitte analysis**

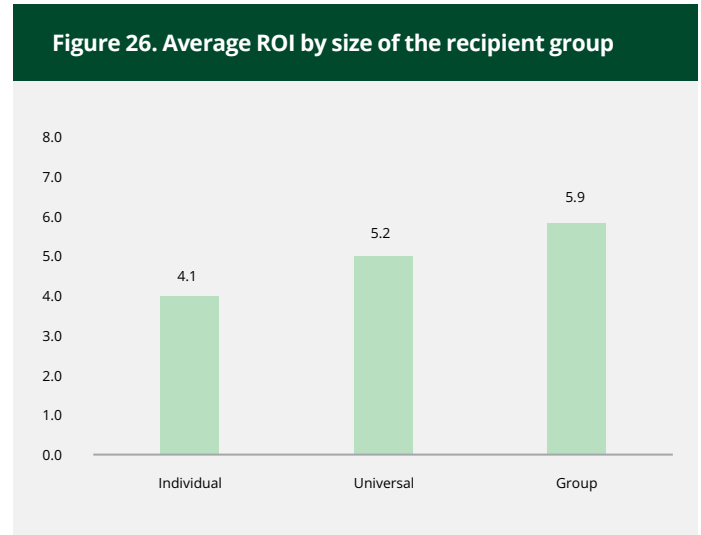
Interventions by employers can also range from screening for targeted approaches, training staff, raising awareness, to providing individual therapy. Our analysis found that screening programmes, which help to identify individuals who may be susceptible to or experiencing mental health issues and which provide targeted support at an early stage to prevent the problem from worsening, yield an ROI of £5.9 for every £1 invested (see Figure 25). Training programmes that educate and upskill employees on mental health (particularly for leaders and managers) and raise awareness about mental health are cost-effective and easy-to-implement interventions that generated ROIs of 5.0:1.

Providing individual therapy for employees with mental health problems provides a ROI for employers of 3.3:1 (Figure 25). Our review also included a study that looked at using exercise to promote mental wellbeing and it reported an impressive ROI of 7.5:1 (not included in the chart as it was a single study). Overall, our analysis shows that the vast majority of interventions supporting employee mental health lead to a positive ROI.

