Mental Health & Productivity
New data from Lockdown

Stephen Bevan, Institute for Employment Studies

Mental Health & COVID-19 – The Context

- Multiple factors at work – isolation, anxiety, financial distress, insecurity, inequality, WfH, techno-stress, lack of control…

- Front-line workers – burnout & 'moral injury'

- Young people badly affected

- Some anxiety about returning to workplaces

- New data from among the relatively privileged folk who have worked from home
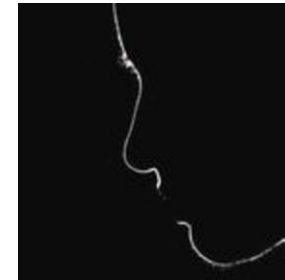
Physical & Mental Wellbeing

45%

45%

Mean
WHO5
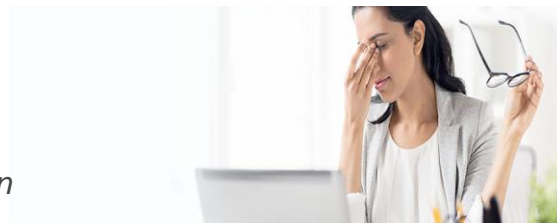score of
47/100

41%

37%

Fatigue → MSK Pain → Mental Health → Eye Strain → Poor Sleep → Fatigue

% of respondents reporting worse than normal symptoms in last 2 weeks

Emotional Wellbeing

Mental wellbeing (WHO5) was generally low

Those with _better_ mental health included:

- Those working contracted hours

- Those with frequent contact with manager

- Those with higher levels of Org Commitment, Satisfaction with WfH, Satisfaction with WLB and Job satisfaction

- Those with few physical health problems

- Those self-identifying as extroverts

Productivity & WfH

Self-reported productivity (as measured by work done per hour worked) compared with pre-COVID19 is generally high:

- Get much more done – 32%

- Get a little more done – 22%

- Get about the same done – 35%

- Get a little less done – 9%

- Get much less done – 2.5%

Productivity & Mental Health (n=1085)

WHO5
Score

Mental health scores for the most productive were TWICE as high as the least productive

| I get much more done | I get a little more done | I get about the same done | I get a little less done | I get much less done |

NB - All results statistically significant

Drivers of Productive Working?

We asked about some of the components of productive working (% saying these statements are 'moderately' or 'exactly' true):

- *I can concentrate on one activity for a long time, if necessary* – 91%

- *I can control my thoughts from distracting me from the task at hand* – 85%

- *After an interruption, I don't have any problem resuming my concentrated style of working* – 83%

- *I'm comfortable using the freedom I have to re-order the tasks in my job* – 94%

Each of these 'drivers' is positively correlated with self-reported productivity per hour worked

Observations & Themes

- Critical role of line managers

- Outputs vs Inputs?

- No strong appetite for a full return to the office – support for 'hybrid' working – but also a strong 'social deficit' and yearning for 'micro-interactions' – (innovation deficit?)

- Control, autonomy, trust, 'voice' and task discretion all important

- Job demands & job resources model still very relevant to 'job quality' and thriving at work

Further information:

www.employment-studies.co.uk

@StephenBevan

Stephen.Bevan@employment-studies.co.uk

www.workafterlockdown.uk