

The Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

United Kingdom | October 2021



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Manager and peer relationships have deteriorated since before the pandemic, which has impacted both mental health and productivity. 3

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October 2021 highlights

Key insight: Manager and peer relationships have deteriorated since before the pandemic, which has impacted both mental health and productivity.

Workplace relationships have deteriorated since before the pandemic, impacting mental health and productivity

- 13% of Britons report that experiences with their manager have not been positive since the pandemic began, an increase of 2% since before the pandemic.
- The mental health and work productivity scores of those who do not have positive experiences with their manager are more than nine points below the national average.
- 10% of Britons indicate that experiences with their work peers have not been positive since the pandemic began, an increase of 3% since the start of the pandemic.
- The mental health and isolation scores of those who have not have positive relationships with work peers are more than 12 points below the national average.

More than one in five employed Britons report a decline in their mental health since the start of the pandemic

- 21% of Britons report poorer mental health than before the pandemic; the mental health of this group is more than 17 points below the national average.

After seven months of improvement, the mental health of Britons declined in October 2021

- The Mental Health Index for October 2021 fell 0.4-points to nearly 11 points below the pre-2020 benchmark.
- Those without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (-25.0) than the overall group (-10.6) and those with emergency savings (-5.6).

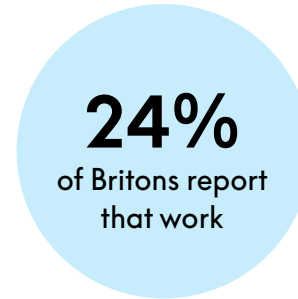
- 20% feel in crisis or have concerns about their ability to cope. These groups have mental health scores more than 23 points below the national average.
- Younger employees are more likely than older employees to be in crisis or to have concerns about their ability to cope.
- Parents are twice as likely as non-parents to be in crisis or to have concerns about their ability to cope.

More than one in five Britons indicate that work hindered their mental wellbeing before the pandemic; this has increased to nearly one-quarter in October 2021

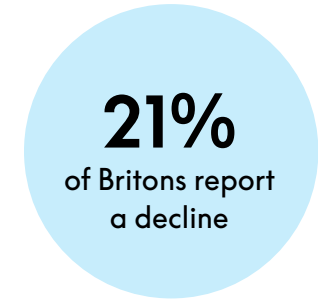
- Britons reporting that work hinders their mental wellbeing have a mental health score more than 11 points below the national average.
- 21% report that work hinders their physical wellbeing.

Managers are more likely than non-managers to be in crisis or to have concerns about their ability to cope

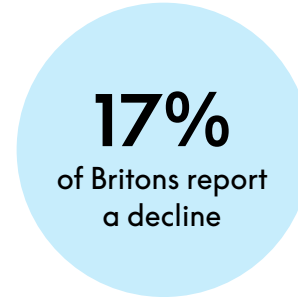
- Managers are 60% more likely than non-managers to report serious physical health issues or are concerned that they will develop a chronic issue.
- In October 2021, the mental health score of managers is slightly better (-10.1) than non-managers (-11.1).
- Managers have a greater increase in mental stress (56.4) than non-managers (54.0).



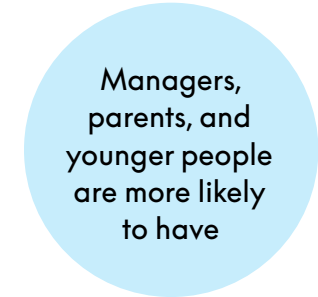
hinders their
mental health



in their mental health
since the start of
the pandemic



in their physical health
since the start of
the pandemic



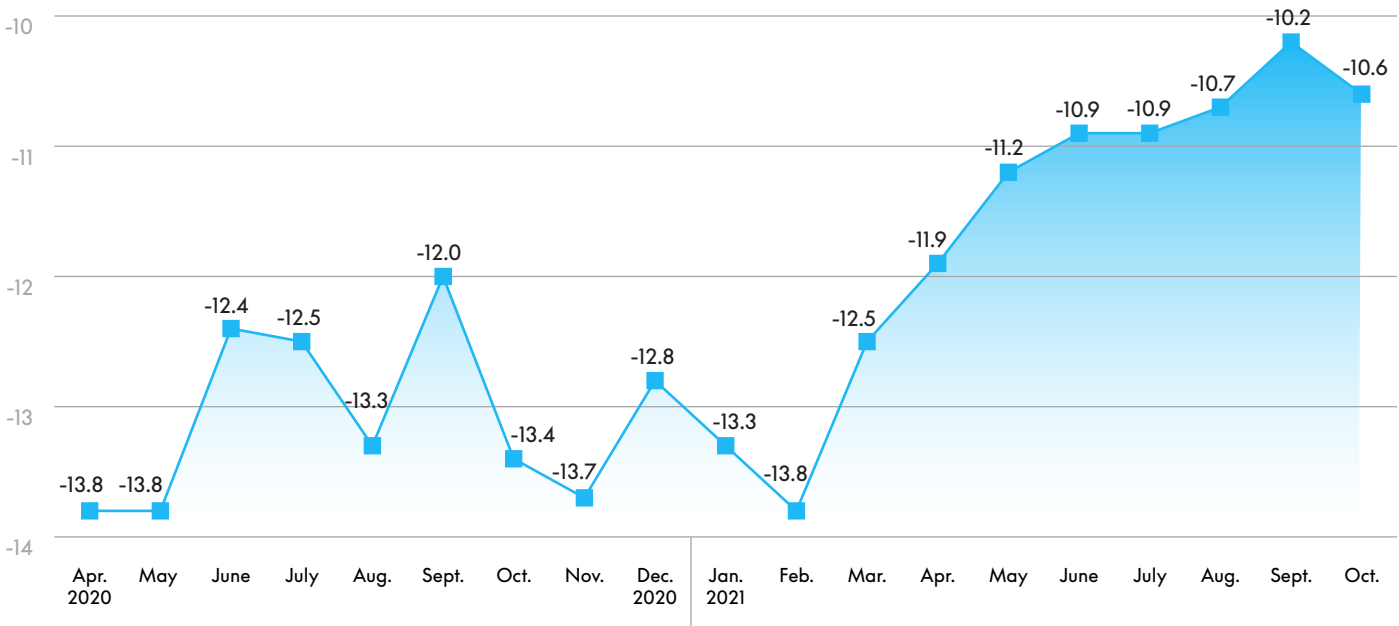
serious mental health
and physical health
concerns

More than one in six Britons report that their physical health has declined since the start of the pandemic

- 17% of Britons report a decline in their physical health; the mental health of this group is nearly 18 points below the national average.
- 23% report serious physical health issues or are concerned that they will develop a chronic issue. These groups have mental health scores more than 13 points below the national average.
- Younger employees are more likely than older employees to report serious physical health issues or are concerned that they will develop a chronic issue.
- Parents are more than 60% more likely than non-parents to report serious physical health issues or are concerned that they will develop a chronic issue.

