



Thrive Report

42ND
STREET



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Introduction

This report is written by young people, with lived experience of mental health conditions, to help young people thrive in the workplace.

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. With many of us spending 5 out of 7 days a week in the workplace, the everyday stresses and strains of this environment can have a significant impact on our overall mental **well-being**.

As a result, in 2017, the Government commissioned the 'Thriving At Work' report. This report suggests a number of core standards to help better manage mental health in the workplace. These standards include: a mental health at work plan, promoting communications and open conversations by raising awareness, reducing stigma, and to provide a mechanism for monitoring actions and outcomes.

Our report focuses on the mental health at work plan core standard, and how we can better tailor this to cater for the needs of young people.



Executive Summary

To explore the core standard we wanted to know what support employees with mental health conditions would like from their employees.

To find this out we created an anonymous online survey, with questions relating to what support they have or have not received, and what they have found helpful.

We targeted young people aged between 16 and 25. This generated 141 responses.

After analysing this, data three main themes were identified and defined: **support**, **flexibility**, and **workplace culture**.

Each of these themes is explored in greater detail in this report.

• Support

Many employees felt that they were unable to speak to their employers due to fear of not being understood or stigmatised.

- a. 42% of our respondents had a negative experience with their mental health in the workplace.
- b. 38% of these respondents stated that this was related to stigma or judgment.
- c. 58.8% of our respondents believed talking to their employer about mental health would impact them negatively.
- d. Many respondents felt like work was too busy to sit down and discuss any personal matters.
- e. 38% of those who answered the questionnaires felt that any form of openness about mental health in the workplace would be helpful such as:
 - i. Accessible information
 - ii. Regular check in with employers
- f. The majority of respondents did not know that they could speak to their manager when needing support with mental health.

• Flexibility

- a. The survey suggested that flexible working times and breaks helps to relieve stress.
- b. Flexible working can include working from home, part time, compressed hours and flexitime.
- c. This flexibility allows work to fit the needs of the employee rather than having a blanket system that may work for some, but not all.

• Workplace Culture

- a. One major exasperator of the stigma around mental health is workplace culture.
- b. People will spend the majority of their week in the workplace. The average 9-5, Monday to Friday, can have a significant impact on an employee's mental health if the workplace culture is a toxic one.
- c. Conversely, a positive work environment can help increase productivity, raise morale and improve teamwork.
- d. There are a number of environmental factors that influence workplace culture.



Methodology



ONLINE SURVEY



Flexible: participants could start and finish the survey in their own time.



Anonymous: allowed participants to be completely honest without having to reveal their personal identity.



QUANTITATIVE DATA

To identify patterns



QUALITATIVE DATA

Useful for contextualising these patterns.



DEMOGRAPHIC

Young people aged 16-25 that have either been employed or currently in employment.



This demographic struggles to find their voice in the workplace, often due to lack of confidence and experience.

16-25

16-25 age bracket is where mental health symptoms can start being recognised.



Location:

The survey was conducted in Manchester around the universities and also shared through social media.



Sample size:
141 participants



Duration:
5 months

Theme 1 – Support

We believe young people struggling with their mental health both need and deserve to be better supported in their workplaces.

In Question 2 of our survey (see Appendix 1), **72% said that emotional wellbeing support in the workplace was very important to them.** Secondary reading also corroborates our findings that better workplace support enable people with mental health conditions to attain more positive, meaningful employment. This also has benefits for the employer, such as higher workplace morale and lower staff turnover. Therefore, we have identified 'Support' as a key theme for our report.

Despite affecting at least 25% of the population at any given time, mental health remains misunderstood and stigmatised. The stigma is powerful, and has the ability to "rob people of social opportunities", such as employment. This needs to change. This argument is supported by research from 'Rethink Mental Illness', where it was found that employers can be wary of employing people with known mental health conditions. They are concerned that an individual could take an excessive number of sick-days, or their mental state may worsen due to pressures of work. Which could then have a knock-on effect to their ability to do their job well.

The following passage was particularly striking:

*The survey of 500 hiring decision makers or influencers found that **83% would worry that someone with a severe mental illness would not be able to cope with the demands of their job. Two-thirds (68%) were concerned that someone with a severe mental illness would not fit in with the rest of their team, and three-quarters (74%) suspected someone with a severe mental illness would need to take lots of time off.***

A key reason for people with mental health conditions needing time off work is that they are not being sufficiently supported. It is vital that employers know how to support people with mental health conditions in their workplace.


24% of our survey respondents reported the main cause for their unhappiness in their workplace was a lack of support (Question 1)

One respondent said:

"I work as a teaching assistant. Some aspects, like my immediate team and actual work interactions with children make me very happy, some aspects make me feel underappreciated and overworked by management, which has at times made me very unhappy."

