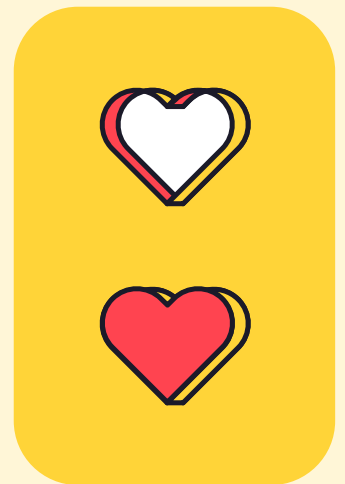


# 2023 Workplace Mental Health Trends

Tackling the  
trillion-dollar  
challenge



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# Methodology

To create this report, we surveyed 850 demographically diverse HR decision-makers in large organisations around the world. We also spoke with senior practitioners to get exclusive insights into how some of the world's leading organisations are shaping workplace wellbeing in 2023. For each trend uncovered, we've analysed the insights and provided some tangible steps you can take to get ahead in 2023.

# ○ Foreward

## In 2023, we need to be impatient.

The mental health and wellbeing industry talks a lot about progress. Make no mistake, *we are* making progress. But by focusing too much on this abstract idea, we risk overlooking a devastating problem.

Mental ill-health costs the global economy around one trillion US dollars. *Every year*. We've drawn attention to that figure in this report, not because the economic impact is everything (important though it is), but as it highlights the enormity and urgency of the issue. Never forget: behind every stat is a human story. A friend facing addiction. A team spiralling into burnout. A workmate contemplating suicide.

We need to be impatient because, while we're making 'progress' in science and public awareness and understanding, the situation is getting worse.

But we're better placed to tackle this challenge now than ever before. We can offer a full spectrum of support, from preventative to reactive, delivered at the right time, tailored to the individual. Too often, wellbeing strategies – at work, and in public health – spring into action only once the person is already in crisis. Meanwhile, many of the tools available to the workplace lack the scientific grounding needed to deliver ethical and effective care.

Few people have a greater opportunity to make a difference than leaders of large companies.

But you can't truly embed psychological safety without leaders onboard. This year's trends are a call to action for those setting the agenda inside their organisations. Those who can use workplace tech and innovative strategies to democratise wellbeing, and offer high-quality support at scale. The people who can drive real cultural change.

We're about to outline the strategies and solutions that HR, People people, and compassionate leaders around the world are rolling out with the tools and knowledge now available to them. Over the following pages, we'll analyse each trend, unpacking what it means for organisations and the people within them.

We'll then suggest some practical steps to help you build more psychologically safe cultures, high-performing teams and, crucially, demonstrate the impact of your wellbeing spend, so we can continue to tackle the problem, and build a better future together.

Let's get going.



**Dr Nick Taylor,**  
Co-founder & CEO



## Buyers turn up the scrutiny on wellbeing solutions

*94% of HR decision-makers say that scientific rigour and an evidence base are important, or very important, factors when selecting a wellbeing solution.*

The Covid-19 pandemic caused a mental health and wellbeing (MHW) explosion that left businesses scrambling for solutions. But now, some three years later, it's clear some wellbeing strategies are more effective than others.

While 94% of HR decision-makers say that scientific rigour and an evidence base either are important or very important factors when selecting a wellbeing solution, just an estimated 5% of mental health apps are backed by credible studies.

It's easy to see the disconnect.

But in 2023, with the benefit of hindsight, we should expect buyers to ask more searching questions when it comes to investing in wellbeing solutions.

And science will become sexy.

## How to get ahead

Ask the tough questions of providers of wellbeing solutions. Where's the evidence that the solutions have a positive effect on your people? Are they scientifically validated? Can they show improvement in productivity? If a wellbeing solution provider can't show their ROI strategy, product testing methods or scientific research, should you *really* trust them with your people's MHW?

The best wellbeing companies are their own biggest critics – approaching business like science. They continually test themselves, and their efficacy, to ensure they really are doing what they claim to do.

For example, at Unmind, we rigorously test our platform to continually improve it. We partner with prestigious academic institutions including Cambridge University and the University of Sussex. Together, we publish studies, validate our product, and further our collective understanding of mental health.

