

A look at
**Workplace
Wellbeing**
in 2022 and
beyond



In our final article of 2022, we reflect on the past year and look ahead to 2023 and beyond.

Introduction

While the world is returning to a normal that we are more familiar with, 2022 was not without its own challenges. How we work continues to adapt and shift. Commenting on the challenges facing HR, Professor David Collings, Professor of Human Resource Management and Contributor to Irish Life Health of the Nation Research at DCU said:

“The last two years have been transformative for work in every organisation, there has been changes to how people work, where people work and why people work. The most obvious manifestation of that is hybrid working. Health was obviously a real concern at the beginning of the pandemic and the focus on wellbeing has been one of the positives to emerge from the pandemic.’

The Irish Life Health of the Nation survey results showed that while overall health maintained a consistent level pre pandemic to during the pandemic, relational health and wellbeing were significantly impacted; in that people suffered from a lack of personal relationships when out of the workplace.”



‘There was decrease in work life balance with no fixed start or end to the day. The survey showed that almost half of respondents said that the most important aspect of their current role is having a work life balance. The pandemic has changed our focus on work life balance. Purpose and wellbeing have become priorities.’

Prof David Collings
DCU

Hybrid / Flexible Working

Looking towards 2023 we asked Stacey Machesney, Head of Health and Wellbeing, Irish Life, what she believes the emerging Workplace Wellbeing trends will be in 2023 and beyond.

Workplace wellbeing trends

Stacey says 'Many organisations are still redefining what the 'work environment' really means to its employees. On the one hand, hybrid working is seen as a must in attracting new talent and retaining their best employees in the near-future. On the other hand, managers are faced with employees who do not necessarily want to come back to the office at all.'

Research from the Microsoft Work Trend Index 2022¹ found that:



82%

82% of business decision makers say getting employees back to the office in person is a concern in the coming year, the fact is that people now expect flexibility and autonomy around how, when, and where they work.

85%

85% of leaders say the shift to hybrid work has made it challenging to have confidence that employees are being productive.

Stacey continued ‘Managing that balance between how we give people some autonomy yet have a workplace where we bring people together to work on collaborative tasks is difficult. I believe the debate has focused on how many days employees are in the office rather than why should we be together in the workplace; what do we do better together and then, how do we design a workplace that facilitates that collaboration when we are together.’

Hybrid working has changed how we work

For leaders it has meant different requirements in terms of how they manage employees that are not in the office. It has created challenges for HR around culture and trust amongst teams: how do you develop and build the connection and culture of a team and organisation in a virtual environment? How do you replace the importance of social cues and company updates that happen naturally in person and support growth and development of an individual?

In many organisations the ratio of office time and at-home time will vary, but companies will need to continue to trial and adapt. The research is very much evolving and there is no one solution as to what works best for an organisation and its employees.



Connecting with colleagues is a key motivation for working in person.

84%

84% of employees would be motivated by the promise of socialising with co-workers, while 85% would be motivated by rebuilding team bonds¹

85%

85% would be motivated by rebuilding team bonds¹.

Financial Wellbeing

Financial stability & wellbeing

The financial fallout of the last two years is still emerging and more recently we cannot escape the barrage of media coverage regarding the cost-of-living increases and the possibility of an economic downturn. Financial stability and wellbeing are intrinsically linked. Employees are nervous and anxious about what the future holds; this stress inevitably impacts job satisfaction, productivity and performance.

Financial stability and wellbeing are intrinsically linked



£2.5 billion

The amount it is estimated that UK employers lose each year due to financial distress.

Therefore, employers and leaders will need to find new ways to help by providing employees with the tools, support and education to build their own financial resilience. Many organisations are offering financial support as a standard part of their wellbeing programmes, including money management skills and financial planning for every stage of life.



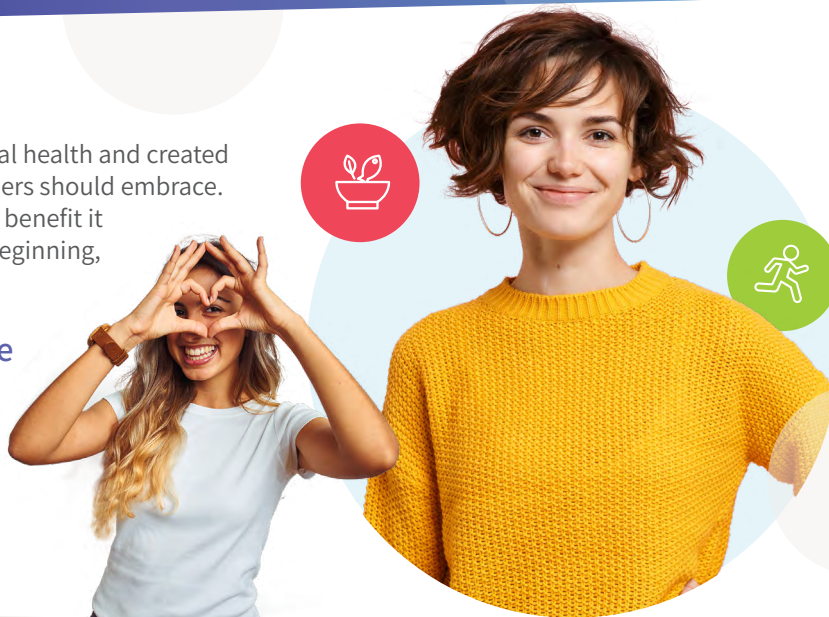
Health & Wellbeing

The pandemic effect

The pandemic has helped to destigmatise mental health and created a path to better working environments that leaders should embrace. This, along with hybrid working and the evident benefit it has on work-life balance, shows us it's just the beginning, with more to come.

Gen Z and Millennials in the workforce

Gen Z and millennials are gradually becoming the largest segment in the workforce. Typically more health-conscious and fitness-driven, organisations need to consider the kind of benefits and incentives that appeal to these individuals².



Impacts on our happiness and ability to work

Our everyday routines, sleeping patterns, exercise and stress levels impact our happiness and ability at work. The impact of health and wellbeing extends far beyond how people feel - it affects the number of sick days employees take, their job performance, burnout and likelihood of leaving your organization³.



Routines



Sleep



Exercise



Stress levels

Conclusion

The future of work

The world of work has undergone many dramatic changes in a short period of time, challenging HR leaders to understand how can they manage in these different ways: How can they upskill and reskill employees? How do they manage culture? And how do they manage wellbeing?

As we enter 2023, we continue to figure out what the future of work is going to look like.

Make a positive difference

To find out how we can use these findings to make a positive difference for your employees and ultimately for your business:

Link in with:
Your Dedicated Irish Life Health Account Manager
or Wellbeing Consultant at wellness@irishlife.ie.



References

¹Microsoft Work Trend Index 2022. Available at <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index>

²Deloitte Global GEN Z and Millennial Survey 2022. Available at <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/deloitte-millennial-survey.html>

³Gallup State of the Global Workplace: 2022 Report. Available at <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/349484/state-of-the-global-workplace.aspx>

⁴CIPD Financial wellbeing: an evidence review. Available at <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/evidence-financial-wellbeing>