To us, this really stood out as a clear example of how people can enjoy their role but, without supportive management, will still be left feeling unhappy at work. **If people are unhappy at work, they will be less likely to work as productively, or to stay long-term as an employee. So, it is beneficial to the employer to support them.** In addition, this lack of support and understanding in the workplace could potentially affect a young person's wellbeing throughout all aspects of their life. We are hoping with this report and supporting documents employers will have the resources they need to change this cycle.

If we refer back to the 'Rethink Mental Illness' study, it is suggested that **employers view mental health problems as a barrier to work.** However, a close analysis of our survey results tells a very different story.



"I work as a teaching assistant. Some aspects, like my immediate team and actual work interactions with children make me very happy, some aspects make me feel **underappreciated** and **overworked** by management, which has at times made me very unhappy"



42%



of respondents reported that having a negative experience in work exacerbated any mental health conditions



In Question 10, 42% of respondents reported that having a negative experience in work exacerbated any mental health conditions. 38% of these described their negative experiences as being linked to judgment/stigma:

“I have been screamed at even though I blacked out and was in hospital the same day”

“Been told to get a grip”

“Bullied by manager and ignored when asked for help”.

These attitudes are outdated and, evidently, unhelpful. What is most interesting, though, is that the remaining 4% of responses refer to times when their symptoms, primarily panic attacks, were the source of the bad experience. **We have found that it is 9.5x more likely** that stigma around mental health will cause a bad experience in the workplace than your actual mental health will. Consequently, we would argue that it is not the mental health conditions in themselves that prove a barrier to positive work experiences, but rather a lack of support whilst at work.

According to the ‘Mental Health at Work 2018’ report, **a mere 16% of employees felt comfortable talking to their employer about their mental health.**³ People are fearful of what unsupportive consequences may arise; 58.8% of respondents in our survey wouldn’t speak to their employer about their mental health due to concerns they will be stigmatised.

Even 15.3% felt they may be discriminated against. For example, it may prevent them from progressing in their career (Question 8). It would be illegal – under the ‘Equality Act 2010’ – if an employee was to discriminate against an individual due to their mental health. Yet, we can infer from our results that if people think it is plausible that they would be illegally discriminated against, then the social environment of the workplace cannot be supportive. This fear may also stop people from going forward for promotions, or other opportunities.

And this has repercussions for the employer. Their staff will not be developing to their full potential. In fact, this is supported by *Mind*, who argue that “a culture of fear and silence around mental health is costly to employers.”

Whilst we are campaigning for better mental health support in the workplace, it would be unfair of us to assume that no interventions are already in place. **32.8% of our respondents have previously received support at work**, and of those, the most helpful strategies were communication based; whether this be counselling, therapy or informal support. They were less keen to receive flexible hours and staff perks/discounts (Question 5).

This does not come as a surprise, as further research has placed ‘Connect’ (e.g. communication) as first of the ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing at Work’. Given that communication-based support has previously helped the employees in our survey, and is also highly recommended for general wellness, it seems sensible to invest in this area. Again, referring to Question 5, informal support seemed as effective as workplace counselling or therapy, so it may be small changes that would make a big difference for young people’s mental health.

Of course, it is important to remind ourselves that big changes are also needed. Just over two thirds of our respondents have never received support from their workplace.

The ‘Mental Health at Work 2018’ report states that **“unlike physical health, the foundation building blocks for mental health are not yet established”**. Our aim is for this to change. We offer recommendations that can serve as the first steps to giving effective mental health support in the workplace. Anecdotal and statistical evidence suggests communication-based support is amongst the most effective.

Recommendations



1. Mental health awareness training for employers

Research by Mind found that only 45% of employees felt that their employer would notice if they were suffering from mental health problems.⁸ If it's difficult for an employer to spot signs of mental health problems then it will be even more difficult to put the right support in place.

Emma Mamo, head of 'Workplace Wellbeing' at Mind says, "It's [also] vital that employers make sure managers know how to spot and support colleagues who might be struggling with issues like stress, anxiety or depression."⁹

This must come from an accurate source; with mental health taking an increasingly prominent role in the media, the danger is that people consider themselves to understand mental health perfectly.

A key example we were aware of was that since the release of *The Joker* (2019),

more people have been talking about mental health despite the film running the risk of further associating psychotic illnesses with violence.¹⁰ Other damaging representations of mental health in media include sexualisation of 'crazy' women e.g. *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* (2015-19), or characters' mental health used for comedic value e.g. *Me, Myself and Irene* (2000).

