

The Mental Health Index™ report

United Kingdom | April 2021



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April 2021 highlights

Key insight: Nearly half of Britons feel the need to mental health support

More than half of people in the United Kingdom have antibodies against coronavirus, either through infection or vaccination, according to the coronavirus infection survey¹. Despite rapid deployment of its vaccination program as well as plans for reopening stores and pubs that have been closed since late 2020², the fatigue of ongoing restrictions continues to strain the mental health of Britons.

Nearly half of Britons feel the need to mental health support

- 46% of Britons feel the need for mental health support
- 26% report a lack of energy to seek care as the greatest barrier to seeking mental healthcare. This group has the lowest mental health score
- Of those who have not taken action on mental health in spite of the need, 22% do not know what type of care is best for them and 21% per cent report that mental health is not a priority for them at this time
- 18% report having no time to focus on improving their mental health
- 72% use exercise to improve their mental health, followed by healthy eating (50%), and changing the way they think about things (36%)
- Women are more likely than men to report a lack of available care or long wait to seek care as a barrier to mental healthcare; however, men are more likely than women to report a lack of knowledge about where to get care

1 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19infectionsurveyantibodydatafortheuk/30march2021>

2 Teneo, April 5th

People believe the vaccine roll-out as important to improving their outlook

- For the third consecutive month, full-time post-secondary students have the lowest mental health score
- The greatest increase in stress month-over-month was for respondents living in Northern Ireland (60.4), followed by England (57.2), Wales (55.0), and Scotland (52.6)
- People without emergency savings continue to experience a lower score in mental health (-26.4) than those with an emergency fund (-7.2)

MHI Sub-scores/trend*

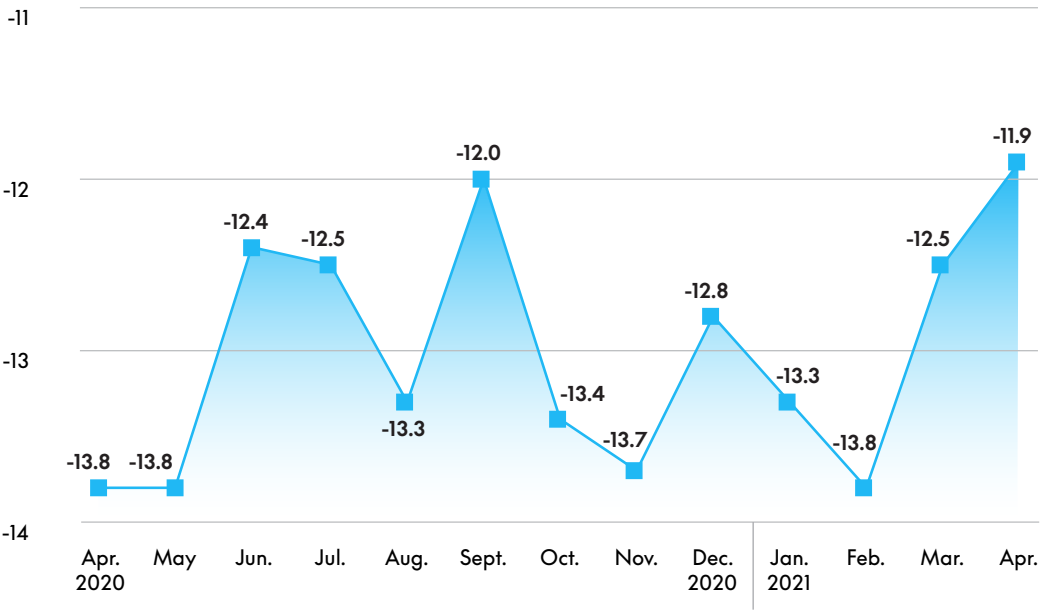
Optimism	-14.7	▲
Anxiety	-14.2	▲
Depression	-14.2	▲
Work productivity	-12.2	▼
Isolation	-11.7	▼
Psychological health	-4.6	▲
Financial risk	6.4	▲

*arrows relate to the prior month

- 25% report that having no more restrictions of any kind would most improve their outlook for the future, and this group has the most favourable mental health score
- 24% report that getting vaccinated against COVID-19 would most improve their outlook, followed by 16% reporting the population reaching herd immunity

The Mental Health Index™

The Mental Health Index™ (MHI) is a measure of deviation from the benchmark³ of mental health and risk. **The overall Mental Health Index™ for April 2021 is -12 points.** A 12-point decrease from the pre-COVID-19 benchmark reflects a population whose mental health is similar to the most distressed one per cent of the benchmark population.



MHI Current Month
April 2021

-12

March 2021

-13

³ The benchmark reflects data collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Mental Health Index™ sub-scores

The lowest Mental Health Index™ sub-score is for the risk measure of optimism (-14.7), followed by anxiety (-14.2), depression (-14.2), work productivity (-12.2), isolation (-11.7), and general psychological health (-4.6). The risk measure with the best mental health score, and the only measure above the benchmark, is financial risk (6.4).

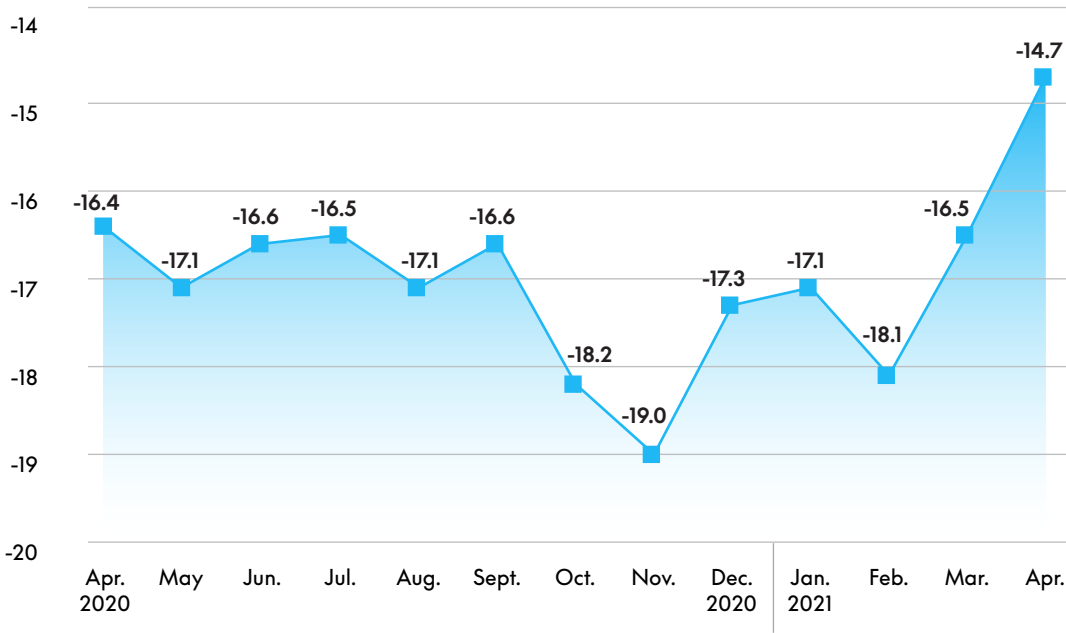
- Isolation and work productivity scores have declined from the prior month.
- With a 1.8-point increase, optimism has had the greatest improvement from the previous month, although it remains more than 14-points below the benchmark.
- The financial risk score is nearly equal to the previous month with a score of 6.4; it continues to be the strongest of all sub-scores and is above the pre-2020 benchmark.