The Mental Health Index™

The Mental Health Index™ (MHI) is a measure of deviation from the benchmark¹ of mental health and risk. **The overall Mental Health Index™ for October 2021 is -10.6 points.** A 10-point decrease from the pre-COVID-19 benchmark reflects a population whose mental health is similar to the most distressed three per cent of the benchmark population.



MHI Current Month
October 2021

-10.6

September 2021

-10.2

¹ 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 (-13.0), followed by depression (-12.3), anxiety (-12.2), isolation (-10.0), work productivity (-9.9), and general psychological health (-3.7).

The best subs-score, and the only measure above the historical benchmark continues to be financial risk (5.6).

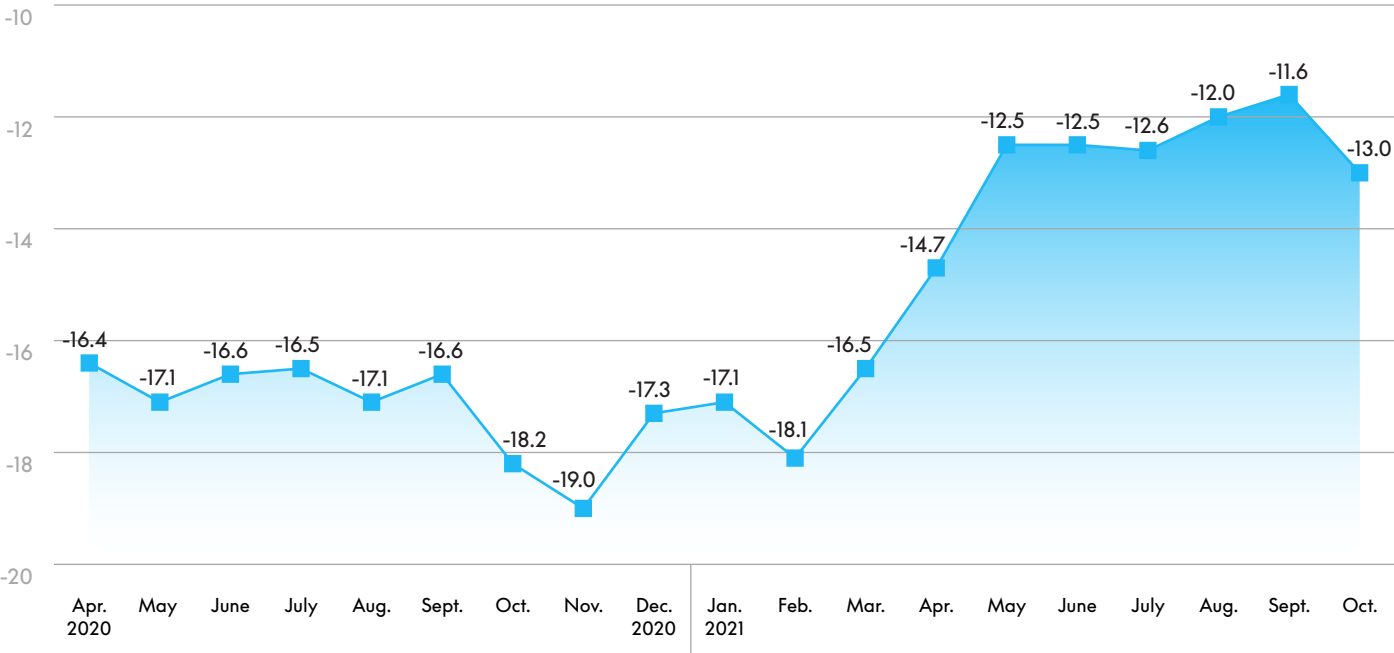
- Isolation, general psychological health, optimism, and anxiety scores declined in October 2021.
- With a modest 0.4-point increase, depression and financial risk scores improved over the prior month.

Mental Health Index™ Sub-scores ² 2021	October	September
Optimism	-13.0	-11.6
Depression	-12.3	-12.7
Anxiety	-12.2	-11.7
Isolation	-10.0	-9.8
Work productivity	-9.9	-10.1
Psychological health	-3.7	-2.9
Financial risk	5.6	5.1

² The demographic breakdown of sub-scores is available upon request.

Optimism

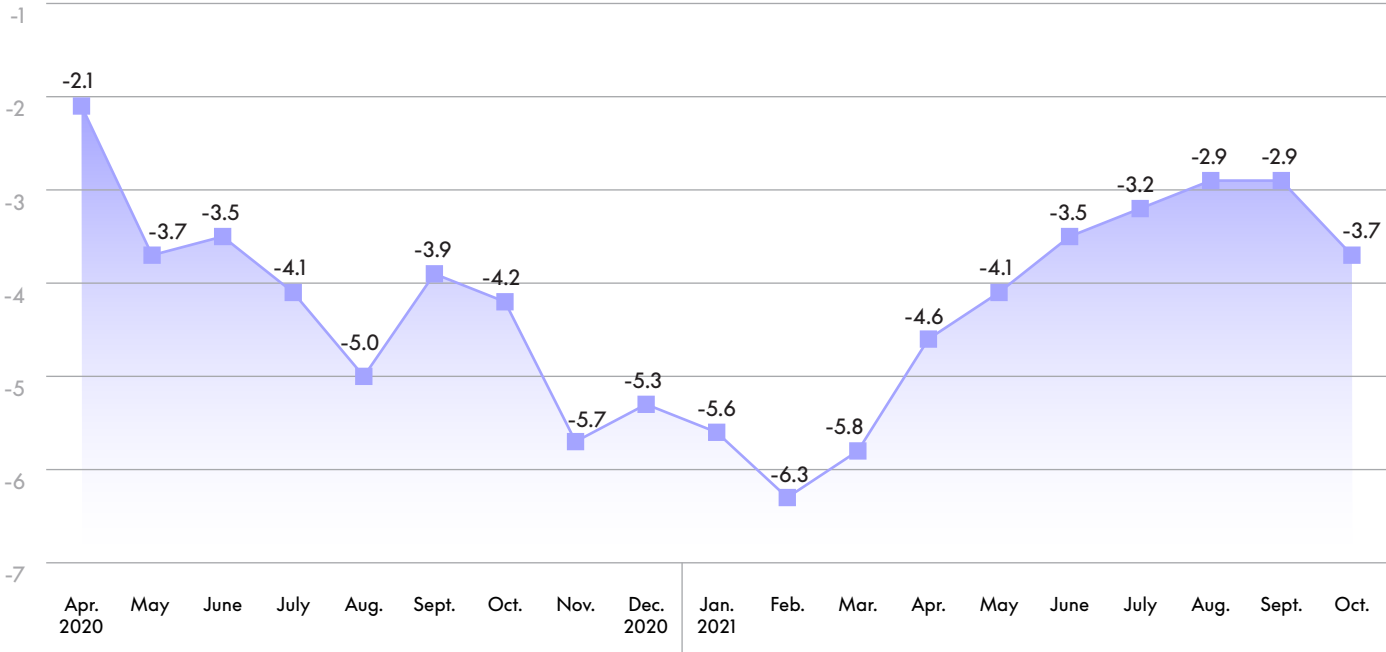
Since April 2020, optimism sub-scores have remained significantly below the benchmark however, beginning in March 2021, scores improved to a high of -11.6 in September. After seven months of improvement, the optimism score in the United Kingdom fell 1.4-points to -13.0 in October 2021.