We must highlight the need for formal training and for employers to not consider themselves skilled up based on what they may see in the media. The training should also cover some brief interventions to train employers in how they can effectively support someone. A simple method would be to complete an individualised 'support plan' with each employee who may need one, should they want that.



2. Taking a proactive stance to ensure employees know they are supported

Too often, workplaces are reactive rather than proactive in their approach to mental health. As a result, more people end up going off sick/leaving their role. This is

unlikely to be the case with physical illnesses. For example, if an employee suffered epilepsy or diabetes, then it would be common place for an employer to have a

medical emergency plan. We are suggesting that it should be the same procedure for if an employee was to experience a panic attack or other mental health crisis.

Some suggestions we discussed included talking about mental health in the interview process, just as would happen about general sickness leave, holiday pay, breaks etc. This breaks the ice around the topic before the employee even starts in their role, so they are more likely to feel comfortable talking about their struggles and more likely to seek support before taking time off.

In a similar way we think all workplaces should have an easily accessible 'Mental

Health Policy' circulated to all staff. Other policies such as Health and Safety are legally required (HSWA 1974), and we believe the mental wellbeing of employees to be every bit as important.

The policy should talk employees through the steps of what would happen if they were to open up about their mental health at work; confidentiality clause, reminder that this will not impact on their ability to progress as an employee, what support would be available etc. This should be referred to in the contract of employment – this way it is legally binding so the employee will feel confident in it and the employer must follow it.



3. Take steps against stigma

Employees should feel comfortable that their workplace is supportive of mental health. Our report found that 38% of people had been stigmatised or judged due to their mental health (Question 10).

Fighting against stigma can be done on a range of levels. Displaying posters and leaflets to make people aware of local mental health support could be one small step that would help employees feel more comfortable. However, we are also keen that big steps are taken.

Samaritans run an annual campaign called #BrewMonday, where they encourage people to get together informally over a cup of tea and talk – whether it be about what they watched on TV, or about their mental health, (*Samaritans*, 2020).

Attendees should be able to talk openly, receive emotional support and not be judged, which *Samaritans* believe has the potential to save a life. We would suggest that a similar set-up should be available in workplaces on perhaps a monthly basis. Employers could make a room available for a few hours and let employees know this is a safe space for them.

Theme 2 – Flexibility

The **Thrive Report** has analysed the results of our survey. The findings suggest that employers, by choosing to be more flexible with their treatment of employees, can provide better support in the workplace. Theme 2 will use the survey responses to show how flexibility in the workplace can lead to a greater level of wellbeing for employees. It will also explore how it leads to greater productivity, allowing an increase in the efficiency of the business.

Gov.uk define several forms of flexible working, including:

- Job sharing, working from home (aka 'remote working');
- Part time;
- Compressed hours (doing hours over fewer days);
- Flexitime (flexibility with start and finish times);
- Phased retirement;
- Annualised/staggered hours.

A quarter of our survey respondents have found flexibility in the workplace has allowed them to feel more supported. One respondent quoted needing 'flexible hours due to studying', whilst another cited the ability to take less shifts 'due to the stress of exams,' as helpful.

Our report and academic research both show the need for flexibility around mental health at work. Our survey found that flexibility has worked well for some young people as respondents said; made an impact on them. **citing 'space... where I can go to ground**

myself' and 'just being allowed to stand back from the shop floor and take some time.'

Ultimately, this kind of flexibility feeds into a positive and thriving workplace culture. Giving flexibility to young employees that reflects the mental health needs of the individual allows them to feel their wellbeing is important and supported in the workplace.

Some survey respondents **felt that flexibility in the workplace was limited due to attitudes.**

Three people claimed they were fired for struggling with anxiety and/or depression. ACAS' guidelines make it clear you must not discriminate unlawfully against the employee. Here, the word 'must' indicates a legal requirement. In these cases, the employer has broken the law, whilst having a detrimental impact on their former employee's mental and, possibly, financial wellbeing. The respondents did not clarify whether the employer knowingly or unknowingly broke the law.


Moreover, it is the employer's responsibility to educate themselves of the law. The 'Mental Health at Work Report' compiled by the *Business in Community* found that **9% of employees had experienced 'disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal' due to symptoms of mental health.** There is nuance in some cases. Simon Cheves is an employment lawyer, who explains that if a person's mental health is seriously impacting their peers' then employers may have a case for dismissal. For this reason, *Thrive* recommends open discussions about mental

9%

of employees had experienced 'disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal' due to symptoms of mental health.

Higher employee wellbeing is associated with **higher productivity** and **company performance**; customer loyalty, employee productivity and staff turnover strongly correlate to higher profitability.





health to begin long before workplace culture reaches this point. In other words, more preventative measures should be taken. In less extreme cases, people felt they could not open up about their mental health problems due to fear of being treated differently.

