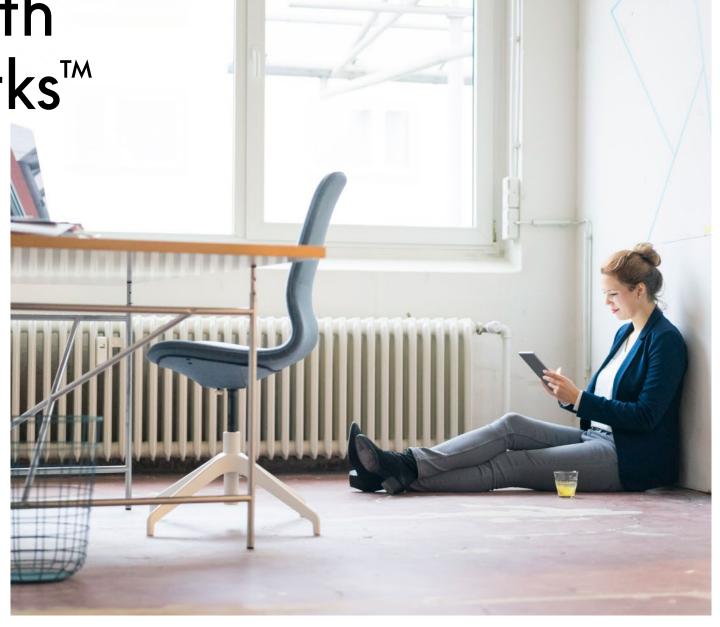
# The Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

United Kingdom | December 2021





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# The top 5 things your need to know | December 2021

- After some improvement from March to September, mental health has declined to the lowest point in eight months
- From a low of -13.8 for the mental health index score in February 2021 to a high of -10.2 in October 2021, the current score is -11.9, which represents a high level of mental health risk.
- The worst subs-scores at this point are for depression, optimism, and anxiety.
- The strongest sub-score is for financial risk, which represents an improvement in the level of emergency savings compared to 2019.
- Mental health scores in England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland have declined in December while the mental health in Wales has improved.
- 2. Nearly one-third of working Britons want flexible work hours
- 31% say that flexibility in the hours of work is most important to them.
- 28% say that flexibility in the location of work is most important.
- 21% want to be able to step away from work to attend to personal issues.

- 3. Employees indicate that full flexibility for everyone would work best for their work team
- 38% want full flexibility, which gives each employee choice in how, when, and where they work.
- 17% want everyone together at the worksite.
- 13% want everyone fully remote.
- 9% believe that the best approach for their team is to have everyone together at the worksite 2-3 days a week.
- 4. Employees indicate a slight decrease in collaboration
- 52% indicate a high level of collaboration before the pandemic, compared to 50% since the pandemic began.
- 16% indicate very poor collaboration before the pandemic, compared to 18% since the pandemic began.
- Nearly half of Britons believe their CEO genuinely cares about employee wellbeing
- 48% believe that their organization's CEO genuinely cares about employee wellbeing.
- 56% say that HR policies at their organization support employee wellbeing.
- 27% are not concerned about the career impact of a mental health issue.

#1 type of flexibility

hours of work

believe full flexibility for their team is best

38%

48%

27%

believe their CEO genuinely cares about employee wellbeing are not concerned about the career impact of a mental health issue



## The Mental Health Index™

The Mental Health Index<sup>™</sup> (MHI) is a measure of deviation from the benchmark¹ of mental health and risk. **The overall**Mental Health Index for December 2021 is -11.9 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.



<sup>1</sup> The benchmark reflects data collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019.



# MHI Current Month December 2021

-11.9

November 2021

-11.0

#### Mental Health Index<sup>™</sup> sub-scores

The lowest Mental Health Index<sup>™</sup> sub-score is for the risk measure of depression (-14.2), followed by anxiety (-14.0), optimism (-14.0), work productivity (-11.6), isolation (-11.1), and general psychological health (-4.4). The best sub-score, and the only measure above the historical benchmark continues to be financial risk (4.1).

- All sub-scores, apart from financial risk, declined compared to November 2021.
- The work productivity score declined 2.1-points in December to -11.6, a score not seen in five months.
- With a modest 0.1-point increase from November 2021, financial risk continues to be the strongest of all sub-scores and is above the pre-2020 benchmark.

