



HR Network

Mental health at work

Dr Sally Wilson

Head of Workplace Health and Wellbeing Research

Event will start at 2.00pm

This event will / will not be recorded

 [@EmplmntStudies](https://twitter.com/EmplmntStudies)

[#MentalHealthAtWork](https://twitter.com/EmplmntStudies)

Overview of contents

- 14:10** Being strategic in formulating your organisation's approach to mental health
- 14:20** [Discussion in groups] Organisational culture and different starting points
- 14:35** Forms of support and the evidence base on what works, working towards best practice and ensuring your employees are on board
- 15:05** [Open discussion] Your thoughts about your next steps
- 15:15** Reflections on discussion
- 15:20** Sources of further information
- 15:30** Close



“We need to have a better understanding of what interventions work. This will involve better adoption of interventions by employers and clear reporting on what does and does not work”

**‘Thriving at Work’
The Stevenson / Farmer review of mental
health and employers (2017)**



**Evaluation
of HWB
initiatives**

**Training for line
managers**
Peer led initiatives
Enhanced OH offers

**Management of
specific conditions**
**Nudging healthy
behaviours**
**Supporting young
people at work**

**Exploratory
research to
understand
health at
work**



**Work to
inform
Government
policy**

**Closing the Disability
Gap**
**Job entry and
retention**
**Informal care and
work**

Mental health training for managers? A case of caveat emptor

Blog posts
8 Aug 2019

Stephen Bevan, Head of HR Research Development
Sally Wilson, Senior Research Fellow
Follow @StephenBevan



Compared with embrace serious celebration. T by any mean third sector certain res all contrib topic for One of worki conf way life th

Understanding the conditions for successful mental health training for managers
A randomised control trial to evaluate two training methods



RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

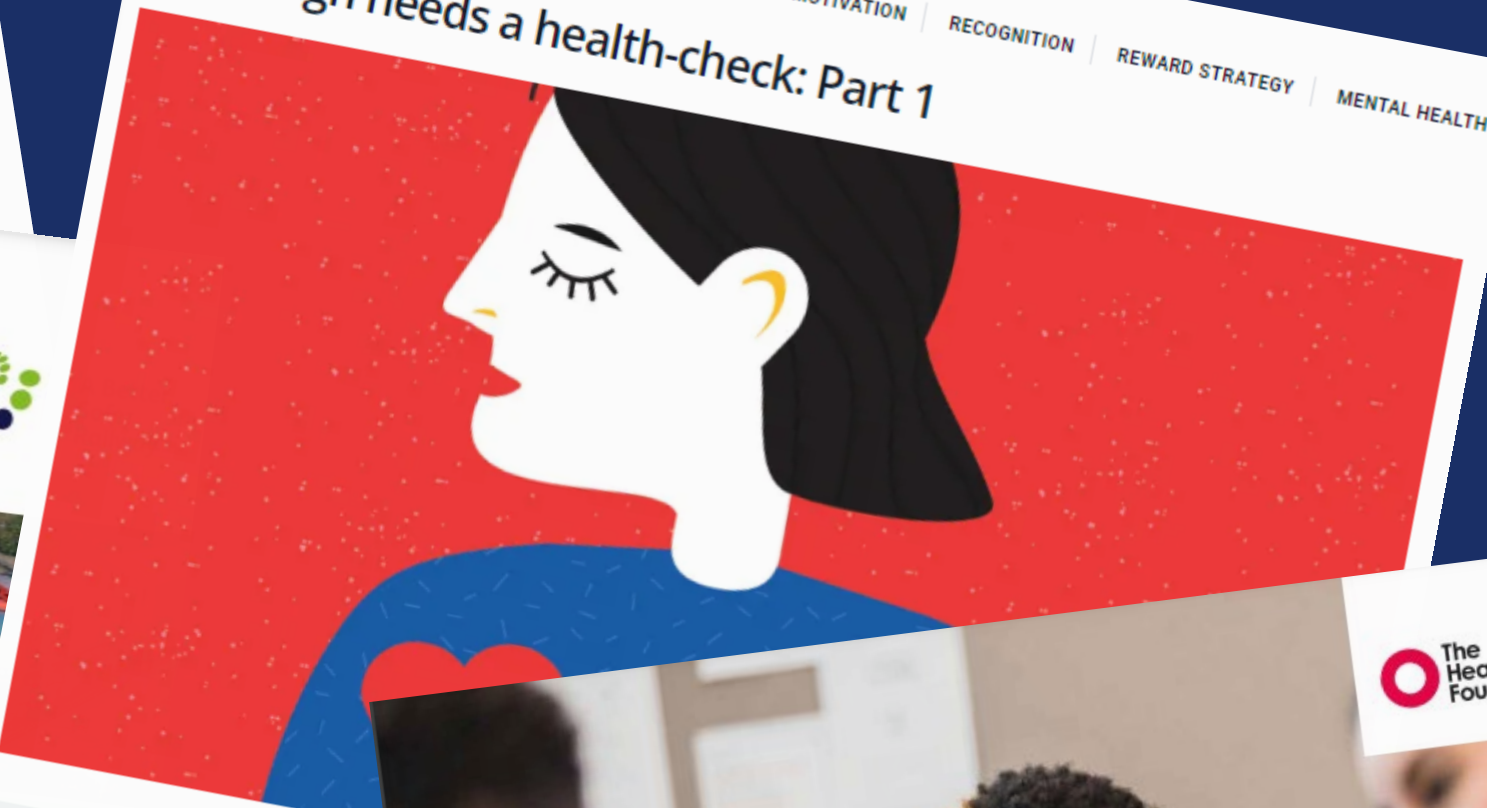


Abstract
What can HR specialists do if, after introducing a pilot intervention, they observe higher sickness absence and lower perceived wellbeing?
Our real-time study observed a pilot intervention followed by changes to each person's job. Two significant findings were that average levels of sickness absence had dropped and that listening and giving people a voice were key success factors.
If there is an EAP, wellbeing courses and gym discounts are a good time to look at job design instead, finds Alison Carter

Job design needs a health-check: Part 1

Alison Carter Sally Wilson
12 January 2023 · Features

INCENTIVE AND MOTIVATION | RECOGNITION | REWARD STRATEGY | MENTAL HEALTH



YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

A report for the Health Foundation's Young People's Future Health Inquiry



Company culture and health conditions: information for Restart participants

There are lots of reasons why a positive company culture can be beneficial for people with health conditions and their employers. For example, it can improve productivity. In addition, it helps employers keep their workforce, and it helps employees stay in their work.