Our research mission has four pillars:

1. Generate robust empirical evidence
2. Continually evolve our product
3. Remain at the forefront of research
4. Offer transparency across our methods and findings



**“We're seeing more and more providers offering workplace mental health and wellbeing solutions – with varying levels of scientific quality.**

**“A solid grounding in science isn't just crucial for health and wellbeing, it's also critical to effective business investment.**

**“It's promising to see how discerning business leaders are becoming when it comes to selecting workplace wellbeing programmes.**

**“We'll continue to raise the standards on our journey to becoming the most credible, high-quality digital mental health and wellbeing organisation in the world.”**

Dr Heather Bolton, Director of Science, Unmind



**“Wellbeing solutions should come under scrutiny. It is not a one-size-fits-all training programme or wellness initiative. It is an entire safety system with promotion, protection and response factors that formulate a psychosocially and psychologically safe workplace.”**

Anna Feringa, Workplace Mental Health Consultant,  
Director, Anna Feringa Consulting Pty Ltd



## Data and measurement become essential ingredients to workplace wellbeing

*67% of HR decision-makers said that measuring employee wellbeing is a priority for their business in 2023*

You can't manage what you can't measure.

If you want to deliver an effective workplace wellbeing strategy, you'll need meaningful insights. Anything else is just guesswork.

That's why it's promising to see that over two-thirds (67%) of our sample said measuring employee wellbeing is a priority for their business in 2023. It seems this will be the year that organisations step up.



## How to get ahead

Here at Unmind, we've always preached the need for an evidence-based approach. It's why we created the Unmind Workplace Index – an evidence-based assessment tool for MHW that businesses can use to take the pulse on employee workplace wellbeing.

The Unmind Workplace Index uses simple survey questions to check how employees are doing, across eight subscales, then provides organisational and clinical psychology strategies to improve scores.

This allows you to demonstrate the effect of poor mental health on your organisation and

identify areas for impactful MHW investment. There's also the ability to compare performance to other industry samples to get data-driven, scientifically validated recommendations on how to improve.

Industry guidance – including ISO 45003 and Safework Australia – highlight the need for a data-driven approach to gaining a comprehensive view of organisational wellbeing, and that noise will only increase through 2023. Unmind can help you get ahead of the curve.



**“Siemens is driving a data-led, evidence base wellbeing strategy to form bespoke wellbeing initiatives for our people. Our management team recognise the importance of their involvement within this as role models.”**

Jamie Blower, Health and Wellbeing Manager, Siemens



## Employers break the taboo on financial stress

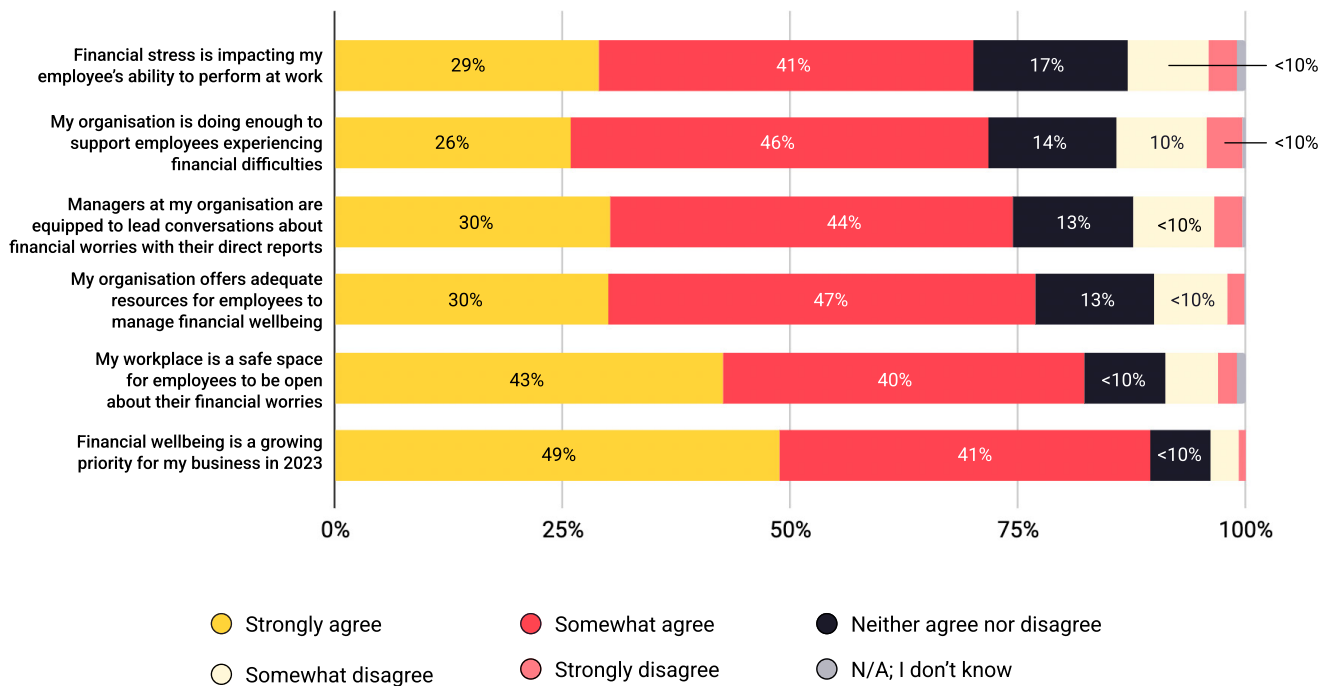
*70% of HR pros believe financial stress is impacting employees' ability to perform at work.*