Unfortunately, the statistics show that people with a disability are more likely to be unemployed. During the 1990s, legislation was brought in to ensure people with disabilities must be treated fairly, under 'Equality Duty', covering and legally enforcing the rights of LGBTQIA+ and people based on races, religions, gender and/or age. This includes provision for 'reasonable adjustment', where the employer provides a service allowing a disabled person to have equal access.

Of the 141 respondents, only one used the term 'flexitime'. No other respondent used any of the other key terms (remote working, compressed hours, phased retirement or annualised/staggered hours). This would suggest that young people are not aware of their rights when it comes to flexible working arrangements. This observation from our survey results is supported by Rachel Muller-Heyndyk's *HR Magazine* article titled, 'Young People Unaware of their Workplace Rights', which uses statistical evidence to support her claim.

The UK Government claims that "all employees have the legal right to request flexible working hours" with a Statutory Application. Each employee is legally entitled to a change in the employment contract. What this change exactly entails can be based on a list of sound and negotiated reasons. If it's a statutory right, not working on a Sunday, the employee can insist on the change being enacted.

This right is underlined in the 'Employment Rights Act 1966'. Under 'ACAS Code of Practice for Handling Requests in a Reasonable Manner', employers have a responsibility to deal with

employee requests. *Thrive* believe if everyone was properly informed of their rights, the workplace would be happier and healthier for employees and employers alike.

As the *World Health Organization* understands, though, it is difficult to quantify the exact impact the workplace has when it comes to "promoting" or "hindering" mental wellness.

Over the past few decades, technological change and new forms of workplace organization have led to increased pressure and responsibility on employees, leading to greater levels of stress. The *Centre for Mental Health* assert this has led to 'presenteeism', where employees feel they must attend work whilst struggling with their health. Many companies only invest in health promotion programs where the financial benefits outweigh the cost of investment.

The *World Economic Forum* conducted analysis from 339 independent studies covering the wellbeing and productivity of 1,882,131 employees over 82,248 business units across 49 industries in 73 countries to prove that higher employee wellbeing is associated with higher productivity and company performance; customer loyalty, employee productivity and staff turnover strongly correlate to higher profitability. Looking at this from another point of view, **a lack of wellbeing reduces employee engagement, increases absenteeism and productivity.**





"No one actually cares or understands. It just gets brushed under the carpet"

"Knowing it would go from one mouth to another's ears and do a full circle by the end of the day"





1/3



of the 100,000 'avoidable deaths' in Britain each year have, are mentally unwell, an issue Rethink Mental Illness claim is virtually ignored by the Government.

Below is LSE's Figure 1. Correlation between employee satisfaction, productivity and firm performance (Gallup client database, 95% confidence intervals)

Engage for Success provides a list of business-based reasons for looking after an employee's wellbeing. These include the cost savings, as a report by the *Institution of Occupational Safety and Health* show: mental illness cost the UK economy more than £8billion per year.

WHO know companies too often prioritise dealing with physical over mental wellbeing. **Ultimately, 1/3 of the 100,000 'avoidable deaths' in Britain each year have are mentally unwell.**

This is an issue *Rethink Mental Illness* claims is virtually ignored by the Government. To help combat this problem, based on the academic research and survey results, we have come up with the following recommendations for employers to better support all employees.

