

The B2W Group

Highlighting Mental Health in the workplace at The B2W Group



Our Employees



At The B2W Group we, like all companies, care about the health and wellbeing of our employees. As a training provider, the mental health of our staff is vital to delivering successful training programmes across all of our provisions.

But the past year has put a strain on everyone's mental health and we're keen to ensure we're doing as much as we can to support our friends and colleagues within The B2W Group.

Research from mind.org.uk¹ shows that a culture of fear and silence around mental health is costly to both employees and employers, with 56% of employers saying they would like to do more to improve staff wellbeing but don't feel they have the right training or guidance. That's why this year we are making proactive efforts to engage our staff in this area. Starting with a company-wide survey at the start of the year, we are now investing time and budget into making The B2W Group a safe, healthy and happy place to work.

Supporting Employees Following the Impact of COVID-19



Ben Waite, Head of HR at The B2W Group, talks about the importance of supporting employees' mental health and wellbeing.

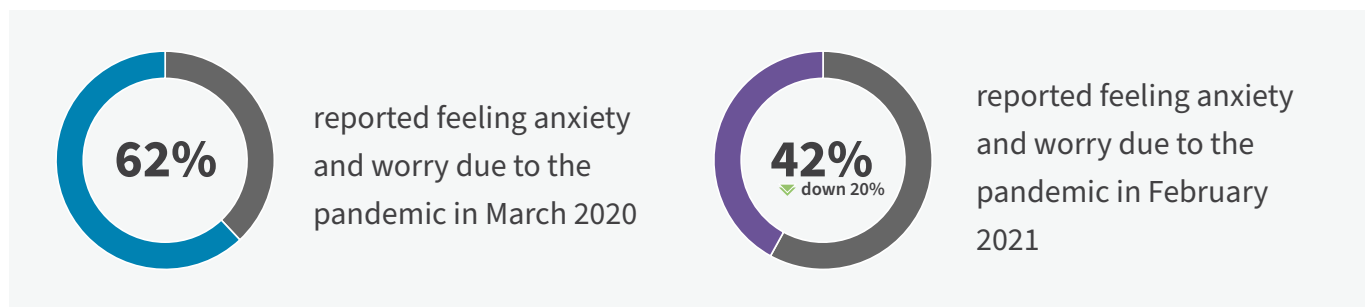
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How Is the Nation's Mental Health Now Compared to a Year Ago?

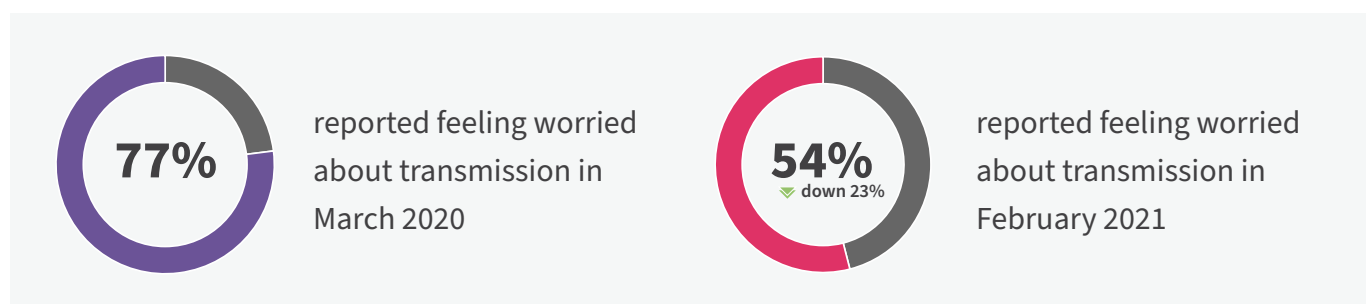
Research conducted by MentalHealth.org throughout the Covid-19 pandemic has provided valuable snapshots into the state of the Nation's mental health². As the UK began to ease lockdown restrictions in the first few months of 2021, mental health has shown signs of improvement.

Anxiety and worry due to the stress of the pandemic has declined significantly from 62% in March 2020 to 42% in February 2021. The UK population is now much more hopeful than they have been since just before the first lockdown with 30% feeling more hopeful in February 2021 compared to only 14% in March 2020.