MHI Sub-scores ⁴ 2021	April	March
Optimism	-14.7	-16.5
Anxiety	-14.2	-14.5
Depression	-14.2	-14.5
Work productivity	-12.2	-11.5
Isolation	-11.7	-11.5
Psychological health	-4.6	-5.8
Financial risk	6.4	6.2

4 The demographic breakdown of sub-scores is available upon request.

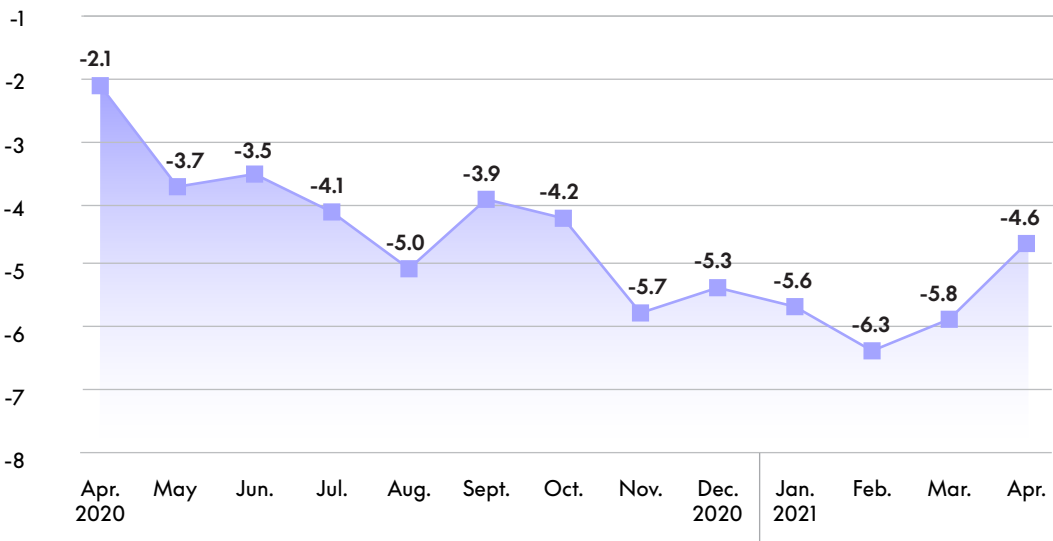
Optimism

Optimism scores since April 2020 have remained significantly below the benchmark. From April to September, scores fluctuated modestly. In September and October, the score dropped sharply to its lowest point, -19.0. Optimism scores have improved to -14.7 in April 2021, reaching its highest level since the launch of the MHI. Despite two months of significant improvement, the optimism score remains nearly 15-points below the pre-2020 benchmark.



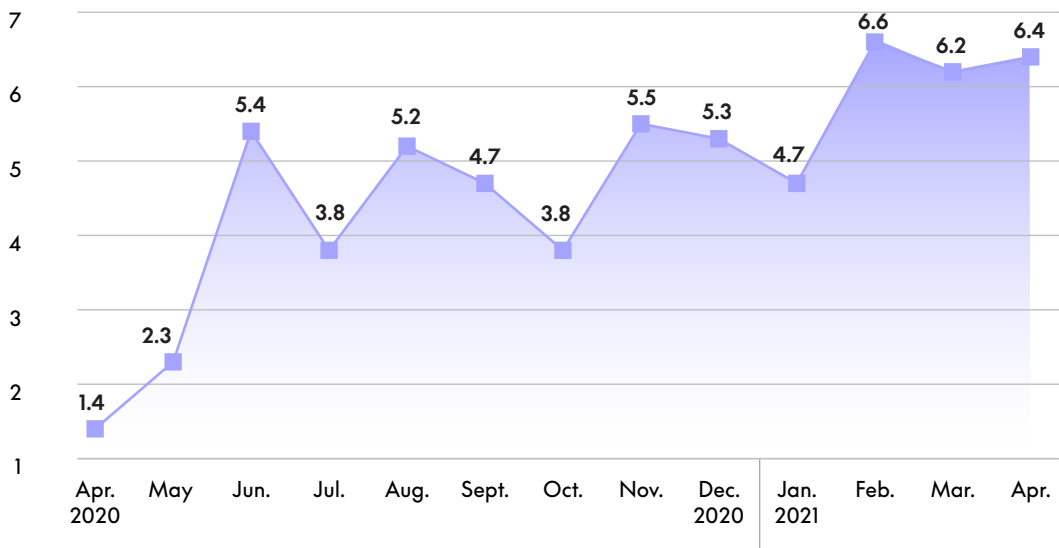
General psychological health

Despite some months of modest improvement, the psychological health of Britons had declined from April 2020 to February 2021. In March and April 2021, general psychological health has improved to however, remains below the pre-2020 benchmark.