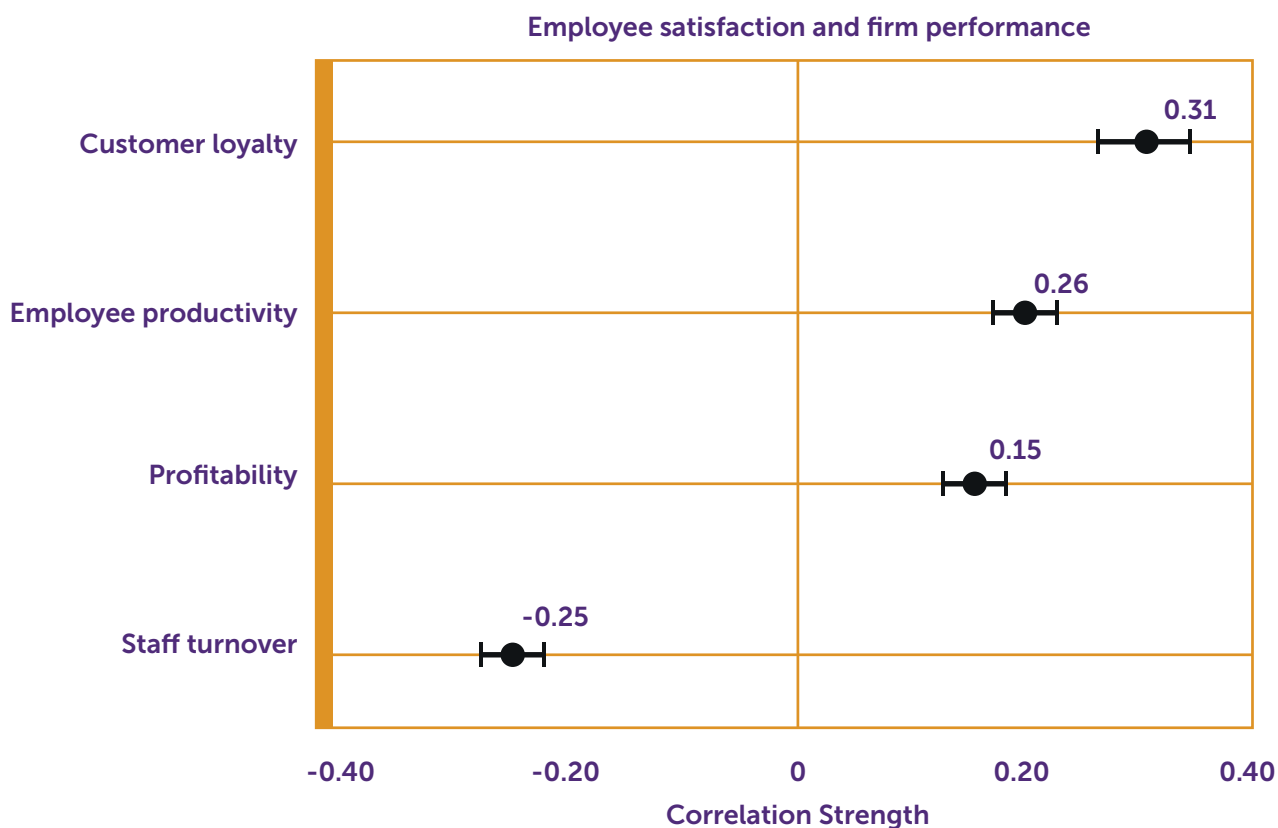


Image: LSE

Recommendations



1. Workplace Mental Health policy

Following the *World Health Organization*, MORR recommend an assessment of the mental health of the organization itself to be included in any comprehensive workplace mental health policy. WHO claims this will benefit well-being, presence and production.



2. Greater employer flexibility to support mental wellbeing

Employers should be clear about their responsibilities to care for and mentor the physical and mental wellbeing of their employees, in a flexible and understanding way. Importantly, people with mental health problems should be supported. The survey showed that when young people are not aware of their employment rights there is a risk that these rights could be exploited and the potential for employment laws to be broken. Instead, young people should be supported to be educated on their equality rights.

Thrive recommend making reasonable adjustments to those in need. Rethink Mental Illness know that employers must provide reasonable adjustment and encourage it through identifying the right changes for the individual to allow them to reduce their health condition from hindering them to work. This includes planning ahead to agree arrangements in case of future illness.



3. Greater recognition of a diverse workforce

Understand the importance and value in the diversity and transferable skills brought by lived experience of mental health problems.

One respondent said that having 'quiet places to just go and calm down when things become overwhelming and my anxiety is bad.' Provided a safe space and allowed them to continue their work. Thrive believes the workplace can become more inclusive and enjoyable for all.



Theme 3 – Workplace Culture

The third and final topic we identified that employers could focus on to support young employees' mental health was "workplace culture". This refers to the social environment of a place; it should reflect the values/ethos of the company, and is heavily influenced by the employer.

Dr. Pragma Agarwal wrote for *Forbes* that "a positive workplace culture improves teamwork, raises the morale, increases productivity and efficiency, and enhances retention of the workforce. Job satisfaction, collaboration, and work performance are all enhanced. And, most importantly, a positive workplace environment reduces stress in employees". This tells us that improving workplace culture can positively impact everyone involved; from managerial levels to new starters.

We found Dr. Agarwal's piece to be consistent with the responses from our survey; 16% of people reported that an unhealthy workplace environment was the main cause of their unhappiness at work, with a further 9% stating it was the values of the workplace making them unhappy - which we can argue is a further part of a workplace environment, therefore meaning a quarter of all employees are unhappy at work due to a negative workplace environment (Question 1b). This is something we can help to change.

Workplace environment can be divided into two categories: tangible environmental factors, and social environmental factors. Looking first at the tangible, in Question 8 we asked our respondents what would stop them from talking to their employer about their mental health:

These two poignant responses demonstrate that often, workplace environments give the impression that work is more important than wellbeing. Practically, people are finding it difficult to sit down and talk about their mental health because the time and space is not there

as a priority, which is a real shame given all the work that has been done in encouraging people to open up. Today, there is more pressure in the workplace than ever before, however it is entirely counterproductive to let this take priority over the wellbeing of employees, or the levels of stress and pressure will perpetuate.