General psychological health

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

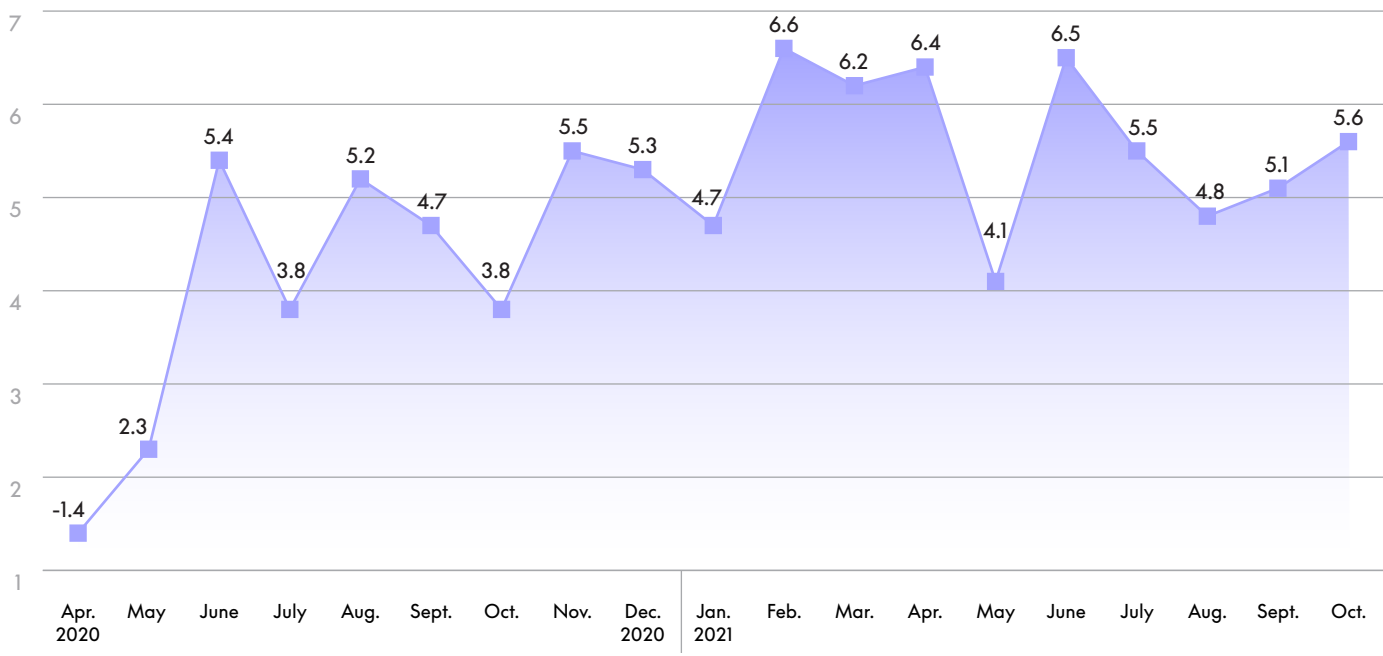
From the launch of the MHI in April 2020 to February 2021, the general psychological health of Britons declined to a low of 6.3 points below the pre-2020 benchmark. Since March 2021, scores have increased, reaching -2.9 in August. After six months of improvement, the psychological health score of Britons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



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 continues its recovery in October to 5.6 points.



Demographics

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In October 2021, the mental health score of women is -12.8 compared to -8.8 for men.
- In each of the past 19 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. More than one year later, this pattern continues with a lower score for those with at least one child (-14.4) compared to those without children (-8.6).

Employment

- Overall, three per cent of respondents are unemployed³ 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 (-24.2), followed by those reporting fewer hours (-19.3), and those not currently employed (-8.2).
- Non-managers have a lower mental health score (-11.1) than managers (-10.1).
- Self-employed/sole proprietors have the highest mental health score (-8.2).
- Respondents working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (-15.0).

Emergency savings

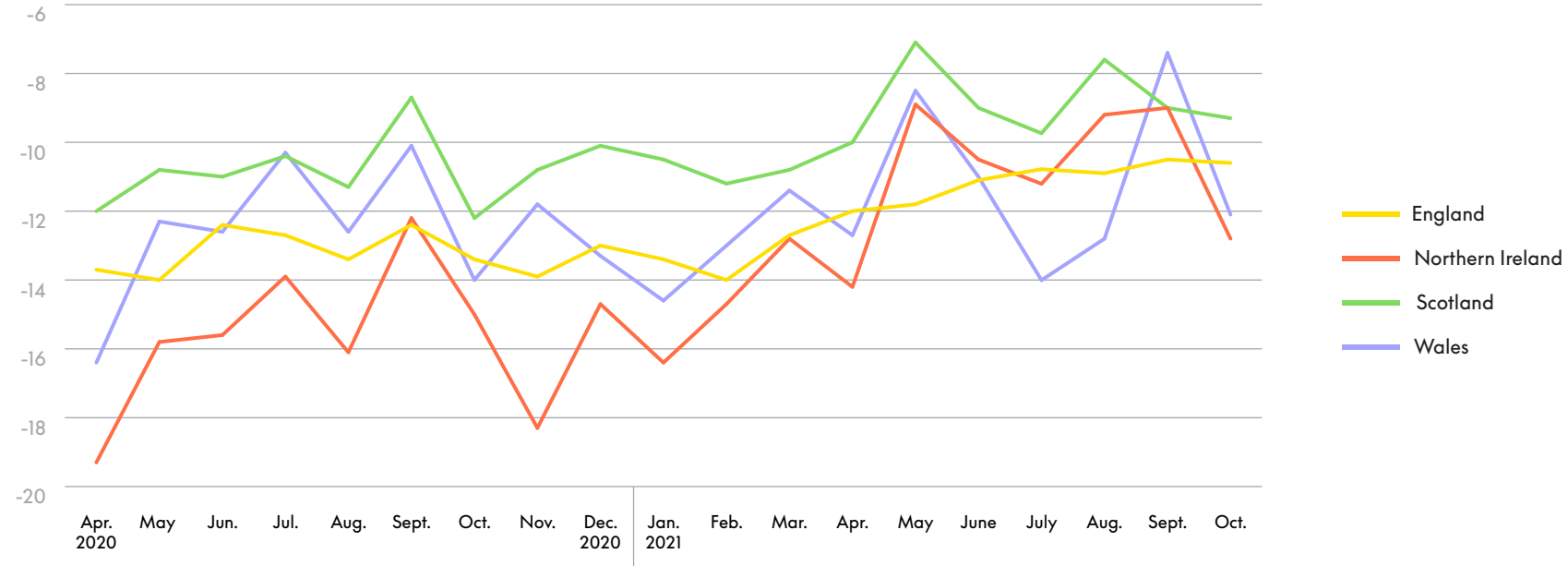
- Those without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (-25.0) than the overall group (-10.6). Individuals with emergency savings have a mental health score of -5.6.