Money talks, and yet we find it so hard to be open about money.

Some 55% of us aren't comfortable opening up about our finances, even though half (48%) have recently worried about money.

As much of the planet edges towards recession, it's crucial we learn to address this elephant in the room.

## To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about financial wellbeing at work?



Almost three-quarters (70%) of HR decision-makers either somewhat agree or strongly agree that 'financial stress is impacting my employees' ability to perform at work'. Just 30% strongly agree that 'managers at my organisation are equipped to lead conversations about financial worries with their direct reports', while under half (44%) somewhat agreed.

2022 made startlingly clear that financial health is a workplace issue. Cost-of-living stresses

don't just unfold outside the office: your people bring their financial problems to work with them. Businesses need to be able to break the taboo and support their employees through their financial worries.

But how many managers are ready for that role?

## How to get ahead

It's not a manager's job to be a financial coach. But they are a first port of call, and well placed to pick up on signals that an employee is struggling.

A manager should be empathetic and, where necessary, signpost to expert help. Yet managers also set the tone – wielding the power to curate a safe environment, where employees feel able to open up about their financial worries.

Your managers may be super humans, but they are not superhuman – they need support too.

When you upskill your leaders, you give them confidence to perform their own role better. The even greater reward? Productive, engaged, flourishing employees.

To find out more about how you can promote financial wellbeing among your managers and employees with Unmind, [book a call](#) to discover our industry-leading support and resources on the topic.