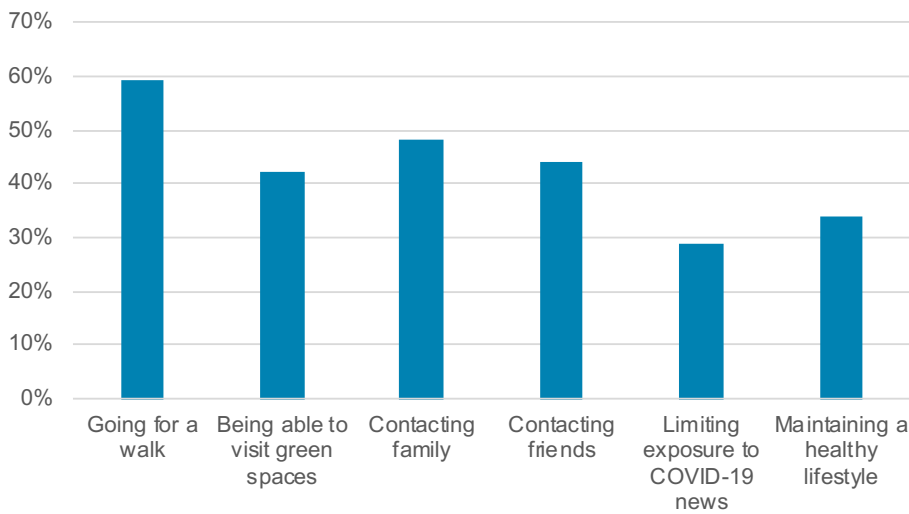
Resilience of the UK population is still being tested. The number of people who stated that they were coping well with the stress of the pandemic has fallen slowly and steadily across the pandemic year. In early April 2020 nearly three-quarters of the population (73%) stated they were coping (very well/fairly well) with the stress related to the pandemic dropping to 64% in February 2021.

However, the number of UK adults reporting that they feel worried about being able to cope with the uncertainty of the pandemic has shown a positive trend across the year from 53% in March 2020 to 42% in February 2021. Those concerned about passing the virus on to others if they become infected has dropped significantly from just before the first lockdown in March 2020 from 77% worried about passing the virus on to 54% in February 2021.





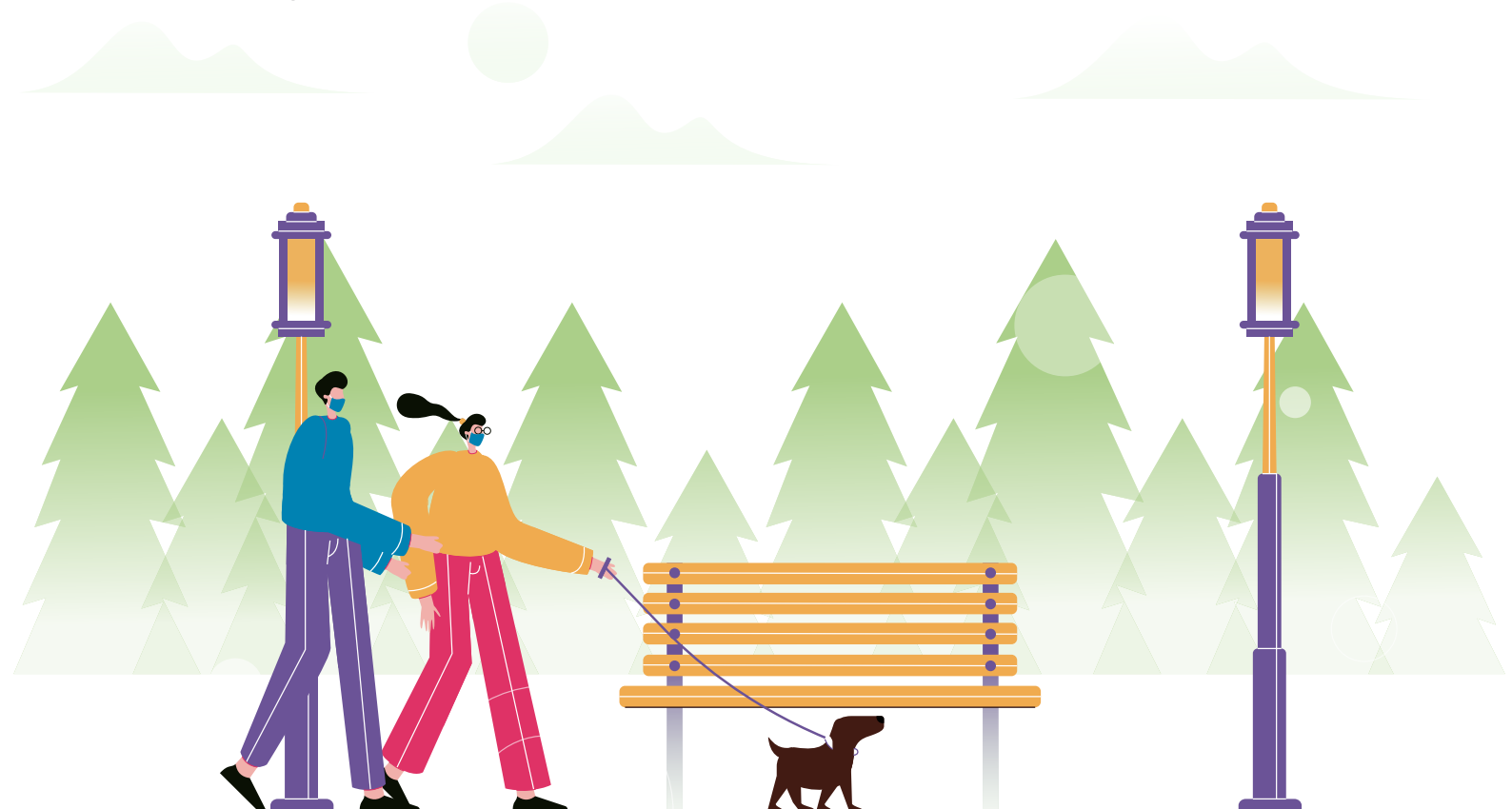
Main Methods of Coping with the Stress of the Pandemic