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

Mental Health Index™ (regional)

Since April 2020, regional mental health scores have fluctuated. In October 2021, the mental health scores in all regions declined compared to the prior month.

- With a significant 4.7-point decline, the mental health score in Wales is lowest (-12.1).
- The highest mental health score is in Scotland (-9.3), despite a modest 0.3-point decline from September.



Employment status	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	-9.9	-9.5
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-19.3	-16.9
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	-24.2	-17.6
Not currently employed	-8.2	-14.5
Age group	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
Age 20-29	-18.6	-16.8
Age 30-39	-17.0	-16.9
Age 40-49	-12.6	-12.7
Age 50-59	-7.8	-6.8
Age 60-69	-4.2	-3.9
Number of children	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
No children in household	-8.6	-8.6
1 child	-13.2	-13.0
2 children	-15.7	-13.4
3 children or more	-15.2	-13.6

Region	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
England	-10.6	-10.5
Northern Ireland	-12.8	-9.0
Scotland	-9.3	-9.0
Wales	-12.1	-7.4
Gender	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
Men	-8.8	-8.9
Women	-12.8	-11.8
Household income	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
Household Income <£15K/annum	-18.0	-18.7
£15K to <£30K/annum	-15.2	-14.2
£30k to <£60K	-10.0	-10.2
£60k to <£100K	-6.4	-4.9
£100K and over	-1.4	-2.1

Employer size	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	-8.2	-8.3
2-50 employees	-9.3	-8.1
51-100 employees	-15.0	-14.0
101-500 employees	-10.5	-10.8
501-1,000 employees	-12.9	-12.5
1,001-5,000 employees	-11.5	-9.6
5,001-10,000 employees	-9.7	-9.2
More than 10,000 employees	-9.5	-9.7
Manager	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
Manager	-10.1	-10.2
Non-manager	-11.1	-10.1

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

Mental Health Index™ (industry)

Individuals working in Food Services have the lowest mental health score in October (-17.3), followed by those working in Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (-14.7), and Information and Cultural Industries (-14.5).

Individuals employed in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (-1.8), Manufacturing (-6.1) and Other services (except Public Administration) (-7.5) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Individuals employed in Wholesale Trade, Public Administration, and Educational Services have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month.

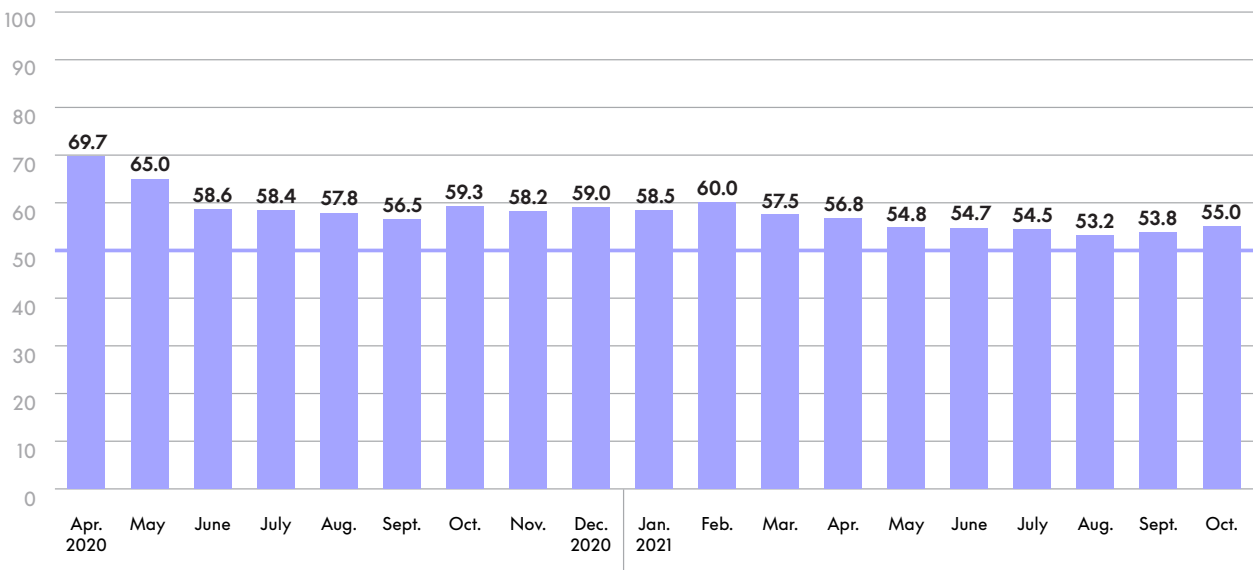
Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.

Industry	October 2021	September 2021	Change
Wholesale Trade	-13.9	-15.9	1.9
Public Administration	-7.6	-8.7	1.1
Educational Services	-8.8	-9.7	0.9
Health Care and Social Assistance	-13.4	-14.2	0.8
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	-1.8	-2.1	0.4
Construction	-10.5	-10.9	0.4
Transportation and Warehousing	-12.3	-12.5	0.2
Finance and Insurance	-8.5	-8.2	-0.3
Retail Trade	-12.5	-12.2	-0.3
Information and Cultural Industries	-14.5	-14.1	-0.4
Food Services	-17.3	-16.5	-0.8
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-8.3	-7.2	-1.1
Manufacturing	-6.1	-4.6	-1.5
Other	-10.8	-8.8	-1.9
Other services (except Public Administration)	-7.5	-5.4	-2.1
Administrative and Support services	-13.1	-9.2	-3.9
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-14.7	-9.8	-4.8

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 October 2021 is 56.1.** This reflects a net increase in mental stress compared to the prior month.