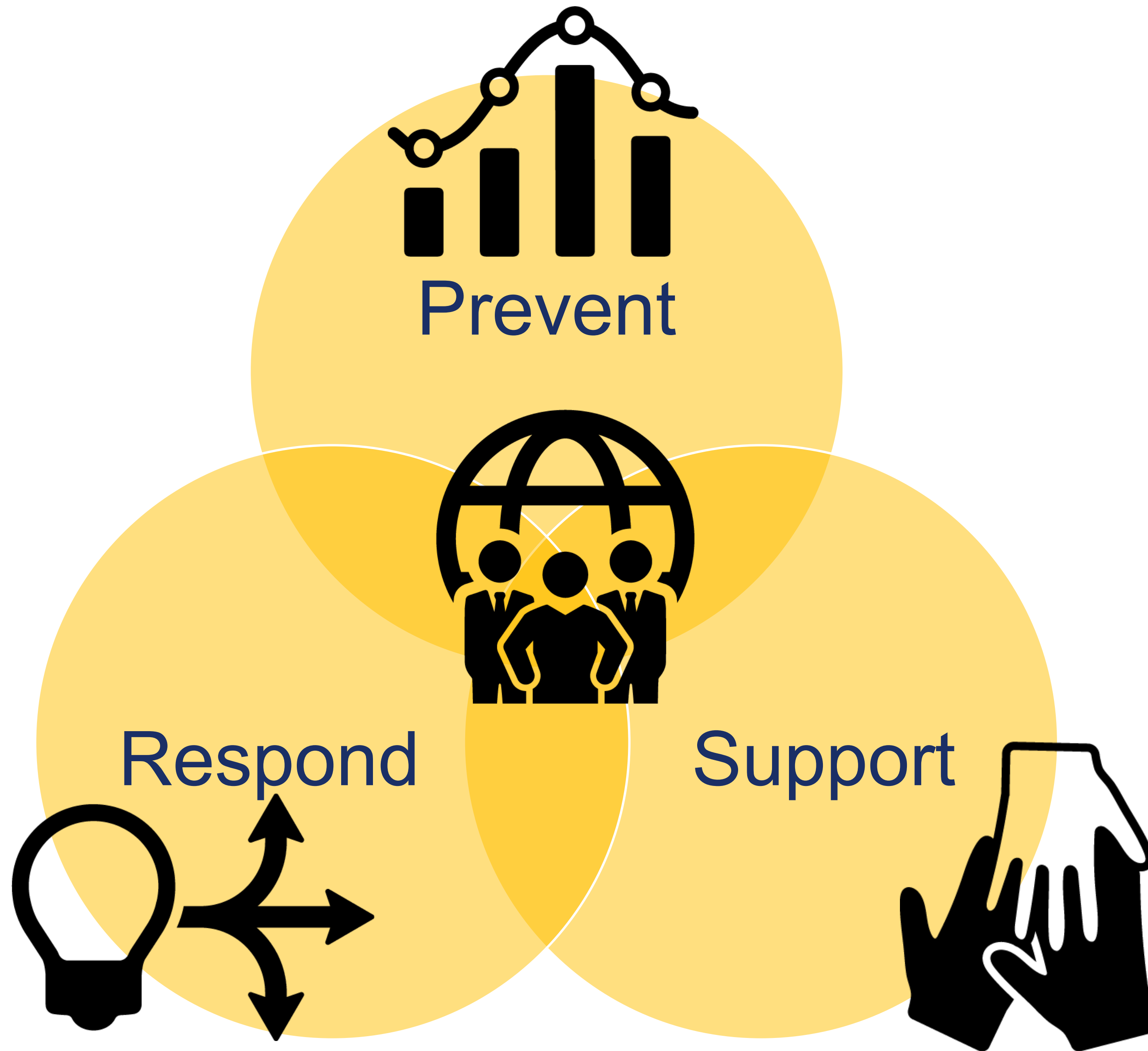


Supporting the mental health of self-employed construction workers

A study conducted by Mates in Mind and The Institute for Employment Studies (IES)
Funded by B&CE Charitable Trust