We would argue that we need a more proactive, rather than reactive response; if our workplace environments are more positive and if we have more in place to support our employees, we increase the chance of them feeling better emotionally whilst at work which ultimately results in more productive employees who will stay longer in the business.

In Question 6, we asked how employers could support their employees better. It seemed that structured personable interventions would prove helpful - 40% of responses were keen for either internal support or supervision, and Question 11 backed this up; where we learnt that communication-based support had generally been the most positive type of support people had received in their workplace.

Pressure is a barrier to this type of support as exemplified by the quotes given from our report, however we would argue it is important to provide protected time for supervision/appraisal/internal support- psychological researchers maintain that the "personal support aspect of supervision aims to optimise motivation, morale, commitment, and to minimise work-related stress, burnout, and mental health problems of the employee", so it is well worth investing in. Guaranteed supervision is a tangible example of how we can improve workplace environments.





“Too busy a work environment to sit down and discuss any personal matters”

“We are always busy and understaffed”



If we then move to look at the non-tangible factors of workplace environment, we found that most employees generally just want a more positive atmosphere.

In Question 6 we asked how employers could support their employees better- **“Be more understanding”, “listen more”, “be nicer”** and **“be more understanding of mental health”** are examples that capture the common theme we

noticed throughout the responses – positive workplace relations would have a positive impact on employees’ mental health.

This is not too much to ask, or expect, but may go amiss in busy pressurised work environments. In our recommendations, we offer ideas of how to prevent this.

Recommendations

We need to look at how we can improve workplace environments.
The recommendations we would propose are:



1. Set an agenda for supervision/probation meetings that encourages supportive conversation

It should not be mandatory for employees to discuss their personal life if they don't want to, however, it should be mandatory that this is an available option for them should they want to. It should also be an option for employees to speak to a supervisor who isn't directly in their team if they want to, if they would feel more comfortable to discuss sensitive matters this way.

We have attached a sample of a supervision template for mental health support in our employers thrive standard or downloadable resources on the website. Most importantly, these supervisions and probation meetings must take place in a protected space and during a protected time.



2. Be realistic about staffing needs for the business

As mentioned in the report, employees may feel uncomfortable speaking to their employer about their mental health if work is too busy/understaffed for them to find a convenient time. An employer not sufficiently staffing their workplace should not be a barrier to an employee being able to seek support for their mental health.

Realistic staffing should free up a little time for employees to have these important conversations rather than feeling it is entirely impossible to do so for logistical and environmental reasons. In addition to freeing up time for employees to speak to their employer, better staffing levels may also be a preventative approach with regards to mental health, as work pressures would reduce and targets would be more achievable.



3a. Management behaviour

Employers should lead by example to create a positive workplace environment. We think small steps, such as a casual daily check-ins from management, would start to make a difference. Asking “How are you?” is not too difficult a question to ask.

Employees would also benefit from more management presence in their workplace. This would help to create an environment where staff feel more supported and part of a team. This would help to avoid an ‘us and them’ culture, where employees are on the ‘shop floor’ and management are away in an office.

We would also recommend management carry out annual, anonymous surveys on how employees are experiencing the workplace; this way they can see how their employees feel at work, and there would be a platform for suggestions to improve the culture of the specific workplace, rather than our general recommendations which can be applied to any business.

3b. Employee behaviour

Through the report we have mentioned how managerial strategies may either negatively or positively impact on mental health. However, we must also be aware that sometimes negative behaviours in the workplace can have an impact upon employees.

“A small army of gossipers can take down a company’s morale”, so a zero-tolerance policy towards gossiping, bullying, blaming culture should be adopted in order to protect positive culture in work. Employers could create a code of conduct, or even more informally, an agreement which employees can sign to pledge their commitment to contributing towards a positive, friendly, accepting environment at work.

Recommendations

Continued



4. Active positivity

We think acts of positivity and kindness have a ripple effect, so we would suggest employers implement them. These will not solve the root cause of mental health problems, but they are a supportive and meaningful preventative measure. We discussed as a group our own experiences of these, and would recommend:

- Teambuilding/fun days for staff. An annual day out or activity to help the team bond and refresh from burnout.
- A staff self-soothe box. This should be accessible to all employees and contain items including personal hygiene items, activities for staff to use on their breaks (colouring books), boosts for during the shift (chocolate, teabags) and perhaps some inspirational card quotes.
- A staff notice board, where staff could leave post-it notes to thank colleagues if they have done anything particularly helpful. This helps employees to feel valued.