Financial risk

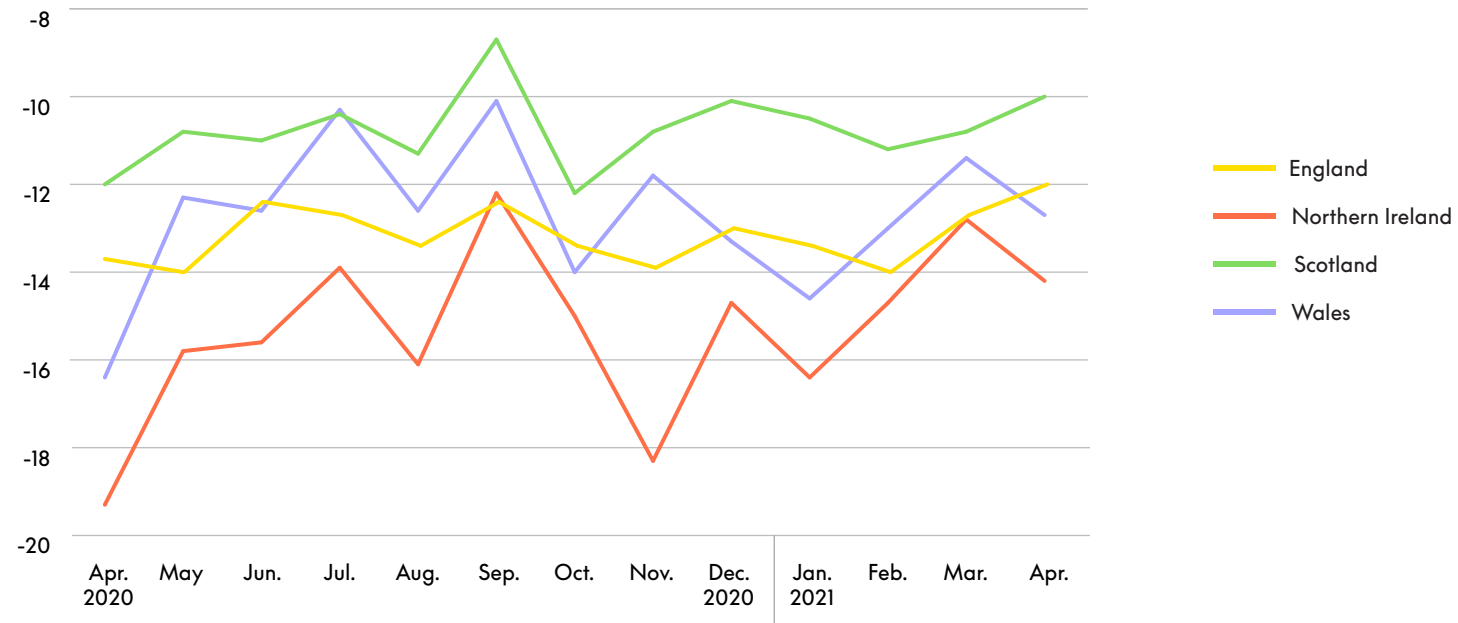
The financial risk score of Britons remains the strongest of all mental health sub-scales. Since the launch of the Index in April 2020, the financial risk score has been above the pre-2020 benchmark. Despite some months of modest fluctuation, the financial risk score in April 2021 remains strong and more than 5-points above the score in April 2020.



Mental Health Index™ (regional)

Regional mental health scores since April have been inconsistent from month to month. In April 2021, England and Scotland show an improvement in mental health compared to the prior month while Wales and Northern Ireland show declines in mental health.

- With a 0.8-point improvement from the prior month, the mental health score in Scotland remains strongest (-10.0).
- For the seventh consecutive month, the lowest regional score is seen in Northern Ireland (-14.2).



Demographics

- Since the start of the MHI, we have found that women have significantly lower mental health scores than men. In April 2021, the mental health score of women is -14.1 compared to -10.0 for men.
- In thirteen consecutive months of MHI results, we have observed that mental health scores have improved with age.
- We have seen differences in mental scores between those with and without children since April 2020. More than one year later, this trend continues with a lower score for those with at least one child (-13.5) compared to those without children (-11.1).

Employment

- Overall, four per cent of respondents are unemployed and fourteen 14 per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary.
- Individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (-23.2), followed by those not currently employed (-18.5), and those who report fewer hours when compared to the prior month (-17.8).
- Managers have a higher mental health score (-10.9) than non-managers (-12.4).
- Individuals working for employers with 5,001-10,000 employees have the highest mental health score (-8.5).
- Respondents who report working for companies with 501-1,000 employees have the lowest mental health score (-15.8).

Emergency savings

- People without emergency savings continue to experience a lower score in mental health (-26.4) than the overall group. Individuals with an emergency fund have a mental health score of -7.2.

Employment status	April 2021	March 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	-10.3	-10.8
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-17.8	-19.0
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	-23.2	-19.9
Not currently employed	-18.5	-17.1
Age group	April 2021	March 2021
Age 20-29	-20.5	-20.6
Age 30-39	-17.6	-17.8
Age 40-49	-12.2	-13.8
Age 50-59	-9.7	-10.5
Age 60-69	-4.6	-4.9
Number of children	April 2021	March 2021
No children in household	-11.1	-11.0
1 child	-12.8	-13.4
2 children	-13.9	-16.7
3 children or more	-15.2	-19.8

Region	April 2021	March 2021
England	-12.0	-12.7
Northern Ireland	-14.2	-12.8
Scotland	-10.0	-10.8
Wales	-12.7	-11.4
Gender	April 2021	March 2021
Men	-10.0	-10.4
Women	-14.1	-15.0
Income	April 2021	March 2021
Household Income <£15K/annum	-21.3	-22.9
£15K to <£30K/annum	-16.7	-17.3
£30k to <£60K	-11.2	-12.3
£60k to <£100K	-7.5	-8.1
£100K and over	-3.0	-1.8

Employer size	April 2021	March 2021
Self-employed/ sole proprietor	-10.0	-10.7
2-50 employees	-10.2	-11.3
51-100 employees	-15.2	-14.9
101-500 employees	-10.8	-11.5
501-1,000 employees	-15.8	-15.7
1,001-5,000 employees	-12.1	-13.8
5,001-10,000 employees	-8.5	-11.3
More than 10,000 employees	-11.9	-11.6
Manager	April 2021	March 2021
Manager	-10.9	-11.1
Non-manager	-12.4	-13.2

Numbers highlighted in orange are the most negative scores in the group.

Numbers highlighted in green are the least negative scores in the group.