For the UK population, in February 2021 the main methods of coping with the stress of the pandemic have been:

- Going for a walk outside (59%.) This has been the top method of coping throughout since April 2020
- Being able to visit green spaces helped for 42% of the population
- Contacting family (48%) and friends (44%)

Limiting exposure to COVID-19 news (29%) and maintaining a healthy lifestyle - such as maintaining a balanced diet, enough sleep, exercise - were cited by just over a third of the population (34%) as popular coping methods to cope with the stress of COVID-19 in February 2021.





The B2W Group Mental Health Survey

In February 2021, The B2W Group conducted a company-wide mental health survey. We saw a healthy number of responses from our staff (78%). This gave us feedback from 135 staff members, providing us with nearly 1400 pieces of information to consider and analyse.

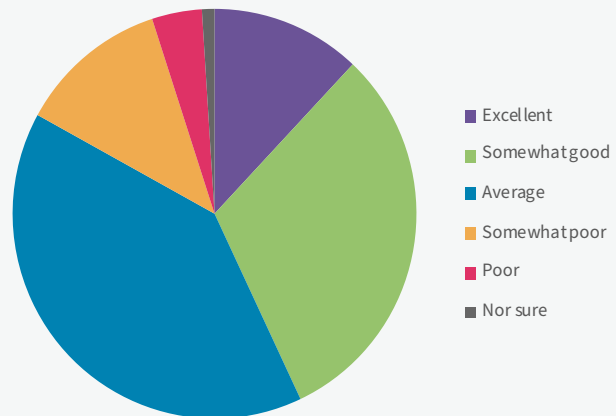
From the survey results, themes presented themselves as key areas for us to consider in order to support our staff during and beyond Covid-19. Below are a few of the key questions we asked our employees.



Key themes were:

- Personal mental health
- Physical health
- Anxiety relating to self and others
- Being heard
- Safe Places

Overall, how would you rate your current mental health?