Stephen Bevan, Sarah Meek, Dan Lucy

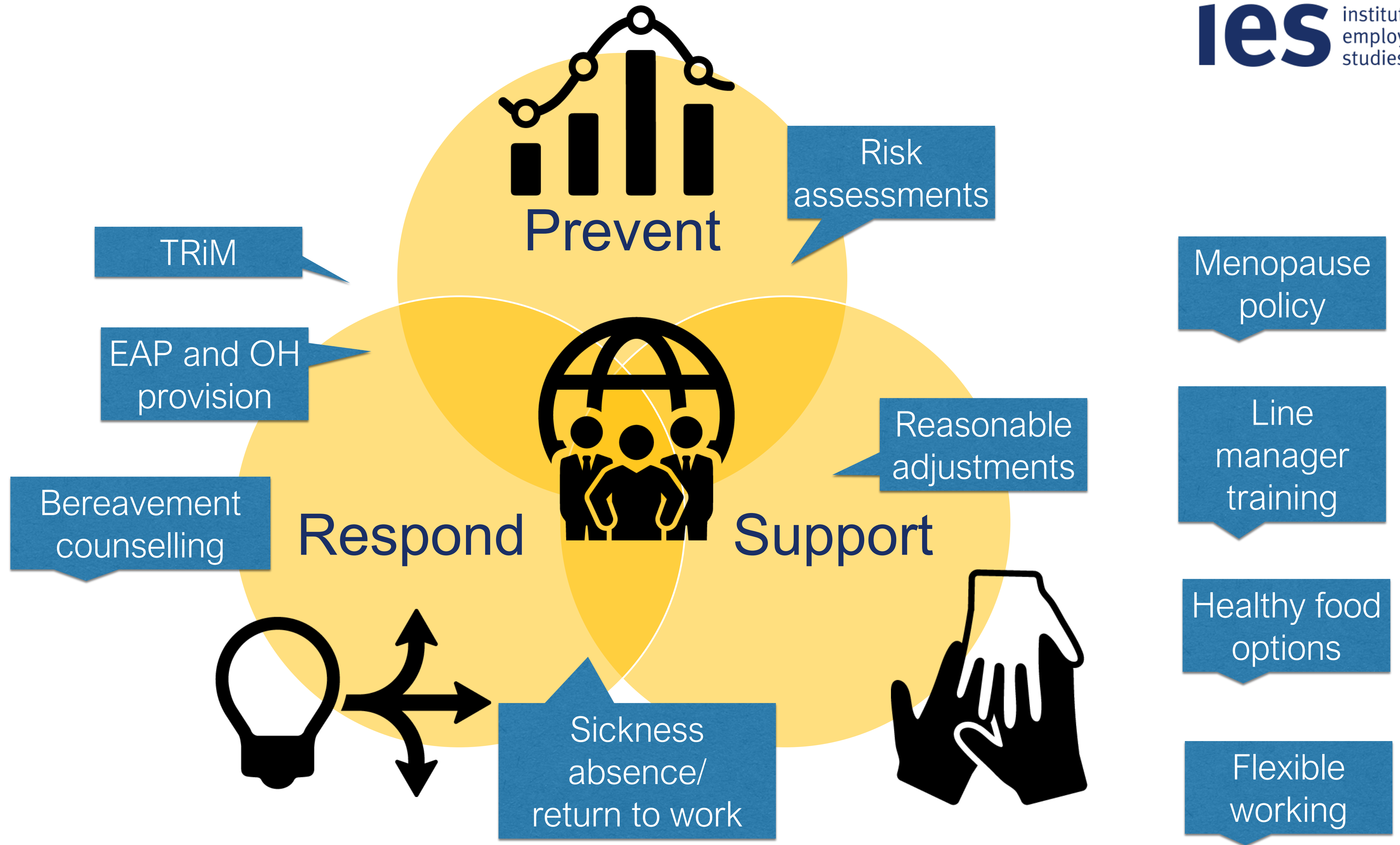




- Where are you starting from?
- What have you learned from progress to date?
- What are the relevant aspects of your organisational culture?
- What are your employees telling you?









Evidence of intervention effectiveness

- Anecdotal report
- ‘Grey literature’ , e.g. professional publications
- Peer review papers, e.g. results of trials



Evidence of provider credibility

- Personal recommendation
- Trusted brand (e.g. private health provider, established charity)
- Individual credentials (e.g. clinical/coaching/lived experience)



