Bippit | Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

Dynamics in Financial Wellbeing

The Inclusion Edition

How to read this report

Our findings are split into two sections.

Section 1 outlines the inclusion barriers to accessing financial support that exist in the workplace and which cohorts are most affected.

Section 2 looks at each cohort in turn, analysing their inclusion barriers and giving practical guidance on how to address them.

Contents

Executive summary

It has been clear for some time now, that the financial wellbeing needs of employees can vary significantly at work. However, in this latest research, we have uncovered two groups - women and non-managers - who experience vastly more financial wellbeing challenges than the average UK employee.

Approximately 75%[1] of the UK workforce are non-managers, and there are 16 million[2] women in employment across the UK, so these are significant cohorts, and while 18% of UK employees worry about money every day, women are 3.1x more likely to do so than men. This equates to just under a third (28%) of all women in work.

Separately, when we consider the role that an employee is engaged with at work, we find that non-managers are 2.3x more likely to worry about money every day than managers.

However, it's not only these two groups that have distinct financial challenges within the workforce. Indeed, we found that higher earners seem to be more affected by money stigma than middle earners, which is perhaps due to them holding more senior positions, or having greater financial responsibilities.

Meanwhile, single-income households are far more likely to take time off work due to money worries (48% versus just 25% for dual-income households), and be distracted at work by financial concerns (58% versus 43% for dual-income households).

Worryingly, some employees feel like they have no financial support at all. Over one in 10 (14%) of women and 19% of non-managers say they have nowhere to turn when worried about money, meaning one in five non-managers at work have no outlet for their financial anxieties.

Even the perception of employer support varies across different cohorts, with well over a third (38%) of women actively disagreeing that their employer provides appropriate support, compared to 15% of men. This appears to support the mounting evidence that wellbeing communications are just as important as the support provided itself.

So how should employers respond to the findings in this report? At the strategic level, we need to view our financial wellbeing strategies through the needs of different groups at work, and tackle the distinct requirements within these segments.

Because ultimately, we can't embark upon a meaningful discussion about financial inclusion at work, unless we're viewing the issue at a cohort level, and recognising that each individual challenge may require individual support. After all, our financial wellbeing efforts will not reach their potential until we're able to personalise the guidance and communications we deliver to our people.

1 The figures available vary based on different analyses and data. We have averaged out 35% from The Importance of People Management (CIPD, 2023) and 15% from Indicators of Management Capability: Developing a Framework (Tamkin et al, date of publication uncertain)

2 The number of women in employment in October to December 2023, Women and the UK Economy, (House of Commons Library, 2024)

Introduction

Samuel Lathey, CEO, Bippit

Organisations are currently operating in a challenging economic environment. There's cumulative inflation and the cost-of-living crisis, but also long-term fiscal drag and impending legislative changes from the new Labour government. This landscape is putting downward pressure on the financial health and mental wellbeing of employees. Most organisations now offer some form of financial wellbeing support, but research has suggested that this has not yet translated into the necessary impact.

At the same time, organisations face significant financial inclusion challenges across the workforce, such as the gender pay gap, the gender pensions gap, talent diversity and record levels of in-work poverty. These are hard issues to solve, made harder by the wider economic landscape. But unless we tackle these challenges, we won't see the impact we need for our organisations, and won't be able to support our people through the economic challenges ahead.

This report attempts to shine a light on the barriers that are preventing certain groups from accessing financial wellbeing support so that we can make progress with financial inclusion at work, and therefore better support our employees when they need it.

Overall, we found that many factors influence financial inclusion and barriers to access. This includes lived experience, current life circumstances, and our relationships with those around us. In fact, the influence of family and peers is so significant that it's more appropriate to think of the financial wellbeing of households rather than individuals. For instance, the presence of dependent children greatly influences various aspects of employee financial wellbeing.

As we analysed the data from this research, clear trends emerged. We found, for example, significant differences between men and women. Women are 3x times more likely to worry daily about money, but they're not dealing with these concerns like men do. In fact, women are 3x less likely to have told their employer about their money worries and 3.4x less likely to have taken time off work due to money.

However, it's not only personal characteristics that influence the needs and concerns across a workforce - it's employment characteristics too. We found that 52% of managers have told their employer about their money worries, compared to just 9% of non-managers. Managers are also more aware of the financial wellbeing benefits offered by their employer, and are more likely to have used them too.

Do our current wellbeing strategies ensure that each of these groups get targeted communications that recognise their differences? If not, this report is for you.

As HR professionals, if we can understand the data and implications around financial wellbeing, we can develop more inclusive practices that recognise that everyone's path to improvement looks different. With that in mind, this report can help by highlighting any gaps in your current thinking on inclusive financial wellbeing, across the following topics:

- Connecting wellbeing benefits to DE&I initiatives and moving wellbeing up the strategic agenda
- Gaining support for wellbeing initiatives that personalise the approach to employees
- Increasing the amount of airtime given to wellbeing initiatives across internal comms to account for a wider set of cohorts that need targeted messaging
- Advocating for a closer working relationship with internal comms to enable more personalised outreach to promote wellbeing initiatives

Beyond financial wellbeing, this report is clear evidence of the need for far more focus on inclusive practices across our organisations. The difference in lived experience is clear to see, across many dimensions of work. Ultimately, we need to consider how we support the needs of individuals at work, and overcome the specific barriers they face.

We hope you enjoy the report.

Samuel Lathey

Methodology

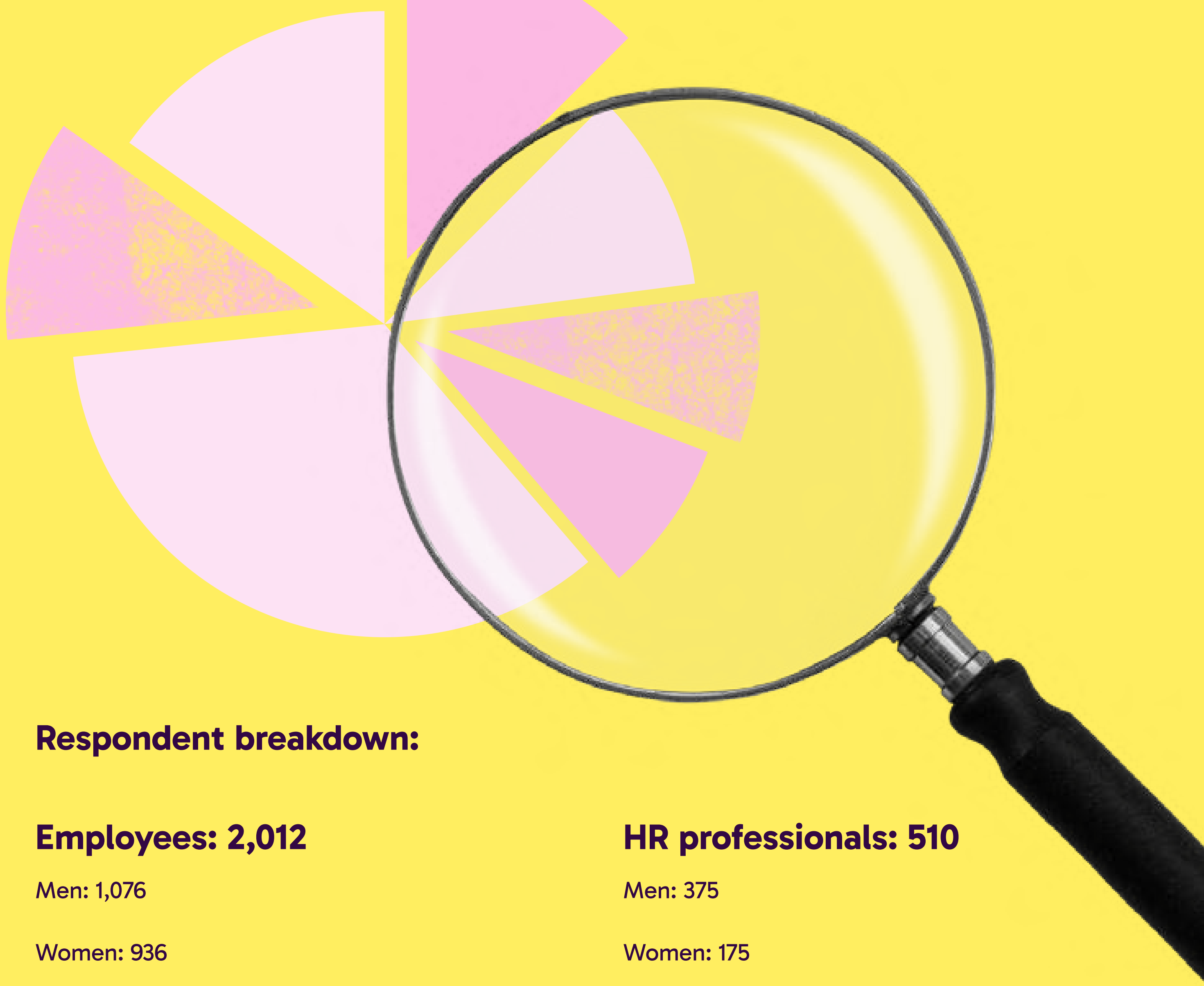
This report was published in September 2024 and is based on a survey conducted in June 2024 of 2,000 UK employees and 500 senior HR professionals. This follows a separate survey in May 2023 of 5,000 UK employees and 660 senior HR professionals. The datasets were pooled and analysed from June to August 2024.