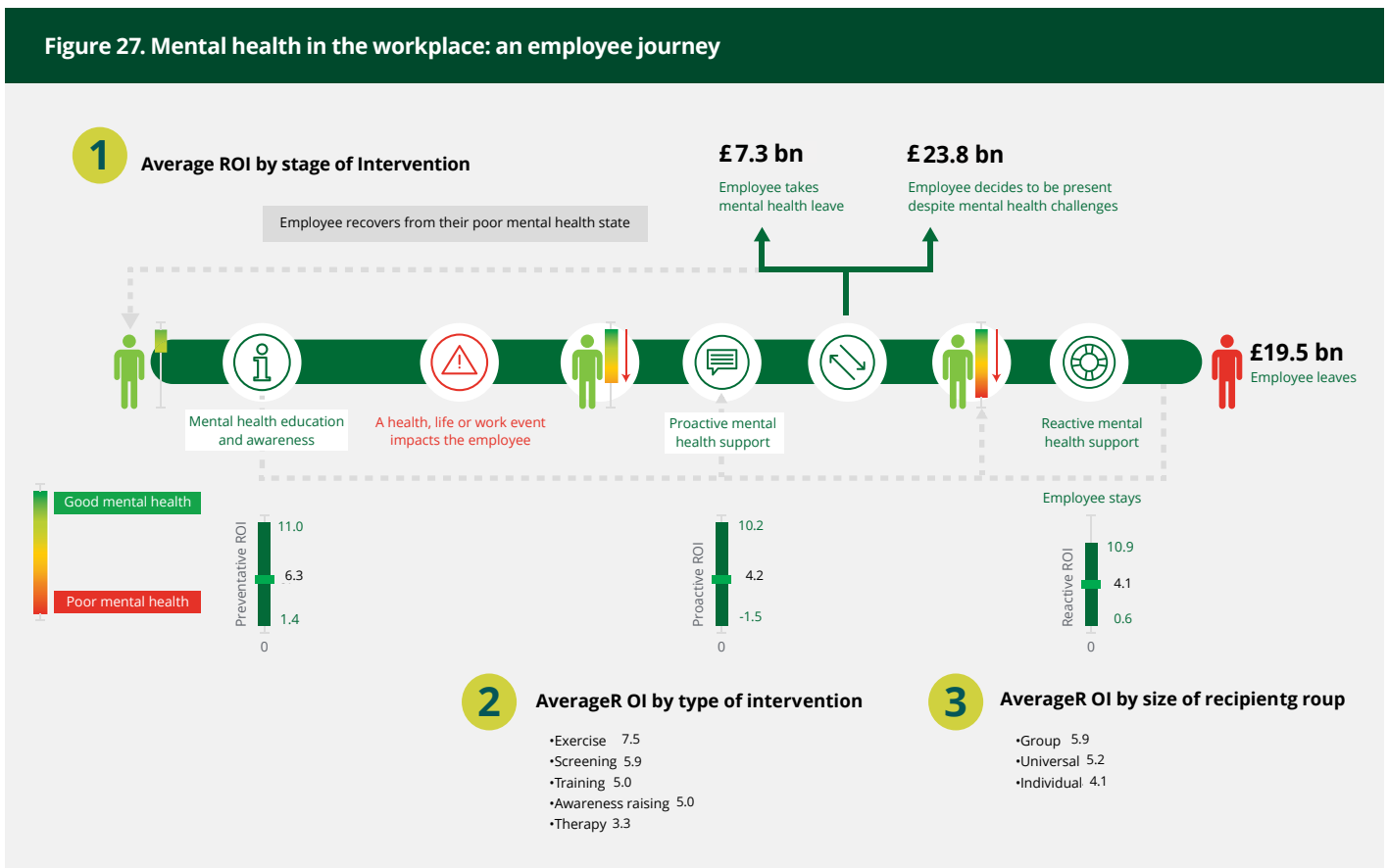
Our analysis also shows that workplace mental health support interventions tend to provide higher financial returns when directed at larger numbers of employees (ROIs of 5.9:1 and 5.2:1 for targeted groups and company-wide interventions, respectively), rather than individual interventions (ROI of 4.1:1) (Figure 26).



Source: Deloitte analysis



Source: Deloitte analysis



Source: Deloitte analysis

Actions to foster a mentally thriving workplace and realise returns on investment



Fostering a safe and healthy workplace that promotes and protects the physical and mental health of employees is crucial for an organisation's overall success. In this section we present an overview of actions that should be considered by leaders of organisations to drive the necessary changes.

Employers need real-world evidence to make informed decisions about how to invest in workplace mental health support programmes to maximise benefits and financial returns. Measures by employers should begin with an awareness and understanding of the pressures of work and parenting on the mental wellbeing of employees, and the measures that can be taken to address them.

Leadership

Leaders....

... can sign up to the **UK Mental Health at Work Commitment** or the Global Business Collaboration for Better Workplace Mental Health pledge.²⁸ Many, including Deloitte, have already done so.

... should set the tone at the top of their organisation and keep mental health concerns high on their agenda and should find the best way to spread awareness and understanding across the whole organisation, giving consideration to special needs and requirements of working parents.

... should commit their organisation to tackle the stigma commonly associated with poor mental health through a variety of training and education tools, and should stimulate more open conversations about mental health and address the implications of stress and burnout among employees.²⁹

Monitoring and raising awareness in organisations

Organisations...

... should establish and monitor metrics (key performance indicators) for happiness or wellbeing in the workforce (for example, a happiness index), mental health issues and anxiety levels.

... should recognise and monitor the direct impact of work on their employee's mental health, identifying stressors and creating a positive, well-designed work environment that protects employee's mental health and wellbeing.^{30 31}

... should be alert to the particular difficulties for higher-risk groups within the workforce, including working parents. This should include investment to support employee financial wellbeing by introducing new processes or resources that build financial resilience and create a culture of support.