Here are example businesses that operate differently and highlight how this can impact on employees mental health

Innocent Ltd

Innocent Ltd have perks to help mental wellbeing and increase morale, as well as profitability.

In their own words, *Innocent* have 'great ambitions: to show the world that you can build a successful business that cares about more than just profits, and to leave things better than we find them.' With this ethos they see themselves in having built 'Europe's favourite health drinks company' from 'the ground up', whilst staying '**committed as ever to [their] social, ethical, charitable and environmental goals.**' Since beginning in 1999, the brand has grown from having 0% to 80% of the market share in 2014.

Despite having sold their business to *Coca-Cola*, **Innocent still give 10% of their profits to charity.** One of the smoothie brand's co-founders Richard Reed claimed that their charitable brand message was actually appealing to *Coca-Cola*.

Innocent is a pioneer in sustainability, with 100% FSC certified card and between 30-50% recycled content in plastic bottles. Matt Mace believes that *Innocent* actively and purposefully empower their staff to drive a successful sustainability strategy. During their rebrand, they found many members of their staff were frustrated as they felt the business was not contributing to sustainability enough.

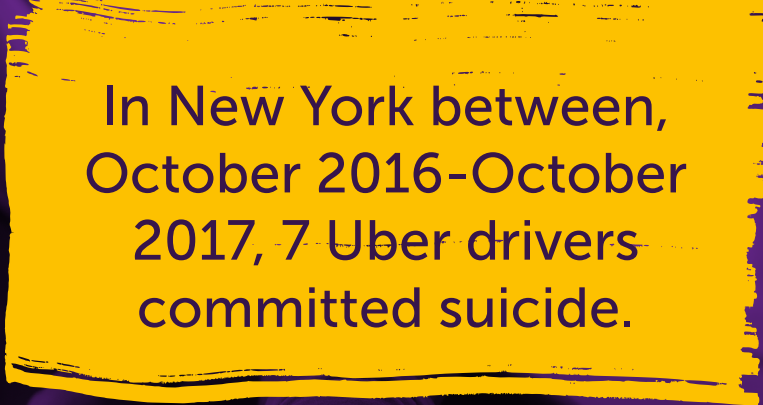
They overcame this by designing sustainability roles of 'Fruit Towers heroes' where staff either became ambassadors, protectors, agitators or activators. Over half of *Innocent's* staff members adopted the role of agitator: a more grassroots role, **in which they create and implement sustainability at home and at work.**

The company have taken this empowering approach to fundraising nationwide, with their **Big Knit campaign.** Since 2003, **over 7.5million hats have been sent in** by at-home-knitters amazingly raising over 2.5million for *Age UK*. In fact, *Innocent's* employee-led innovation gave their employee, Adam, the confidence to pitch his idea for knitted hats.

Innocent's 'Company Pride' currently measures at an impressive 98%. *Innocent's* systems seem to be almost perfect, they're an extremely successful, fast growing business allowing employers and employees to feel successful, fulfilled and empowered. Their 2012 £200million revenue can be attributed to employee innovation. For example, *Innocent's* employee-led innovation model led to the creation of 'Veg Pots', in 2008, now worth £30million. Similarly with 'This Water' which, when introduced in 2007, saw retail sales saw from £8 to £30million.



Innocent's 'Company Pride' currently measures at an impressive **98%**.



In New York between,
October 2016-October
2017, 7 Uber drivers
committed suicide.

Uber Technologies, Inc.

Uber are a company notorious for negative publicity around their business practices. Researching the company, Uber's scandals are numerous, and often poorly covered up with expensive marketing campaigns and an 'we just make the technology' shrug that tech giants increasingly use. These incidents range from senior company members making sexist remarks and victim blaming, to employees spying on politicians, exes and celebrities.

In May 2017, **Uber were forced to repay employees the 10s of millions of dollars** it underpaid them for two ½ years, by taking a bigger cut of drivers' fares than they were entitled. The company calculated the commission based on the gross fare of the journey, which would allow Uber to take a larger chunk of the earnings before taxes and fees were deducted. As result of this 'wage theft', as deemed by *Bloomberg BNA*, Uber were required to pay-out roughly 900 dollars to every driver in compensation.

The impact of Uber's business practices also have an impact on the mental well being of their drivers. **In New York between, October 2016-October 2017, 7 Uber drivers committed suicide.** *New York Times Magazine* wrote an expose on Virgil of Fausto Luna. Virgil turned from sober to anger in less than 30 minutes as the driver had been struggling with increasing debts, despite working longer shifts, contributed to his stress and depression.