Both surveys were designed to assess the state of employee financial wellbeing across UK workplaces, and help employers shape their financial wellbeing strategies. Where relevant, we have asked linked questions to employees and HR professionals to uncover any misaligned expectations or understanding across both groups.

This report is entitled *The Inclusion Edition* because we found a strong theme running through the data, that certain cohorts experience various barriers to getting the financial support they need at work. It became clear that these barriers represent a significant inclusion challenge to the design of financial wellbeing strategies, so they formed the basis of the report you're reading.

It's important to note that we did not design our research survey to specifically study how different cohorts at work experience financial exclusion. This has resulted in less focus on intersectionality and individual characteristics than we would have ideally liked. Because of this, certain cohorts that are very likely to experience financial inclusion challenges at work may not be represented here. We would like to explore this in future as part of our *Dynamics in Financial Wellbeing* research programme.

The Inclusion Edition is the second report on financial wellbeing in the workplace that Bippit has published as part of this research programme. The first, *The Stigma Edition*, was published in August 2023 and explored how organisations could normalise the conversation about money and create more positive discussion around financial wellbeing.



Respondent breakdown:

Employees: 2,012

Men: 1,076

Women: 936

Managers: 1,449

Non-managers: 563

Single parents: 402

Two-parent families: 1,610

Single-income households: 986

Dual-income households: 1,026

Has dependent children: 1,006

No dependent children: 1,006

Household income < £35,000: 347

Household income £35,000 to £65,000: 1,007

Household income £65,000 - £95,000: 535

Household income £95,000+: 81

HR professionals: 510

Men: 375

Women: 175

Managers: 380

Non-managers: 130

Single parents: 302

Two-parent families: 208

Single-income households: 268

Dual-income households: 242

Has dependent children: 351

No dependent children: 159

Household income < £35,000: 35

Household income £35,000 to £65,000: 248

Household income £65,000 - £95,000: 202

Household income £95,000+: 25

Section 1

The key financial inclusion problems at work

Contents

HR are underestimating the scale of inclusion barriers

There are considerable differences in lived experience between the HR population and employees, which may be shielding HR from the struggles seen across some of the cohorts we've examined. This appears to be leading HR to underestimate the scale of inclusion challenges across the workforce, which could have significant implications for how we design inclusive financial wellbeing strategies.

Across the whole workforce, just 17% of HR professionals say money is their biggest stressor at the moment - lagging behind work, mental health, physical health, and even friendships. In stark contrast, money was the biggest stressor across almost every employee cohort - with an average of 30% citing it as their biggest stressor.

Additionally, half of UK employees (50%) say that they have been distracted or unfocused at work due to money worries. However, just 25% of HR professionals thought the number was 50% or above. In fact, over a third (34%) thought the figure was 19% or lower.

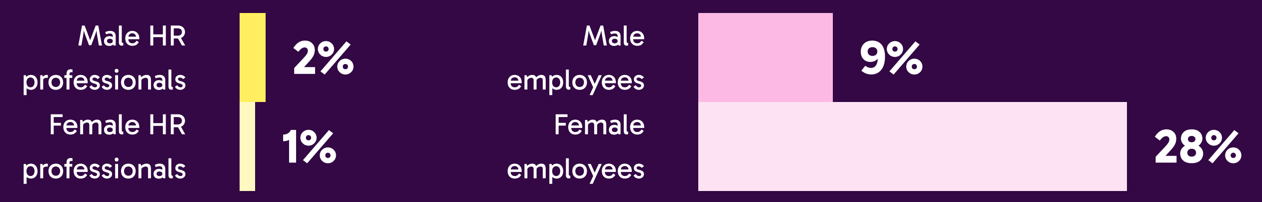
Separately, 59% of HR professionals say they provide support appropriate to their employees' needs, but only 44% of employees agree. A quarter (25%) of employees say they actively disagree, while 30% aren't sure, which means 55% of the workforce are either uncertain about the support offered or do not rate it highly.

Underestimating the barriers experienced, and overestimating the impact of support provided, may be explained by different lived experience among HR professionals, which feeds into the financial wellbeing strategy. In terms of gender, just 2% of male HR professionals and 1% of female HR professionals worry about money daily, compared to 9% of male employees and 28% of female employees. Meanwhile, just 1% of male and 1% of female HR professionals report having no main source of financial education, compared to 9% of male employees and 23% of female employees.

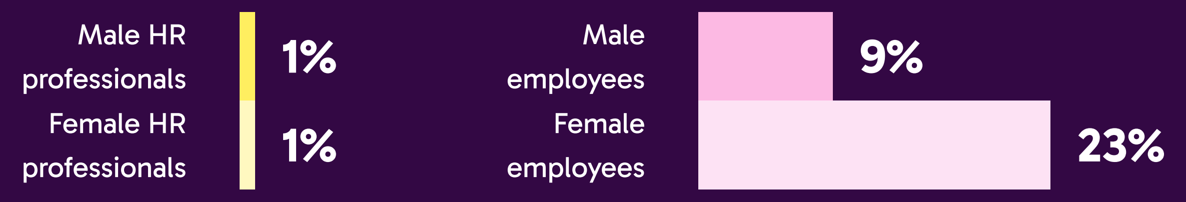
When looking at managers and non-managers, we also find a similar picture. Just 3% of HR professionals that do not manage others worry about money every day, compared to 30% across all non-managers.

And when it comes to financial education, no HR managers and just 2% of non-managers in HR say they lack a main source of information. However, across all employees, 9% of managers and 31% of non-managers say they don't have a main source of financial education.

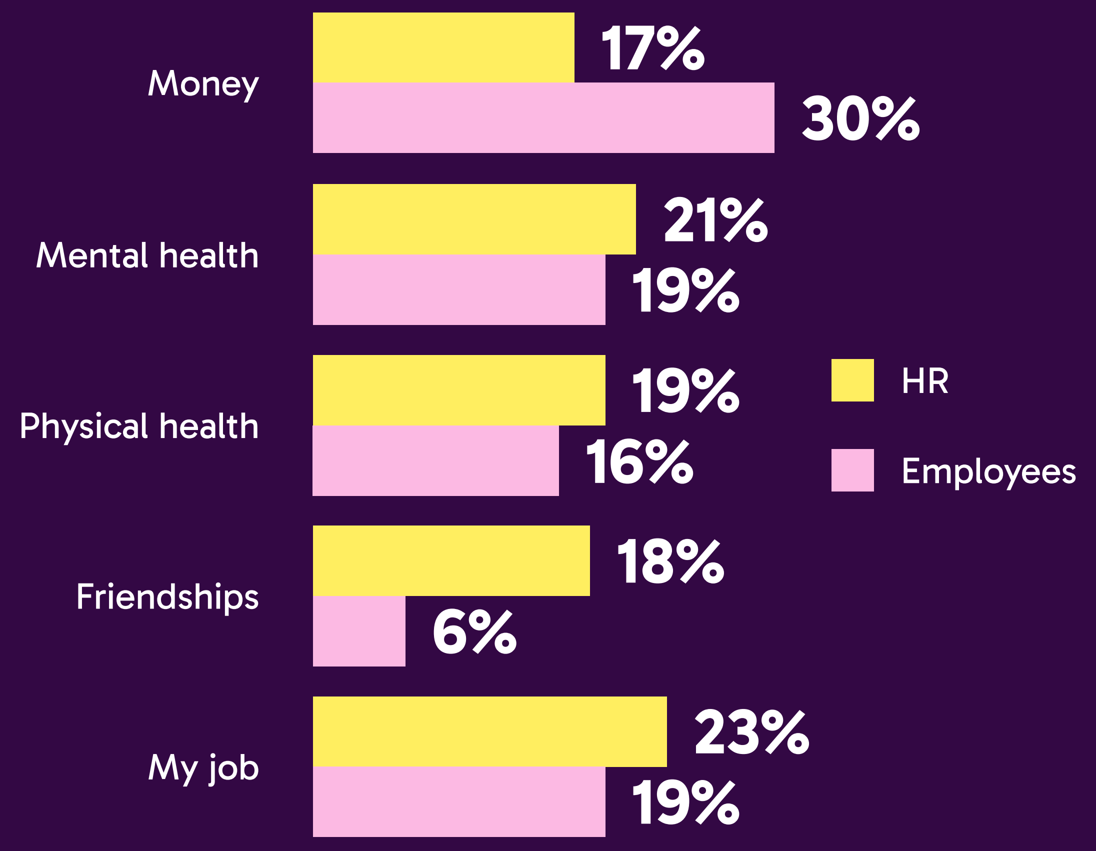
"I worry about money daily."



