

# Mental health in the workplace



## Introduction

According to mental health charity, Mind, approximately 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year. CV-Library's own research, exploring the views of 1,200 UK workers around mental health issues in the workplace, found that **14.1%** of respondent admitted to suffering with mental health problems, increasing to **26.9%** amongst under 18s.

What's more, **89%** of individuals said that these affect their working life. And while it seems that more and more people are being affected, there are ongoing concerns that employers are not doing enough to support members of staff who are suffering, and to help make the process of coming to work that little bit easier.

In this report, we will explore our findings in more detail, and outline a framework for successfully managing mental health in the workplace.



## An ongoing stigma

Despite more conversations opening up around mental health, it is certainly still a taboo subject. In fact, **60.2%** of professionals said that they would be embarrassed disclosing information about the state of their mental health to their employer. This appeared to be most prevalent with those aged 18-24, where **69%** admitted to feeling this way. In addition to this:



Employees aged 35-44 feel the most uncomfortable talking about their mental health with their manager



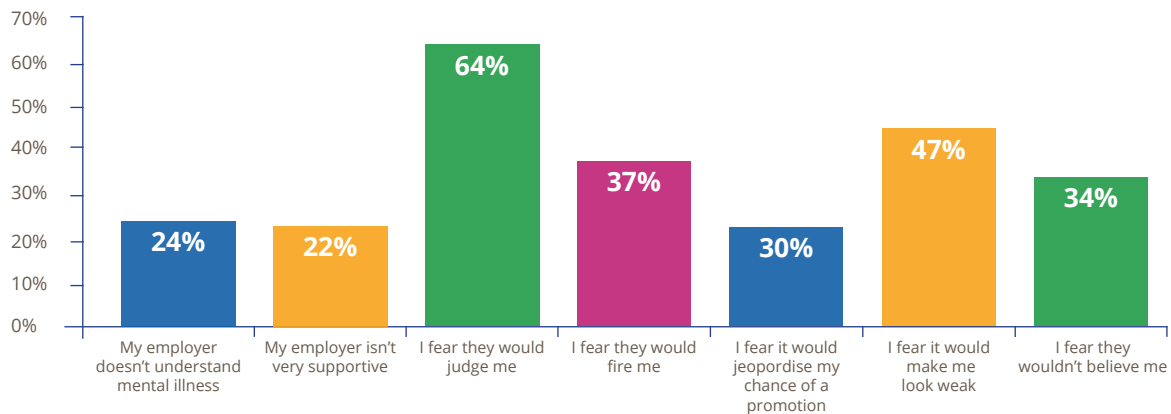
Under 18s feel more comfortable talking to their colleagues about their mental health, than their boss



Men are more likely to talk to their co-workers about their mental health, than women are

What's more, our research outlines the reasons why people feel so reluctant to talk about how they're feeling in the workplace.

## Reasons why workers feel embarrassed to talk to their boss about mental health



In addition to this, **63%** said that they would feel guilty taking time off work for mental health reasons, rising to **67.6%** amongst women and **69%** across those aged between 18 and 24. Clearly, the notion that mental health is just as important as physical health is not ringing true in a lot of UK workplaces.

## Combating mental health in the workplace

The research from CV-Library found that one third (**31.7%**) of workers do not feel their workplace is supportive of mental health, with three quarters (**77.8%**) also believing that organisations across the UK are nowhere near as supportive as they should be.

So what should employers be doing to ensure their workplace is as accommodating as it can be? We asked respondents to vote for what they think companies can introduce.

### Seven steps to success

- 1 **Promote a healthy work/life balance (38.6%)** – Whether that's ensuring that your employees leave on time, or hosting regular 'wellbeing' days to raise awareness of mental health. Try to lead by example: your employees are more likely to adopt a strong work/life balance if they see that you are doing so.
- 2 **Create an environment where mental health is not stigmatised (15%)** – As mentioned in point one, talking openly about mental health, and raising awareness in the workplace, is important. It may be that you celebrate awareness days, or ensure that managers have one to one catch-ups with their direct reports to check in on their wellbeing.
- 3 **Refer employees to a counselling service (13.7%)** – Large corporate organisations will sometimes have specialised occupational health departments, which are dedicated to improving the wellbeing of staff. Of course, if you aren't on such a scale, it may be worth researching suppliers which you could refer staff to if they are feeling particularly stressed.