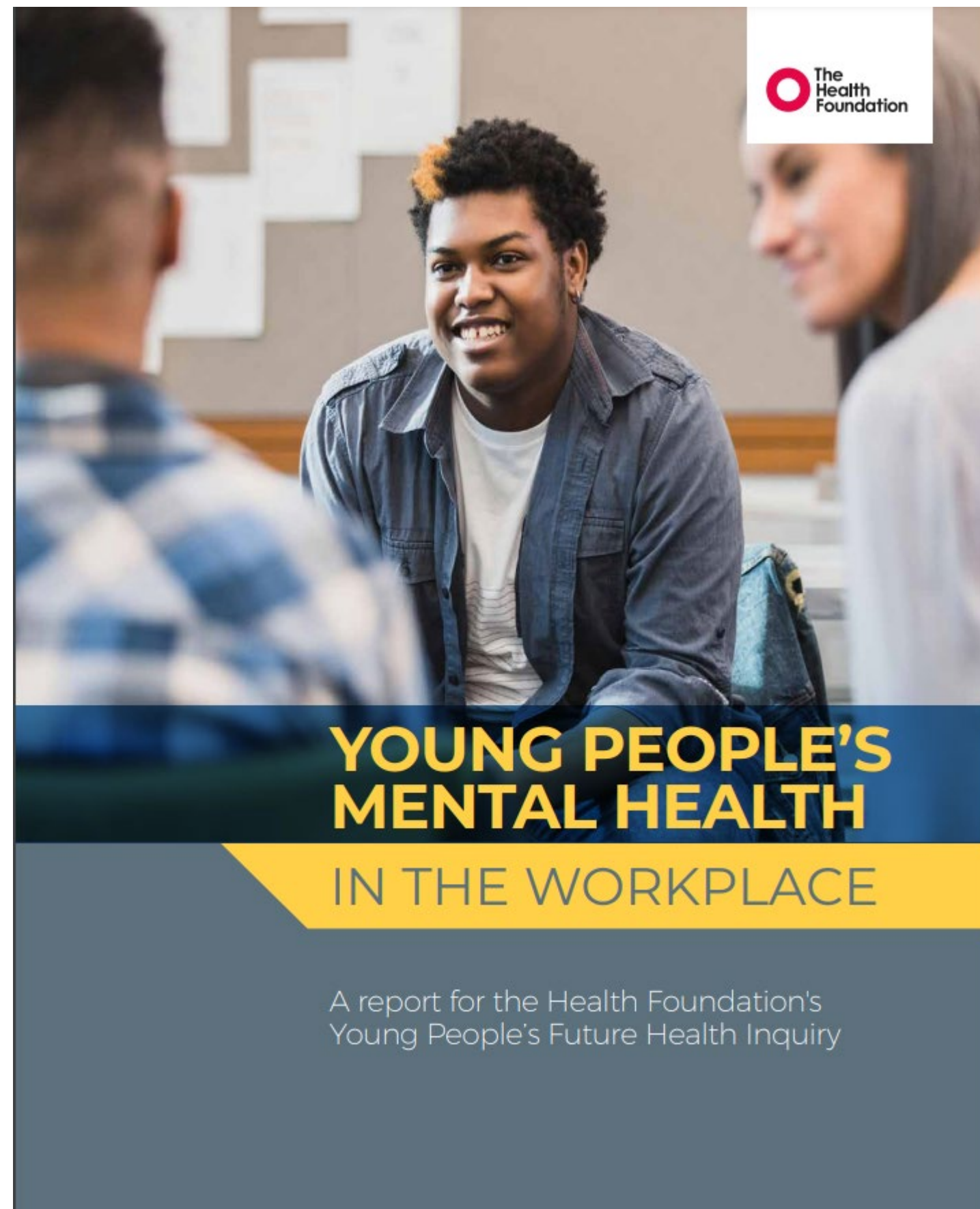
Evidence from your own employees

- Absence patterns
- Changes in help-seeking behaviour/referrals
- Preferences when consulted (e.g. staff surveys)
- ‘Happy sheets’ from previous initiatives



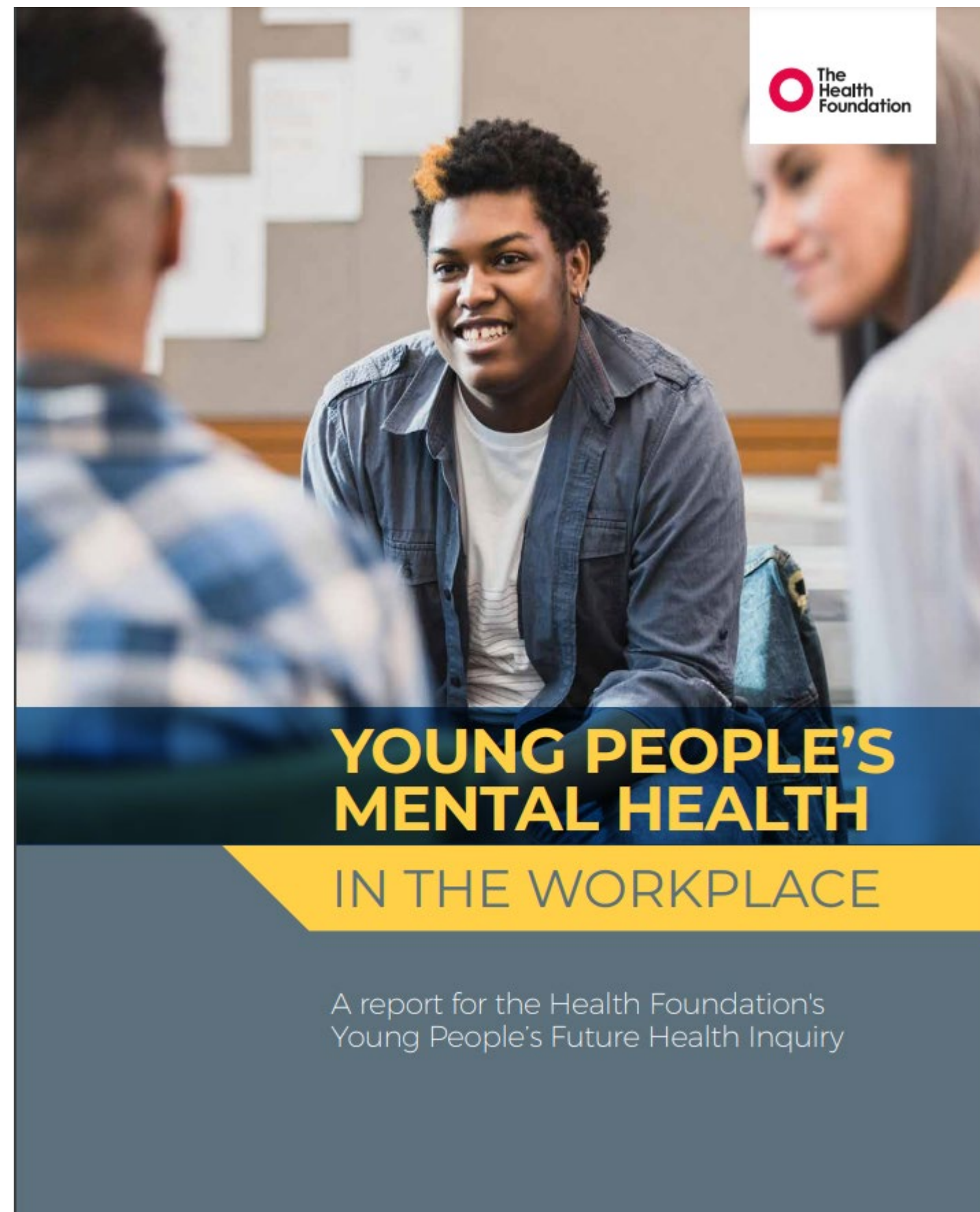
“Let those with lived experience
influence your mental health at work
policies”