Available upon request:

Specific cross-correlational and custom analyses

Mental Health Index™ (industry)

For the third consecutive month, full-time post-secondary students have the lowest mental health score (-23.9). This score continues to be significantly lower than the next lowest scores: individuals in Retail Trade (-18.1), and Utilities (-16.6).

Individuals in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (1.2) and Manufacturing (-4.9) show the highest mental health scores this month.

Individuals employed in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing, the Food Services, and Public Administration have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month

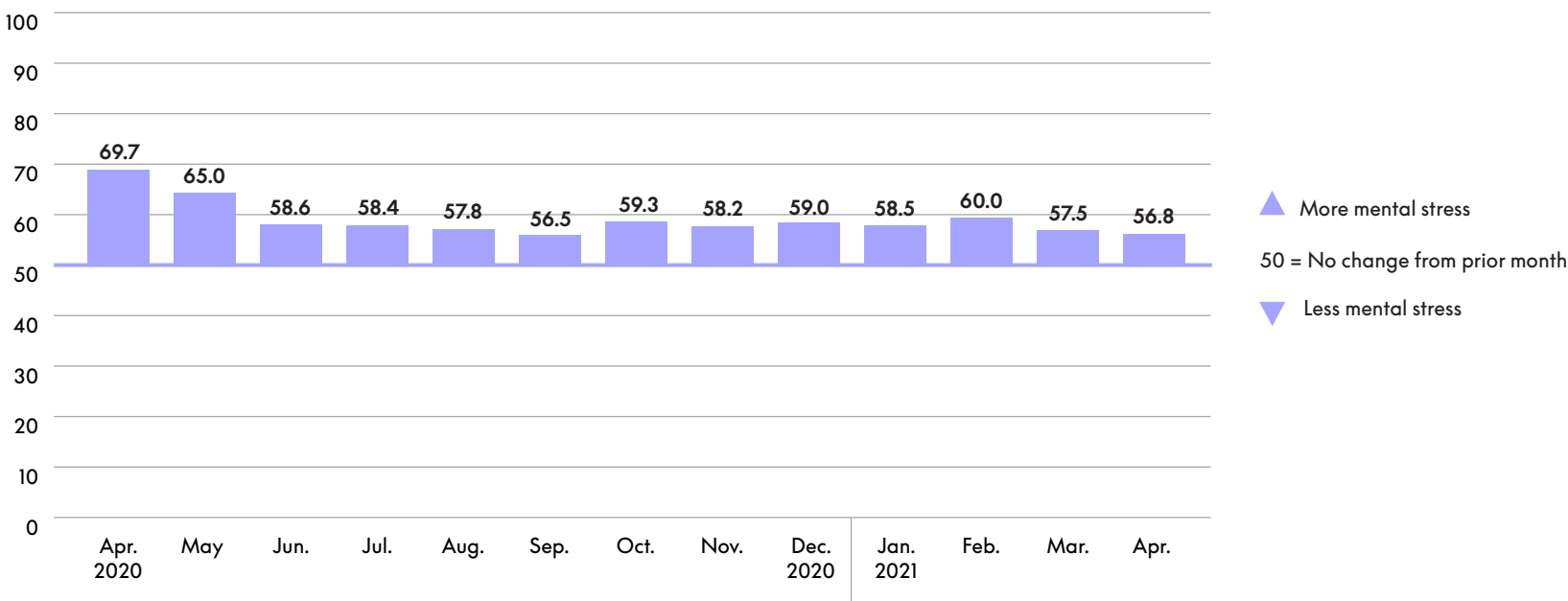
Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.

Industry	April 2021	March 2021	Change
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	1.2	-4.2	5.5
Food Services	-13.0	-17.7	4.8
Public Administration	-8.1	-12.3	4.2
Manufacturing	-4.9	-7.8	2.9
Wholesale Trade	-16.1	-18.8	2.7
Other	-7.7	-10.3	2.6
Healthcare and Social Assistance	-14.1	-15.6	1.5
I am a student	-23.9	-24.9	1.0
Educational Services	-12.2	-12.6	0.4
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-16.0	-16.1	0.1
Transportation and Warehousing	-12.7	-12.7	0.0
Construction	-13.0	-12.6	-0.4
Finance and Insurance	-9.3	-8.4	-0.8
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-10.6	-9.6	-1.0
Utilities	-16.6	-15.6	-1.1
Other services (except Public Administration)	-9.2	-7.7	-1.6
Administrative and Support services	-15.4	-13.4	-2.0
Retail Trade	-18.1	-15.6	-2.5
Information and Cultural Industries	-16.1	-11.4	-4.7

The Mental Stress Change score

The Mental Stress Change score (MStressChg) is a measure of the level of reported mental stress compared to the prior month. **The Mental Stress Change score for April 2021 is 56.8.** This reflects a net increase in mental stress compared to the prior month.

The current score indicates that 21 per cent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with 7 per cent experiencing less. A continued increase in mental stress since April 2020 indicates a significant accumulation of strain in the British population.



