



# The Mental Health Index by TELUS Health.

Special report on physical health and wellbeing

United Kingdom | April 2023



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# What you need to know for April 2023.

## 1. More than one-third of workers in the United Kingdom have a high mental health risk.

- At 64.1, the mental health of workers in the United Kingdom declined modestly from the prior period
- All mental health sub-scores declined from January 2023
- 34% have a high mental health risk, 41% have a moderate mental health risk, and 25% have a low mental health risk
- Mental health scores declined in all regions apart from Northern Ireland
- Labourers have a lower mental health score than service and office workers
- Managers have a slightly lower mental health score than non-managers

## 2. More than one in ten workers report mental health decline or significant mental health challenges.

- The mental health scores of workers reporting a decline in their mental health or significant mental health challenges are 46 or more points below workers reporting good mental health and 30 or more points below the national average
- Workers older than 50 are more likely than workers under 40 to self-report good mental health



### 3. One in seven workers report a decline in their physical health or significant physical health challenges.

- The mental health scores of workers reporting a decline in their physical health or significant physical health challenges are 30 or more points below workers reporting good physical health and 18 or more points below the national average
- 25 per cent of workers cite motivation and/or no energy as the barrier to exercising regularly
- 10 per cent of workers say cost is the biggest barrier to exercising regularly
- 21 per cent do not exercise and the mental health score of this group is eight points below workers who exercise four or more times per week
- 16 per cent exercise to improve or maintain their mental health
- Workers over 50 are more likely to exercise to maintain their health whereas workers under 40 are more likely to exercise to improve or maintain their appearance

### 4. Two in five say better sleep would be most helpful in managing their physical health, followed by better access to a convenient or safe place to exercise.

- 79 per cent believe physical activity has a positive effect on their mental health
- Most workers indicate that they exercise vigorously less than 1.5 hours a week; however, better mental health scores are seen at 3.5 hours per week or more
- 8 per cent say managing their physical health starts with their mental health; this group has a mental health score 12 points lower than the national average
- 12 per cent of workers have a physical health issue that interferes with work
- Among workers with a physical health issue that interferes with work, 33 per cent say their employer is unaware, or are unsure whether their employer is aware, of their physical health issue

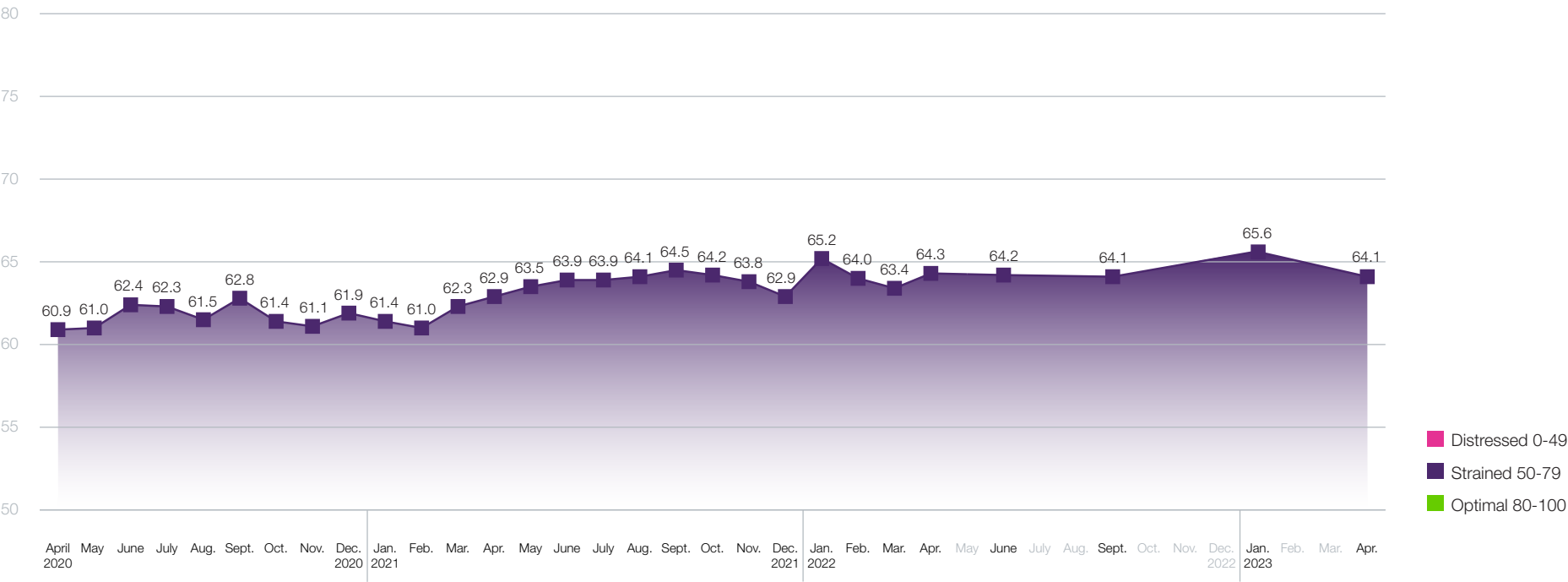
### 5. One in six workers are dissatisfied with the level of available healthcare.

- The mental health score of workers dissatisfied with available healthcare is nearly 13 points lower than satisfied workers and eight points lower than the national average
- Workers over 50 are 50 per cent more likely than workers under 40 to be dissatisfied with the level of available healthcare
- 42 per cent of those dissatisfied cite little or no access to a family doctor
- 37 per cent of those dissatisfied cite long wait times for treatment
- 10 per cent say access to a family doctor would be most helpful in managing their physical health

# The Mental Health Index.

The overall Mental Health Index (MHI) for April 2023 is 64.1. The mental health of workers in the United Kingdom declined 1.5 points from the prior period.

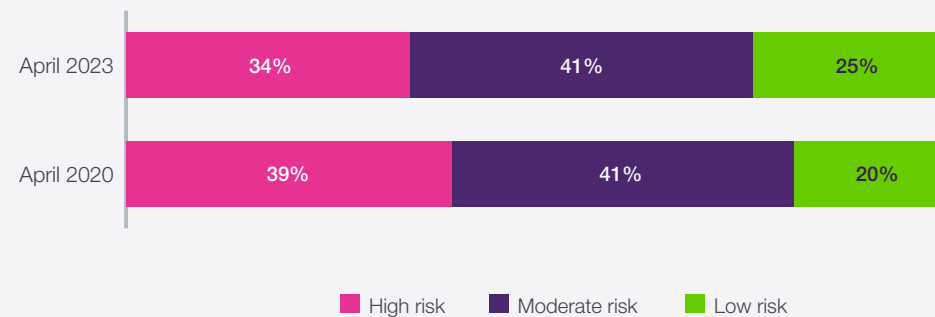
MHI Current Month April 2023	March 2023
64.1	65.6





## Mental health risk.

In April 2023, 34 per cent of Britons have a high mental health risk, 41 per cent have a moderate mental health risk, and 25 per cent have a low mental health risk. Three years after the launch of the Index in April 2020, near the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a five per cent decrease in high-risk workers and a five per cent increase in low-risk workers.