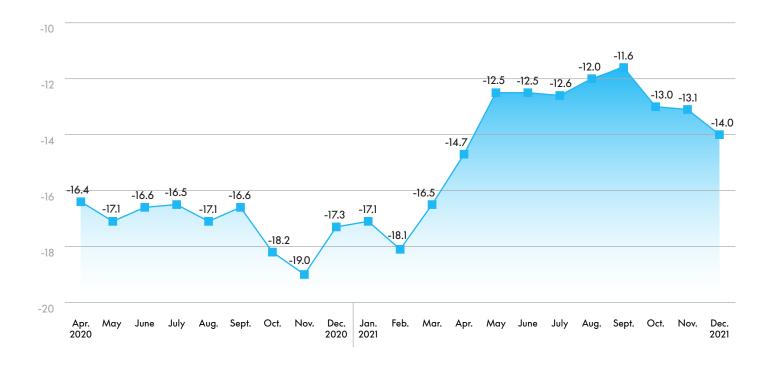
Mental Health Index <sup>™</sup> Sub-scores <sup>2</sup> 2021	December	November
Depression	-14.2	-12.4
Anxiety	-14.0	-12.4
Optimism	-14.0	-13.1
Work productivity	-11.6	-9.5
Isolation	-11.1	-10.5
Psychological health	-4.4	-4.0
Financial risk	4.1	4.0

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



#### Optimism

Since April 2020, optimism sub-scores have remained significantly below the benchmark however, beginning in March 2021, scores improved to a high of -11.6 in September. After seven months of improvement, the optimism sub-score in the United Kingdom fell 1.4-points to -13.0 in October 2021. In December, the optimism score declined 0.9-points from the prior month to -14.0 points below the pre-2020 benchmark.

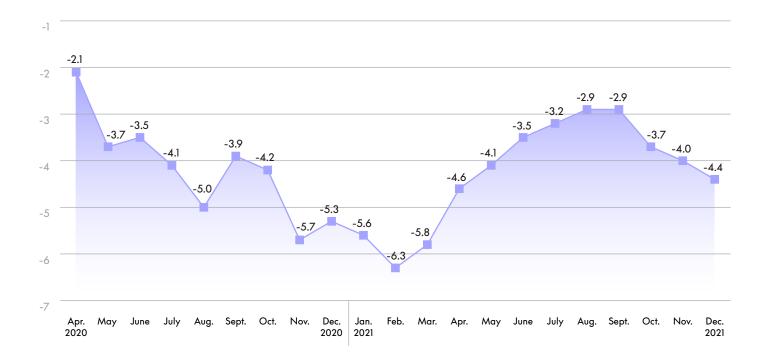




#### General psychological health

The psychological health sub-score assesses individuals' self-perception of their overall level of psychological health.

From the launch of the MHI in April 2020 to February 2021, the general psychological health of Britons declined to a low of 6.3 points below the pre-2020 benchmark. Since March 2021, scores have increased, reaching -2.9 in August. After six months of improvement, the psychological health of Britons fell nearly 1 point to -3.7 in October. The decline continues in November and December to -4.4 points below the pre-2020 benchmark.

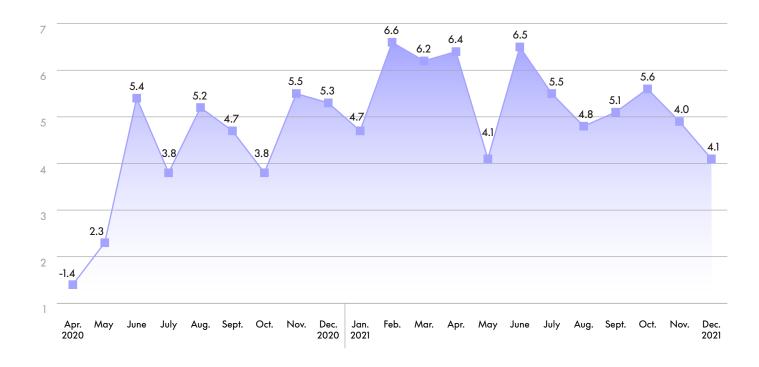




#### Financial risk

The financial risk sub-score measures the level of individuals' emergency savings.