Sarah Merrington,
Head of Mental Health at Work programme, Mind



Over two-fifths of young people in the survey either had a pre-existing mental health condition or challenge when recruited to their job or started experiencing one after joining.

Nearly half of young people surveyed who have a mental health condition do not disclose this to their employer due to feeling uncomfortable doing so. Female respondents are much less likely to disclose compared to male peers.



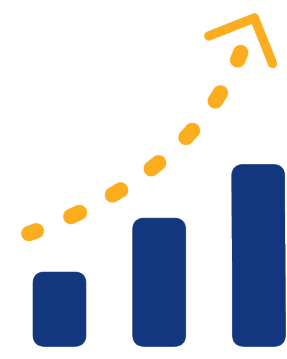
Young people are generally satisfied with the quality of their work. However, over **three in ten respondents in our survey reported being dissatisfied with** opportunities for career progression, voice and representation, pay, feeling valued for their work, and **receiving support to manage their health.**

Three in ten young people in the survey had either left a previous job or are planning on leaving their current job as a result of its impact on their mental health. Rates are higher among those who have an impairment, disability or health condition and among those who specifically have a mental health condition.

Consult
with staff



Monitor
regularly



Encourage
Feedback





“If the pressure is high, no amount of messaging about wellbeing will make any difference. Taking time off, whether it's some kind of leave or for some wellbeing meetings of some kind, just takes time out of your workday, resulting in increased pressure because now you're even further behind.”

Commentator on
wellbeing article in Tribune Mag (2021)

Taking a more holistic approach

Opportunities to progress



Working to deadlines



Having a say in how work is done (job design)



Working hours and flexibility

Celebrating success

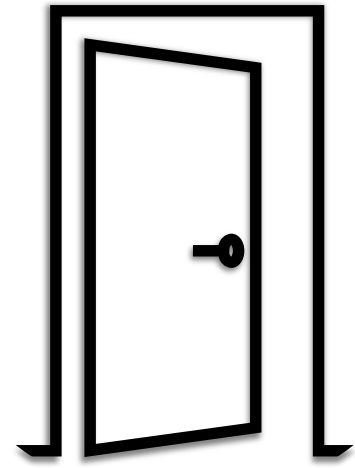


Cover during busy times



Case study example





What if staff remain unhappy despite a suite of wellbeing programme?



IES addressed this with a public sector client
deploying research and consultancy expertise
Respond to concerns



Approach based on research evidence which links poorly designed work with higher sickness absence and lower perceived job engagement.