MStressChg Current
Month—April 2021

56.8

MStressChg Current
Month—March 2021

57.5

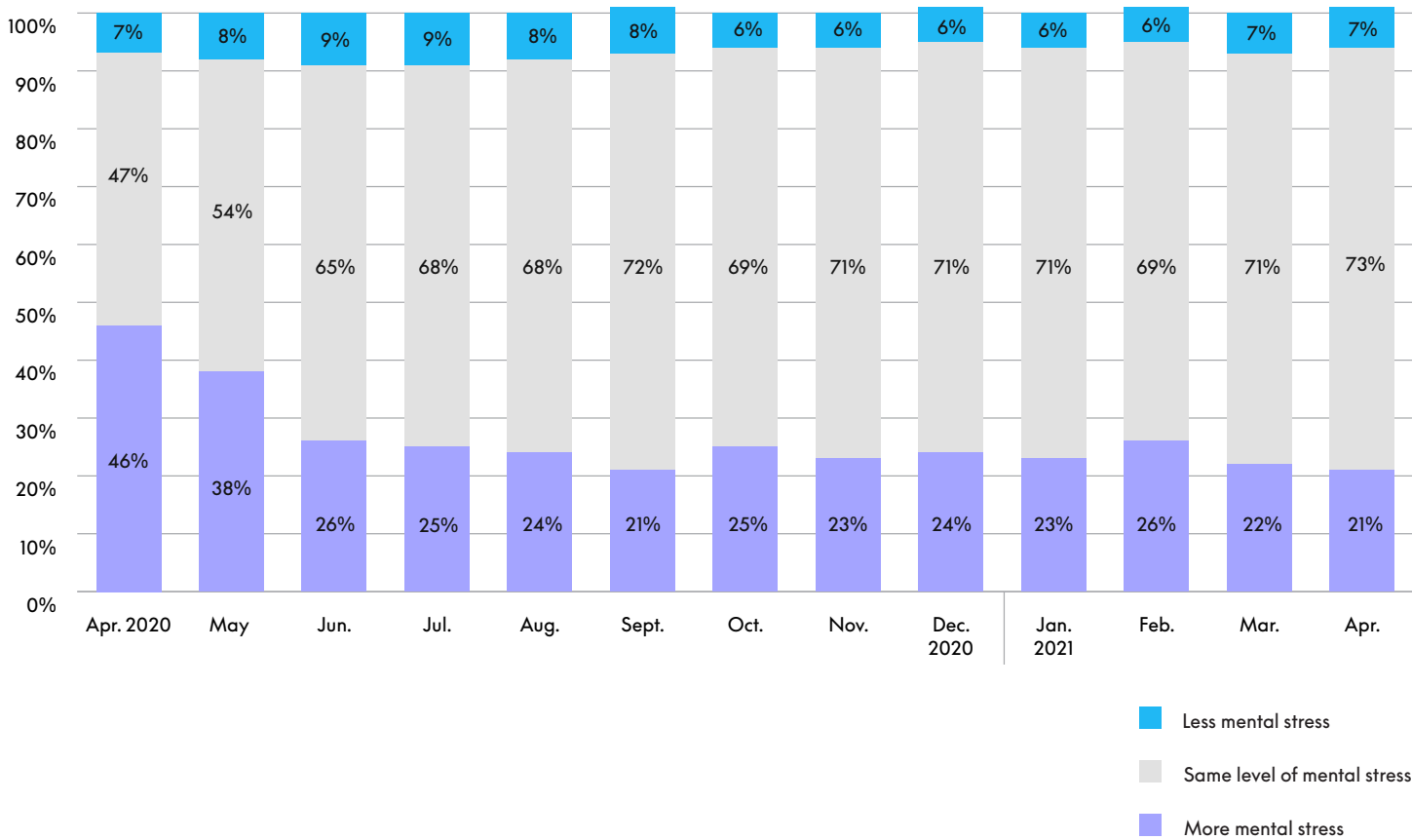
Mental Stress Change (percentages)

Mental Stress Change tracks everyone's stress changes each month. The percentages of those experiencing more stress, the same level of stress, and less stress for each month of the survey are shown in the graph.

For more than one year, the percentage of those experiencing more mental stress than the previous month has steadily decreased; however, the data showing this decline is too insignificant to lower the overall Mental Stress Change score to below 50 (the level at which stress is lower than the previous month). As the proportion of individuals reporting the same level of stress or more stress than the previous month continues to outweigh the proportion reporting less mental stress, the population will continue to feel the effects of significantly increased stress and will not be able to reach a more sustainable and healthy level of stress.

In April, 46 per cent of individuals reported an increase in mental stress. While those reporting increased month-over-month mental stress decreased to 21 per cent in April 2021, 73 per cent of respondents report the same level of mental stress and only 7 report a decrease in mental stress.

Mental Stress Change by month



Demographics

- Since the start of the MHI, we have observed that younger people are experiencing a greater increase in mental stress compared to older respondents.
- We have also found that women have larger increases in mental stress than men. In April 2021, the mental stress change score of women is 57.2 compared to 56.4 for men.

Geography

- The greatest increase in stress month-over-month is for respondents living in Northern Ireland (60.4), followed by England (57.2), Wales (55.0), and Scotland (52.6).

Employment

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in employed people with reduced salary (62.9), followed by employed people with reduced hours (60.4) compared to unemployed people (59.6) and employed people with no change to salary or hours (55.9).
- The greatest increase in mental stress is observed among managers (58.4) while non-managers have a more modest increase in mental stress (55.4).

Employment status	April 2021	March 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	55.9	56.6
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	60.4	62.3
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	62.9	61.1
Not currently employed	59.6	57.0
Age group	April 2021	March 2021
Age 20-29	61.7	56.1
Age 30-39	58.8	61.1
Age 40-49	57.2	60.2
Age 50-59	54.9	56.3
Age 60-69	53.8	53.2
Number of children	April 2021	March 2021
No children in household	55.5	55.9
1 child	59.5	58.9
2 children	60.3	61.7
3 children or more	55.8	63.3

Region	April 2021	March 2021
England	57.2	57.5
Northern Ireland	60.4	54.4
Scotland	52.6	57.2
Wales	55.0	59.3
Gender	April 2021	March 2021
Men	56.4	56.0
Women	57.2	59.2
Income	April 2021	March 2021
Household Income <£15K/annum	60.0	63.3
£15K to <£30K/annum	57.8	59.2
£30k to <£60K	57.7	57.4
£60k to <£100K	55.2	55.2
£100K and over	51.8	54.5

Employer size	April 2021	March 2021
Self-employed/ sole proprietor	56.2	56.2
2-50 employees	57.1	57.4
51-100 employees	60.5	60.4
101-500 employees	55.1	54.0
501-1,000 employees	55.2	58.4
1,001-5,000 employees	57.0	56.4
5,001-10,000 employees	53.7	55.8
More than 10,000 employees	57.8	60.3
Manager	April 2021	March 2021
Manager	58.4	57.8
Non-manager	55.4	57.1

Numbers highlighted in orange are the most negative scores in the group.

Numbers highlighted in green are the least negative scores in the group.

Available upon request:

Specific cross-correlational and custom analyses

The Mental Stress Change (industry)

Mental Stress Change scores for individuals employed in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (46.6) and Utilities (50.0) reflect a stabilization of mental stress from month to month.

Individuals working in Wholesale Trade have the most significant increase in mental stress (64.1), followed by individuals employed in Construction (62.4), and full-time post-secondary students (60.9).

Mental Stress changes from the last two months are shown in the table.