... should be more understanding about the need for time off work to cope with stress and burnout. The costs of presenteeism and turnover are much greater than the costs of absences from work.

Changing culture and increasing support

Employers...

... must create a workplace culture that gives employees the time and space to take care of their mental health and feel able to express their concerns and worries, such as implementing policies that allow employees to take mental health days and providing open communication channels to promote a culture of understanding and support.

... should increasingly provide flexible work arrangements, such as flexible hours and remote working to support parents in managing their work commitments and family responsibilities.

... should continue to build the literacy of all employees, and managers in particular, to understand their own mental health and recognise the signs of poor mental health in others. As well as knowing how to spot the signs of poor mental health, they should be upskilled in terms of what factors promote or hinder good mental health.

... should have a portfolio of support measures available for the needs of different employees, including those specifically designed to support working parents and their families holistically. Employers should recognise the growing use of digital tools to support mental health, and community networks to support working parents.

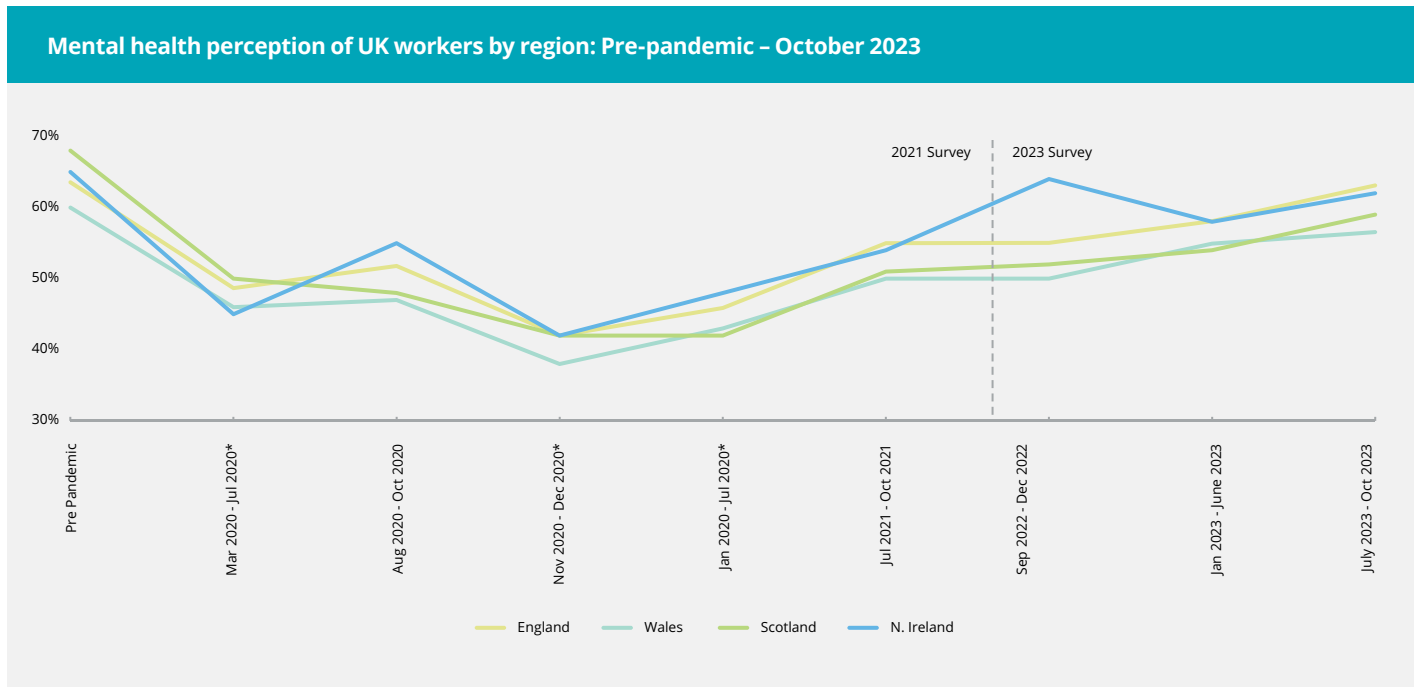
... should establish clear communication channels to increase awareness and uptake once support measures are implemented, to help normalise their use and reduce stigma.