"I have no main source of financial education."



"What, if anything, is causing you the most stress at the moment?"



Money worries are more extreme in some pockets

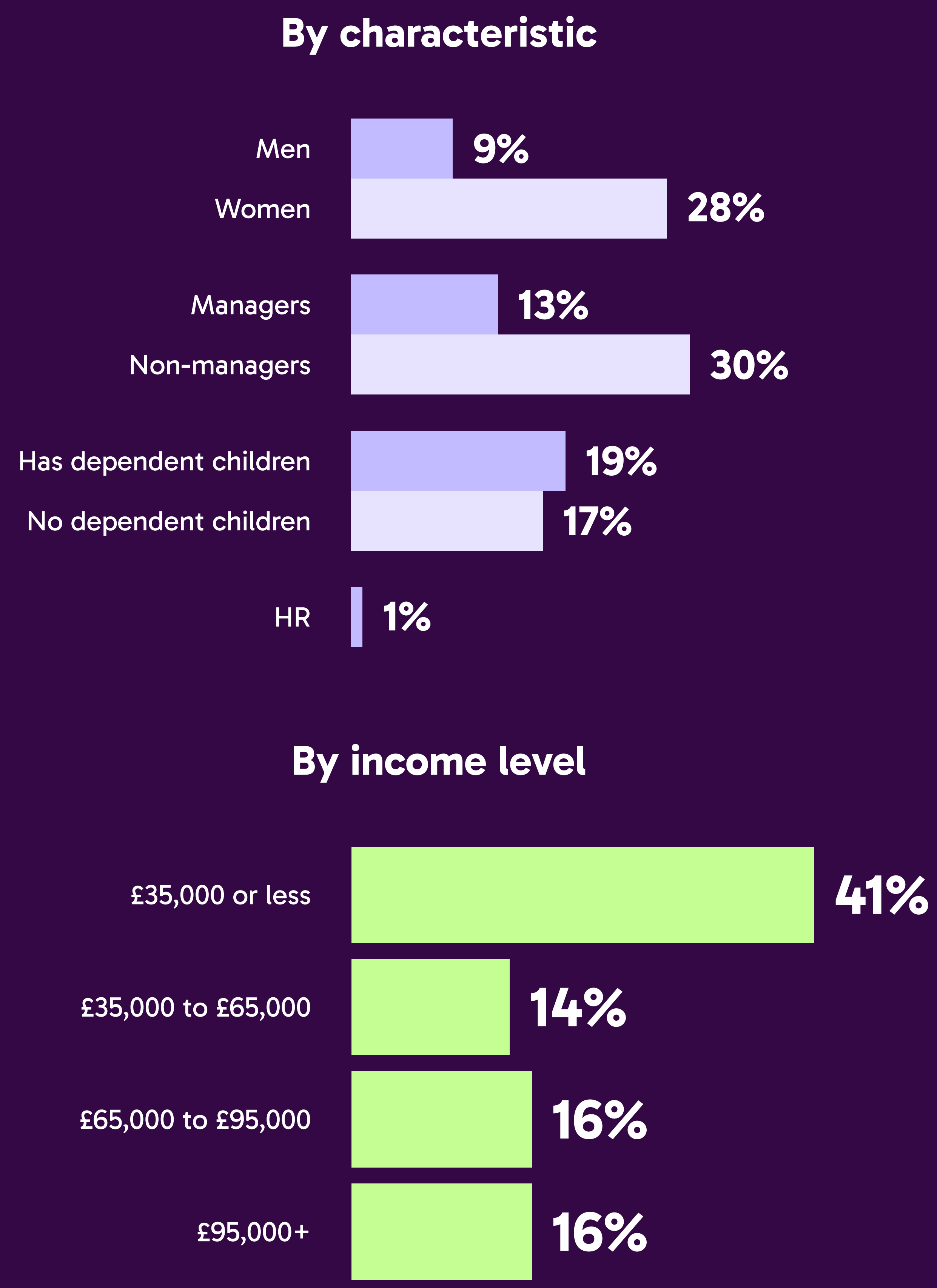
The number of UK employees who worry daily about money rose sharply during the cost-of-living crisis. In our 2023 report, we found that 22% worry daily about money. This time around, 18% now worry daily about money. While this fall represents a positive trend, there are several cohorts that experience far higher levels of daily money worries.

Indeed, close to a third of women (28%) worry about money daily, compared to one in 10 men (9%). There's also a stark difference between managers and non-managers, with almost a third of non-managers (30%) experiencing daily worries compared to 13% of managers.

Almost half (41%) of respondents with a household income of £35,000 or less worry about money every day, compared to 14% of those bringing in between £35,000 and £65,000. But it wouldn't be fair to say that if you earn more, you worry less, because those who earn higher salaries worry more (16%) than those in the £35,000 to £65,000 band.

That's because financial concerns do not always correlate with an employee's objective financial situation - you can be wealthy and worry more, perhaps due to larger financial commitments, or less well-off and worry less. However, these findings can help us understand some of the factors that may be causing employees to experience higher levels of anxiety about their finances.

"I worry about money every day."



Money stigma is masking the need for financial support

Some cohorts are far more affected by stigma than others. The largest difference is between managers and non-managers, where non-managers are 5.8x less likely to have told their employer about their money worries.

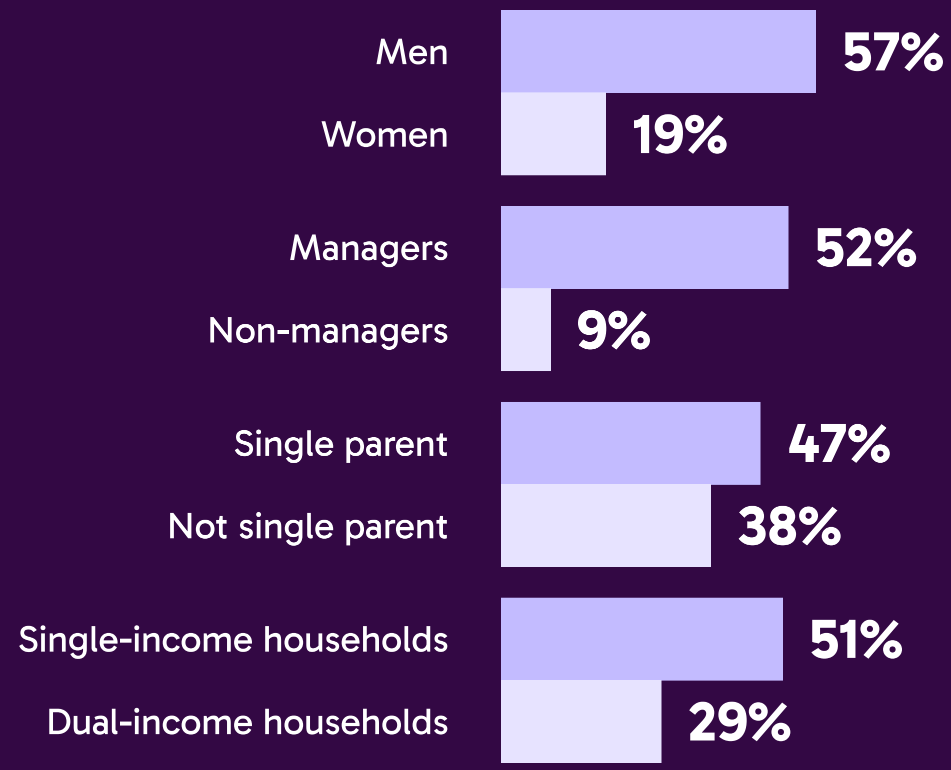
There's also a big divide when it comes to gender, where women are 3x less likely to have told their employer about their money worries than men. When we look at household income, lower earners are less likely to tell their employer about their money worries, but so are higher earners (see graph below). This could be because higher earners are more likely to be in positions of authority, which they feel would be threatened following a disclosure of financial concerns.

Aside from the differences, is there anything common to these groups when it comes to money stigma? Over a third (39%) say that the reason they haven't told their employer about their money worries is because they don't think their employer can help. This figure fluctuates only slightly across the different groups and is perhaps representative of the generally low levels of confidence that employees have in the financial wellbeing support offered to them.

Stigma, like the frequency of worry, also does not correlate perfectly with status, income or position. However, the more we understand about the factors that drive financial stigma, the more we can design wellbeing strategies that promote psychological safety, and encourage people to share their concerns.

Employees with money worries, who have not told their employer

"I have told my employer about my money worries."



Financial absenteeism is an acute risk in certain cohorts

We asked employees if they have taken time off work due to money worries. Overall, just over a third (36%) of UK employees have done so. This is a huge number, but once we drill down we see that the problem is also quite complex, and there are significant differences across the workforce.