The current score indicates that 17 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.



- ▲ More mental stress
- 50 = No change from prior month
- ▼ Less mental stress

MStressChg
Current Month—
October 2021

55.0

MStressChg
September 2021

53.8

Mental Stress Change (percentages)

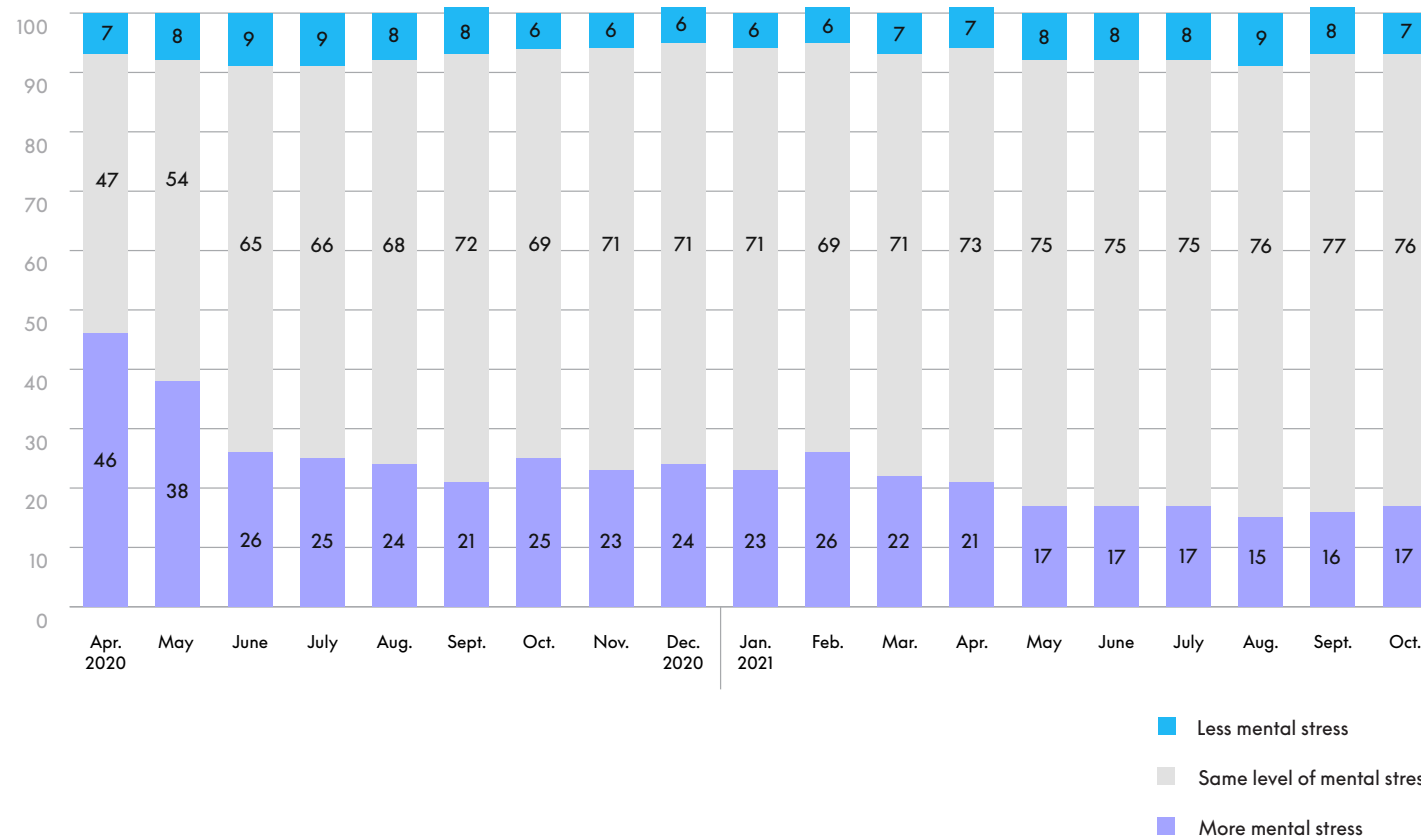
Mental Stress Change tracks stress changes each month.

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 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 2020, 46 per cent of individuals reported an increase in mental stress. The number of respondents reporting increased month-over-month mental stress is 17 per cent in October 2021, while 76 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 October 2021, the mental stress change score for women is 55.8 compared to 54.2 for men.

Geography

- The greatest increase in month-over-month stress is for respondents living in Wales (58.4), followed by England (54.9), Scotland (54.6), and Northern Ireland (50.9).

Employment

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in employed people with reduced hours (59.6), followed by unemployed people (55.6), employed people with no change to salary or hours (54.6), and employed people with reduced salary (53.7).
- Managers have a greater increase in mental stress (56.4) than non-managers (54.0).

Employment status	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	54.6	53.4
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	59.6	57.0
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	53.7	62.0
Not currently employed	55.6	54.9
Age group	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
Age 20-29	55.4	55.9
Age 30-39	58.5	57.5
Age 40-49	55.9	55.8
Age 50-59	53.4	50.7
Age 60-69	53.2	52.2
Number of children	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
No children in household	53.2	51.8
1 child	57.3	58.3
2 children	59.5	56.6
3 children or more	57.7	58.3

Region	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
England	54.9	54.0
Northern Ireland	50.9	49.0
Scotland	54.6	54.4
Wales	58.4	52.3
Gender	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
Men	54.2	53.6
Women	55.8	54.1
Household income	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
Household Income <£15K/annum	57.4	57.4
£15K to <£30K/annum	56.1	53.3
£30k to <£60K	55.9	54.6
£60k to <£100K	52.4	53.5
£100K and over	52.6	50.0

Employer size	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	52.6	49.6
2-50 employees	53.9	51.9
51-100 employees	55.8	57.6
101-500 employees	56.9	56.0
501-1,000 employees	54.1	55.7
1,001-5,000 employees	56.2	53.4
5,001-10,000 employees	56.9	48.2
More than 10,000 employees	53.6	54.0
Manager	Oct. 2021	Sept. 2021
Manager	56.4	56.5
Non-manager	54.0	51.6

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 October 2021, individuals employed in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (50.0) report the same amount of stress than the prior month. 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 working in Information and Cultural Industries have the most significant increase in mental stress (60.4), followed by individuals employed in Health Care and Social Assistance (59.8), and Public Administration (55.9).