Industry	April 2021	March 2021
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	46.6	52.9
Utilities	50.0	61.9
Manufacturing	52.5	53.9
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	53.3	57.9
Other	53.5	54.1
Information and Cultural Industries	53.6	54.8
Other services (except Public Administration)	53.7	54.0
Food Services	55.4	59.5
Finance and Insurance	55.6	58.2
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	55.8	61.0
Transportation and Warehousing	56.4	55.1
Public Administration	56.8	56.5
Educational Services	58.4	58.0
Healthcare and Social Assistance	59.8	60.6
Administrative and Support services	59.8	55.0
Retail Trade	59.8	57.1
I am a student	60.9	57.1
Construction	62.4	60.7
Wholesale Trade	64.1	64.8

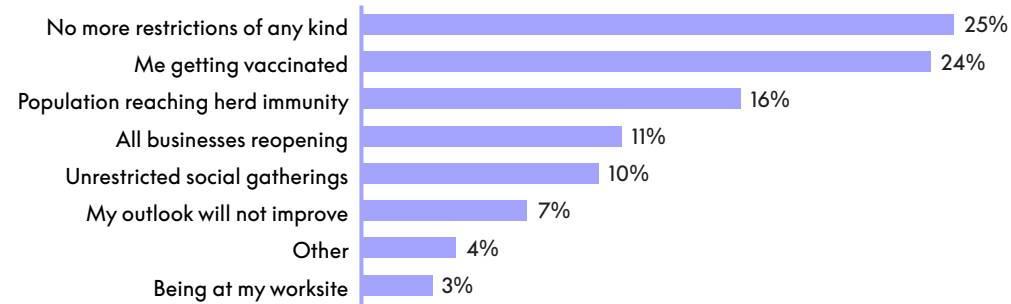
Spotlight

Future outlook

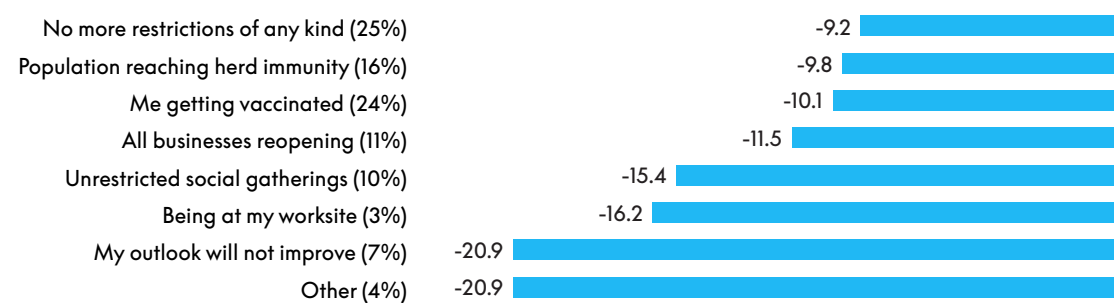
With vaccines continuing to roll-out across the United Kingdom, there is cause for optimism. Respondents were asked what would most improve their outlook for the future.

- One-quarter report that having no more restrictions of any kind would most improve their outlook for the future and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-9.2).
- Almost one-quarter (24 per cent) report that the getting vaccinated against COVID-19 would improve their outlook, followed by those reporting population reaching herd immunity (16 per cent).
- Employees working fewer hours or with reduced salary are 50 per cent more likely to report that businesses reopening would most improve their outlook.

Event that would most improve my outlook for the future



MHI score by event that would most improve my outlook for the future



Supports and barriers to improving mental health

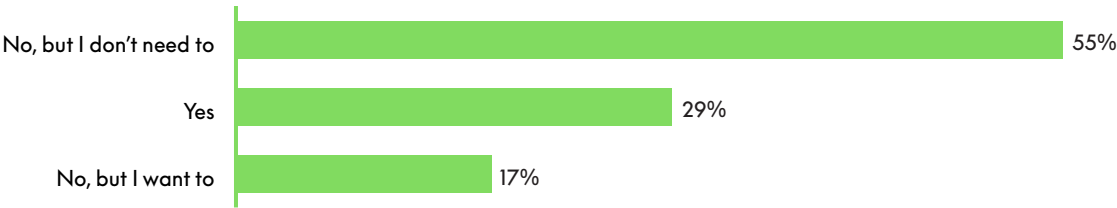
Steps to improving mental health

In March 2021, we reported that forty-five per cent of Britons were less likely to seek mental healthcare than prior to the pandemic or were undecided about accessing mental healthcare. This reluctance exists despite continued availability of mental healthcare.

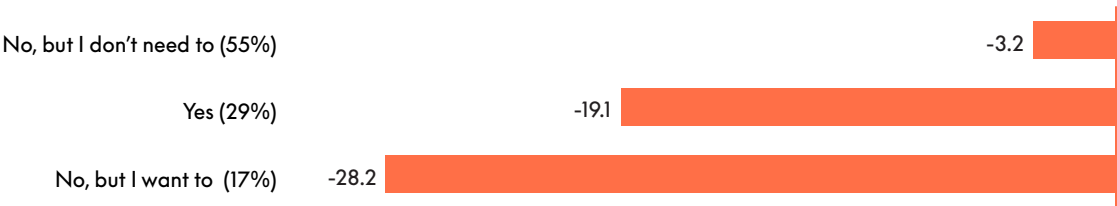
Respondents were asked if they were taking steps to improve their mental health.

- Twenty-nine per cent have taken steps to improve their mental health, while another seventeen per cent have not taken steps but want to.
- The least favourable mental health scores are seen among the seventeen per cent who have not taken steps but want to (-28.2), followed by those who have taken steps to improve their mental health (-19.1).
- Individuals under 50 are nearly twice as likely than those over 50 to have taken steps to improve their mental health.

Have you taken steps to improve your mental health?