Diagnostics



People Survey scores below the directorate average for engagement, high on reported bullying and harassment



Highest levels of sickness absence across the Directorate despite extensive efforts by local managers, HR and the People Team



85-90 per cent of staff in receipt of a reasonable adjustment



Health and Wellbeing audit conducted by HWB team clearly indicated of what was and wasn't working well

Evidence base



Work underpinned by evidence that links poorly designed work with higher sickness absence and lower perceived job engagement.



The way a job is designed can influence: the efficiency levels; the sense it makes to the job holder; and whether the job is motivating and satisfying.



It also determines whether the job links well with other, related jobs in the team; and whether the job is beneficial (or harmful) to health.



The main actors included professionals with HR and change experience with hands-on knowledge of what had worked in other areas of the Civil Service. With input from IES.

Inputs



Job Design
seminars for
managers

Basic elements (enlargement/enrichment rotation, job crafting), links with wellbeing. Line managers explored and actioned change with their direct reports.

Wellbeing
and
Change
sessions
for all staff



How people can support each other and build resilience through change and help themselves and each other.

Emphasis that there should not be sole reliance on the line management chain to build an individual's resilience.



Energetic
communication that
wellbeing
matters

Continuation and enhancement of existing wellbeing offer

Activities and outputs



A visual plan on the wall in the office with upcoming milestones and key dates, so staff were aware and felt brought into upcoming changes and events.



A 'you said we did' board on the wall in the office to show staff what managers had done with their feedback on a new case management system.



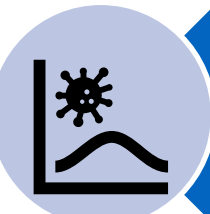
Team reward and recognition budget used up collectively, rather than individually, by issuing all staff with a voucher as a reward for everyone's work on the roll out of a new system.



Weekly short wellbeing sessions (15 minutes) on topics such as mindfulness, gratitude and stress relief.



Regular 10 @ 10s sharing important messages through Senior Executive Officers and team leaders.



Staff workshops set up as part of continuous improvement



A development scheme to build line manager capability with an emphasis on retention



Mapping local requirements against corporate training programmes already on offer, for example in building resilience and emotional intelligence.

Overview

An intervention lasting >18 months to change systemic working and changes to each person's job

Two service delivery teams (180 in total) participated, and after one-year, average levels of sickness absence had dropped by 40% in Team 1 and 26% in Team 2

In-depth interviews found that listening and giving people a voice were key success factors and lower perceived job engagement.

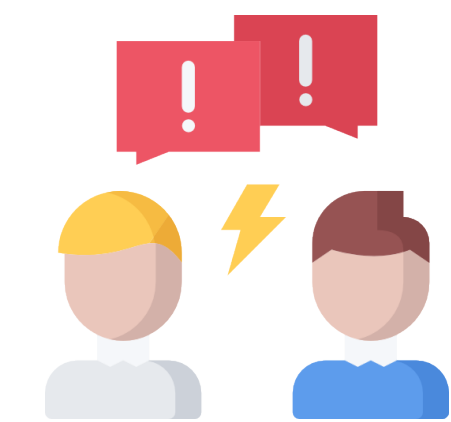
Learning points



Recognise everyone has a role to play in change and enable honest conversations



Bring people together as a team to solve problems (peers, staff, experts)



Listen to feedback around what does and does not work



Activities should be underpinned by the message that people's wellbeing matters

Do you have enough knowledge about your organisation to take your next steps?

- What if anything do you need to know from your employees?
- What, if anything are the skills/expertise you need to draw on in-house/externally?
- What kind of investment and/or support do you require?



Reflections to takeaway



Work out what you want to achieve and what/whose needs you want to meet

Workout how wide/deep you need to go. Consult with colleagues and experts

Take a sceptical approach to interventions and products

Listen to your employees and democratise decision-making

References

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HR Network

To learn more about the Network, contact
HR Network Manager Emma Stewart-Rigby

emma.stewartrigby@employment-studies.co.uk

About IES:

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) is an independent, apolitical, international centre of research and consultancy in public employment policy and HR management. It works closely with employers in all sectors, government departments, agencies, professional bodies and associations. IES is a focus of knowledge and practical experience in employment and training policy, the operation of labour markets, and HR planning and development. IES is a not-for-profit organisation.

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