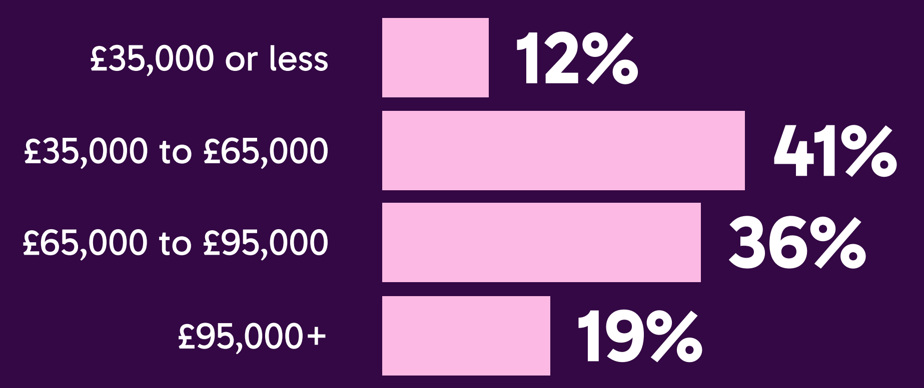
Well over half (54%) of men have taken time off work due to money worries, compared to just 16% of women. Meanwhile, managers are 5.2x more likely to have taken time off compared to non-managers. Perhaps this is an indication that managers feel more empowered to take time off when they need it?

Those in single-income households were twice as likely to take time off as those in dual-income households. This could be because they have less financial resilience or, if an issue requires them to take time off, they may not have another adult at home that can do so.

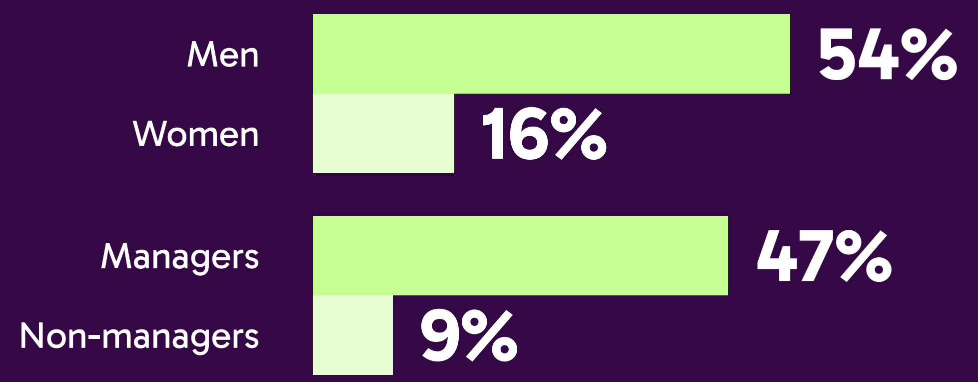
Ultimately, we should consider equality of opportunity here. If certain groups don't feel empowered to take time off when needed, then their suffering will be hidden from the organisation, and may lead to reduced productivity, engagement, and increased attrition. And it seems HR is not aware of the scale of this issue, with 45% underestimating how many employees have taken time off work due to financial stress.

"I have taken time off work due to money worries."

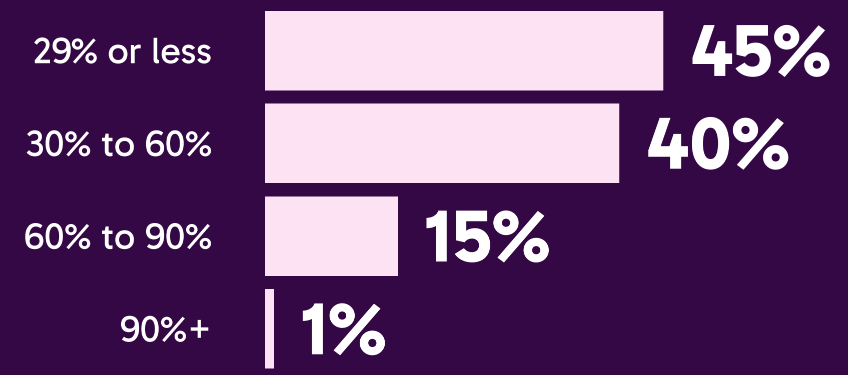
By income level



By characteristic



What percentage of your employees, if any, do you think have taken time off work because of financial stress?



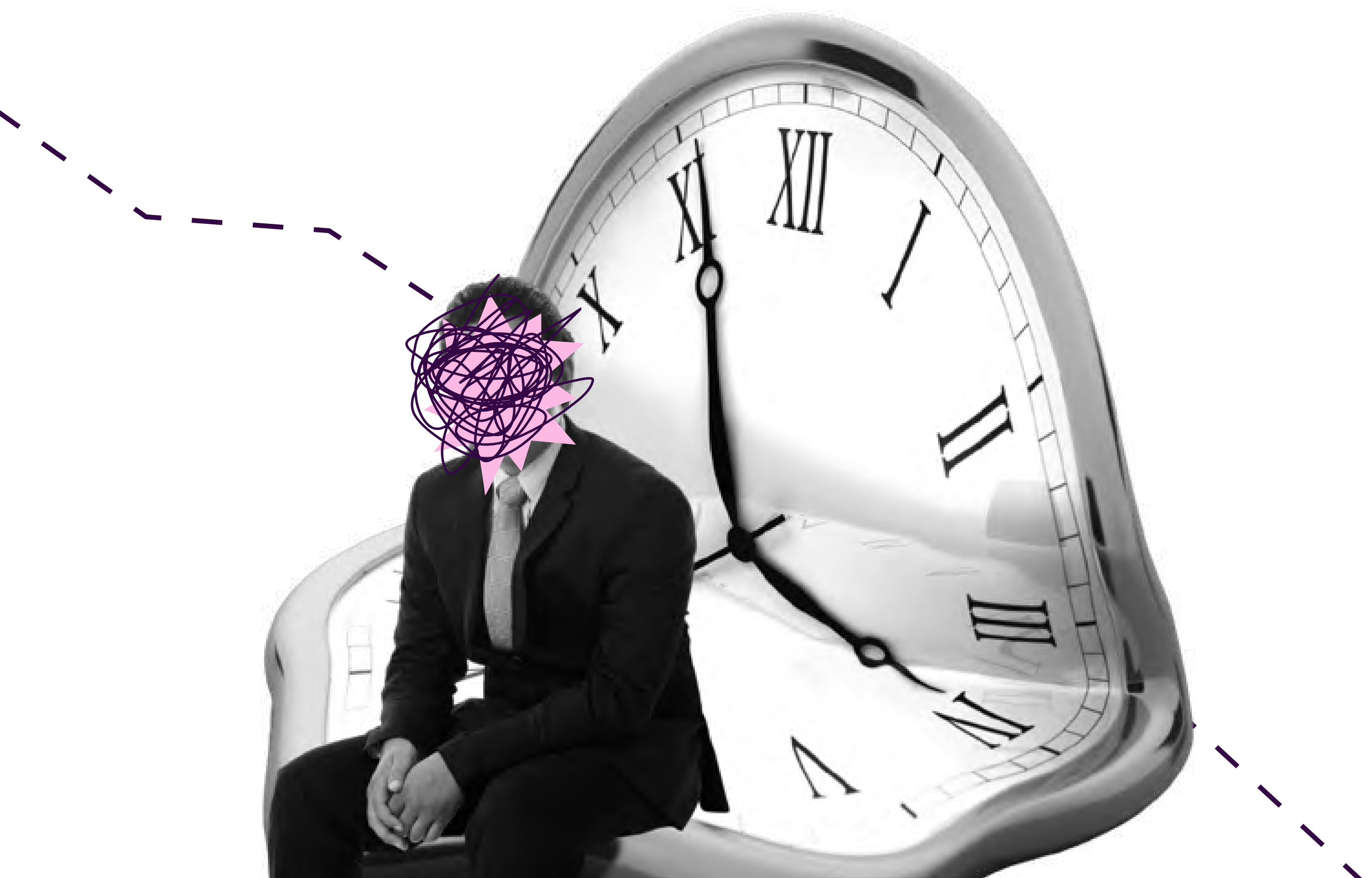
Financial presenteeism is a problem in some groups

As we saw earlier, certain cohorts have a high proportion of individuals worrying daily about money. Unfortunately, these groups also report high levels of distraction in the workplace due to money worries.

Across the entire UK employee base surveyed for this report, 50% say they have been unfocused or distracted at work due to money worries. Men are 1.5x more likely to be distracted or unfocused at work than women, while managers are 1.9x more likely to be distracted than non-managers.