The financial risk score of Britons remains the strongest of all sub-scores. Since the launch of the Index in April 2020, the financial risk sub-score has been above the pre-2020 benchmark. Following two consecutive months of declines in July and August, the financial risk score recovered in October to 5.6 points however, a significant 1.6-point decline was seen in November and remains nearly unchanged in December to 4.1.





#### **Demographics**

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In December 2021, the mental health score of women is -14.4 compared to -9.9 for men.
- In each of the past 21 months, mental health scores improve with age.
- Differences in mental health scores between those with and without children have been reported since the launch of the Index in April 2020. Nearly two years later, this pattern continues with a lower score for those with at least one child (-16.3) compared to those without children (-9.7).

#### **Employment**

- Overall, two per cent of respondents are unemployed<sup>3</sup>
   and seven per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary.
- Individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (-22.1), followed by those reporting fewer hours (-18.4), and those not currently employed (-17.7).
- Managers have a slightly lower mental health score (-12.2) than non-managers (-11.5).
- Individuals working for organizations with 2-50 employees have the highest mental health score (-8.6).
- Respondents working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (-17.1).

Those without emergency savings continue to experience
a lower mental health score (-27.1) than the overall group (-11.9).
Individuals with emergency savings have a mental health
score of -6.2.

<sup>3</sup> MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

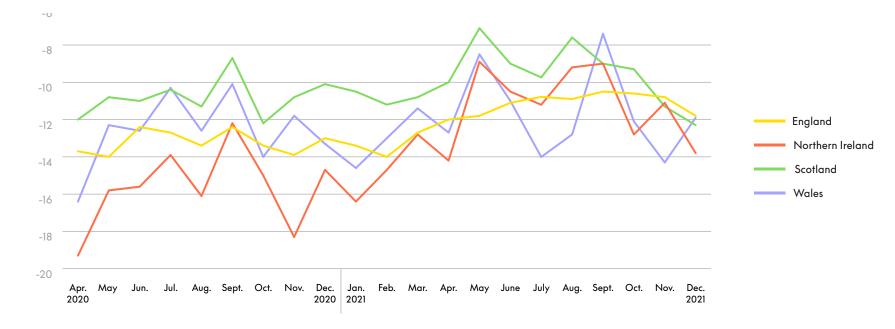


**Emergency savings** 

# Mental Health Index™ (regional)

Since April 2020, regional mental health scores have fluctuated. In December 2021, the mental health scores in all regions, apart from Wales, continue to decline.

- The mental health scores in England and Scotland have declined for four consecutive months.
- With a significant 2.4-point increase, Wales is the only region with an improvement in mental health in December (-11.9).
- The lowest mental health score is in Northern Ireland (-13.8), due to a 2.7-point decline from November.
- The highest mental health score is in England (-11.8), despite a 1.0-point decline from November.





Employment status	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	-11.3	-10.2
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-18.4	-20.2
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	-22.1	-22.0
Not currently employed	-17.7	-13.6
Age group	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
Age 20-29	-20.5	-19.0
Age 30-39	-19.0	-18.0
Age 40-49	-14.6	-13.2
Age 50-59	-9.4	-8.1
Age 60-69	-4.5	-4.9
Number of children	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
No children in household	-9.7	-9.4
1 child	-16.1	-14.4
2 children	-16.7	-14.5
3 children or more	-16.3	-12.1

Region	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
England	-11.8	-10.8
Northern Ireland	-13.8	-11.1
Scotland	-12.3	-11.3
Wales	-11.9	-14.3
Gender	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
Men	-9.9	-9.0
Women	-14.4	-13.4
Household income	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
Household Income <£15K/annum	-18.6	-18.2
£15K to <£30K/annum	-17.0	-17.6
£30k to <£60K	-10.8	-9.3
£60k to <£100K	-7.8	-6.2
£100K and over	-3.8	-1.5

Employer size	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	-8.9	-8.4
2-50 employees	-8.6	-9.7
51-100 employees	-17.1	-17.0
101-500 employees	-12.4	-12.3
501-1,000 employees	-14.9	-13.3
1,001-5,000 employees	-11.5	-10.1
5,001-10,000 employees	-10.3	-8.9
More than 10,000 employees	-12.2	-9.4

Manager	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
Manager	-12.2	-11.1
Non-manager	-11.5	-10.9

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)

Respondents working in utilities have the lowest mental health score (-22.3). This score is notably lower than the next lowest scores: individuals employed in Information and Cultural Industries (-18.1) and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (-17.1).