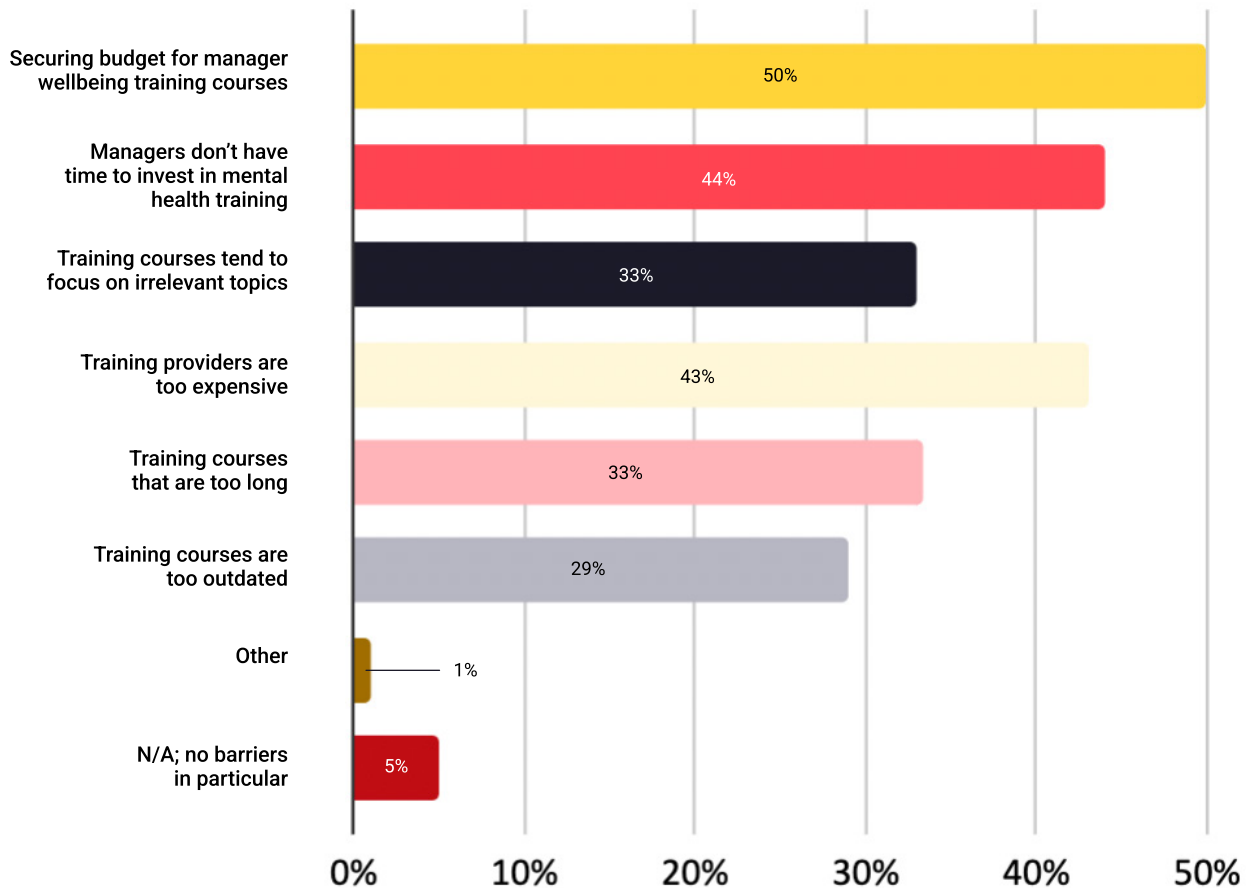
## Manager training and leadership development become central to workplace wellbeing

*The three biggest barriers to leadership wellbeing training: 50% said budget; 44% said managers are too time-poor; 43% said providers are too expensive.*

The barriers to successful manager mental health training are no shock – money and time, the two things no one seems to have enough of. Half (50%) of People people say budget is the leading blocker, and 44% feel leaders are just too busy.

Managers *are* busy people. In fact, the individuals we expect to support the most people across an organisation, quite often, run on empty themselves. Poor manager wellbeing not only puts their health on the line, but is shown to increase the risk of poorer leadership and employee mental health difficulties.

## What do you think are the biggest barriers to successful manager mental health training? [Select up to 3 options]



Fact is, workplace wellbeing investment is just that: *an investment*. Over time, you're repaid by your empowered managers – able to confidently support employees. By smaller staff turnover. By less burnout. By supercharged productivity and more.

## How to get ahead

Managers interact with more staff on a given day than any head of HR or CEO – creating a safe culture starts with them.

The WHO recommends manager training in how and when to direct employees to support and recognise when they need it. Rather than just giving managers a metaphorical mental health first aid box, your focus should be continuous learning – with a focus on how to listen, and also how leaders can set a healthy example.

Training has become a dirty word for many managers. It stirs up images of conference rooms, awkward ice-breakers, and endless hours that could've been spent doing actual work. But no longer. This will be a year for innovative wellbeing training programmes, with 'nano learning' a big trend.

Nano learning provides short learning resources that can be retained easily – think soundbites, text, videos and images – and courses can last anywhere between two and 10 minutes, focused on a single learning outcome.

Our recent trial of on-demand, nano-content manager training showed real change. In a 1000+ headcount enterprise, 87% of managers were more confident in handling mental health difficulties in their teams and 79% increased their knowledge of mental health.

When you cut the waffle, you may find your managers have more time – *and* appetite – to embrace training.