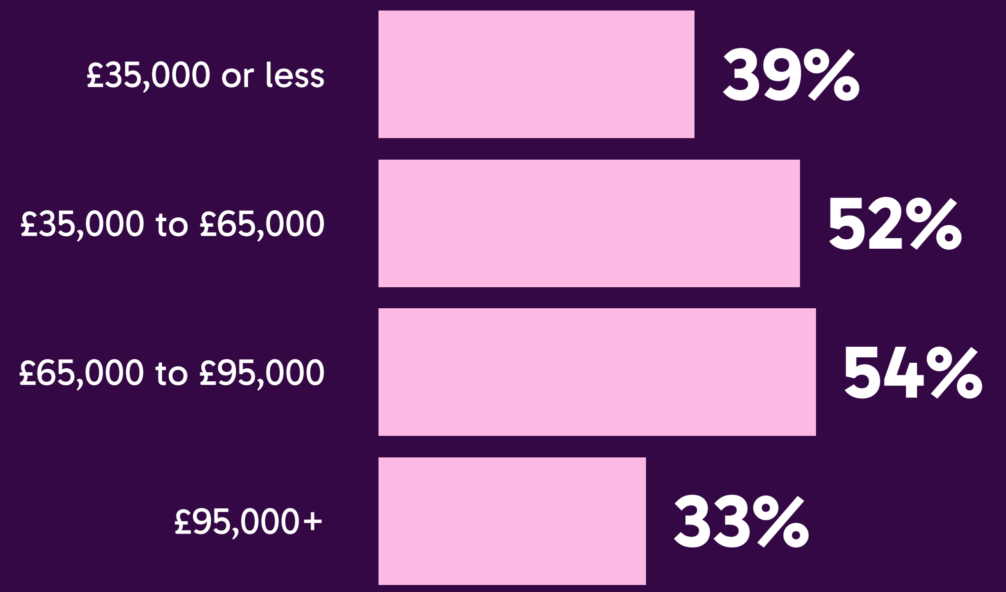
Living in a single or dual-income household also makes a difference. Over half (58%) of those in single-income households reported being distracted at work, compared to 43% from dual-income households.

Interestingly, those on lower incomes report being less distracted at work, as do those on higher incomes. It may be that these groups have alternative coping mechanisms than those across the middle of the income range, who report much higher levels of distraction at work.

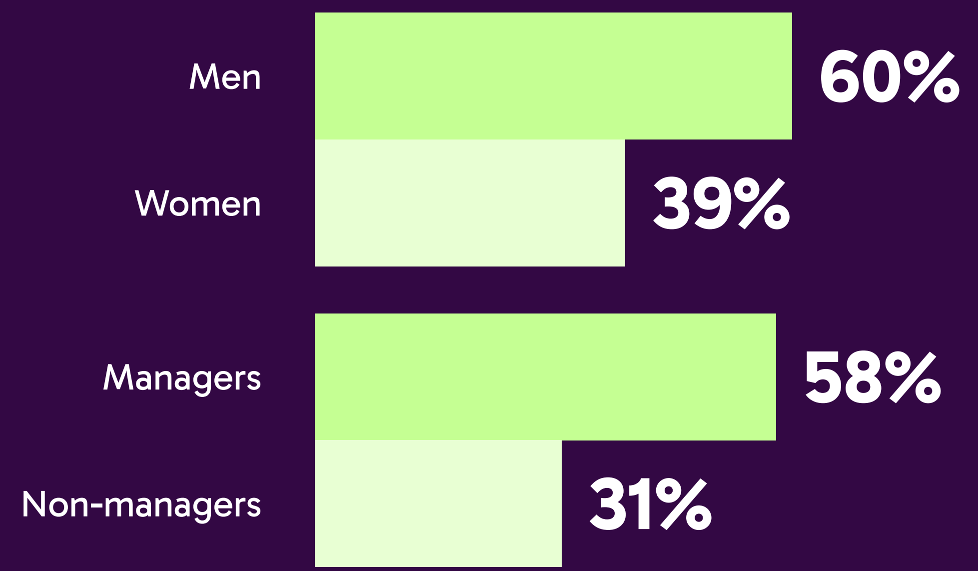


"I have been distracted or unfocused at work due to financial stress."

By income level



By characteristic



Financial wellbeing efforts are leaving some feeling unsupported

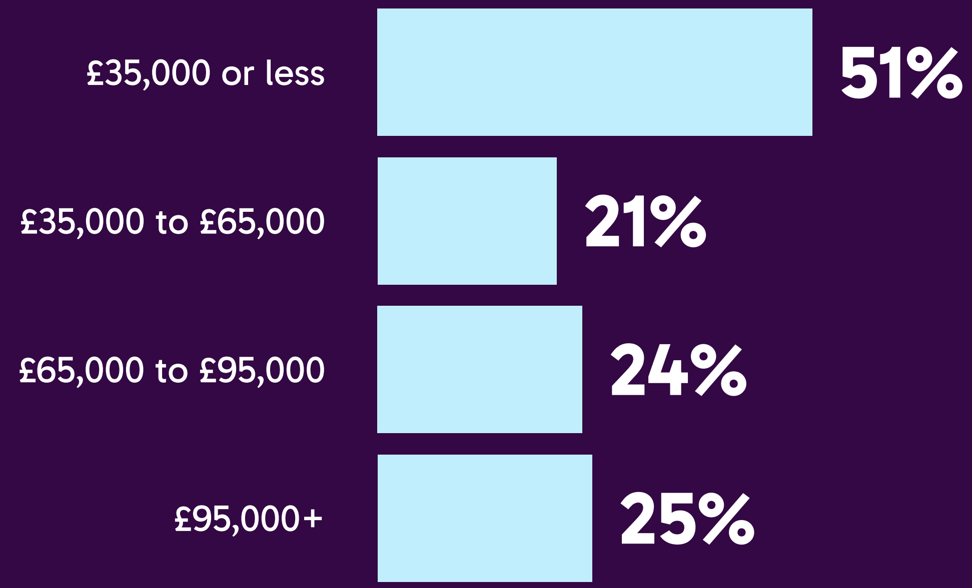
Well over half (56%) of men say that their employer provides financial support that's appropriate to their needs, compared to just 31% of women. Additionally, well over a third (38%) of women actively disagree that their employer provides appropriate support, compared to 15% of men.

We see even starker differences when it comes to managers and non-managers. Over half of managers (54%) say their employer provides appropriate support, compared to just 20% of non-managers. Non-managers are also twice as likely to actively disagree that their employer provides appropriate support.

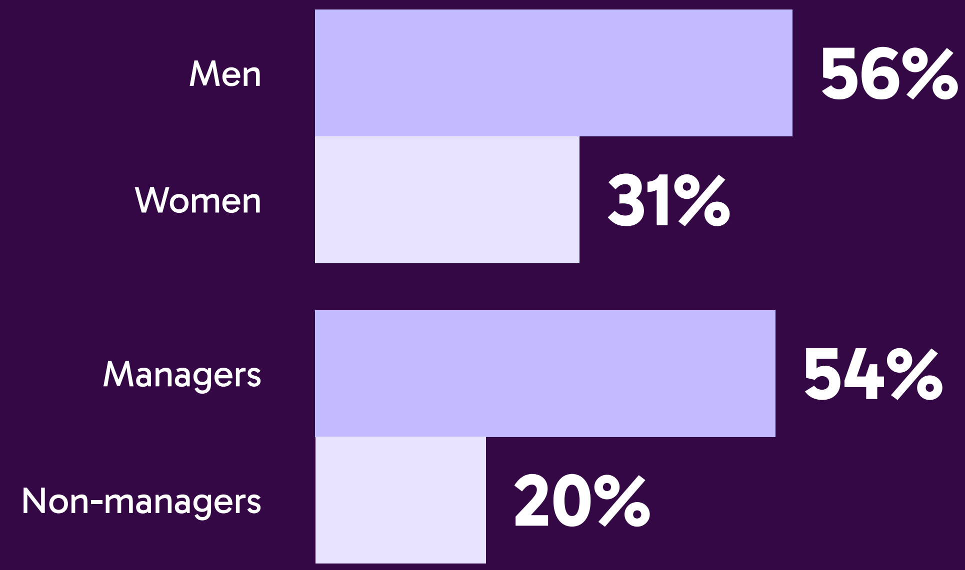
The same discrepancies appear when we look across the last 12 months. More than double the managers (55%) than non-managers (22%) say their employer has increased the amount of financial support in the last 12 months. Meanwhile, over half (57%) of men say their employer has increased support, compared to 33% of women.

When we break it down by household income (see graph), we find that half of those on lower pay actively disagree that their employer provides financial support that aligns with their needs. This suggests there may be a significant barrier for lower earners to access the financial support they need.

"My employer provides inappropriate support for me."



"My employer provides financial support that aligns with my needs."



Conflicting priorities are causing decision paralysis

We asked employees what the biggest blocker was to them making better financial decisions. Overall, a quarter (24%) of UK employees say conflicting priorities are the biggest blocker. This suggests they are struggling to make sense of the complexity of their financial lives in the absence of expert guidance.