Individuals employed in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (-0.6), Manufacturing (-8.3), and Accommodation (-9.1) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Individuals employed in Food Services, Administrative and Support services, and Construction have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.

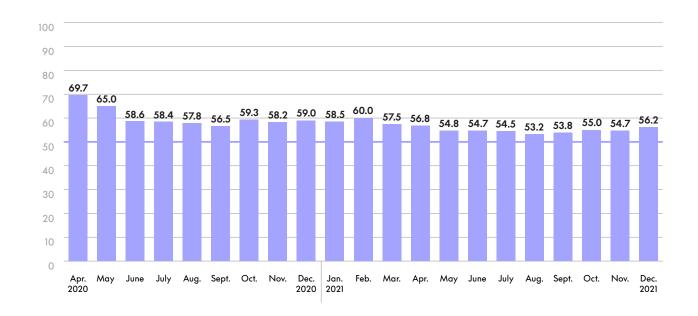
Industry	December 2021	November 2021	Change
Food Services	-15. <i>7</i>	-19.0	3.3
Administrative and Support services	-13.3	-15.8	2.5
Construction	-12.3	-13.9	1.6
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	-0.6	-1.6	1.1
Educational Services	-10.1	-10.4	0.4
Other	-9.8	-10.1	0.4
Transportation and Warehousing	-11.4	-11.2	-0.3
Manufacturing	-8.3	-8.0	-0.3
Other services (except Public Administration)	-9.8	-8.1	-1.6
Wholesale Trade	-14.4	-12.6	-1.8
Information and Cultural Industries	-18.1	-16.3	-1.9
Public Administration	-11.7	-9.8	-1.9
Health Care and Social Assistance	-13.5	-11.2	-2.3
Retail Trade	-16.0	-13.4	-2.6
Finance and Insurance	-11.5	-8.6	-2.9
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-10.3	-7.2	-3.0
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-17.1	-13.2	-3.9



# 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 December 2021 is 56.2.** This reflects a net increase in mental stress compared to the prior month.

The current score indicates that 20 per cent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with seven 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—
December 2021

56.2

MStressChg November 2021

54.7

More mental stress

50 = No change from prior month

Less mental stress

# Mental Stress Change (percentages)

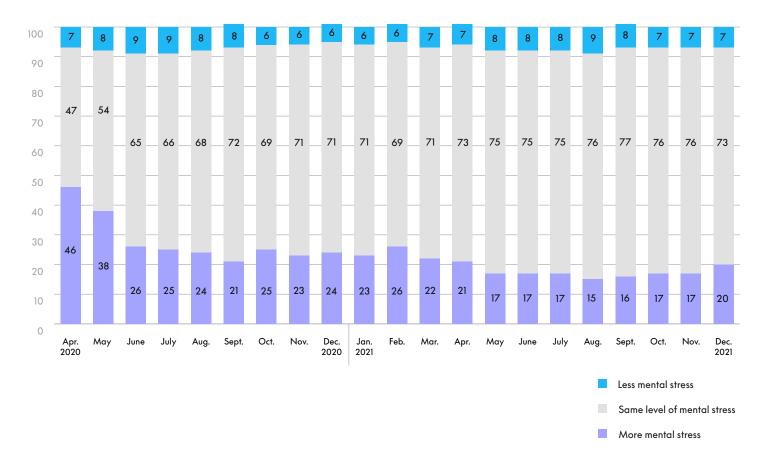
Mental Stress Change tracks stress changes each month.

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 nearly two years, 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 2020, 54 per cent of individuals reported an increase in mental stress. The number of respondents reporting increased month-over-month mental stress is 20 per cent in December 2021, while 73 per cent of respondents report the same level of mental stress and seven per cent report a decrease in mental stress.

#### Mental Stress Change by month





#### **Demographics**

- Since the launch of the MHI in April 2020, younger people
  have experienced a greater increase in mental stress month
  over month compared to older respondents.
- Since April 2020, women have had larger increases in mental stress compared to men. In December 2021, the mental stress change score for women is 57.4 compared to 55.2 for men.