**“A culture of workplace wellbeing needs to be built and embodied by an organisation’s leaders, otherwise it often becomes all talk and no action.”**

Melanie Cochrane, CEO/Group Managing Director  
A/NZ Equifax



# HR takes on psychosocial risk management

*57% of HR leads say that managing psychosocial risk factors is a growing priority for their organisation, yet only 48% feel able to identify and control psychosocial risk factors.*

Psychosocial risk sounds alarming – and it really can be. As with any other scary thing, it's better to face it head-on than hide and wait for it to catch up to you.

Whether it's excessive workloads, conflicting demands, a lack of control over working methods, or workplace bullying and sexual harassment, HR needs to identify and prevent risks to the workforce's wellbeing.

It's been big in the news in 2022 after breakthrough studies from the likes of [ISO 45003](#) and the [US Surgeon General](#), and we can expect more of the same in 2023. The [WHO](#) now states that work is to blame for 2.7% of global deaths and disabilities.

While 57% of our sample feel that managing psychosocial risk factors is a growing priority for their organisation, only 48% say they're able to identify and control psychosocial risk factors.

It's a gap that clearly needs to be bridged. And organisations are coming under increasing pressure to do just that.

In July 2022, Safe Work Australia released its new model [Code of Practice](#): 'Managing psychosocial hazards at work', which made psychological health and safety a top concern, and for many organisations it even became a legal responsibility. Australia are leading here, but we're hopeful the UK will soon follow.



## How to get ahead

HR and business leaders need to read up. There's a lot of game-changing literature out there on the subject, starting with [ISO 45003](#).

From there, it's time to radiate that knowledge out. How? By investing in a workplace culture that truly nurtures employee wellbeing.

This includes expert-led training to upskill managers, using data to pinpoint mental health

challenges that cause absenteeism, burnout and staff turnover, and creating company-wide cultural change from leaders to wellbeing champions.

For a deeper understanding of psychosocial risks and the actions you can take to reduce them, [check out our latest blog on the topic](#).



**“Leaders can’t just talk the talk, they must walk the talk. They must know what workplace psychological hazards exist, why they create risk, and exercise their skills to lead in a psychologically safe and productive manner.”**

Nina Hoang, Senior Associate Workplace Relations,  
FCW Lawyers



## Mental health jumps up the ESG agenda

*65% of HR decision-makers say employee expectations for wellbeing support have increased in the last year. And 51% feel ESG reporting is a priority in 2023.*

These days, everyone's talking about ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance), and how companies are becoming more accountable for their wider impact on the world.

While ESG is a broad term and covers, more or less, every aspect of the way an organisation relates to the world, the S in ESG very directly relates to employees and their mental health.

Accountability and transparency in employee wellbeing are no longer nice-to-haves – they're must-haves.

This isn't *just* a question of morals, or bleeding HR hearts – it makes hard-nosed business sense too. Leaders who invest in employee wellbeing are more likely to see increased productivity and performance while reducing staff turnover, burnout and stress. All in one go.

Almost two-thirds (65%) of HR decision-makers say employee expectations for wellbeing support have increased in the last year. Little wonder that over half (51%) feel ESG reporting is a priority in 2023. Clearly it matters now more than ever that leaders are proactive on employee wellbeing.

## How to get ahead

You guessed it: there aren't any quick fixes, easy answers, or boxes to tick. This is about genuine cultural change. But it's within your grasp.

These are the three key areas to focus on for the S part of your ESG strategy:

### Measurement and metrics

2022 was a momentous year for mental health at work. Landmark studies from the World Health Organisation and ISO have set about standardising accountability and transparency over employee welfare, challenging workplaces to get more proactive with their interventions.

This is where Unmind's Workplace Index can be a crucial ally. A science-backed, independent measurement tool can help organisations rigorously assess workplace wellbeing, report on how strategies are working and benchmark progress globally.

### Stakeholder alignment – inside and out

Wellbeing isn't just a growing expectation internally among employees and employers, there are external optics too. People want to work with – and buy from – organisations that share their own values, so employee wellbeing

is increasingly becoming a focal point for investors and policyholders too.

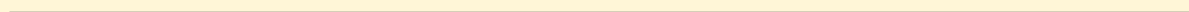
The Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) – a UN-backed network of investors devoted to understanding the implications of ESG factors on investment – identified mental health and access to health care as one of the four top priority social issues.

### Driving business performance

Time and again, studies show that businesses with good employee wellbeing programmes perform better. But one from the world of stock market investment is worth drawing our attention to.