MHI score by whether respondents have taken steps to improve their mental health

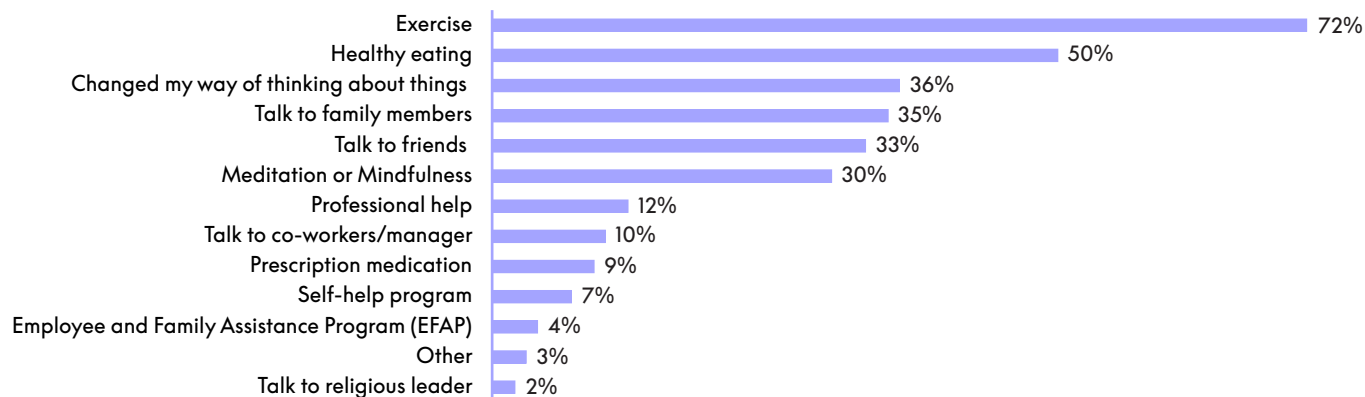


Supports to improve mental health

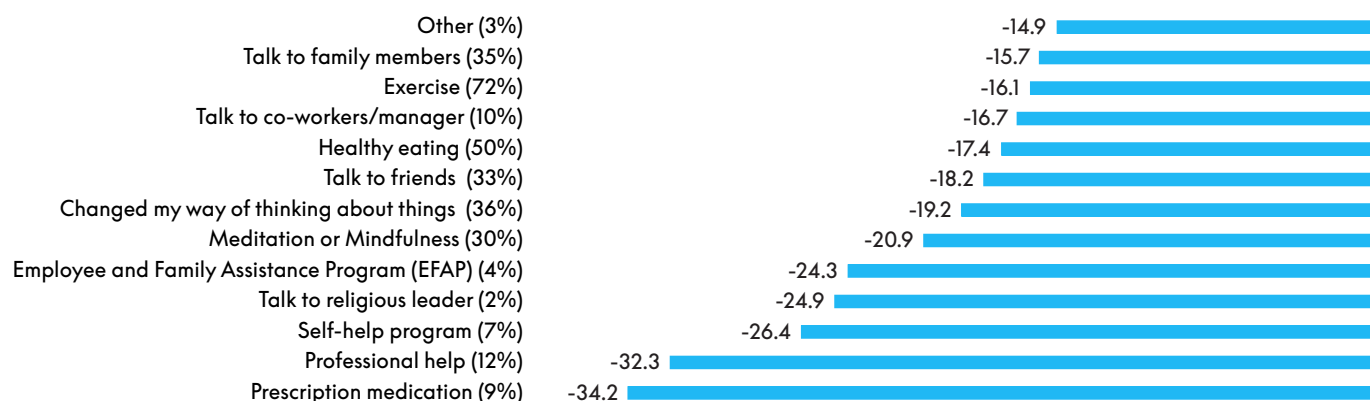
Nearly one-third (29 per cent) of people report taking steps to improve their mental health. Respondents were asked to select the supports that they have used to manage their mental health.

- Nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) of people use exercise to improve their mental health, followed by healthy eating (50 per cent), and changing the way they think about things (36 per cent).
- The most favourable mental health scores are reported by people who talk to family members as a means of mental health support (-15.7), followed by those exercising (-16.1), and those who talk to co-workers/manager for mental health support (-16.7).
- Women are more than fifty per cent more likely than men to report talking to friends and family members for support.

Supports to improve mental health



MHI score by supports to improve mental health

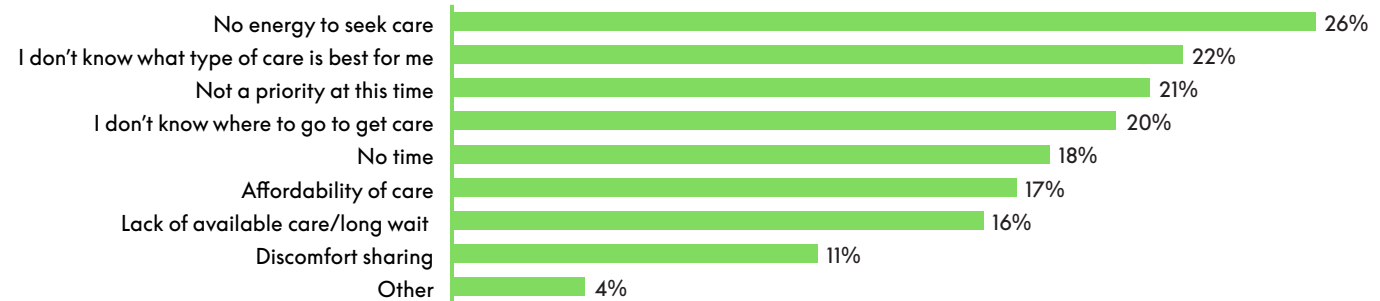


Barriers to improving mental health

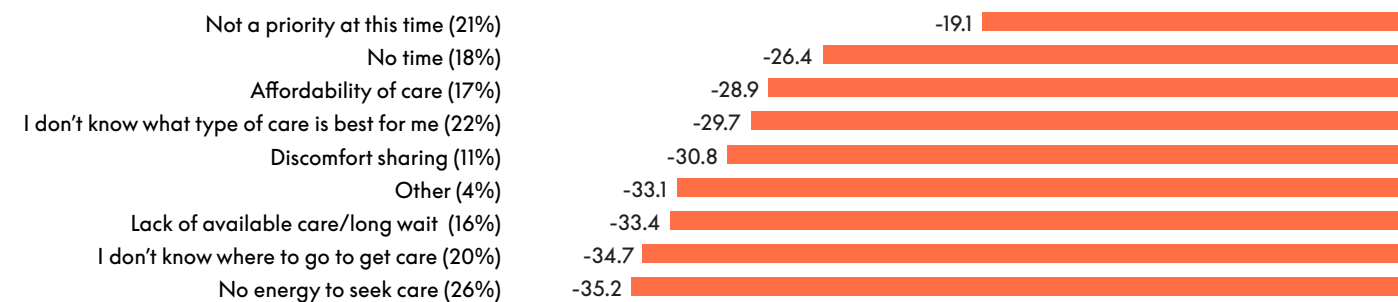
Seventeen per cent of people report that they have not taken steps to improve their mental health but would like to. We asked this group about barriers to mental Healthcare.