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

Industry	October 2021	September 2021
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	50.0	51.2
Manufacturing	51.0	51.7
Administrative and Support services	52.0	50.0
Construction	52.1	53.9
Retail Trade	53.2	52.6
Finance and Insurance	53.5	51.9
Transportation and Warehousing	54.4	55.6
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	54.4	50.0
Food Services	54.5	55.1
Wholesale Trade	54.5	56.9
Other services (except Public Administration)	54.9	52.0
Educational Services	55.2	54.7
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	55.8	51.8
Other	55.8	52.1
Public Administration	55.9	51.9
Health Care and Social Assistance	59.8	58.8
Information and Cultural Industries	60.4	67.9

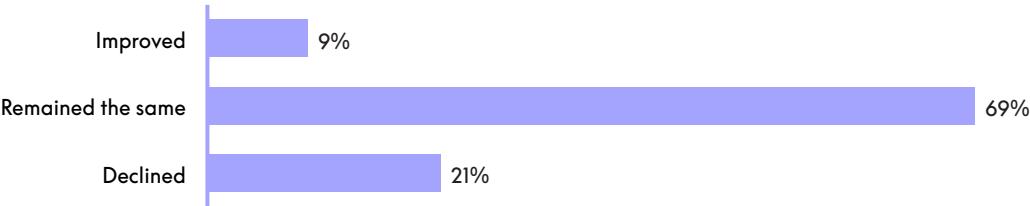
Spotlight

Mental health

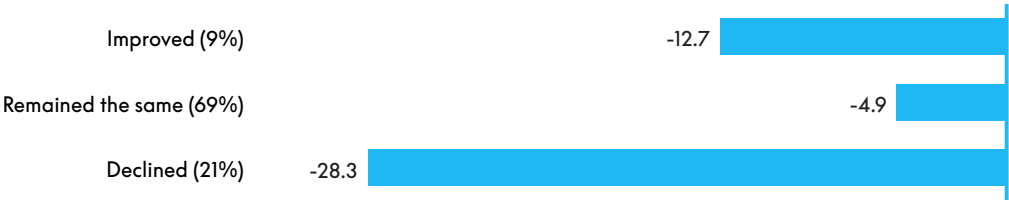
Respondents were asked whether their mental health has changed since the start of the pandemic.

More than one in five (21 per cent) report that their mental health has declined since the start of the pandemic and this group has a mental health score nearly 18 points below the national average.

Since the pandemic began, my mental health has...



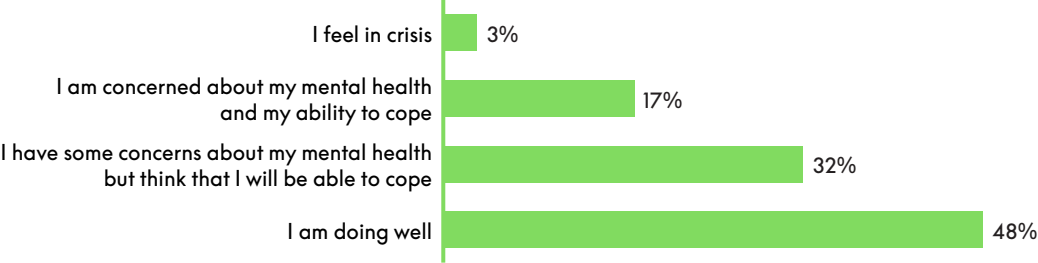
MHI score by since the pandemic began, my mental health has...



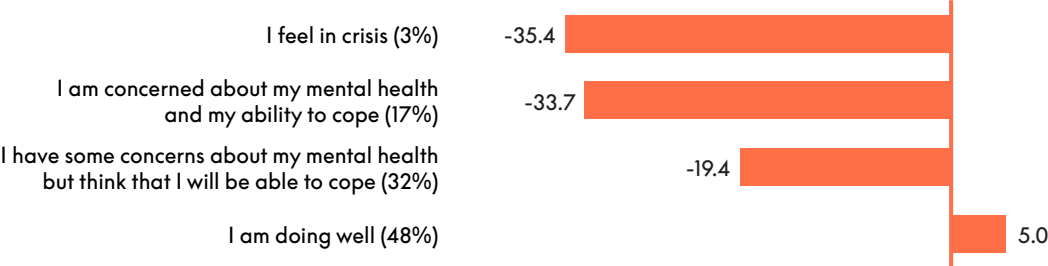
Respondents were asked to rate their mental health.

- More than half (52 per cent) indicate that they have some concerns about their mental health or are in crisis.
- One in five (20 per cent) report that they feel in crisis or that they have concerns about their mental health and their ability to cope. These groups have mental health scores more than 23 points below the national average.
- More than one-third (35 per cent) of individuals under 40 have concerns about their mental health and their ability to cope or indicate that they feel in crisis, compared with 12 per cent of those 50 and older, a three-fold difference.
- Parents are twice as likely as non-parents to have concerns about their mental health and their ability to cope or indicate that they feel in crisis.
- Managers are more than 60 per cent more likely than non-managers to have concerns about their mental health and their ability to cope or indicate that they feel in crisis.

Mental health rating



MHI score by mental health rating

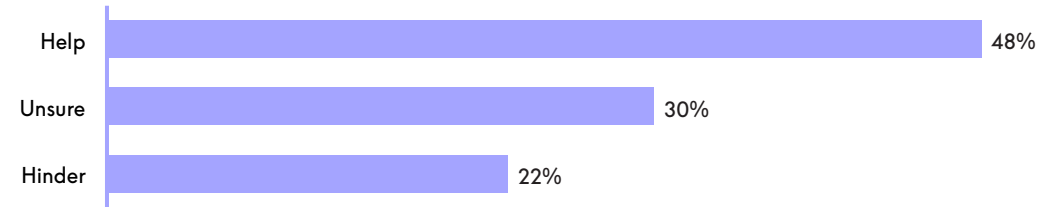


Impact of work on mental wellbeing

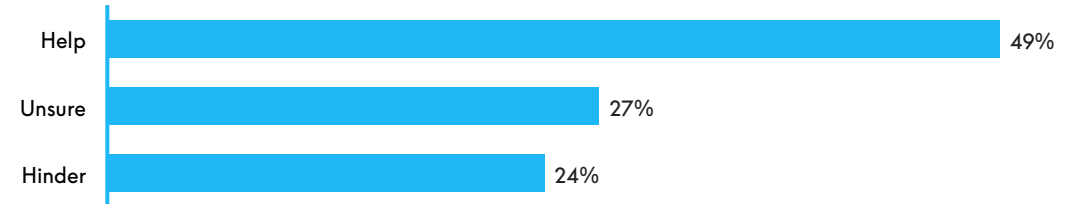
Respondents were asked whether work helps or hinders their mental wellbeing at two intervals: before the pandemic and at present.

- More than one in five (22 per cent) report that work hindered their mental wellbeing before the pandemic compared to nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) reporting that work hinders their wellbeing at present.
- Those whose work hinders their mental wellbeing have a mental health score more than 11 points below the national average.