The Everett Koop National Health Award recognises effective workplace health promotion programmes in the US. A recent study found that those who invested \$10,000 in companies that have earned this coveted workplace wellbeing gong saw on average \$42,000 returns over 14 years compared to just \$22,500 in competitors.

This is all yet more evidence that mental health and wellbeing isn't just an altruistic move, it's simply good business.





## HR bridges business strategy and people centricity with wellbeing

*94% of HR leads agree they're at least partially responsible for driving business strategy, as well as overseeing employee wellbeing and creating a good company culture.*

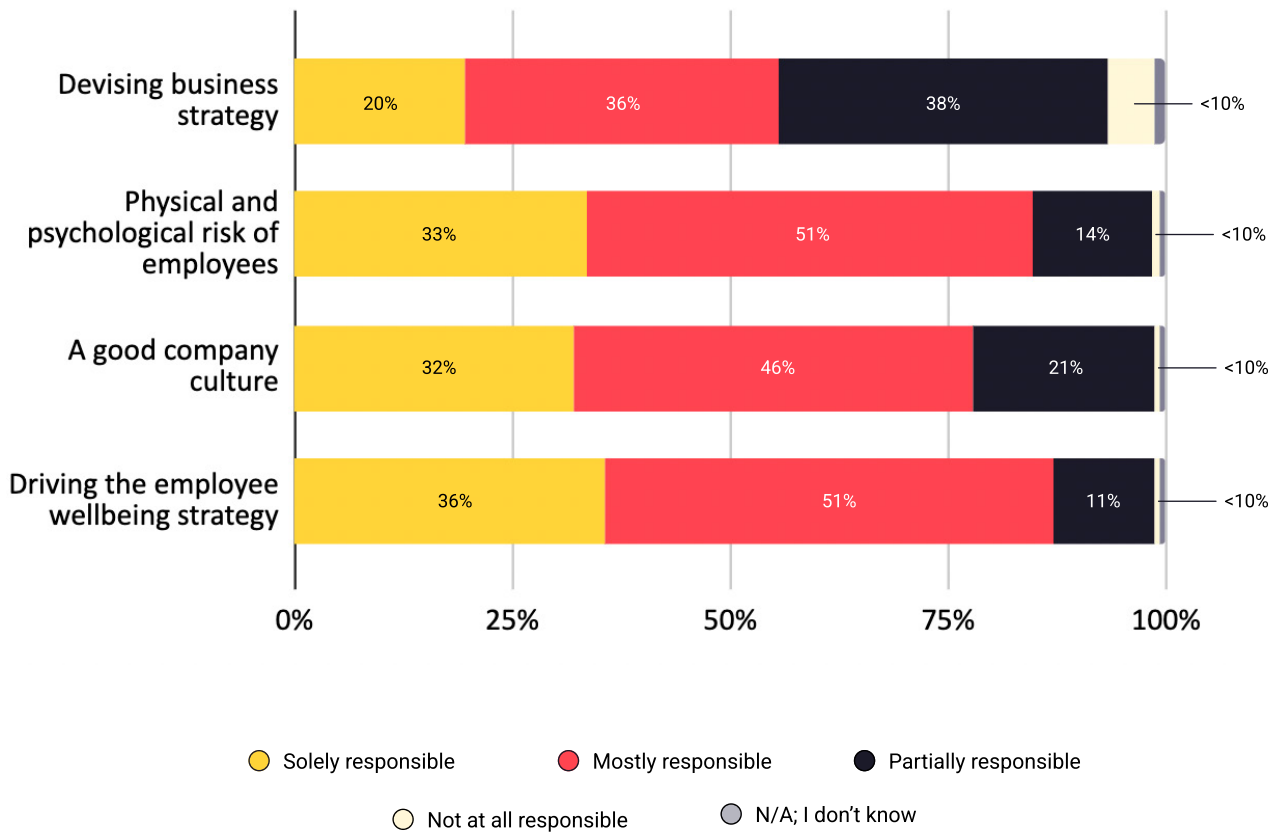
HR is evolving. Where once it was simply focused on servicing employee needs, People teams are becoming a strategic function – with the ability to impact their business's bottom line.