Approximately 30 per cent of people in the high-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression, seven per cent report diagnosed anxiety or depression in the moderate-risk group, and one per cent of people in the low-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression.

**Mental Health Index sub-scores.**

For one year, the lowest Mental Health Index sub-score is for the risk measure of anxiety (57.1). Isolation (60.3), depression (62.8), optimism (63.0), and work productivity (63.9) follow. Financial risk (71.5) and general psychological health (71.8) continue to be the most favourable mental health measures in April 2023.

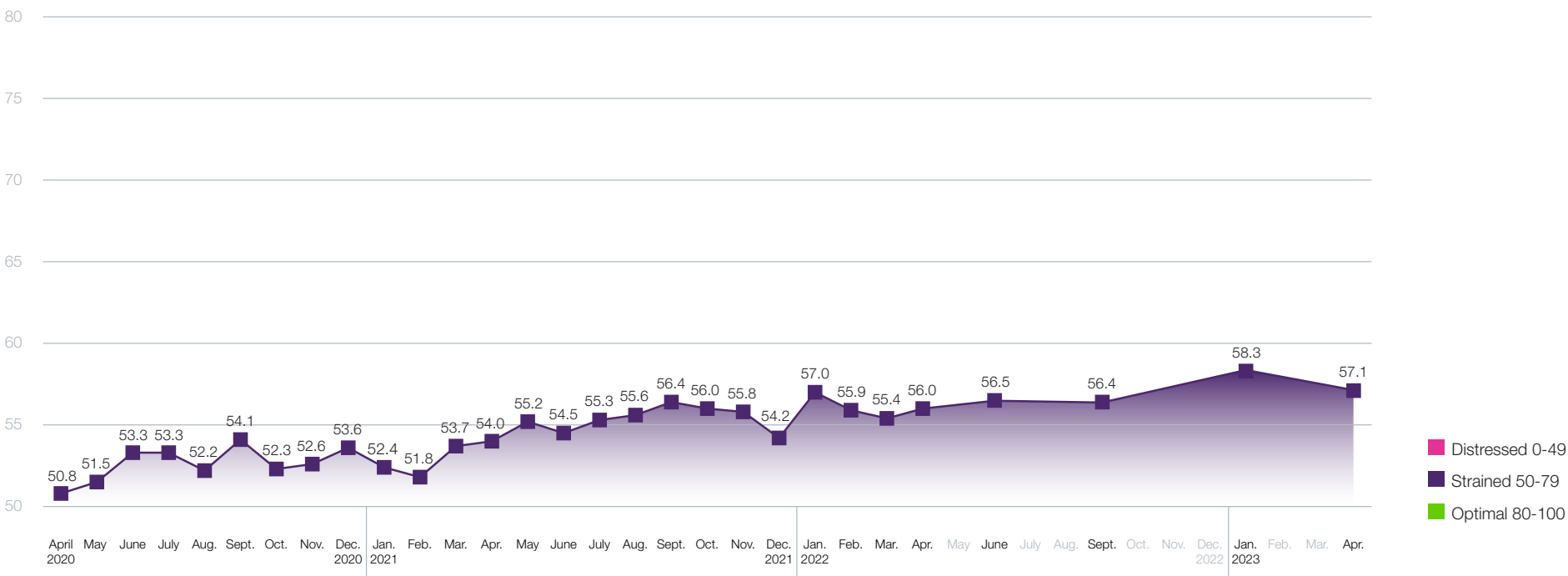
- All mental health sub-scores have declined compared to the prior period
- The greatest decline is observed in the isolation sub-score, decreasing 2.6 points from January 2023

Mental Health Index Sub-scores	April 2023	March 2023
Anxiety	57.1	58.3
Isolation	60.3	62.9
Depression	62.8	64.8
Optimism	63.0	63.7
Work productivity	63.9	65.5
Financial risk	71.5	73.4
Psychological health	71.8	72.6



Anxiety

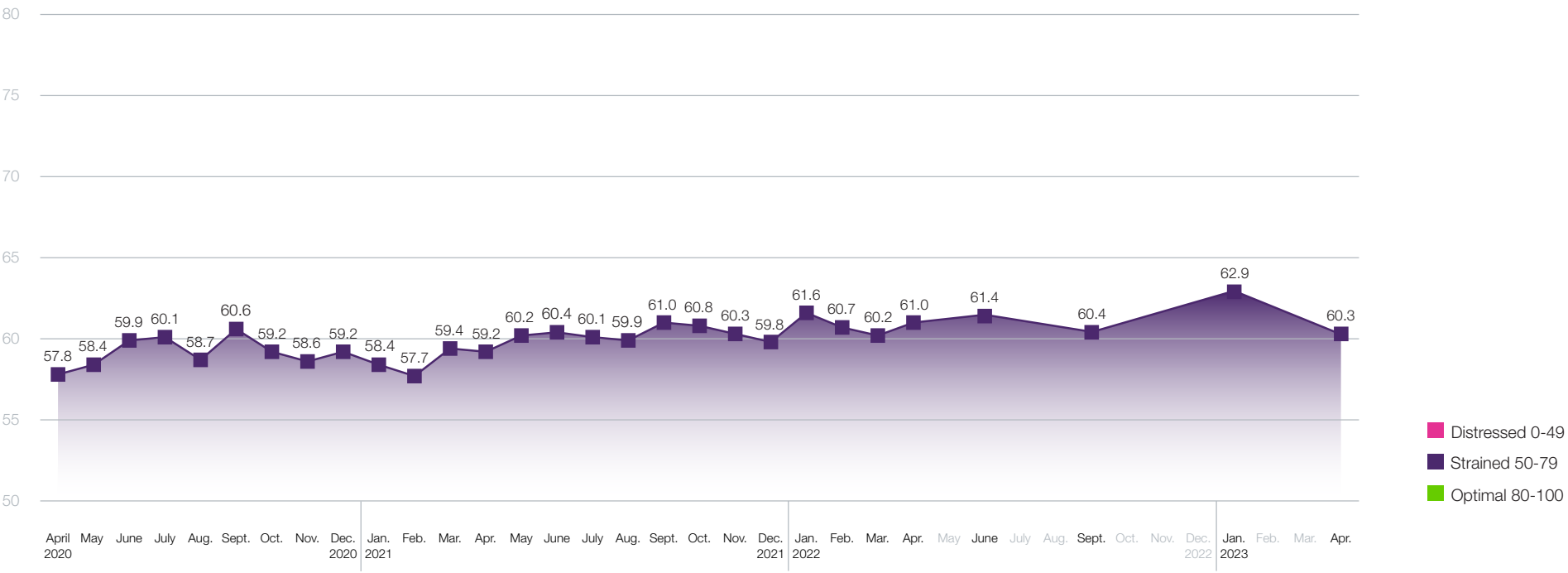
The anxiety sub-score fluctuated through 2020, then showed general improvement to September 2021. Following a decline in December 2021, the score rebounded in January 2022, but thereafter followed a declining trend through September 2022. After reaching its high in January 2023, the anxiety score declined 1.2 points and is the lowest mental health sub-score.