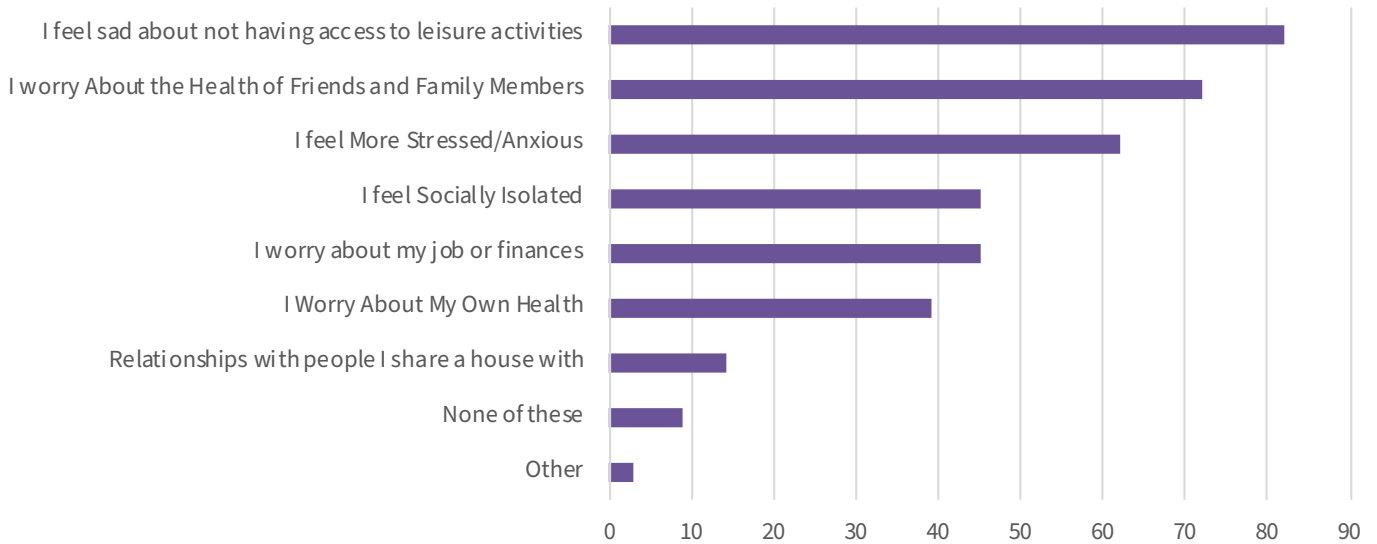
83% of staff recorded their overall mental health as “average”, “somewhat good”, or “excellent”. While this is encouraging, the 16% of our colleagues who rated their mental health as “somewhat poor” or “poor” told us that we needed to ensure a steady delivery of mental health initiatives to ensure the support of all staff.

We want our staff to feel a sense of community while working remotely, so we launched a companywide themed photography competition.

The theme of each competition is designed to encourage the sharing of ideas and experiences, from home working desk setups, to nature photos.

Each month a new theme is announced and each month’s winner receives a £50 voucher.

Getting involved is a good way for staff to come together with others and celebrate creativity, participation and uniqueness away from the day to day.



Two major areas of responses stood out to us from the above questions. “I feel sad about not having access to leisure activities” and “I worry about the health of friends and family members” indicated that social activities are now a real issue for our staff.

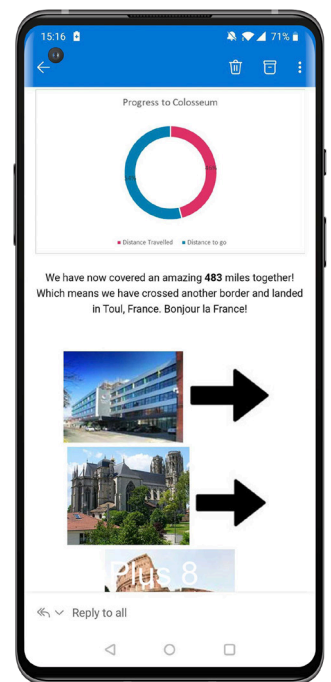
60% of respondents to the wellbeing survey cited dismay at not having access to leisure activities. As the weather started to improve, we launched our Virtual Walk initiative to encourage all staff

to get active.

Our first Virtual Walk was to walk to the Colosseum in Rome.

To ensure opportunities for all staff, we encouraged distance walking, treadmills, rowing machine, bike rides, daily dog walks, morning runs, cross trainer workouts, exercise bike sessions, and more.

Weekly updates from our HR Team became a great way to show our progress and see how far we’d (virtually) walked.



Anxiety relating to others (colleagues, friends and family) being equipped to support and help others was high on the agenda with over 50% identifying it as an area of concern.

We encouraged anyone who would like to be better informed to help others complete the free Public Health England Covid-19: Psychological First Aid course. This not only helped build confidence but also contributed to our staffs’ CPD commitments.

Building on that we formed a group of Wellbeing Champions within the business. We have invested in full external training with a recognised agency who equipped volunteers for the role. The team work together to develop wellbeing messages and actions across the whole business.

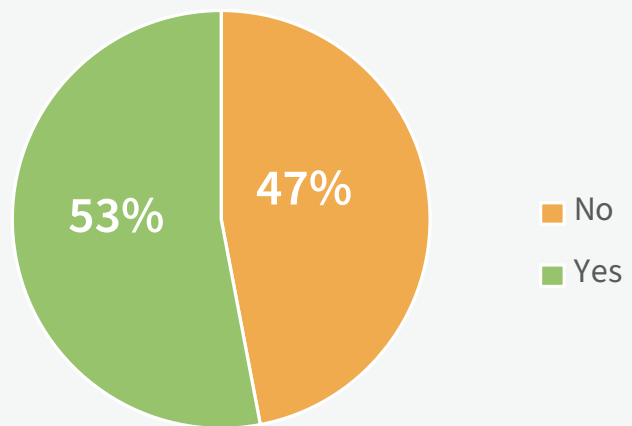


Stress and anxiety scored highly on our survey, possibly tied in with the high scoring concern over finances.