In our survey, a resounding 94% of senior practitioners said they believe HR are partially, solely or entirely responsible for driving business strategy, as well as taking

on the more traditional roles of overseeing employee wellbeing and creating a good company culture.

But while the expectations on HR are increasing, the resources being provided are not. The result is that HR is often left under-resourced, overstretched and struggling to meet the demands of their new hybrid role.

## To what extent do you think HR is responsible for the following aspects?



## How to get ahead

Since the pandemic, we've rightly celebrated HR leaders as heroes. And, like all good superheroes, they need a sidekick.

People people – like other strategic leaders – need data to demonstrate business impact and ROI. Strategic partnerships with integrated systems can help provide the expertise and confidence to support people while driving business results.

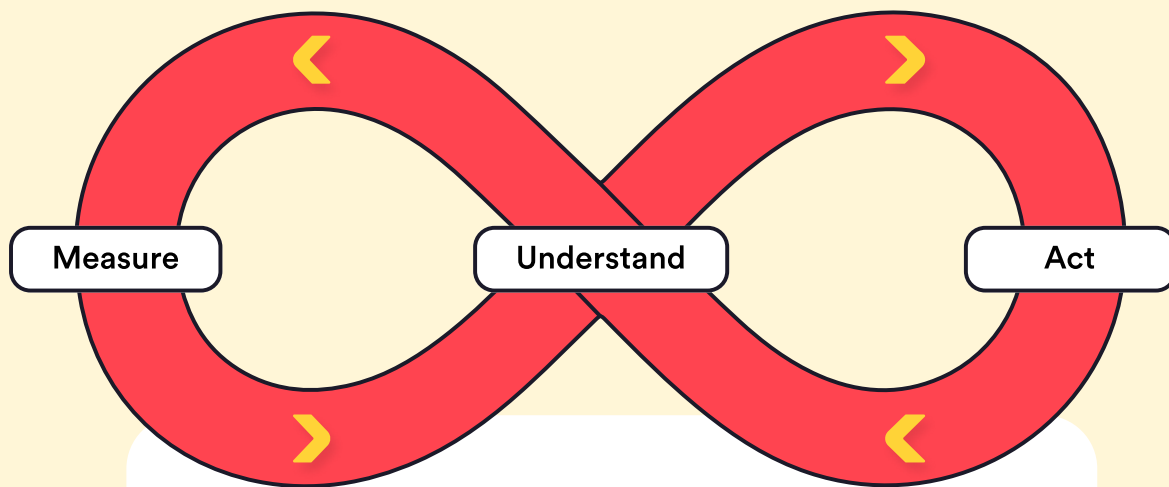
Unmind are experts in work-life wellbeing, and specialists in mental health. We drive change on an individual and organisational level. Our science-backed, data-led approach

allows us to support, and shape, our partners' strategic decisions.

Put Unmind in HR's corner and you empower them to embrace their new role – rather than feel overburdened by it.

Let us introduce the Measure > Understand > Act framework. This allows us to identify and map wellbeing challenges, help the HR or leader understand the root causes, then offer organisational and clinical psychological strategies to address those challenges and drive results for the employee and the business as a whole.

## The Unmind Approach



### **Measure: if you can't measure it, you can't manage it**

If knowledge is power, then measurement *really* matters. By providing data insights driven by science you can track, identify and inform strategy and, most importantly, see if your strategy is working.

### **Understand: Turn data into meaningful insights**

Data is all well and good, but meaningful insights are what truly matters. Personalised, tailored insights – that identify emerging and existing symptoms of poor wellbeing and mental health – mean you are being proactive on MHW, and getting ahead of the curve.

### **Act: Turn insights into cultural change**

Every organisation is unique, and so are our action plans. Our strategic and tactical interventions are tailored to your organisation and our evidence-based approach means you can see and measure their impact. It's change you can see *and* feel.



## Wellbeing champions get the investment they need

*58% of HR leads believe organisations should invest budgets and resources into cultivating wellbeing champions networks. 57% feel wellbeing champions' duties should be formally recognised within an employee's overall role.*

Wellbeing champions should be celebrated. Okay, we're not necessarily asking for an open-top bus tour or blasting out that Queen song, but a little bit of recognition is long overdue.