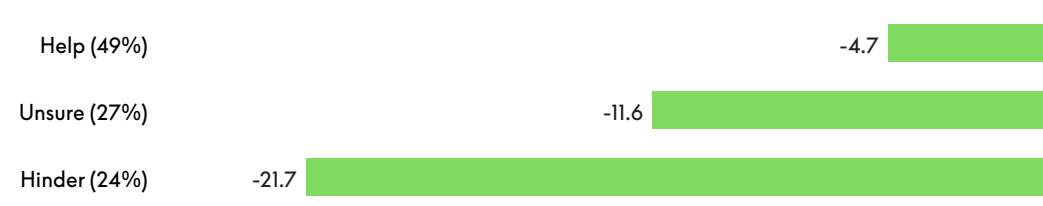
Before the pandemic, did work help or hinder your mental wellbeing?



Currently, does work help or hinder your mental wellbeing?



MHI score by whether work helps or hinders mental wellbeing (currently)

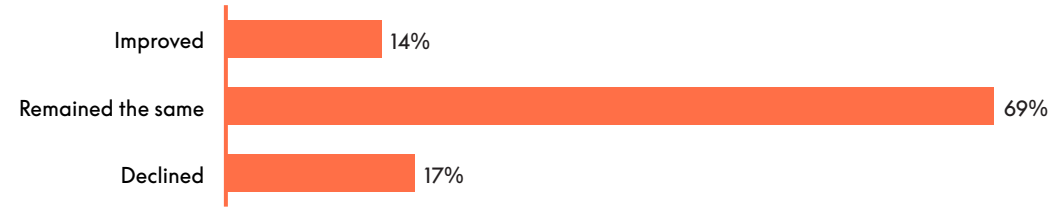


Physical health

Respondents were asked whether their physical health has changed since the start of the pandemic.

- More than one in six (17 per cent) report that their physical health has declined since the start of the pandemic and this group has a mental health score nearly 18 points below the national average.

Since the pandemic began, my physical health has...



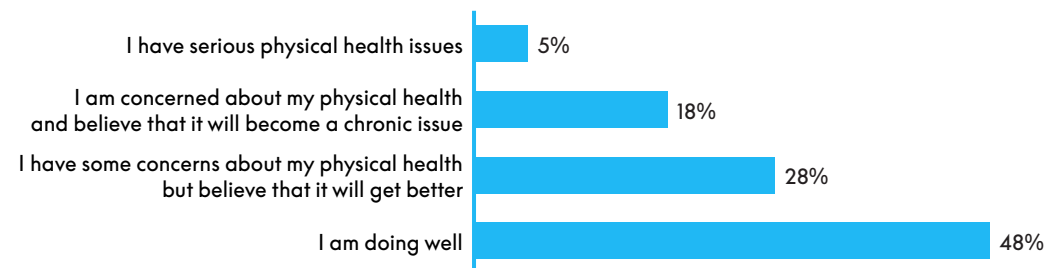
MHI score by since the pandemic began, my physical health has...



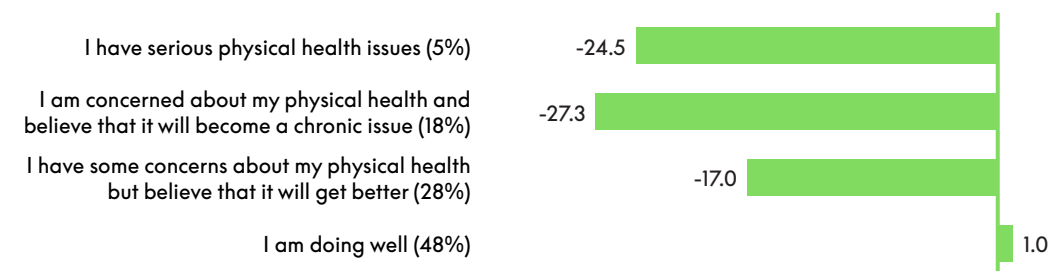
Respondents were asked to rate their physical health.

- Nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) report that they have serious physical health issues or are concerned about their physical health and believe that an issue will become chronic. These groups have mental health scores more than 13 points below the national average.
- Nearly one-third (34 per cent) of individuals under 40 report serious physical health issues or are concerned about their physical health and believe that an issue will become chronic, compared to 17 per cent of those 50 and older.
- Parents are more than 60 per cent more likely than non-parents to report serious physical health issues or are concerned about their physical health and believe that an issue will become chronic.
- Managers are 60 per cent more likely than non-managers to report serious physical health issues or are concerned about their physical health and believe that an issue will become chronic.

Physical health rating



MHI score by mental health rating

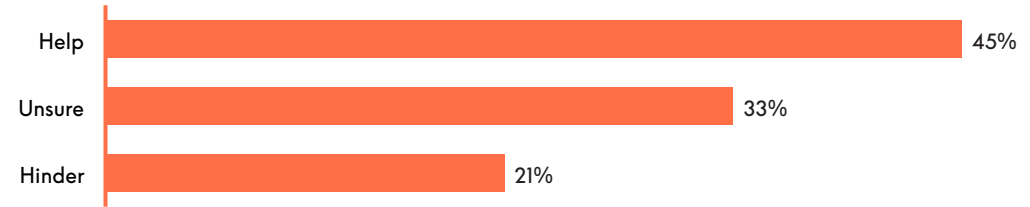


Impact of work on physical wellbeing

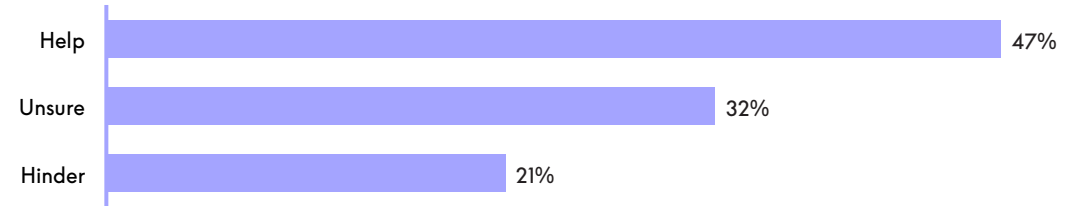
Respondents were asked whether work helps or hinders their physical wellbeing at two intervals: before the pandemic and at present.

- More than one in five (21 per cent) report that work hindered their physical wellbeing before the pandemic as well as at present.
- Those whose work hinders their physical wellbeing have a mental health score 11 points below the national average.