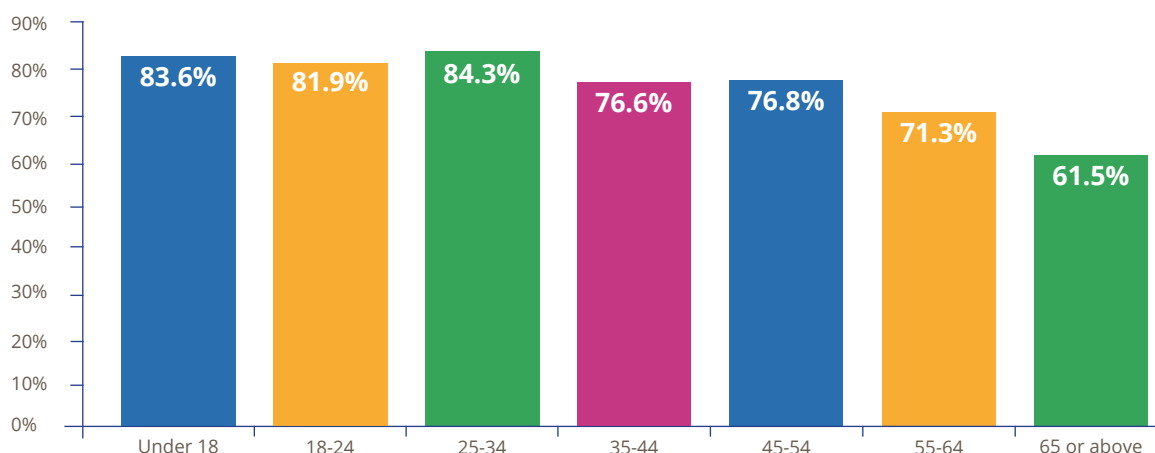
- 4 **Talk more openly about mental health (11.9%)** – Mental health is still a taboo subject. Therefore, it's important that you encourage staff to open up and be more honest about how they're feeling. This may require you to invest in training for management on how to best approach these sorts of conversations with your employees.
- 5 **Have an internal counselling service for staff (10.6%)** – If you can't put a formal counselling service in place, it may be worth considering how your HR department handles these sorts of issues. Again, they may need to have further training in occupational health, but it can certainly help to ensure that you deal with situations professionally.
- 6 **Allow people to take time out when they need to (8.6%)** – If you're a good boss, you'll hopefully notice the signs of someone that is heading for burnout. It's best to catch this early, and suggest that the employee takes some time off to recover. You should give mental health the same amount of respect as physical health, after all.
- 7 **Don't give people access to their emails outside of work (1.7%)** – Perhaps not as obvious, this is important if you want your employees to achieve a strong work/life balance. It can be extremely difficult to switch off from work, which can add to the day-to-day pressures of life. By not permitting your staff to access emails outside of work, you could help them to gain more balance.

## Being an employer of choice

In addition, **83.6%** of respondents said that they think employers should offer 'mental health days', where employees are encouraged to take time out to look after their health. What's more, a further **78%** state that they would be more likely to work for a company that offered 'mental health days'.

The graph below indicates how these findings vary by generation. Millennials (those aged between 25 and 34) are the most likely to want to work for companies that offered 'mental health days', closely followed by Generation Z (under 18s). Older workers were the least likely to prioritise this.

### Age breakdown of workers that would be more likely to work for a company that offered 'mental health days'

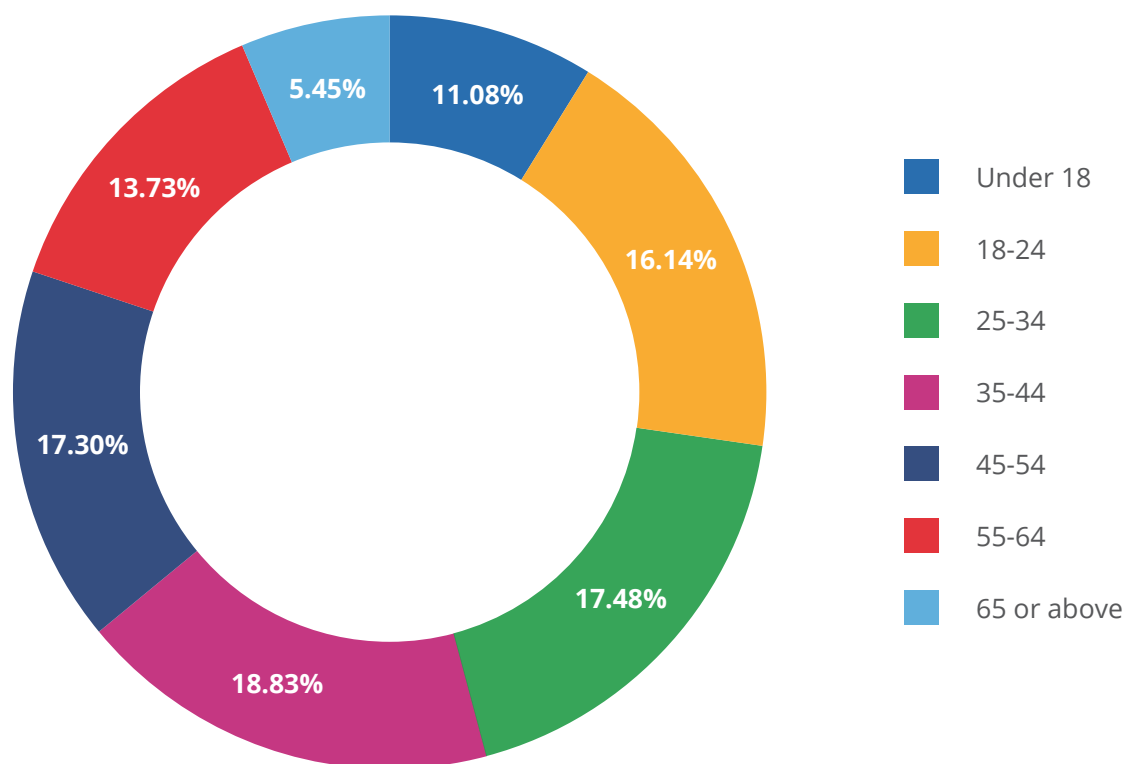


While losing out on staff temporarily may ring alarm bells for employers, it can actually help in the long run. There are plenty of avenues to go down, and it's imperative that you get it right. Otherwise, you could risk losing your employees altogether.

## Retaining talented workers

Nearly half (**46.1%**) of professionals said that they have considered resigning from a job because it impacted their mental health. This was most prevalent amongst those aged between 35 and 44, where **53.2%** of respondents said they felt this way. This suggests that more organisations could retain staff, if they focussed on making work more bearable during difficult times.

### Age breakdown of workers that have considered leaving a job because of mental health reasons



## In summary

We are a nation that is under more pressure than ever before and it's therefore unsurprising that people will be feeling the effects whilst at work. Businesses should prioritise creating a culture where openness and honesty is encouraged. In turn, this will ensure that workers feel comfortable confiding in their boss, making coming to work that little bit less stressful.