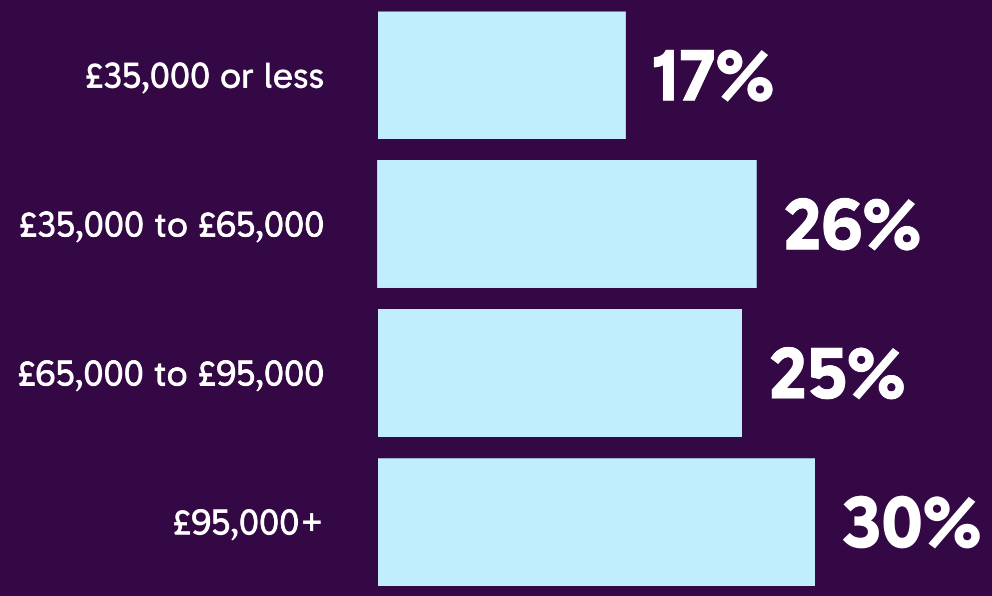
Some groups were more affected by this issue than others. Those with dependent children are 1.7x more likely to say that conflicting priorities were the biggest blocker, unsurprising given the emotional, mental, and financial burdens of parenting.

Women were over 2x more likely to say that there was actually no biggest blocker to them making better financial decisions, perhaps suggesting that they were struggling to identify the root cause of any issues. This effect was even bigger when looking at non-managers, who were 3x more likely than managers to say nothing was their biggest barrier.

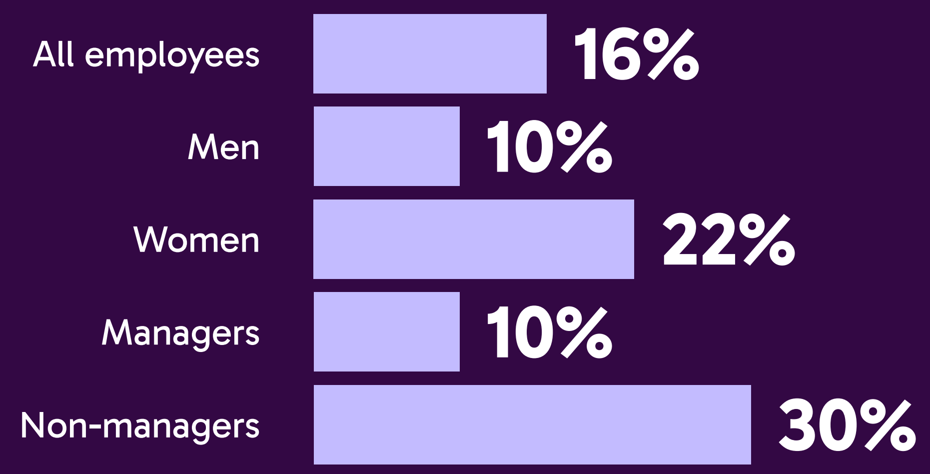
Interestingly, single parents were less likely to identify conflicting priorities and more likely to identify a lack of time as their biggest blocker to making financial decisions. Single-income households and lower earners were also much less likely to cite conflicting priorities.

But what is the reason for these discrepancies? It might be because those with less time and less disposable income have fewer options available to them, so don't have the luxury of needing to prioritise.

"Conflicting priorities are the biggest blocker to me making better financial decisions."



"There is no main blocker to me making better financial decisions."



Employees turning to inappropriate places for financial support

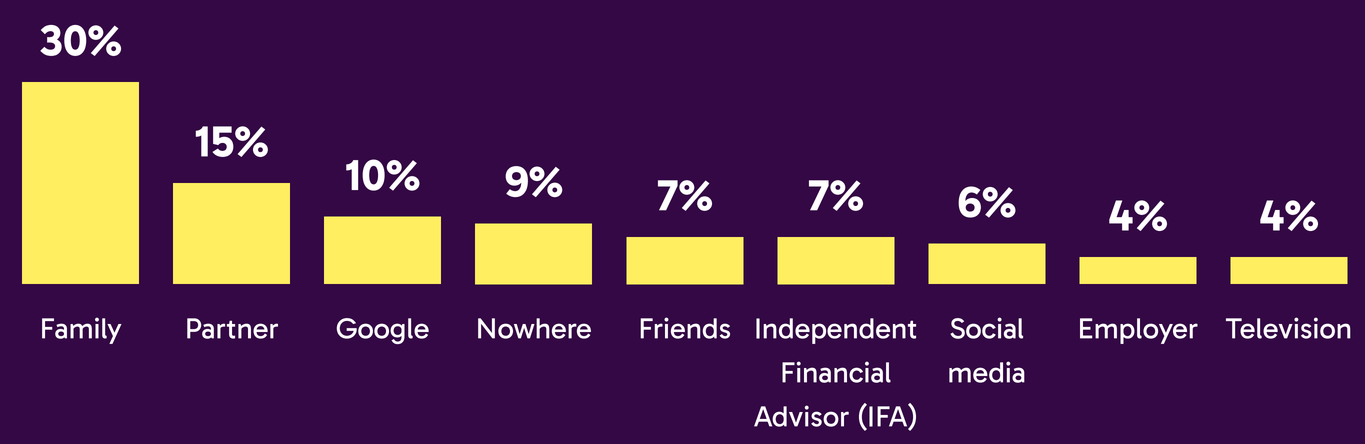
Fewer than one in 20 (4%) employees say they would be most likely to approach their organisation if worried about money. Although there are some variations, this is relatively stable across all groups. That includes HR professionals, who would rather turn to Google (14%) and social media (11%) for financial guidance than share their financial concerns with their employer (10%).

The impact of this cultural issue at work is that employees are relying on inappropriate forms of financial support when they have money worries. Close to one in three (30%) would turn to their family, who are unlikely to have the knowledge and expertise to help with their unique needs.

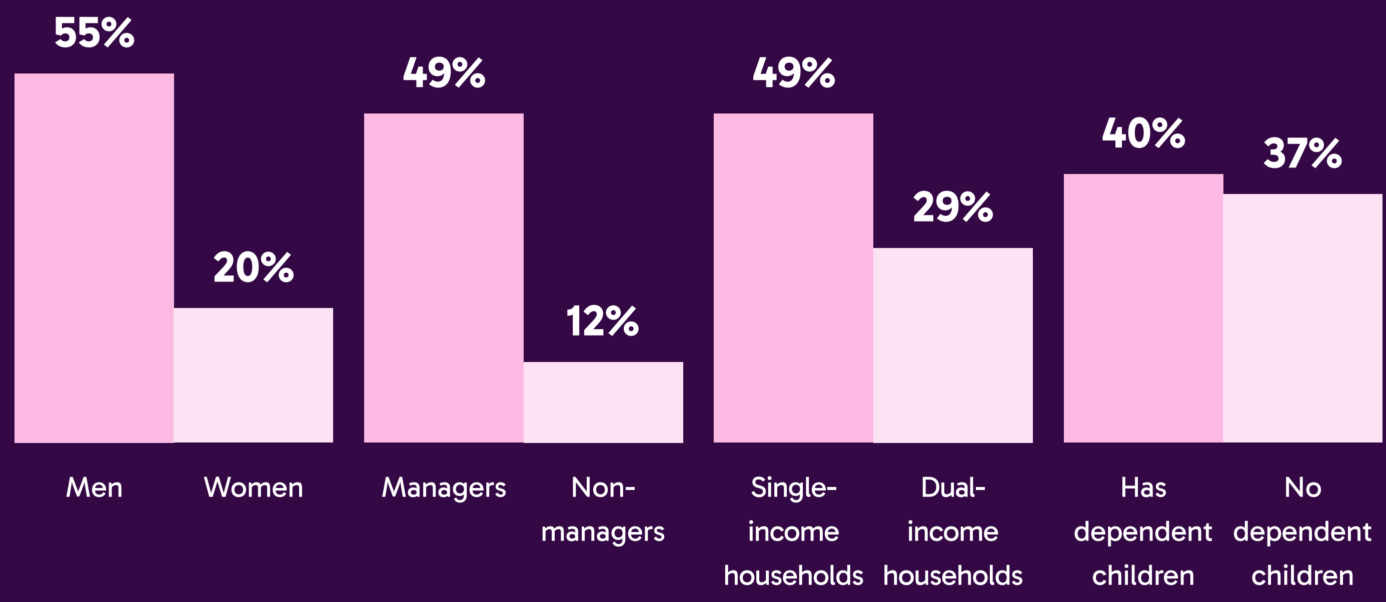
A further 10% would turn to Google, which could ultimately see them landing anywhere on the internet. This is especially concerning because 39% of employees say they have followed financial guidance that has had a negative impact on them. Over a quarter (26%) say this guidance came from social media, and one in 10 (11%) said it came from their family.