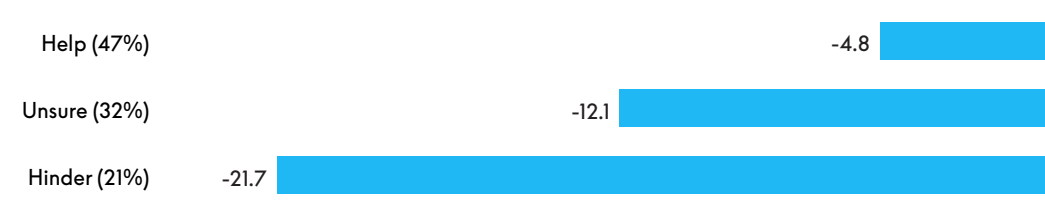
Before the pandemic, did work help or hinder your physical wellbeing?



Currently, does work help or hinder your physical wellbeing?



MHI score by whether work helps or hinders physical wellbeing (currently)



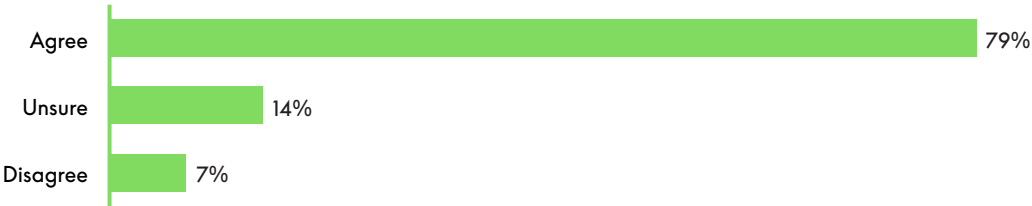
Work relationships

Peer relationships

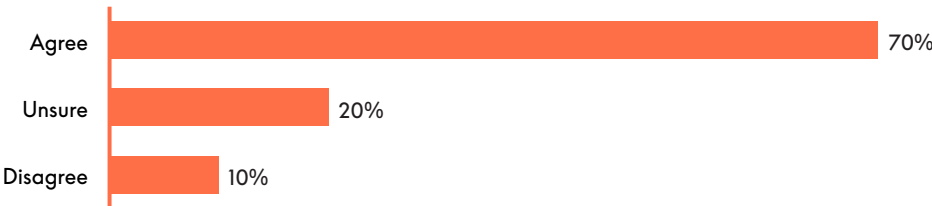
Respondents were asked about their experiences with their work peers at two intervals: before the pandemic and since the pandemic.

- Seventy-nine per cent report that experiences with their work peers were positive before the pandemic compared to 70 per cent since the pandemic.
- Ten per cent indicate that experiences with their peers have not been positive since the pandemic began, an increase of three per cent since the start of the pandemic, and this group has a mental health score nearly 15 points below the national average.
- The isolation score among those who indicate that experiences with their peers have not been positive since the pandemic began is 13 points below the national average.

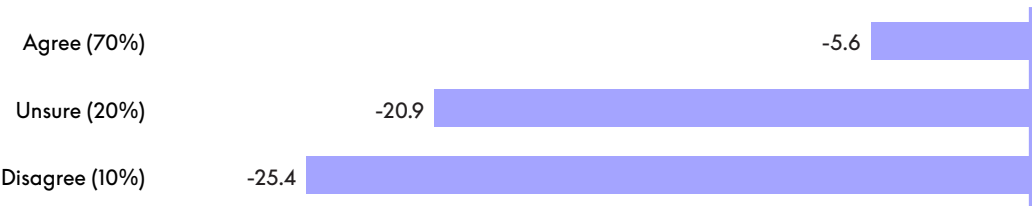
Experiences with work peers were positive before the pandemic



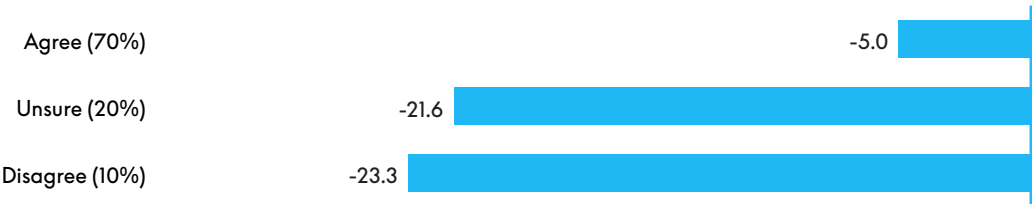
Experiences with work peers have been positive since the pandemic began



MHI score by experiences with work peers have been positive since the pandemic began



Isolation score by experiences with work peers have been positive since the pandemic began



Manager relationship

Respondents were asked about their experiences with their managers at two intervals: before the pandemic and since the pandemic.

- Seventy-two per cent report that experiences with their managers were positive before the pandemic compared to 68 per cent since the pandemic.
- Thirteen per cent indicate that experiences with their manager have not been positive since the pandemic began, an increase of two per cent since before the pandemic, and this group has a mental health score nearly 10 points below the national average.
- The work productivity score among those who indicate that experiences with their manager have not been positive since the pandemic began is nearly nine points below the national average.

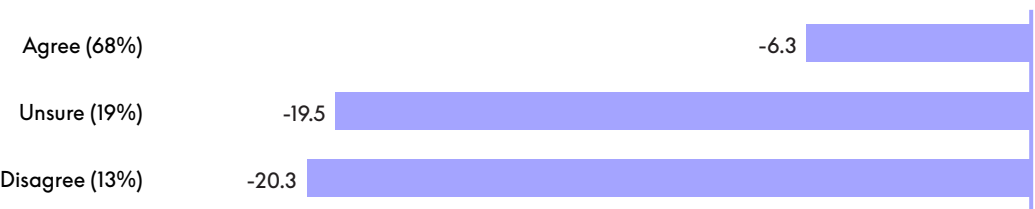
Experiences with my manager were positive **before the pandemic**



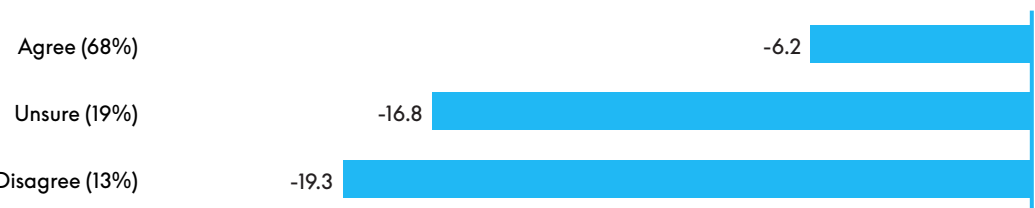
Experiences with my manager have been positive **since the pandemic began**



MHI score by experiences with my manager have been positive since the pandemic began



Work productivity score by experiences with my manager have been positive since the pandemic began



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:

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 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™ has been published monthly since April 2020. Benchmark data was collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Data for the current report was collected between October 6 and 12, 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



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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