Examples of free resources for working families:

- [Best ways to support working parents - Mental Health At Work & Kooth](#)
- [Mental health support for parents and carers – Place2Be](#)
- [Advice for Parents & Carers - Working Families](#)
- [Parents' Toolkit - BBC Bitesize](#)
- [Children's mental health - Every Mind Matters - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
- [YoungMinds | Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People | YoungMinds](#)



Appendix 1. Additional figures



Note: UK Adults 18+ who worked in September 2020 - August 2021 (2021 Survey) and in September 2022-October 2023 (2023 Survey) and not self-employed were asked to rate their overall mental health where "very bad" indicates very poor mental health (e.g., severe depression / anxiety), "neither good nor bad" indicates neutral mood and some minor health concerns and "very good" indicates very good mental health (e.g., strong wellbeing and absence of mental health concerns). This chart doesn't show results for 'Prefer not to say'

'Net: good' figures include a range of responses – 'I felt good/very good'; 'Net: bad' figures include a range of responses – 'I felt bad/very bad'

*Denotes Periods of National Lockdown

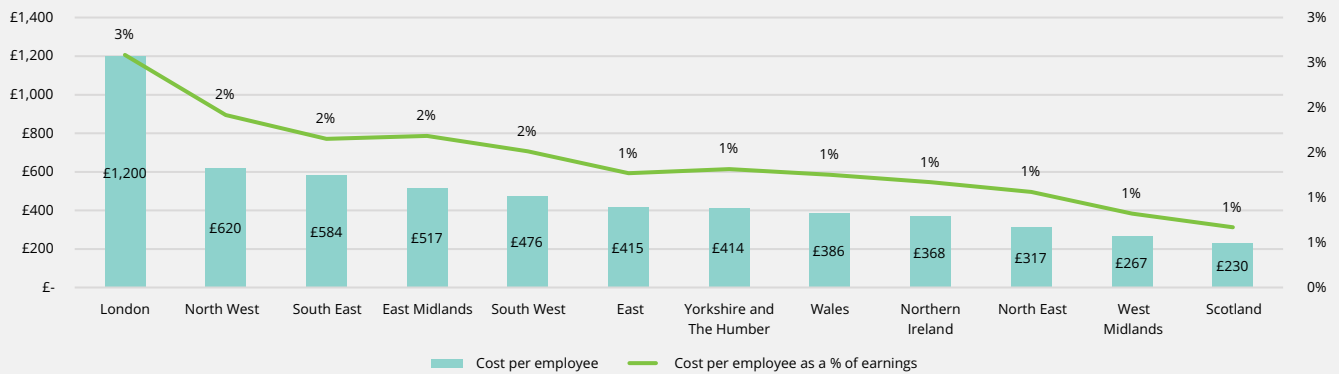
Source: **Deloitte analysis**



Cost per employee with poor personal mental health by region



Cost per employee when their child/ren struggle with poor mental health by region



Appendix 2. Costing methodology

In order to calculate the costs of poor employee mental health and costs relating to poor mental health of their children, we considered a range of costs including:

Absence from work

Presenteeism

Staff turnover

Other team and organisational costs

Based on overall cost impact, data availability and robustness, we focused on absence, presenteeism and staff turnover costs. We then calculated costs by sector (both public and private sectors) and by industry groups within each sector, as well as by region and age groups.

Our modelling methodology aims at a detailed level of analysis of mental health costs, allowing for data availability and robustness.

Definitions

In this report, we consider absence, presenteeism and staff turnover costs. We have used common definitions found in the literature and have excluded costs which are not sufficiently well-defined or do not have robust data to support them.