- Twenty-six per cent report that lack of energy is the greatest barrier to seeking mental health care, followed by twenty-two per cent reporting that do not know what type of care is best for them, and twenty-one per cent reporting that their mental health is not a priority at this time.
- The lowest mental health scores are seen among twenty-six per cent of people reporting lack of energy to seek care (-35.2), followed by twenty per cent of people who do not know where to get care (-34.7), and sixteen percent reporting lack of available care or a long wait to seek care (-33.4) as a barrier.

Barriers to mental health improvement

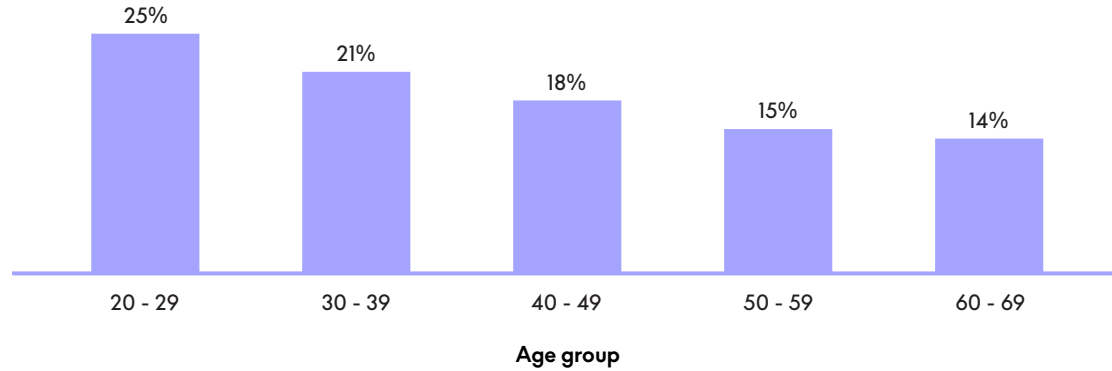


MHI score by barriers to mental health improvement



Nearly twenty per cent (18 per cent) of people report having no time to focus on improving their mental health. One-quarter of people aged 20-29 report that they have no time, followed by twenty-one per cent of people aged 30-39, and eighteen per cent of people aged 40-49.

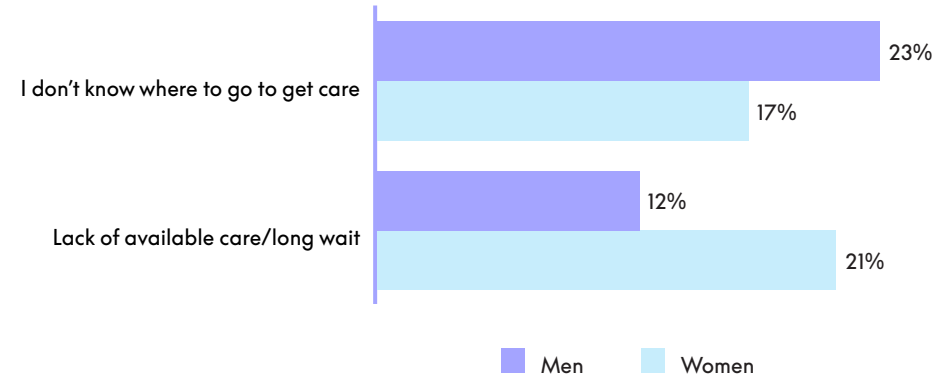
People reporting “no time” as a barrier to improving mental health



Gender differences

- Women are more likely than men to report a lack of available care or long wait to seek care, however, men are more likely than women to report lacking knowledge of where to get care.
- Men with children are nearly twice as likely as men without children to report no time to seek care as a major barrier to improving their mental health.

Key gender differences in reported barriers to improving mental health



Overview of the Mental Health Index™

The mental health and wellbeing of a population is essential to overall health and work productivity. The Mental Health Index™ provides a measure of the current mental health status of employed adults in each geography compared to benchmarks collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The increases and decreases in the MHI are intended to predict cost and productivity risks and inform the need for investment in mental health support by business and government.

The Mental Health Index™ report has three parts:

1. The overall Mental Health Index™ (MHI), which is a measure of change compared to the benchmark of mental health and risk.
2. A Mental Stress Change (MStressChg) score, which measures the level of reported mental stress compared to the prior month.
3. A spotlight section that reflects the specific impact of current issues in the community.

Methodology

Data for this report is collected through an online survey of 2,000 Britons who are living in the United Kingdom and are currently employed or who were employed within the prior six months. Participants are selected to be representative of the age, gender, industry, and geographic distribution in the United Kingdom.

The same respondents take part each month to remove a sampling bias. Respondents are asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. The Mental Health Index™ is published monthly starting in April 2020. Benchmark data was collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Data for the current report was collected between March 22 to April 2, 2021.

Calculations

To create the Mental Health Index™, the first step leverages a response scoring system turning individual responses to each question into a point value. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and less mental health risk. Everyone's scores are added and then divided by a total number of possible points to get a score out of 100. The raw score is the mathematical mean of the individual scores.

To demonstrate change, the current month's scores are then compared to the benchmark and the prior month. The benchmark comprises data from 2017, 2018 and 2019. This was a period of relative social stability and steady economic growth. **The change compared to the benchmark is the Mental Health Index. A score of zero in the Mental Health Index™ reflects no change, positive scores reflect improvement, and negative scores reflect decline.**

A Mental Stress Change score is also reported given that increasing and prolonged mental stress is a potential contributor to changes in mental health. It is reported separately and is not part of the calculation of the Mental Health Index. The Mental Stress Change score is (percentage reporting less mental stress + percentage reporting the same level of mental stress * 0.5) * -1 + 100. The score reflects a comparison of the current to the prior month. **A Mental Stress Change score of 50 reflects no change in mental stress from the prior month. Scores above 50 reflect an increase in mental stress and scores below 50 reflect a decrease in mental stress.** The range is from zero to 100. A succession of scores over 50, month over month, reflects high risk.

Additional data and analyses

Demographic breakdown of sub-scores, and specific cross-correlational and custom analyses, are available upon request. Benchmarking against the national results or any sub-group is available upon request. Contact MHI@lifeworks.com



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