Sadly, this is not a standalone story. Uber employee Kodaiah Alias Praveen sparked protest in Hyderabad, India, after he purposely consumed poison February 2017. In his documentary "Secrets of Silicon Valley", presenter Jamie Bartlett acknowledges that Uber promise a new kind of 'flexible' and 'empowering' job, but the reality of this show as stark difference. Uber ran adverts around Hyderabad promising up to 90,000 ruppees (£1,100 per month) which was four times what the drivers had been earning through the pre-existing local cab economy. Moreover, the company leant money to help drivers buy new cars.

As the number of Uber drivers rose, earnings fell as there wasn't enough customer demand. **Uber cut incentives, even for existing employees,** leading them stranded in debt and feeling 'betrayed.' In a similar incident, Mohammad Zaheer's suicide also triggered protests in Hyderabad, Norrjahan. Zaheer's wife described the company as 'deceitful' after it did not respond to these protests.

The CTO of Uber, Thuan Pham does not agree with a majority of the research. Instead, compares his Silicon Valley employees to diamonds 'which are compressed with heat and pressure for thousands of years... those who can actually survive and thrive from it come out as diamonds.' However, the former Uber executive admitted to 'totally mislead[ing]' Indian employees.' As a result, **Uber is now banned across India.**

Meet the Team



Georgie

I got involved with 42nd Street's employment rights campaign after struggling to find and hold down a job due to my mental health. Often employers are unknowledgeable or unsympathetic on how to navigate young people's mental health in the work place. Doing the campaign helped me build my confidence and expertise through enjoying work and eating crisps with our amazing group. I have learnt a lot about what my rights are in the workplace, and how to assert them, and often support other young people who come to me asking how to do the same.

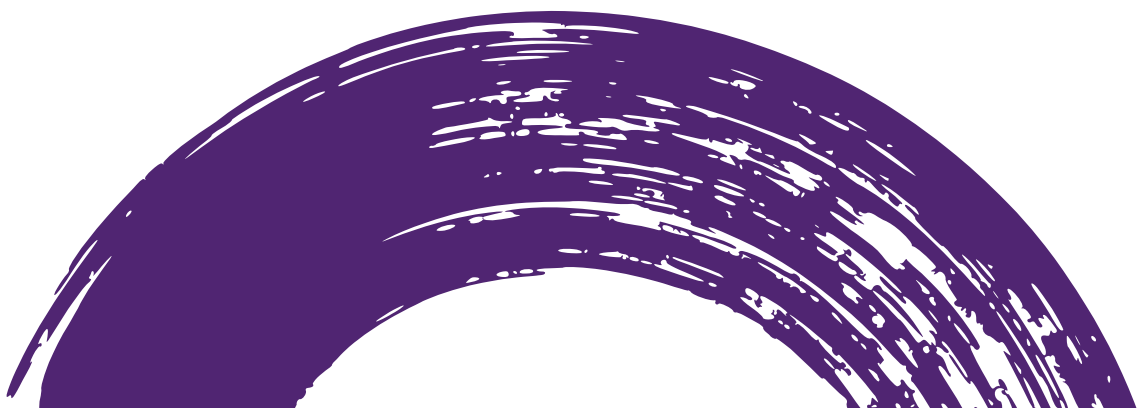
Josh

I started working on this campaign because I think it's so important for everyone to have a voice. We spend most of our time at work and many young people struggle to find their voice at work. I want to help change this and encourage employers to become more transparent with what help they can offer. Having struggled to find my voice in different situations I can sympathise what it is like and this needs to change



Izzy

I joined the campaign because I knew from personal experience, and from hearing the experiences of friends and family, that work often negatively impacts people's well-being and causes or exacerbates mental health problems. However, I know the impact of better support, education, and other positive changes within a workplace can change lives, and so I believe we should all be fighting for those changes however we can.





Nadia

I decided to become involved in this social action project as I wanted to make a difference to young people's lives and learn more about our rights. Not only have I met some wonderful people, my confidence has increased a lot. It became clear at the start of the campaign that two main issues were faced by young people. These were employment and mental health. We decided that it was necessary to combine the two and research it further. I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the group and hope that now people are being more open about mental health it will also improve for the coming generations in the workplace.

David

I came to join this campaign in October 2018 where I decided to see what the group was about. I have really enjoyed being a part of the campaign and getting involved with the different sessions. It has been very interesting to learn about the employment rights and people who have had problems in the work place. I also enjoyed doing the Wheel of Fortune at the People's History Museum for the Radical Late. I am so glad that I have been involved in this group and I will miss it so much.



Jemima

To be honest I initially got involved with the campaign because I wanted to be part of a group as I was quite isolated at the time. I didn't necessarily join because of an interest in campaigning but this definitely developed over time! I now feel really passionate about making a change for those who need it and ensuring everyone's voice is heard.



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