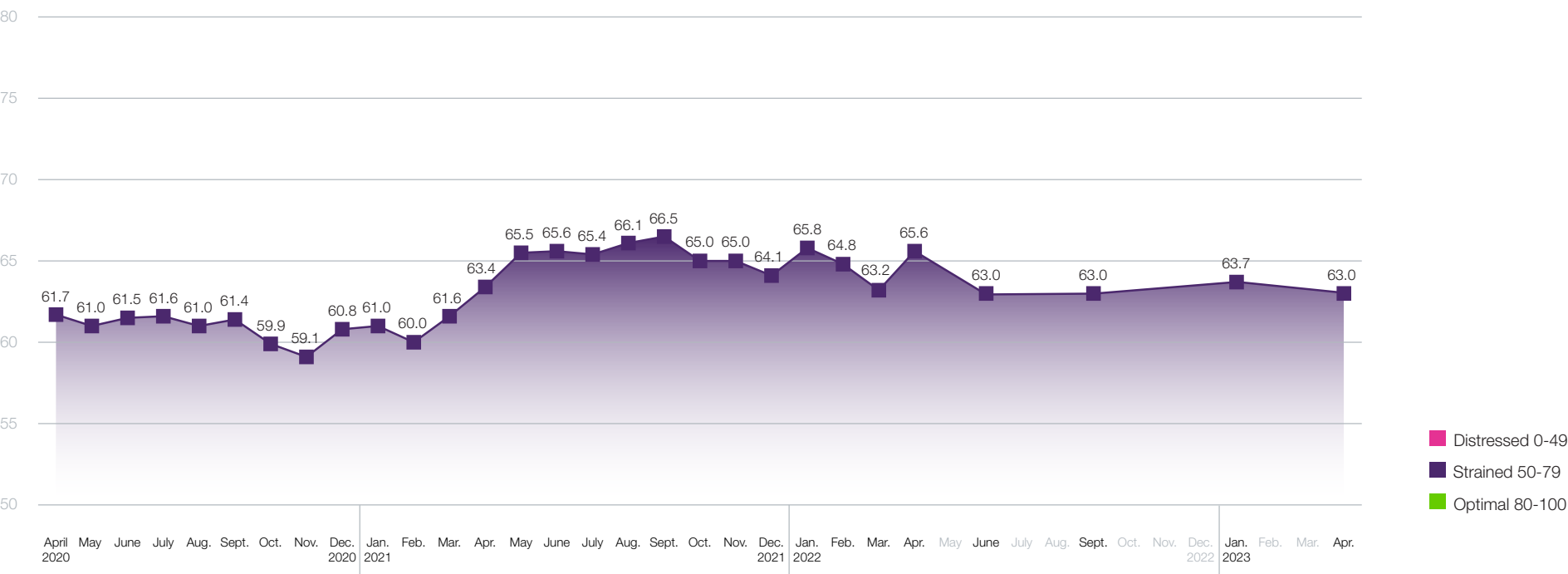
Isolation

Since the launch of the Index in April 2020, the isolation sub-score has fluctuated wildly. In January 2023, the isolation score reached its high of 62.9 but declined sharply by 2.6 points in April.



Optimism

Optimism scores improved from February 2021 to September 2021. Following that period, scores have declined despite two peaks in January and April 2022. Following a slight improvement in January 2023, the optimism sub-score declined modestly from the prior period.



## Mental health by gender and age.

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have a significantly lower mental health score than men. In April 2023, the mental health score of women is 62.2 compared to 65.7 for men
- Since April 2020, mental health scores have improved with age
- Differences in mental health scores between individuals with and without children have been reported since the launch of the Index in April 2020. Three years later, this pattern continues with a lower score for individuals with at least one child (60.4) than individuals without children (65.8)

## Mental health by employment status.

- Overall, three per cent of respondents are unemployed<sup>1</sup> and six per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary
- Individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (40.5), followed by individuals working fewer hours (56.1), individuals not currently employed (64.0), and individuals with no change to salary or hours (64.8)
- Managers have a slightly lower mental health score (63.6) than non-managers (64.4)
- Labourers have a lower mental health score (61.7) than service (63.7) and office workers (65.1)
- Respondents working for companies with more than 10,000 employees have the highest mental health score (65.9)
- Respondents working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (61.8)

## Emergency savings

- Workers without emergency savings continue to experience a lower score in mental health (42.3) than the overall group (64.1). Workers with emergency savings have a mental health score of 74.3