In response to this, we became a National Living Wage Employer, paying all employees the Government's National Living wage. As a collective the team worked hard over the pandemic to keep the business sustainable and strong, and this was an opportunity say thank you and financially reinvest in staff.



If you were struggling with your mental health, would you talk to your colleagues or line manager about it?



In our survey, being heard and making contributions was an area identified as being important, so we launched a new virtual suggestion box. This is a place where staff can submit questions or ideas for consideration by the senior Management Team. The forms are anonymous, but our colleagues have the option of identifying themselves and their department if they wish.

On top of this, we have launched a company-wide newsletter, featuring contributions from all teams and departments. The goal of this newsletter is to ensure the whole company is up-to-date with all goings-on and feel that their work is contributing to the whole business.



Partnership with Healing Clouds



47% of our staff responded to our survey to indicate that they would not be comfortable talking to someone inside the business about mental health. This was something we knew we needed to prioritise.

As well as improving internal perceptions across the board, we decided to seek external agency involvement to support staff.

We were delighted to bring on board Healing Clouds:



“We built Healing Clouds with passion because we care about what we do. It started with our mental health which has led to a mission to make mental wellbeing affordable and accessible to everyone.

We dream to create a world where we don't have to wait for mental breakdown to happen to seek counselling. We are devoted to help you in your pursuit of healing and your growth that you rightfully deserve.”

Through Healing Clouds, our staff can access one-to-one sessions with accredited therapists, and have access to therapist-led courses, fully online, and fully free of charge.

Healing Clouds offer support on challenges across depression, relationships, parenting, anxiety, PTSD, sexual health, stress, grief, chronic illness, anger issues, sleep issues, and more.

At The B2W Group, our ultimate goal is to ensure that our staff have a safe space to discuss any challenges they are facing. Healing Clouds provides that safe space, and will also encourage a more open attitude to the discussion of mental and physical health.



The Future for Mental Health Wellbeing at The B2W Group



We caught up with our Head of HR Ben Waite to talk about what initiatives are in the pipeline to ensure the positive attitude towards their mental health:

“As a business, we wanted to ensure that all employees had services and activities that they could get involved with and use in a way that suited them, whether it be getting creative with the photography competition, volunteering to become part of the wellbeing champion team or utilising the different services on the Healing Clouds platform. We wanted to avoid forced participation and ensure that everyone had the option to engage in a way that supported them

in as simple way as possible to create their own wellness space whilst at work with The B2W Group, unique to them.

“The leaders and managers at The B2W Group are committed to the sustainability of robust wellbeing support, with the commissioning of a Public Health England course in Psychological First Aid to be administered by local charity, Tog Mind. This is to develop internal wellbeing support for employees, by way of a newly formed, highly trained team of Wellbeing Champions to drive the long-term wellbeing initiative, act as a discreet point of contact and educate others at The B2W Group with a more long term focus.”





About The B2W Group



Professional Training and Coaching

The B2W Group provide professional training and coaching services to suit a range of employer and learner needs. Founded in 2012, The B2W Group has trained and supported thousands of people into work and help them to develop within a range of industry sectors.



Developing Your Careers


The B2W Group provide pre-employment, pre-apprenticeship, distance learning and digital marketing apprenticeship programmes designed to make it easy and convenient for learners to find employment, upskill and develop their careers.

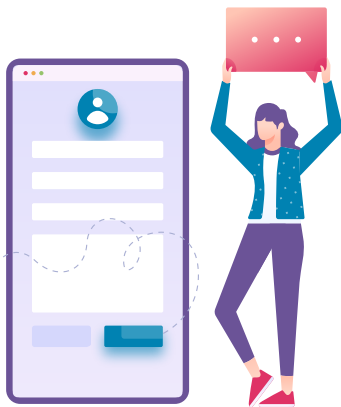
Contact Us

 info@b2wgroup.com



 www.b2wgroup.com

 0161 474 7603



 The B2W Group, Universal Square, Manchester, M12 6JH



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Document References

¹ Mind.org.uk (<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-your-staff/>)

² Mentalhealth.org.uk (<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/research/coronavirus-mental-health-pandemic>)



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