Some employees feel like they have no support: just under one in 10 (9%) say they have nowhere to turn when they're worried about money. This increases to 14% for women and 19% for non-managers, meaning one in five of your non-managers has no main outlet for their financial anxiety. When people have no outlet for their financial worries, they become more vulnerable and may be more likely to fall prey to scams.

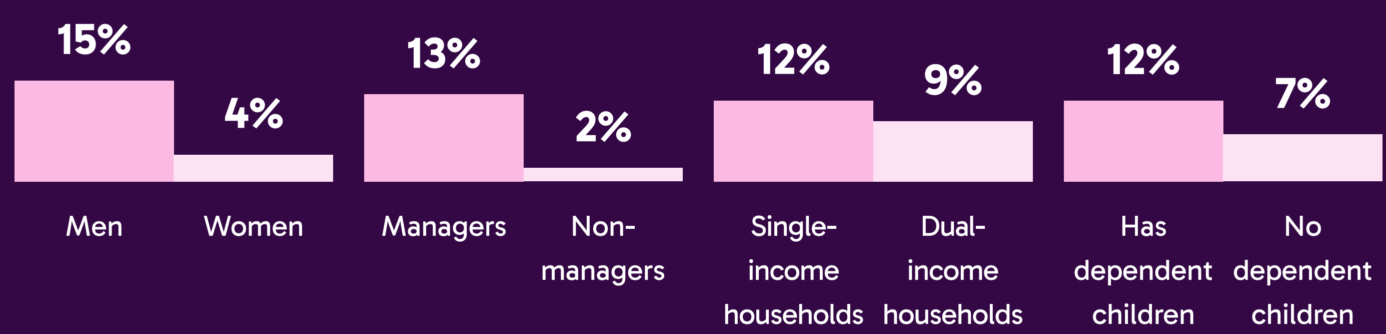
Where are you most likely to go if you're worried about money?



"I have followed financial guidance that has had a negative impact on me."



"The financial guidance that had a negative impact came from social media."



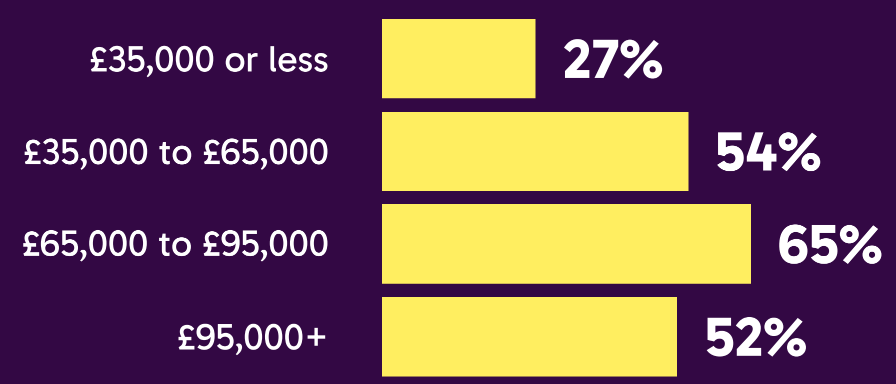
Financial advice gap is wider for some employees

We asked employees if they would want to talk to a professional expert about their financial concerns if it was free of charge, and whether they had already spoken to a financial expert already. Across all respondents, 74% would like to talk to a professional expert and 52% have previously accessed this type of support. However, when we break these figures down by cohort, we find some serious inclusion challenges.

Well over two-thirds (69%) of men have spoken to a financial expert, compared to 33% of women. Those on lower incomes were much less likely to have spoken to a financial expert, while the individuals most likely to have spoken to a financial expert had incomes in the middle. In the most highly-paid groups, we found that just over half had spoken to experts.

When we look at how many people would like to talk to an expert, we find that over three-quarters (79%) of men want to do so, along with 69% of women. The figures are 77% for managers and 67% for non-managers. When we compare these figures to the numbers that have actually spoken to a financial expert, there appears to be a barrier to access.

"I have spoken to a financial expert about my finances."



Section 2

How financial inclusion affects different groups (and what you can do about it)

Contents

NOTE: The cohort profiles below are designed to help organisations tailor their wellbeing programmes more effectively. They are based on broad survey data and do not take into account individual lived experience, personality traits, and other characteristics. After all, everyone is an individual with their own unique situation.

Women

Overview of inclusion barriers, in comparison to men:

3.1x
more likely to worry about money daily.

3x
less likely to have told their employer about their money worries.

3.4x
less likely to have taken time off work because of money worries.

2.6x
more likely to say that they don't have a main source of financial education.

2.5x
more likely to disagree that their employer provides appropriate financial support.

Less than half
as likely to have spoken to an expert about money.

Commentary

There are clear barriers to access here. Women do not have a main source of financial education, and are far less likely to have spoken to an expert. They're also 3x more likely to say their employer provides no financial support, yet their satisfaction when using financial wellbeing support is broadly similar to men. For some reason the support is not landing in their hands.

Secondly, while women are a lot more likely to worry about money every day, they're far less likely to take time off or be distracted at work.

Is this because they have alternative coping mechanisms, or because they don't feel they can take time off? If it's the latter, there could be a much higher risk of burnout.

More women (18%) also report that they are not confident managing their money, compared to 8% of men. Only half (52%) say they have a good relationship with money, compared to 70% of men.

What can I do?

- [ ] Call out the different challenges that men and women face when it comes to financial wellbeing. Be bold and acknowledge that these differences are real and affect your workforce, which will encourage people to talk more openly about financial wellbeing.
- [ ] Women are more affected by stigma than men, so encourage members of your female networks to share their money stories with others. Provide support directly via women's networks, using the existing safe space to allow people to learn and grow together.
- [ ] Proactively signpost your financial wellbeing support at every key life/career event, but especially maternity leave. This is one of the most financially-impactful events and specialist financial support can ensure households thrive.

Something to think about

If you're using absenteeism data to measure the impact of poor financial wellbeing, bear in mind that female financial stress may be significantly underrepresented as women are less likely to take time off.

Men

Overview of inclusion barriers, in comparison to women:

2.8x
more likely to have followed financial guidance that had a negative impact on them.

1.5x
more likely to say that unexpected costs are worrying them most about money.

2.3x
less likely to go to their partner if they're worried about money.

3.4x
more likely to have taken time off work due to money worries.

1.8x
more likely to say social media is their main source of financial education.

1.5x
more likely to have been distracted or unfocused at work due to financial stress.

Commentary

Men seem particularly exposed to following poor financial guidance, which could be a problem if they're experiencing acute financial distress. This may come from social media, as they're more likely to use this as a source of financial guidance. They're also much more likely to have taken time off work to deal with money worries and be distracted in the workplace due to money worries. Yet they worry less about money than women, perhaps suggesting they have more outlets for dealing with it.

More positively, men think better of their employer when it comes to financial wellbeing. They're more likely to confide when they have money worries, they perceive more support is available to them, and they are more likely to have used that support. Does this mean we're designing financial wellbeing strategies to better target men's needs, or is there something else going on?

What can I do?

- [ ] Add 'financial stress' as an absence reason on your HR system. Men seem more likely to take time off due to money worries and this will help you track and support them, although bear in mind it may take some time before people feel comfortable self-reporting in this way.
- [ ] Educate your teams on the sources of inappropriate financial guidance and how dangerous they can be. Men seem to be particularly susceptible to poor financial guidance on social media, and it's important we inform our workforce on its pros and cons.
- [ ] Signpost to trusted and credible sources, and make sure you do your homework. The government lists free and educational resources, as will your EAP if you have one.

Something to think about

Could targeted financial wellbeing support for men focus on helping them manage financial stress before it escalates? How can you provide education that builds resilience while counteracting the influence of social media misinformation?

Single-income households

Overview of inclusion barriers, in comparison to dual-income households:

1.7x
more likely to say that work is their primary stressor.

1.8x
more likely to share their money worries with their employer.

1.9x
more likely to take time off work due to money worries.

1.3x
more likely to be unfocused or distracted at work due to money worries.

2.2x
more likely to say that social media is their main source of financial education.

Commentary

Single-income households face direct financial pressures, in that they are likely to have less money coming in than a household with two earners. But they also seem more isolated. They're much more likely to turn to social media as their main source of financial education. In fact, those in single-income households are half as likely to turn to family as their main source of financial education.

They also seem more vulnerable, with more time taken off due to money worries and more time spent being distracted at work. Overall, single-income households are in need, more vulnerable and should be treated as such. This is unsurprising, as they are a single point of financial failure for the household, and that's a lot of pressure on one person's shoulders.

What can I do?

- [ ] Do you know how many of your employees are in single-income households? Start collecting this data, for example in an employee survey. Without knowing this, it can be hard to direct appropriate support to this vulnerable section of your workforce.
- [ ] Train managers to look for the signs of financial distress among their teams. Single-income households seem more likely to reach out if they have worries, but the appropriate structures still need to be in place to facilitate this - trained and attentive managers are critical.
- [ ] Speak to your networks (if you have them) to sense-check what they think. Often organisations have groups of employees who are happy to be vocal and represent their colleagues' voices. This is a great way to better understand the needs of your people around topics that matter.