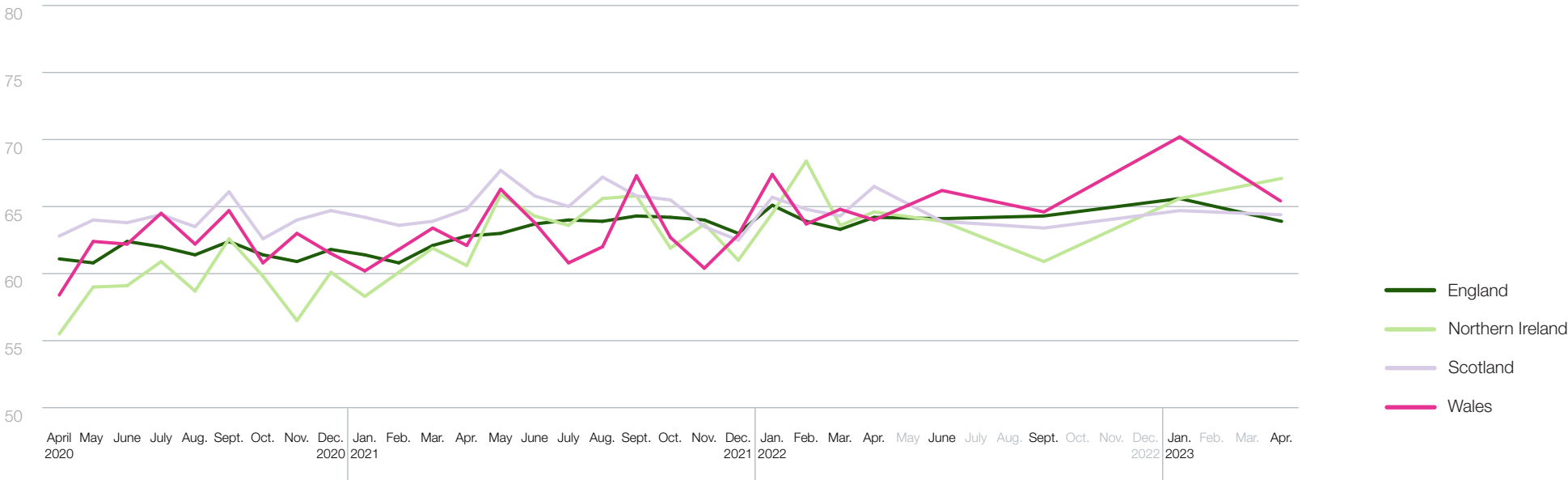


<sup>1</sup> MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

# The Mental Health Index by region.

Since April 2020, regional mental health scores have fluctuated. In April 2023, the mental health score declined in all regions compared to the prior period, apart from Norther Ireland.

- With a 1.6-point decrease, England has the lowest mental health score (63.9) in April
- The mental health score in Northern Ireland improved 1.5 points and is the only region with an increase in mental health



Employment status	Apr. 2023	March 2023
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	64.8	66.0
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	56.1	57.1
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	40.5	56.3
Not currently employed	64.0	69.1
Age group	Apr. 2023	March 2023
Age 20-29	55.1	57.3
Age 30-39	57.2	59.3
Age 40-49	61.5	62.7
Age 50-59	65.6	66.5
Age 60-69	71.5	71.8
Number of children	Apr. 2023	March 2023
No children in household	65.8	67.1
1 child	60.3	62.2
2 children	61.4	62.9
3 children or more	57.5	58.3

Region	Apr. 2023	March 2023
England	63.9	65.5
Northern Ireland	67.1	65.6
Scotland	64.4	64.7
Wales	65.4	70.2
Gender	Apr. 2023	March 2023
Men	65.7	68.0
Women	62.2	62.8
Household income	Apr. 2023	March 2023
<£15K/annum	54.0	57.2
£15K to <£30K/annum	57.7	59.2
£30k to <£60K	65.5	66.7
£60k to <£100K	68.4	69.8
£100K and over	74.7	76.3

Employer size	Apr. 2023	March 2023
Self-employed/sole proprietor	64.5	66.9
2-50 employees	64.7	66.8
51-100 employees	61.8	61.0
101-500 employees	63.3	66.3
501-1,000 employees	62.8	63.2
1,001-5,000 employees	63.8	66.3
5,001-10,000 employees	65.1	64.9
More than 10,000 employees	65.9	65.7
Manager	Apr. 2023	March 2023
Manager	63.6	66.9
Non-manager	64.4	64.7
Work environment	Apr. 2023	March 2023
Labour	61.7	-
Office/desk	65.1	-
Service	63.7	-

Numbers highlighted in **pink** are the most negative scores in the group.

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

# The Mental Health Index by industry.

Employees working in Arts, Entertainment and Recreation have the lowest mental health score (55.5) in April 2023, followed by individuals working in Food Services (55.6), and Wholesale Trade (59.4).

Respondents employed in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (75.4), Technology (69.1), and Construction (68.2) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.



Industry	April 2023	March 2023	Change
Administrative and Support services	61.4	59.2	2.2
Public Administration	65.0	63.4	1.5
Construction	68.2	67.2	1.1
Other	63.9	64.2	-0.3
Educational Services	65.5	66.4	-1.0
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	75.4	76.4	-1.0
Technology	69.1	70.4	-1.3
Retail Trade	60.5	61.9	-1.4
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	65.7	67.4	-1.7
Health Care and Social Assistance	65.4	67.1	-1.7
Manufacturing	66.5	68.6	-2.1
Transportation and Warehousing	64.1	66.3	-2.2
Finance and Insurance	65.1	67.7	-2.6
Wholesale Trade	59.4	62.0	-2.7
Information and Cultural Industries	62.3	65.0	-2.7
Food Services	55.6	60.4	-4.8
Other services (except Public Administration)	60.7	66.8	-6.1
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	55.5	63.9	-8.4
Accommodation	62.8	75.9	-13.1

# Spotlight

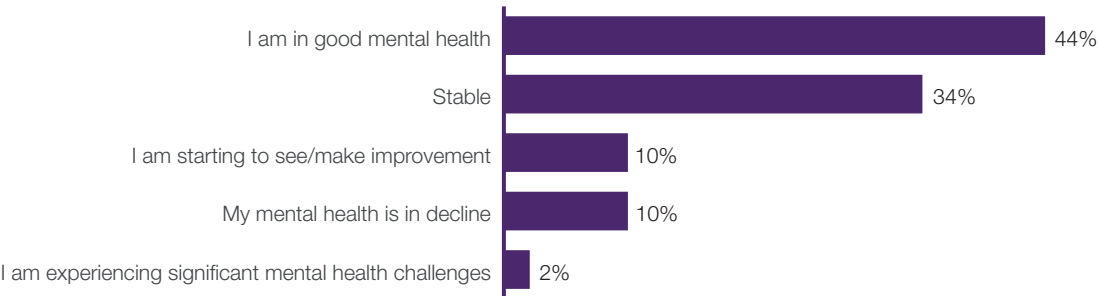
## Self-reported mental health.

Workers in the United Kingdom were asked to describe their current mental health.