#### Geography

• The greatest increase in month-over-month stress is for respondents living in Northern Ireland (57.8), followed by England (56.3), Scotland (56.0), and Wales (53.2).

#### **Employment**

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in unemployed people (58.8), followed by employed people working fewer hours (58.5), employed people with no change to salary or hours (56.1), and employed people with reduced salary (50.0).
- Managers have a greater increase in mental stress (57.7) than non-managers (55.0).



Employment status	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	56.1	54.6
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	58.5	59.6
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	50.0	50.0
Not currently employed	58.8	51.8
Age group	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
Age 20-29	62.9	58.4
Age 30-39	59.9	58.5
Age 40-49	56.2	55.3
Age 50-59	54.8	52.6
Age 60-69	52.7	53.3
Number of children	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
No children in household	55.2	53.2
1 child	56.5	58.2
2 children	58.9	57.4
3 children or more	63.4	57.0

Region	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
England	56.3	54.6
Northern Ireland	57.8	60.5
Scotland	56.0	56.1
Wales	53.2	51.6
Gender	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
Men	55.2	53.9
Women	57.4	55.7
Household income	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
Household Income <£15K/annum	58.6	54.7
£15K to <£30K/annum	57.9	57.3
£30k to <£60K	54.9	54.2
£60k to <£100K	58.2	54.6
£100K and over	51.7	50.4

Employer size	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	54.7	54.2
2-50 employees	56.1	54.5
51-100 employees	57.0	57.6
101-500 employees	54.7	55.2
501-1,000 employees	55.7	53.7
1,001-5,000 employees	56.2	56.0
5,001-10,000 employees	57.8	55.2
More than 10,000 employees	57.0	52.5

Manager	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021
Manager	57.7	56.2
Non-manager	55.0	53.8

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)

In December 2021, individuals employed in Construction (48.9) report less mental stress than the prior month while those working in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing report no increase in mental stress. A score of 50 means that the proportion of the population experiencing more stress is balanced by the proportion experiencing less stress. A score below 50 indicates that the group is experiencing less stress than the prior month.

Individuals employed in Food Services have the most significant increase in mental stress (61.8) followed by those employed in Information and Cultural Industries (60.3), and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (59.4).

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

Industry	December 2021	November 2021
Construction	48.9	56.9
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	50.0	46.3
Other	52.2	49.7
Manufacturing	54.4	54.3
Educational Services	54.6	56.4
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	54.7	53.5
Other services (except Public Administration)	55.2	54.5
Administrative and Support services	56.6	54.7
Public Administration	56.8	54.3
Transportation and Warehousing	57.2	55.7
Wholesale Trade	57.8	58.0
Health Care and Social Assistance	58.1	57.7
Finance and Insurance	59.4	55.2
Retail Trade	59.4	52.6
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	59.4	52.0
Information and Cultural Industries	60.3	55.8
Food Services	61.8	58.0



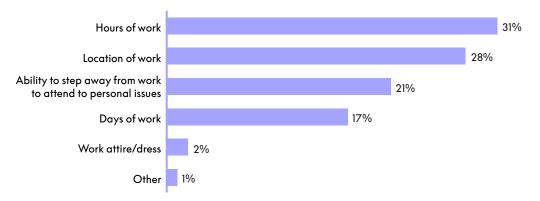
# Spotlight

### Flexibility at work

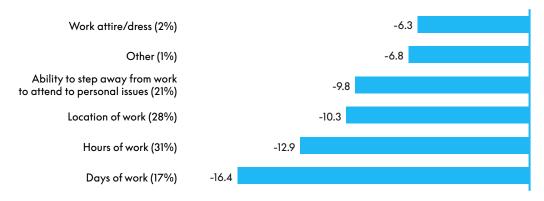
Britons were asked about the type of flexibility that is most important to them at work.

- Nearly one-third (31 per cent) report that the hours of work
  is the most important type of flexibility, followed by 28 per cent
  reporting that location of work is the most important, and
   21 per cent reporting the ability to step away from work to attend
  to personal issues is the most important type of flexibility at work.
- Britons under the age of 40 are 80 per cent more likely than those
   50 and over to indicate that days of work is the most important
   type of flexibility at work.