Methodology for evaluating costs

- The number of people working by industry, by region, and age groups.
- Applying national average salary levels as well as absence, presenteeism and turnover rates by industry, by region and by age groups.
- The methodology for calculating absence, presenteeism, and turnover costs is consistent across all dimensions, with the only exception being turnover cost value.
 - Industry rating: Turnover costs are associated with the intellectual level of the work involved in an industry. Industries are categorised as high, medium, or low based on this intellectual level. Higher intellectual level ratings generally correspond to higher turnover costs.
 - Region and Age group: Studies indicate minimal differences in turnover costs across regions or age groups. Therefore, a single estimate (not specific to region or age group) is used to calculate turnover cost as a percentage of salary.

Assumptions

Our cost model is based on a range of assumptions. To select the most appropriate assumptions, we judged the reliability and methodology behind the various sources of data.

Employee sample

- Employees only are considered (not self-employed individuals).
- Full-time part-time workers: The survey used for inputs to this model include approximately 20% part-time workers who work between 8-30 hours per week. This is nationally representative given the overall sample size, and no adjustments have been made to survey data.
- The employee figures for industries, regions and age groups are drawn from the 2023 ONS data.
- The total cost figures for the Whole Economy are based solely on employed individuals, and do not include the 4.5 million self-employed.
- The calculations assume that 58% of the total number of employees are working parents, as indicated by the survey data.

Absence, presenteeism and turnover data

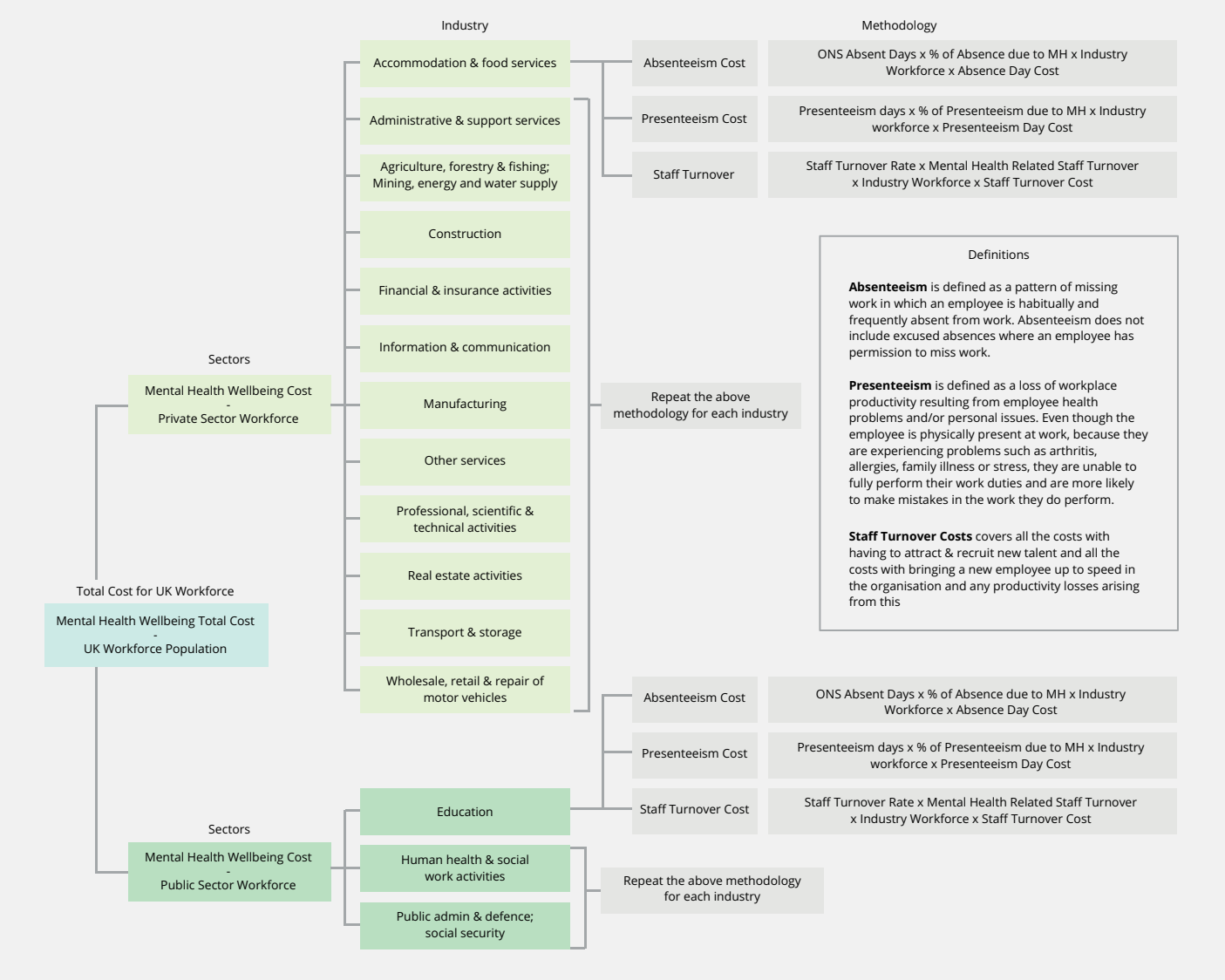
- Data related to overall absence are based on ONS source, while presenteeism and turnover figures are taken from the Deloitte survey.
- Data related to the % of absenteeism, presenteeism and turnover related to MH is pulled from our Deloitte survey findings.
- Turnover rates are based on % of employees having left in the past year.
- Staff turnover is attributed to mental health wherever respondents stated that leaving a job in the previous 12 months was at least "somewhat" related to mental health. A weighting approach has been used to account for differences between the response categories that attribute staff turnover to mental health.