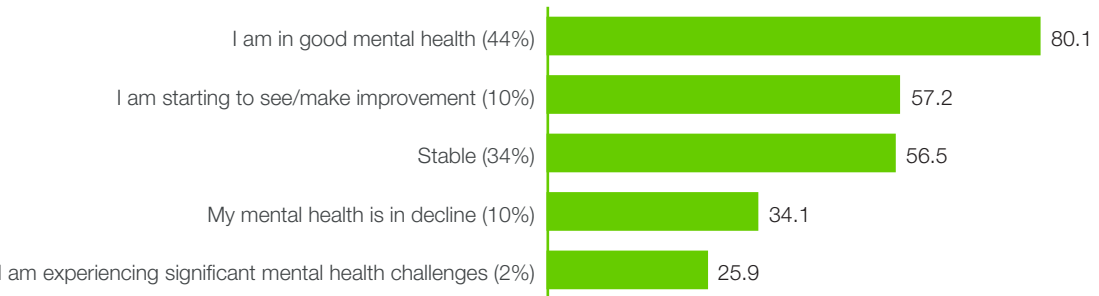
- More than one in ten (12 per cent) say their mental health is in decline or they are experiencing significant mental health challenges; workers in these categories have mental health scores 46 or more points lower than workers reporting good mental health and 30 or more points lower than the national average (64.1)
- Workers under 40 are three times more likely than workers over 50 to report they are starting to see/make improvement in their mental health
- More than two in five (44 per cent) self-report good mental health; this group has the highest mental health score (80.1), 16 points higher than the national average (64.1)
- Workers older than 50 are 60 per cent more likely than workers under 40 to report being in good mental health



### Current mental health



### MHI score by “Current mental health”



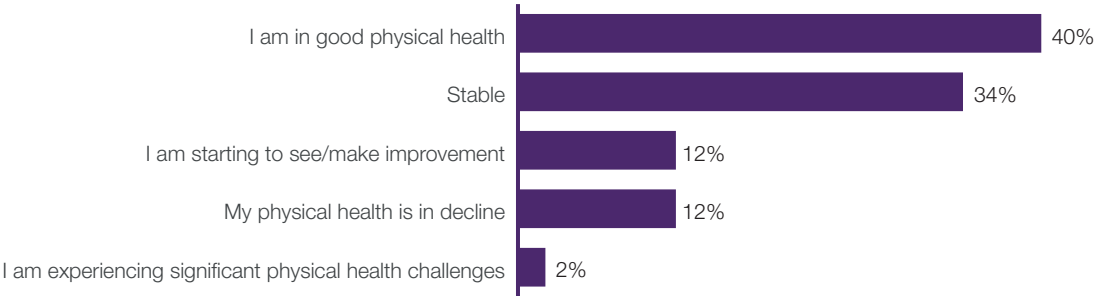
# Self-reported physical health.

Workers in the United Kingdom were asked to describe their current physical health.

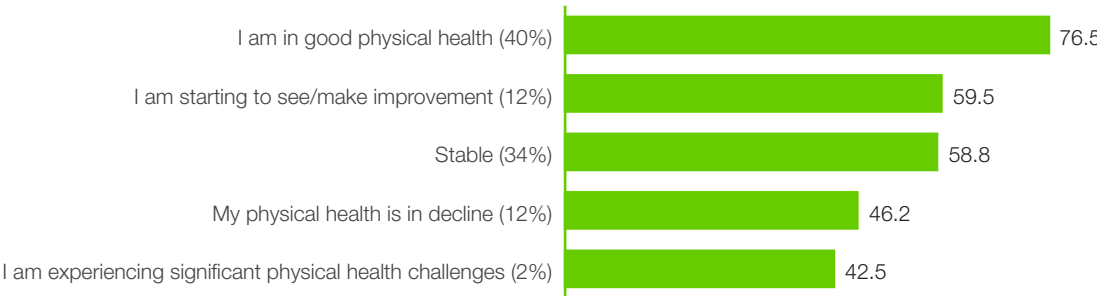
- One in seven (14 per cent) say their physical health is in decline or they are experiencing significant physical health challenges; workers in these categories have mental health scores 30 or more points lower than workers reporting good physical health and 18 or more points lower than the national average (64.1)
- Workers under 40 are two and half times more likely than workers over 50 to report they are starting to see/make improvement in their physical health
- Two in five (40 per cent) self-report good physical health; this group has the highest mental health score (76.5), more than 12 points higher than the national average (64.1)



## Current physical health



## MHI score by “Current physical health”





# Physical health effect on mental health.

Workers in the United Kingdom were asked whether physical activity has a positive effect on their mental health.

Nearly four in five (79 per cent) believe that physical activity has a positive effect on their mental health; this group has the highest mental health score (65.3), nearly seven points higher than workers who are neutral (58.7) and more than one point above the national average (64.1)

## Physical activity has a positive effect on my mental health



## MHI score by “Physical activity has a positive effect on my mental health”



Workers in the United Kingdom were asked whether physical activity and good mental health are linked.

More than four in five (82 per cent) believe that physical activity and good mental health are linked; this group has the highest mental health score (64.6), two or more points higher than workers who are neutral or disagree, and slightly above the national average (64.1)

I believe that physical activity and (good) mental health are linked



MHI score by “I believe that physical activity and (good) mental health are linked”

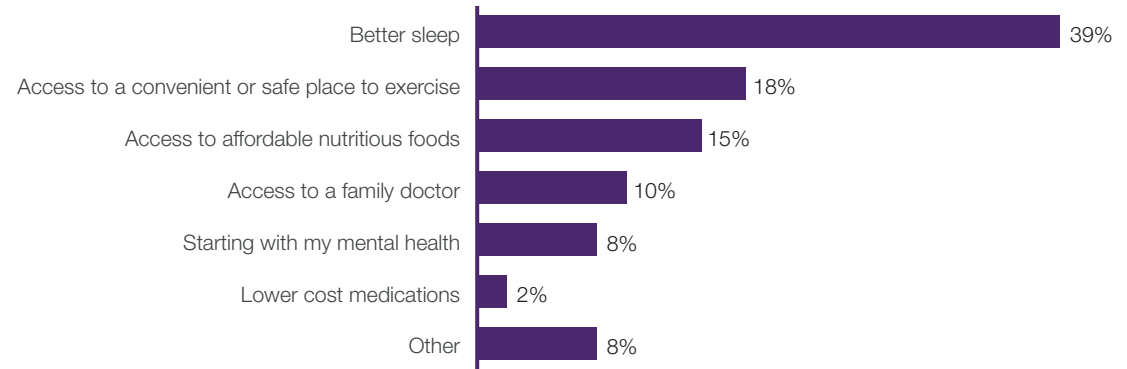


Workers in the United Kingdom were asked what would be most helpful in managing their physical health.