Something to think about

Single-income households have fewer support structures in place and so may need more help with their financial wellbeing. How can you build proactive financial wellbeing strategies that offer specific, ongoing support to single-income households throughout different stages of their career and life? Would tailoring your communications based on household type increase engagement?

Parents with dependent children

Overview of inclusion barriers, in comparison to those without dependent children:

1.7x
more likely to say 'conflicting priorities' are their biggest blocker to making better financial decisions.

1.2x
more likely to say that money is their biggest driver of stress.

1.3x
more likely to say that 'unexpected costs' is worrying them most about money.

1.8x
more likely to say that family is their main source of financial education.

1.3x
more likely to turn to family when stressed about money.

1.5x
more likely to say that negative financial guidance they've followed came from social media.

Commentary

There are lots of financial demands on parents, as well as demands on time, sleep, and attention, so it's no surprise that 'conflicting priorities' was seen as such a blocker to making better financial decisions. Not having the headspace to make sense of options can lead to a lack of action when it comes to money.

It's, again, no surprise that those with dependent children are more stressed generally about money, considering the financial impact of having children, and also that unexpected costs are worrying them the most. Greater costs and pressure on often reduced household income means that unexpected costs can hit parents hard.

There's a natural reliance on family for financial support, which at first glance may seem like something to celebrate. But it's important to note that family members are rarely financial experts. Indeed, well-meaning advice can be misguided, and parents with dependent children need independent professional guidance as much as anyone else.

What can I do?

- [ ] Review your flexible working policy. It may disadvantage parents with dependent children. One of the biggest financial pressures for this group is childcare costs, which can rise dramatically if they do not have flexibility around working hours or shifts.
- [ ] Provide content and support that accommodates the time-poor nature of parents, such as short, accessible articles or quick coaching calls during non-working hours.

Something to think about

Does your financial wellbeing strategy help people make sense of their options? Conflicting priorities and a lack of time (and sleep, where new parents are concerned) can make people feel overwhelmed and confused by what they could do, which makes it harder to get them the support they need.

Non-managers

Overview of inclusion barriers, in comparison to managers:

1.9x
more likely to have used no financial wellbeing benefits offered by their employer.

5.8x
less likely to have told their employer about their money worries.

2.7x
less likely to say their employer provides appropriate financial support at work.

2.5x
less likely to say their organisation has increased financial support in the last 12 months.

2x
less likely to say they're open and honest with their employer about money.

2.6x
less likely to say they've spoken to a professional financial expert about their money.

2.3x
more likely to worry about money every day.

5.2x
less likely to have taken time off due to financial stress.

Commentary

Non-managers are psychologically 'further away' from the organisation's decision making, which means they receive less information that takes longer to filter down. This may be the driving force behind some clear barriers to better financial wellbeing when compared to managers.

Isolation appears to be a key theme for non-managers, with significant levels of stigma, as well as poor perception and use of the financial wellbeing benefits on offer. Connecting with, and empowering, non-managers needs to be a focus for organisations.

What can I do?

- [ ] Start segmenting your employees by manager and non-manager, for example in engagement surveys and when delivering wellbeing comms. It's clear they have very different experiences of work and this will help you deliver more targeted support.
- [ ] Start to develop a network of financial wellbeing champions. Not everyone has a good relationship with their manager and this may explain, in some cases, why non-managers don't feel safe to share their financial concerns at work. Money champions can help leapfrog the manager relationship and give employees another route to gain support.

Something to think about

Non-managers are much less likely to take time off work due to financial issues. They may not feel empowered to do so, or perhaps they are concerned about the impact on the organisation. Do you have a hidden presenteeism issue?

Managers

Overview of inclusion barriers, in comparison to non-managers:

5.8x
more likely to have told their employer about their money worries.

2x
more likely to say they're open and honest with their employer about money.

4.1x
more likely to have followed financial guidance that had a negative impact.

1.4x
more likely to say that negative financial guidance they've followed came from social media.

Commentary

Managers are more connected with the organisation, it seems. They're more aware of how things fit together, and are more likely to be in regular contact with HR. As managers, they are more informed on resourcing, which may explain why they feel more empowered to take time off work for money worries.

It's also encouraging that managers tend to think positively about the employer in terms of the financial support on offer. Organisations should think about how to tap into these advocates who, after all, are in daily contact with the rest of the workforce.

However, it's important that we recognise their financial barriers too. For example, over one in 10 (13%) UK managers worry about money every day, which is significant, while almost one in five (19%) haven't used any of the financial benefits on offer.

Managers are also much more likely than non-managers to have followed financial guidance that had a negative impact on them. They also seem more susceptible to social media as a source of inappropriate financial guidance. Meanwhile, both groups show a high level of concern over their savings rate (over 70%).

What can I do?

- [ ] Train your managers to better spot the signs of poor financial wellbeing in their teams. Over two-thirds (67%) say they are confident doing so, but their lived experience is markedly different, which may lead to blind spots.
- [ ] Make sure you're targeting your managers with support too. It's easy to compare them to non-managers, but they still have their own concerns. If they're struggling, it will be harder for them to support their teams. Who do they talk to when they need support in the workplace? Make sure they don't think that asking for support is a sign of weakness.
- [ ] Poll them on where they access support from and why. As a group willing to access financial guidance, but having been burnt by risky support previously, it could be helpful to understand why they chose the route they did in order to firstly signpost them to trusted support, but also to equip them in signposting their teams to that too.

Something to think about

Are managers equipped to deliver financial wellbeing messages effectively, and are they receiving the support they need to maintain their own financial wellbeing? How can you empower them to be champions of financial health within their teams?

Higher earners (£75,000+)

Overview of inclusion barriers, in comparison to lower and middle earners:

2.4x
less likely to have told their employer about their money worries than middle earners.

2.1x
less likely to take time off because of financial stress than middle earners.

1.2x
more likely than *middle earners* to say ‘conflicting priorities’ are their biggest barrier to better financial decisions.

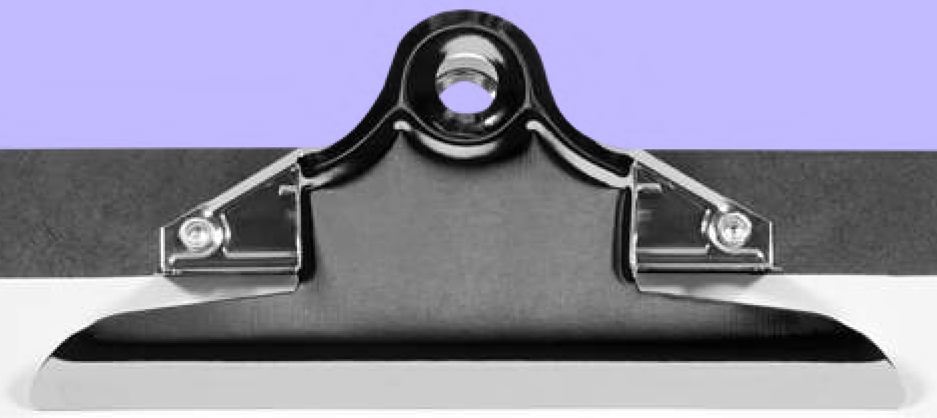
1.7x
more likely than *lower earners* to say ‘conflicting priorities’ are their biggest barrier to better financial decisions.

As likely
to be distracted or unfocused at work than lower earners.

Commentary

It’s easy to think that money makes your troubles go away, but higher earners certainly experience barriers to financial wellbeing. Conflicting priorities remain a problem for higher-earners, perhaps driven by lifestyle creep, although higher earners may be later in life and experiencing greater financial responsibilities, or perhaps financial challenges such as divorce, bereavement, or caring for elderly parents.

Higher earners are more affected by stigma than middle earners, possibly because they may be in positions of more authority, and feel that disclosing financial concerns could threaten their reputation or role.



What can I do?

- [ ] Educate your high earners on the significant efficiencies they can experience through increasing their pensions contributions. You’d be surprised by the number of people who drift into higher tax bands without understanding their ability to limit their tax exposure through better retirement planning.
- [ ] Higher-earners are more likely to be in positions of authority, so they may feel like financial wellbeing support offered is for other people and not them. This can be isolating, so sharing stories from ‘people like them’ is key, as is giving them an outlet where they can voice their worries without being concerned how that may appear to others.
- [ ] Promote a financial planning mindset and educate your workforce on the concept of lifestyle creep during pay review cycles. When you earn more, it doesn’t necessarily mean you are better off overall. In fact, our research found that every income group saves less than they want and say unexpected costs are the main reason they can’t save, so this is a lesson that will resonate with all.

Something to think about

Could you focus more on the financial stressors faced by higher earners, such as complex tax situations, lifestyle creep, or financial planning for later life? How can you support this group in making the most of their income without falling into financial pitfalls?

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