Cost results

- Cost results at the 'Whole economy,' 'United Kingdom,' and 'All Ages' levels are derived by summing individual industry, region, and age group results. This approach, prioritising individualised results over averages, avoids data smoothing and ensures accuracy representative of specific industries, regions and age groups.



Model methodology for estimating the total cost with mental health wellbeing in the UK workforce





Appendix 3. ROI methodology

For every publication, we analyse and report numbers on return on investment (ROI) for mental health interventions by conducting a literature review and we ensure the most up to date studies that also meet our criteria are included in our analysis. To improve our analysis, this year we have introduced stricter criteria to include studies in our review. Consequently, in line with our updated methodology, criteria and assumptions, we have done a revision of all studies included. This updated review includes 36 ROIs extracted from 26 studies/reports. Of note, in our literature search we have also found a study that we decided not to include in our main analysis, as it did not reach statistical significance in cost savings between the control and intervention groups. However, we are highlighting this particular study, as it reported a close to 90% (88.2%) chance of producing an impressive ROI of 20:1.

A literature review was conducted to gather studies that have conducted a return on investment analysis of mental health interventions. In our review we used the following search criteria and steps:

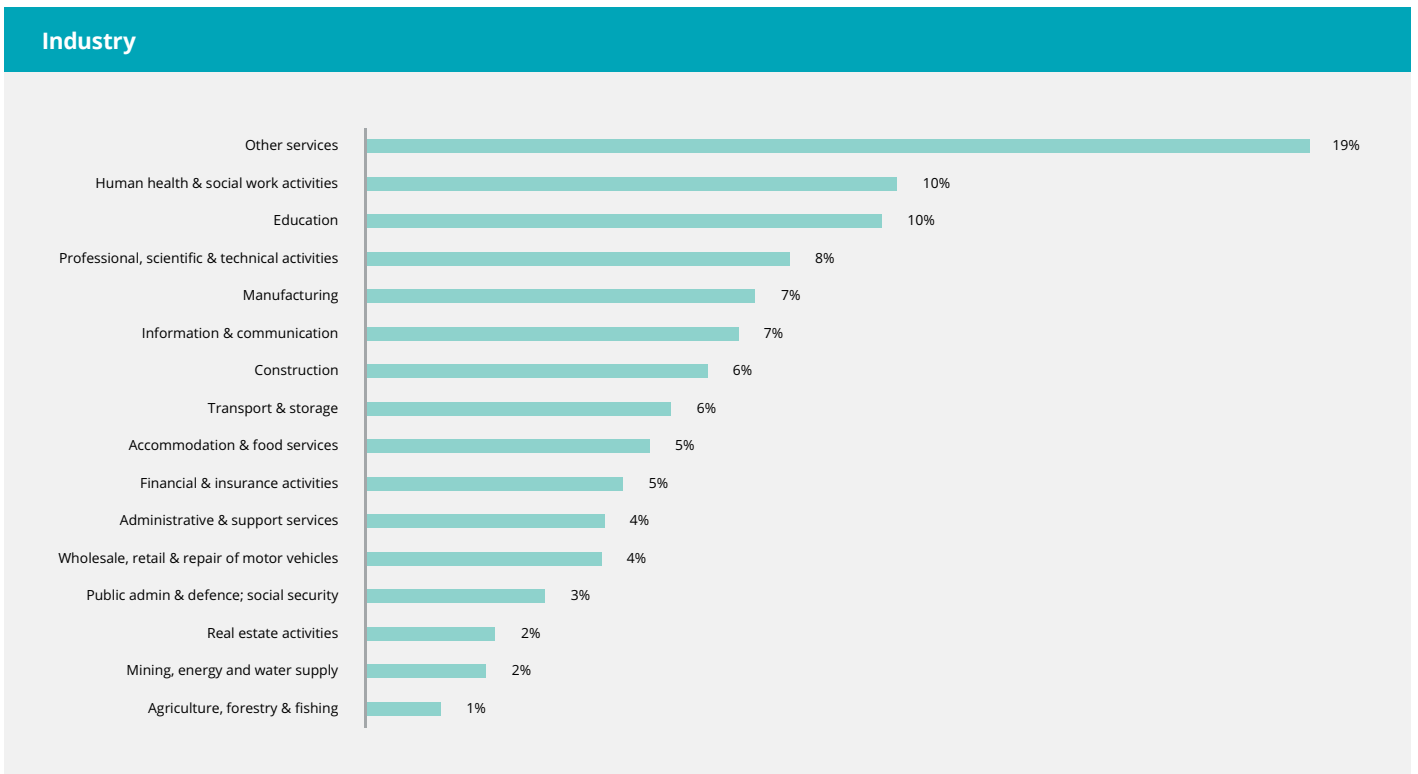
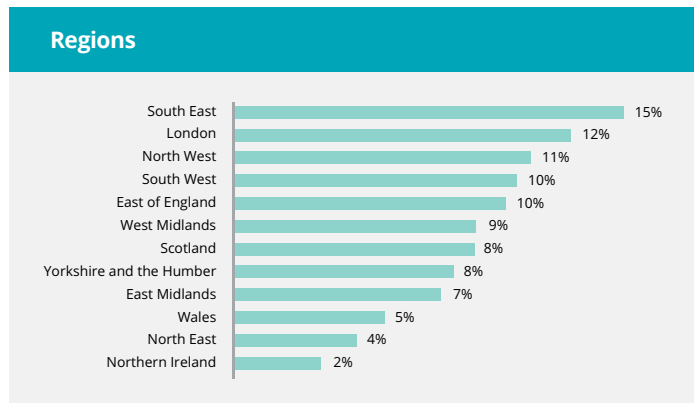
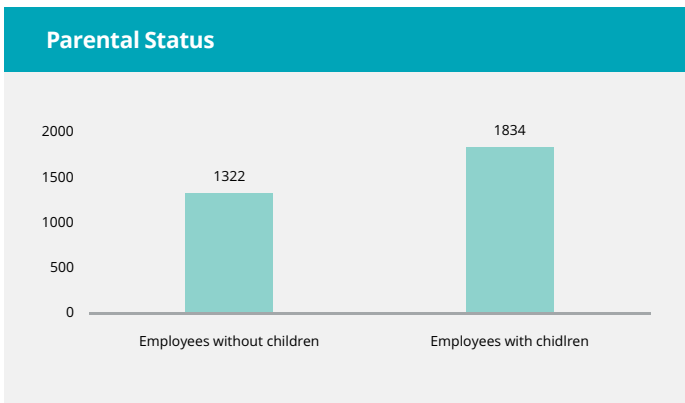
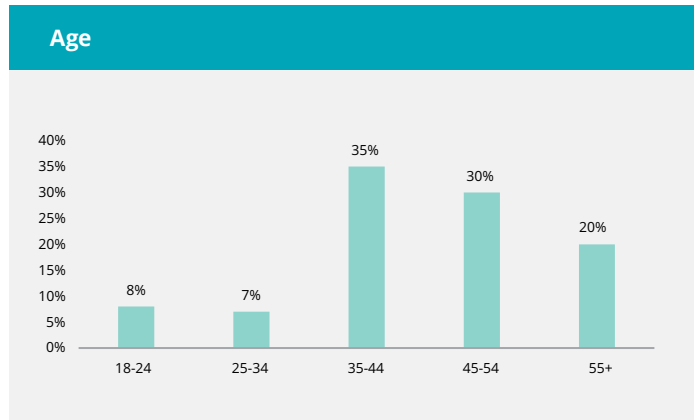
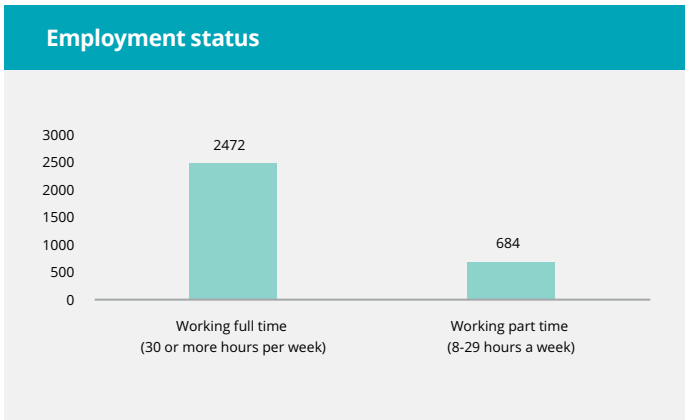
- A keyword search using a combination of phrases linked to mental and emotional health and wellbeing, the workplace and ROI analysis via Google and Google Scholar. Different study designs were included, such as financial modelling, randomised control trials, and non-experimental (before and after comparison). The studies and reports included come from academic sources, NGOs and governmental bodies. We did not review the technical details of the study/ intervention methodology, beyond identifying the type of intervention that was used to confirm it was in line with our criteria. Our scope was not to critique existing literature, or focus on a specific type of mental health intervention, but rather to

collate findings from a variety of published sources reporting different mental health intervention/ modelling approaches.

- We excluded studies that could not be linked to either mental health or the workplace or did not provide quantitative data on costs and benefits. In cases where ROI was reported, the methodology of calculation was examined. The formula used in this report is: $ROI = (\text{benefits} - \text{costs}) / \text{costs}$. However, it should be noted that in the literature ROI can also be calculated as $\text{benefits} / \text{costs}$. This was taken into account in this report and all numbers were adjusted, where we had sufficient information to do so.
- While conducting our analysis, we have followed the assumptions/criteria below:
 - Where a range has been provided for the ROI for an intervention, an average was taken.
 - Where studies reported a number of different interventions with different impacts and ROI, we have extracted each ROI separately.
 - We only extract ROIs that haven been reported as statistically significant.
 - Where we needed to calculate ROIs from costs and benefits figures, we extracted the numbers as they were reported.
 - As ROI is a ratio, calculations were conducted and presented in the original study's currency.

We conducted an ROI evaluation of these reports to reveal final ROI ranges. As a result of our analysis, the overall ROI range we report is of -1.5:1 to 11.0:1.

Appendix 4. Survey demographics



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