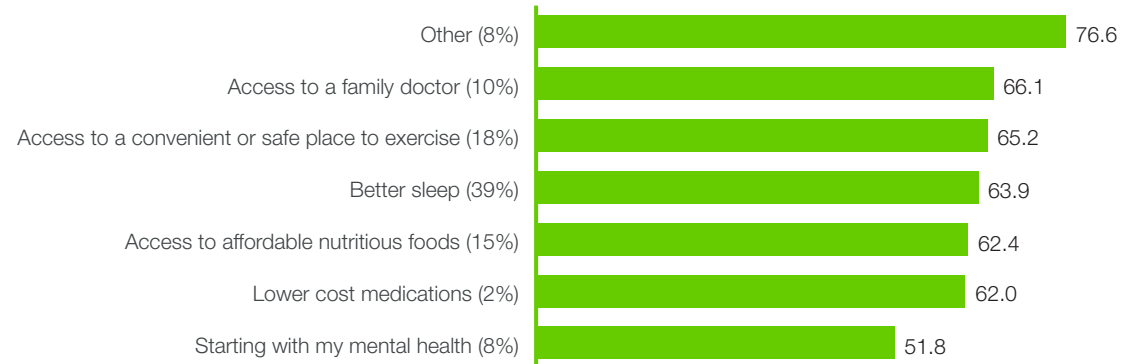
- Nearly two in five (39 per cent) report better sleep would be most helpful in managing their physical health, 18 per cent report access to a convenient or safe place to exercise, 15 per cent report access to affordable nutritious foods, and 10 per cent report access to a family doctor as most helpful in managing their physical health
- Eight per cent said that starting with their mental health would be most helpful in managing their physical health; the mental health score of this group (51.8) is 12 points lower than the national average (64.1)
- Workers under 40 are two times more likely than workers over 50 to say that access to affordable nutritious foods would be most helpful in managing their physical health



### Most helpful in managing physical health



### MHI score by “Most helpful in managing physical health”



# Exercise

Workers in the United Kingdom were asked how frequently they exercise.

- More than one in five (21 per cent) do not exercise.  
The mental health score of this group (60.2) is eight points lower than workers who exercise four or more times per week (68.7) and four points lower than the national average (64.1)
- Non-parents are nearly 50 per cent more likely than parents to report not exercising
- Workers over 50 years are 70 per cent more likely than workers under 40 to report not exercising
- More than one-quarter (28 per cent) exercise four or more times per week; this group has the highest mental health score (68.7), more than four points higher than the national average (64.1)



## How frequently do you exercise?



## MHI score by “How frequently do you exercise?”

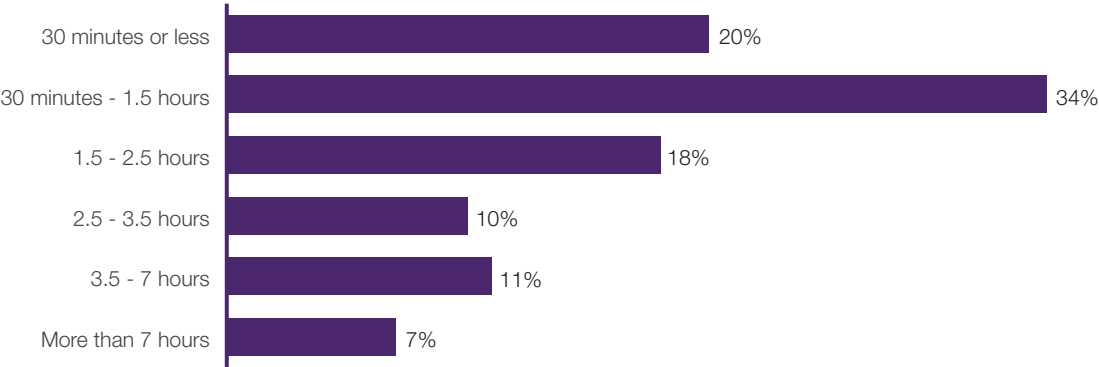


Workers in the United Kingdom who exercise were asked about their total duration of moderate to vigorous exercise in a typical week.

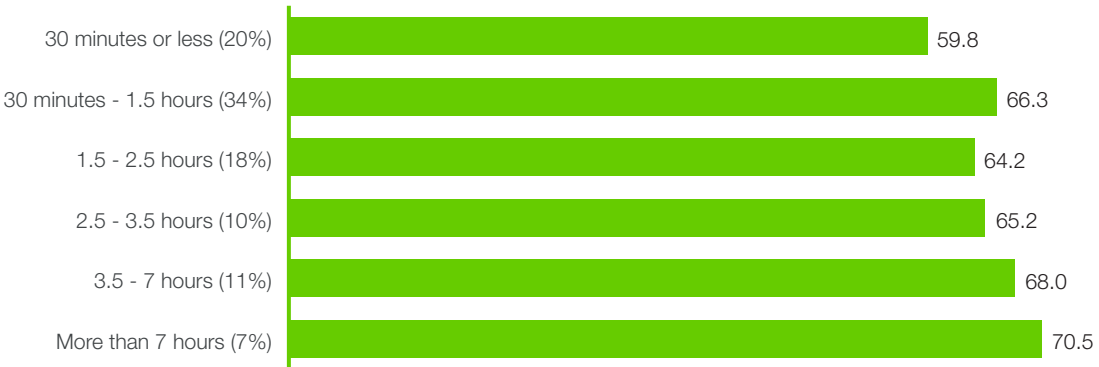
The highest mental health score (70.5) is among seven per cent of workers reporting more than seven hours of moderate to vigorous exercise per week. The mental health score of this group (70.5) is nearly 11 points higher than workers who report 30 minutes or less of moderate to vigorous exercise (59.8) and more than six points higher than the national average (64.1).



Total duration of moderate to vigorous exercise



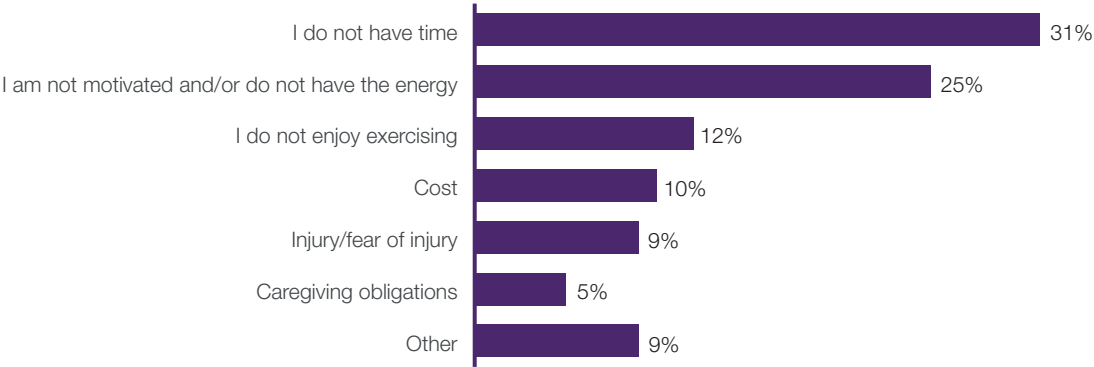
MHI score by “Total duration of moderate to vigorous exercise”