These groups of engaged, passionate individuals who volunteer to drive change and support colleagues are a powerful social movement – a tribe of positivity at the core of a company. As bottom-up, grassroots networks, they're instrumental in activating the workplace wellbeing agenda on a peer-to-peer level.

But right now, wellbeing champions are being taken for granted. Often there's confusion over

their roles – well-meaning mental health day training courses have led people to believe they're qualified therapists. What's more, they're painfully under-resourced, receiving little formal (or even informal) recognition, and extra duties not being fully recognised in their roles.

Indeed, 58% of our survey-takers believe organisations should invest budgets and resources into cultivating wellbeing champions networks, and 57% feel wellbeing champions' duties should be formally recognised within the employee's overall role.

## How to get ahead

Where there *is* training for wellbeing champions, it's often inconsistent and ineffective. But all that's about to change...

Unmind is launching our flagship training course to educate, engage and excite users on how to be a true, authentic wellbeing champion – not a have-a-go therapist.

Through concise, socially driven, impactful training, wellbeing champions are galvanised to do what can be the most rewarding thing anyone can do in their career. 2023 will be the year wellbeing champions finally get their moment in the spotlight (no open-top bus needed). You can [book a chat](#) with an Unminder to find out more about our wellbeing champions toolkits.



**“Mental health champions have been absolutely crucial in supporting HR to promote positive wellbeing and smash stigma through a friendly lens. Shining a light on these legends and giving them the recognition they deserve is incredibly important, as it amplifies the meaningful impact they’re making so that more employees can accessibly benefit and more organisations feel inspired to follow suit.”**

David Titeu, Founder & Director, Linkmate





## The workplace becomes an engine for positive mental health and wellbeing

*95% of HR say there's a growing expectation for the workplace itself to be a driver of positive mental health and wellbeing.*

There's a growing expectation for the workplace to be a positive engine for mental health and wellbeing. In fact, a staggering 95% say they either strongly or somewhat agree with that sentiment.

This tallies with the [Surgeon General report](#), which provided a five-point framework backed by extensive research stressing that our wellbeing is shaped by work.

The five pillars outlined in the report are:

- Protection from harm
- Connection and community
- Work-life harmony
- Mattering at work
- Opportunity for growth

Put simply, when workplace wellbeing is badly managed, it harms your people's health and business performance. When it's done well, people and organisations flourish.

## How to get ahead

2023 will usher in the next generation of workplace wellbeing solutions that make it possible for every layer of your organisation to flourish.

These are not quick-fix solutions or platitudes. This is an evidence-based, whole-person,

whole-organisation approach to mental wellbeing, resulting in genuine cultural change.

2023 is the year of the workplace mental health revolution. Don't get left behind.



# About Unmind

Unmind is the workplace wellbeing platform with a difference. Grounded in science and built for business, our full spectrum of care will transform your wellbeing strategy for good.



## Whole person. Whole organisation.

Transforming mental health at work means driving change at every level. Unmind makes this possible by helping leaders set the tone, upskilling managers to confidently support their teams, and allowing internal champions to build a better environment. Meanwhile, every employee can use the platform to proactively track, understand and improve their own wellbeing.



## Measure it. Manage it.

With Unmind, you get science-backed wellbeing insights on an individual and organisational level. This means you can spot trends before they become problems, use data to shape your strategy, and prove the real-world impact of your investment – beyond the cells of a spreadsheet.



## Proactive & preventative.

Our vast, varied content library is based on the key pillars of clinical psychology. Your people can access in-the-moment exercises, self-guided courses and personalized recommendations, on demand – giving them the power to manage their own wellbeing, and tackle problems before they even start.



## Learn. Lead. Change.

Unmind's wellbeing-centred training platform gets right to the heart – and head – of modern leadership. With evolving, expert-led training in the art of empathetic management, your leaders can build the confidence they need to cultivate psychologically safe, performance cultures. Designed for busy schedules, with on-demand and live experiences.

We're driving cultural change with world-leading organisations:

Sainsbury's

Uber

Nationwide  
Building Society

wework

Virgin  
media O<sub>2</sub>

BRITISH AIRWAYS

JOHN  
LEWIS  
& PARTNERS

Ogilvy

mediacom

NHS

TSB

standard  
chartered

Want to find out more?

Schedule a call today at [unmind.com](https://unmind.com)



## 2023 Workplace Mental Health Trends