#### Most important type of flexibility at work



#### MHI score by most important type of flexibility at work



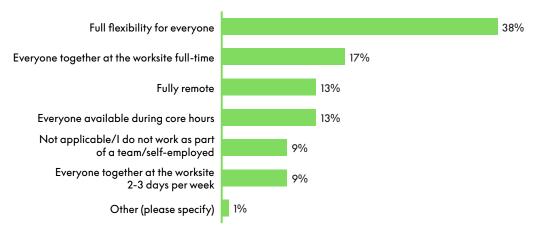


#### **Teamwork**

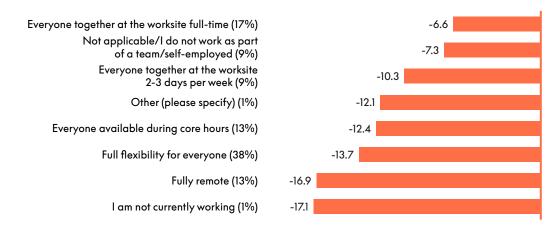
Britons were asked which model would work best for their team.

- Nearly two in five (38 per cent) report that full flexibility for everyone (days, hours, and location) would work best for their team.
- Seventeen per cent report that having everyone together at the worksite full-time is the best, followed by 13 per cent that reporting a fully remote team would work best.
- Britons under the age of 40 are 50 per cent more likely than those 60 and over to indicate that everyone working fully remotely is the best for their team.

#### Which model would work best for your team?



#### MHI score by which model would work best for your team



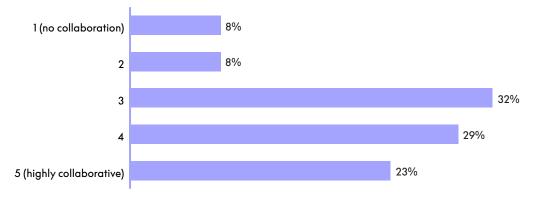


#### Collaboration

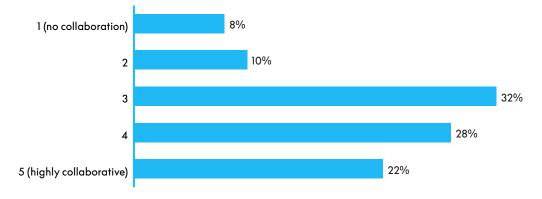
Britons were asked to rate collaboration/teamwork before the pandemic and since the pandemic began.

- More than half (52 per cent) report high collaboration (a rating
  of four or five on a five-point scale) before the pandemic compared
  to 50 per cent since the pandemic began. Both groups have higher
  mental health scores than those reporting poor collaboration.
- Sixteen per cent report poor collaboration (a rating of one or two)
  before the pandemic compared to 18 per cent since the pandemic
  began. Both groups reporting poor collaboration have the lowest
  mental health scores.

#### Collaboration/teamwork rating pre-pandemic



#### Collaboration/teamwork rating since the pandemic began





### Support for employee wellbeing

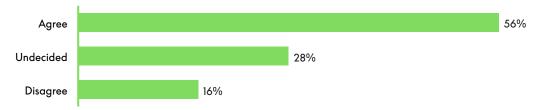
Britons were asked whether the HR policies at their organization support employee wellbeing.

- More than half (56 per cent) agree that HR policies at their organization support employee wellbeing, and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-8.0).
- Those who disagree that HR policies at their organization support employee wellbeing have the lowest mental health score (-20.3).

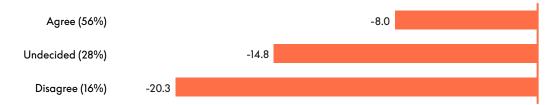
Britons were asked whether they believe that the CEO of their organization genuinely cares about employee wellbeing.

- Nearly half (48 per cent) agree that their organization's CEO genuinely cares about employee wellbeing, and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-7.3).
- One in five (20 per cent) do not believe that their organization's CEO genuinely cares about employee wellbeing and this group has the lowest mental health score (-19.7).
- Managers are more than 40 per cent more likely than non-managers to agree that the CEO genuinely cares about employee wellbeing.