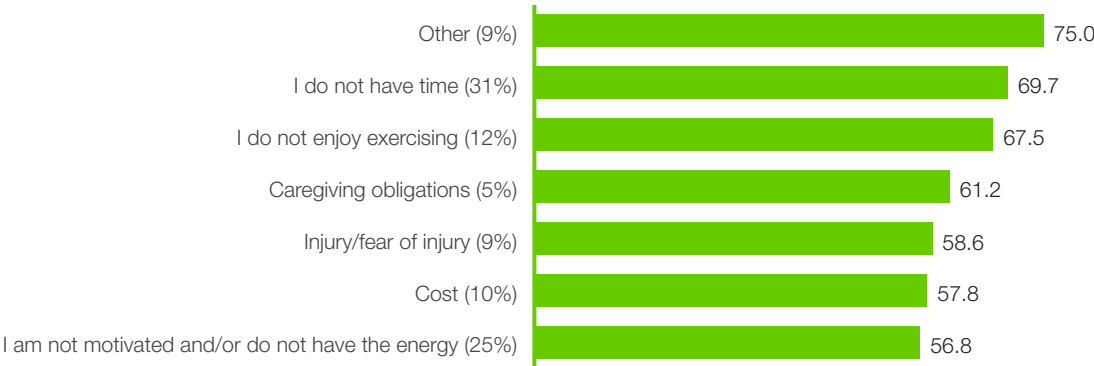
Workers in the United Kingdom were asked about the biggest barrier to exercising regularly.

- 31 per cent say they do not have time to exercise regularly, and one-quarter (25 per cent) are not motivated and/or do not have the energy to exercise
- Workers who are not motivated and/or do not have the energy to exercise have the lowest mental health score (56.8), more than seven points lower than the national average (64.1)
- Parents are 60 per cent more likely than non-parents to say cost is the biggest barrier to exercising regularly
- Non-parents are two and half times more likely than parents to report not enjoying exercising

Biggest barrier to exercising regularly



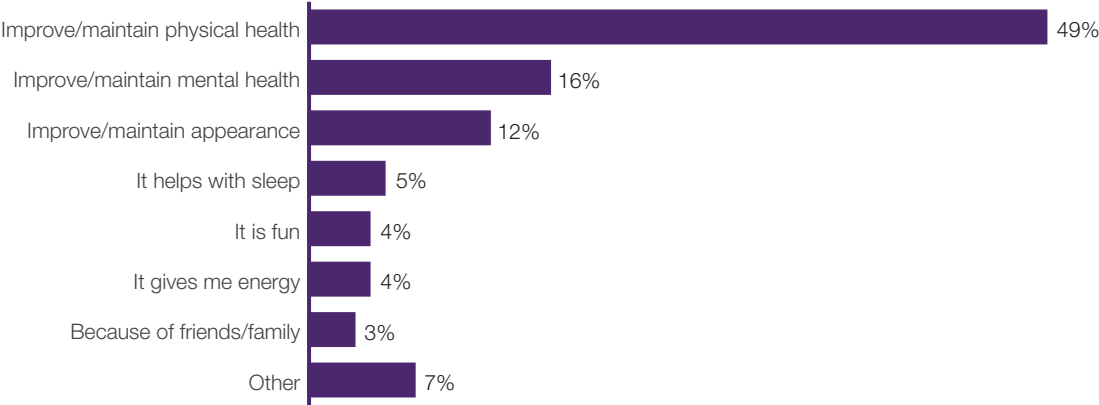
MHI score by “Biggest barrier to exercising regularly”



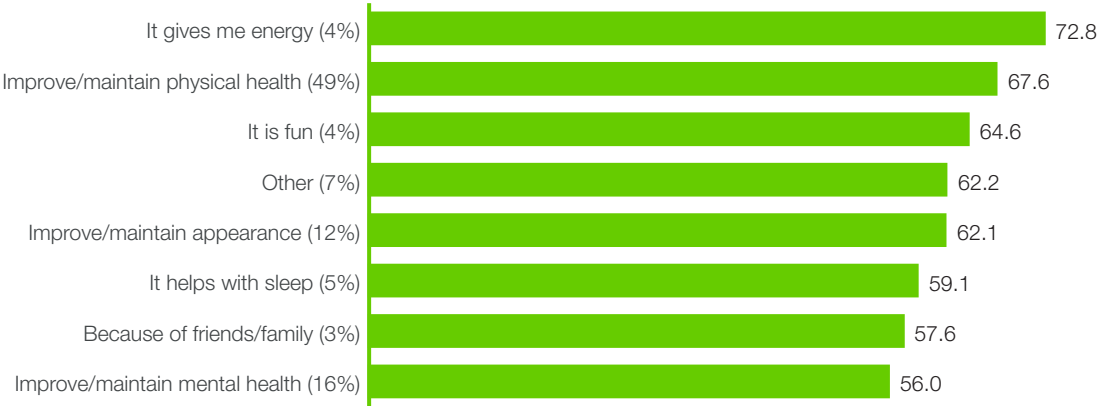
Workers in the United Kingdom were asked about the primary reason they exercise.

- Nearly half (49 per cent) exercise to improve/maintain physical health; this group has a mental health score (67.6) more than three points higher than the national average (64.1)
- Workers over 50 are 50 per cent more likely than workers under 40 to exercise to improve/maintain their physical health
- Nearly one in five (16 per cent) exercise to improve/maintain their mental health; this group has the lowest mental health score (56.0), eight points lower than the national average (64.1)
- Twelve per cent exercise to improve/maintain their appearance; the mental health score of this group (62.1) is two points lower than the national average (64.1)
- Workers under 40 are two and half times more likely than workers over 50 to report exercising to improve/maintain their appearance

Primary reason for exercising



MHI score by “Primary reason for exercising”



# Physical health issues that interfere with work.

Workers in the United Kingdom were asked whether they have a physical health issue that interferes with work.

- More than one in ten (12 per cent) have a physical health issue that interferes with work; this group has a mental health score (48.9) 17 points lower than workers not reporting a physical health issue that interferes with work (66.3) and 15 points lower than the national average (64.1)
- Labourers are 60 per cent more likely than office workers to have a physical health issue that interferes with work



Do you have a physical health issue that interferes with work?



MHI score by “Do you have a physical health issue that interferes with work?”

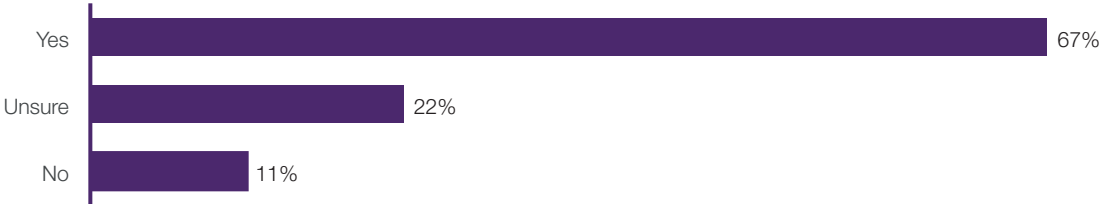




Workers in the United Kingdom reporting a physical health issue that interferes with their work were asked whether their employer is aware of the issue.

- More than one in ten (11 per cent) report their employer is unaware of their physical health issue; the mental health score of this group (47.5) is nearly 17 points lower than the national average (64.1) and more than three points lower than workers whose employers are aware of their physical health issue
- More than one in five (22 per cent) are unsure whether their employer is aware of their physical health issue that impacts work. The mental health score of this group (43.2) is nearly 21 points lower than the national average (64.1)
- Two-thirds (66 per cent) report their employer is aware of their physical health issue; despite this, the mental health score of this group (50.9) is more than 13 points lower than the national average (64.1)

Is your employer aware that you have a physical health issue that interferes with work?



MHI score by “Is your employer aware that you have a physical health issue that interferes with work?”



Workers in the United Kingdom whose employers are aware of their physical health issue that interferes with work were asked whether their employer is helpful in managing work.

- More than one in ten (11 per cent) report their employer is not helpful in managing work given the challenges with their physical health issue; the mental health score of this group (32.1) is 32 points below the national average (64.1) and 25 points lower than workers whose employers are always helpful
- Nearly nine in ten (89 per cent) report that their employer is always or sometimes helpful in managing work given the challenges with their physical health issue; despite this support, the mental health score of this group is six or more points lower than the national average (64.1)



**Is your employer helpful managing work given the challenges you have with your physical health issue?**



**MHI score by “Is your employer helpful managing work given the challenges you have with your physical health issue?”**



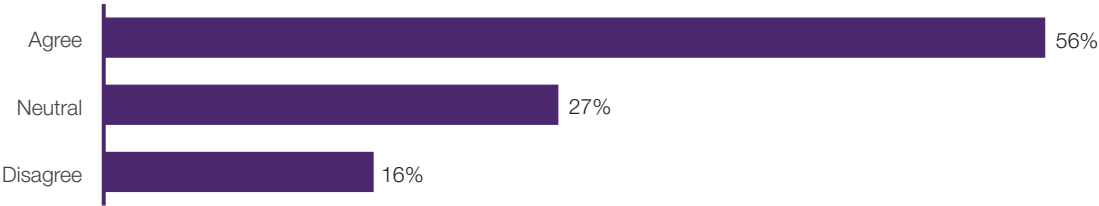
## Satisfaction with healthcare.

Workers in the United Kingdom were asked whether they are satisfied with the level of healthcare available.

- Nearly one in five (16 per cent) are dissatisfied with the level of healthcare available; the mental health of this group is lowest (56.1), nearly 13 points lower than workers who are satisfied (68.7) and eight points lower than the national average (64.1)
- Workers over 50 are nearly 50 per cent more likely than workers under 40 to report being dissatisfied with the level of healthcare available
- Nearly three in five (56 per cent) are satisfied with the level of healthcare available; this group has the highest mental health score (68.7), nearly five points higher than the national average (64.1)



### I am satisfied with the level of healthcare that is available to me

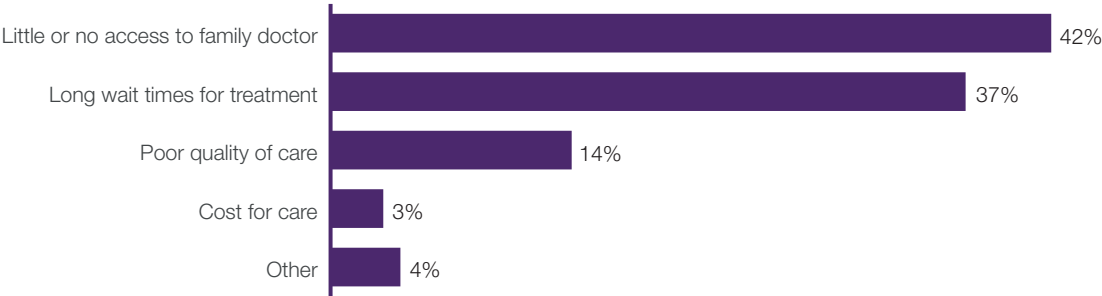


### MHI score by “I am satisfied with the level of healthcare that is available to me”



- Workers in the United Kingdom dissatisfied with the level of healthcare available were asked for the reason.
- Nearly four in five (79 per cent) are dissatisfied because of access to care; specifically, 42 per cent are dissatisfied because of little or no access to a family doctor and 37 per cent are dissatisfied because of long wait times for treatment
  - The mental health scores of workers dissatisfied because of access to care are four or more points lower than the national average (64.1)
  - The mental health score of 14 per cent of workers reporting poor quality of care (44.8) is 19 points lower than the national average (64.1)
  - Workers in service industries are twice as likely as labourers and nearly 50 per cent more likely than office workers to report poor quality of care as the reason for dissatisfaction
  - The mental health score of three per cent of workers reporting dissatisfaction over the cost for care (61.7) is more than two points lower than the national average (64.1)
  - Parents are four times more likely than non-parents to report cost of care as the reason for dissatisfaction

Reason for dissatisfaction



MHI score by “Reason for dissatisfaction”



# Overview of the Mental Health Index by TELUS Health (formerly 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. 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 two parts:

1. The overall Mental Health Index (MHI).
2. 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. Respondents are asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. Data for the current report was collected between April 3 and April 13, 2023.

## Calculations

To create the Mental Health Index, a response scoring system is applied to turn individual responses into point values. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and less mental health risk. The sum of scores is divided by the total number of possible points to generate a score out of 100. The raw score is the mathematical mean of the individual scores. Distribution of scores is defined according to the following scale:

**Distressed** 0 - 49    **Strained** 50-79    **Optimal** 80 - 100

## Additional data and analyses.

Demographic breakdowns 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.

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