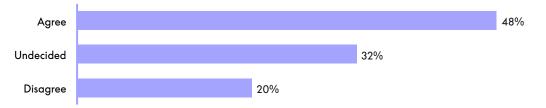
#### HR policies at my organization support employee wellbeing



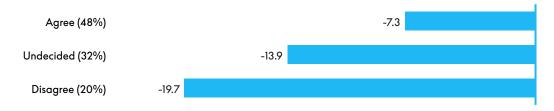
#### MHI score by HR policies at my organization support employee wellbeing



#### My organization's CEO genuinely cares about employee wellbeing



#### MHI score by my organization's CEO genuinely cares about employee wellbeing





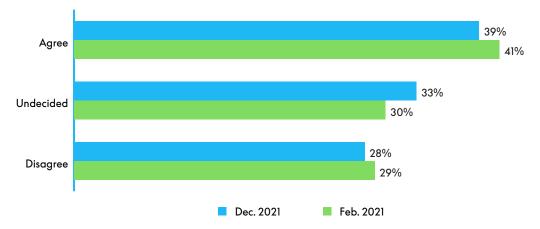
### Mental health support

#### Self-stigma

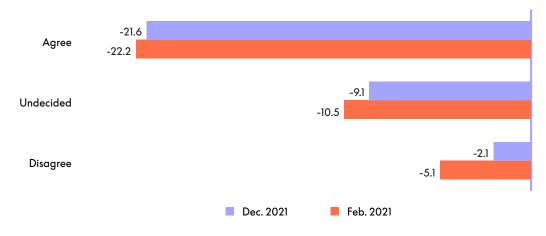
In February 2021 and December 2021, Britons were asked whether they would feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue.

- In December 2021, nearly two in five (39 per cent) would feel
  negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue,
  a slightly lower proportion (41 per cent) than reported in
  February 2021. The mental health score of those who would
  feel negatively about themselves is significantly lower (-21.6),
  than the national average (-11.9).
- Overall, the mental health scores among each group of respondents are more favourable in December 2021 compared to February 2021.
- Britons under the age of 40 are nearly 60 per cent more likely than those 50 and over to feel negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue..

#### I would feel negatively about myself if I had a mental health issue



#### MHI score by I would feel negatively about myself if I had a mental health issue



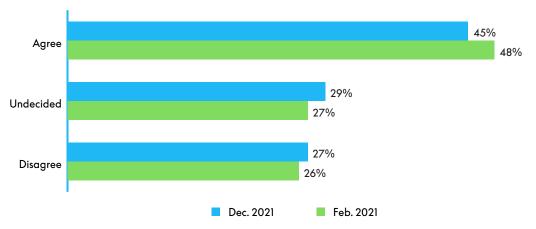


#### **Career impact**

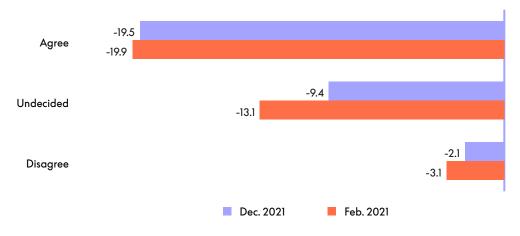
In February 2021 and December 2021, Britons were asked whether they would be concerned that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue, and their workplace was aware.

- In December 2021, nearly half (45 per cent) believe that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue and their workplace was aware, a slightly lower proportion than reported (48 per cent) in February 2021. The mental health score of those who would be concerned about career impact is significantly lower (-19.5), than the national average (-11.9).
- Overall, the mental health scores among each group of respondents are more favourable in December 2021 compared to February 2021.
- Britons under the age of 40 are 50 per cent more likely than those 50 and over to believe that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue, and their workplace was aware.

My career options would be limited if I had a mental health issue, and my workplace was aware



MHI score by my career options would be limited if I had a mental health issue, and my workplace was aware





# Overview of the Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

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:

- The overall Mental Health Index<sup>™</sup> (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 1,000 people who live 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<sup>™</sup> has been published monthly since April 2020. Benchmark data was collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Data for the current report was collected between December 3 and 14, 2021.

#### **Calculations**

To create the Mental Health Index<sup>™</sup>, 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<sup>TM</sup>. A score of zero in the Mental Health Index<sup>TM</sup> 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<sup>TM</sup>. 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





#### **About LifeWorks**

LifeWorks is a world leader in providing digital and in-person solutions that support the total wellbeing of individuals. We deliver a personalized continuum of care that helps our clients improve the lives of their people and by doing so, improve their business.

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