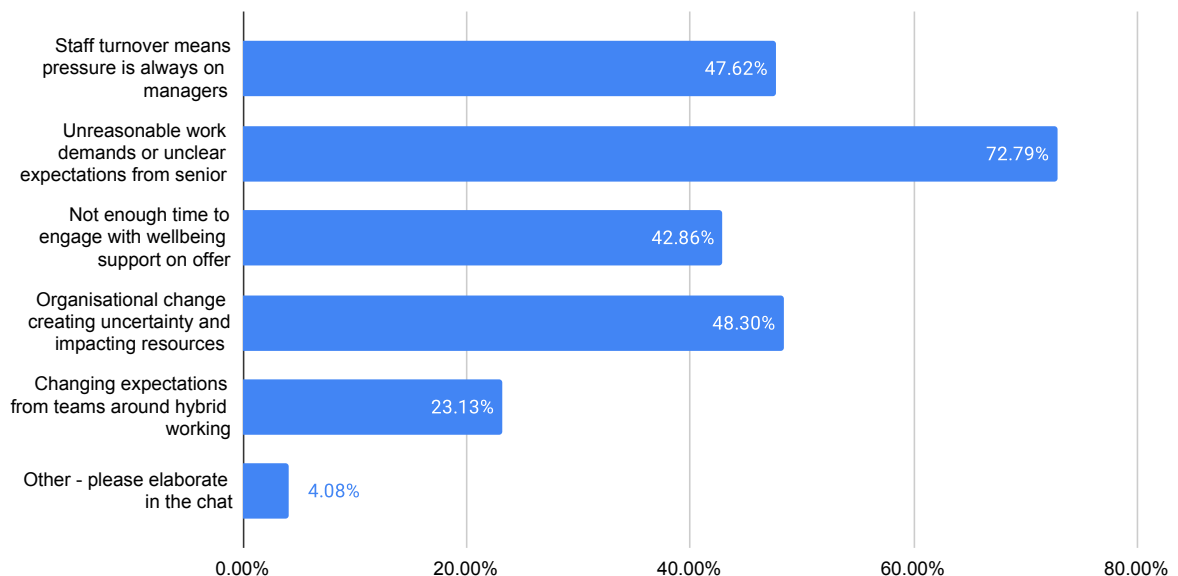## Anonymysed chat from "Managers matter: why managers are struggling and how to help them thrive" webinar, 18th May 2023

**Results of poll and other top reasons for manager burnout:**

In your opinion, what are the top five reasons for manager burnout? (multiple choice)



| Reason | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Staff turnover means pressure is always on managers | 47.62% |
| Unreasonable work demands or unclear expectations from senior | 72.79% |
| Not enough time to engage with wellbeing support on offer | 42.86% |
| Organisational change creating uncertainty and impacting resources | 48.30% |
| Changing expectations from teams around hybrid working | 23.13% |
| Other - please elaborate in the chat | 4.08% |

Increasing (and more complex) issues within teams - not just one thing, lots of things (together, all at once)

I agree - dealing with staff issues

Pressure from top, expectations from below

We have a directive to reduce travel across our business, however not meeting the team face to face how do you build rapport without that interaction?

I think the biggest issue is not having an understanding of what "burnout" really is, making it hard to identify. The interventions usually offered are ineffective, exacerbating the problems highlighted in the poll.

## Useful links shared:

Link to more information about Britain's Healthiest Workplace Survey: https://www.vitality.co.uk/business/healthiest-workplace/

Shared this with my senior team today https://hbr.org/2018/09/planning-doesnt-have-to-be-the-enemy-of-agile?utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=hbr&utm_source=twitter&tpcc=orgsocial_edit

: https://www.who.int/news/item/28-05-2019-burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon-international-classification-of-diseases

https://makeadifference.media/mental/burnout-explained-and-four-tips-to-beat-it/

## Comments / tips:

I once told my manager that I was setting aside 1 day per week to actually manage my team. He said that's fine as long as I don't compromise my other tasks 🫨

Burnout needs preventions, not interventions.

Intervention includes both recovery as well as prevention. Both are needed

Exactly, it is really confusing to think one is not able to handle their work (especially with home stresses too), and at what point do we put our hand up to flag this, before we get into real difficulties..?

I'm probably an idealist but I hope to achieve a world/workplace where we look at primary and secondary interventions and don't even need tertiary ones.

One of the greatest [burnout] interventions is around education. Increasing the awareness on the difference between being rundown and being burnt out and recognising that burnout is not an occupational phenomenon

Work life balance comes from hybrid working my health has been a lot better since this was introduced

Spend time on building strong Line Managers and investing there

Wellbeing interventions are very broad and can end up being a form of toxic positivity.

I agree with that too - we have multiple tools

Tick box exercise for wellbeing!

We also need to measure the impact of that money spent on well-being.  If we cannot show the impact employees may question the amount spent

Agree with that too. During Covid we provided a lot of support to our people and a lot of that came from people managers. That expectation still exists having come out of that and now in hybrid working

That's why having a wellbeing strategy is so important. Otherwise, it's just a scattergun, reactive approach to wellbeing which then doesn't positively impact employees.

Part of the issue is that Wellbeing initiatives tend not to prevent burnout, because they provide relief to physiological symptoms of stress but fail to reduce the individual's exposure to chronic stress, which is what causes burnout in the first instance.

We have a good wellbeing strategy and now reviewing it

We have increased Mental Health resources since Covid but still I feel many of these are just tick boxes

I agree. To have a wellbeing strategy owned by the top management is important.

Does the 'draw down early' project not add to the problem? If they are struggling now, will they not struggle more when they have less funds later on?

Response from Adam - CEO, Everyturn Mental Health: Hi - the charity we work with has many other tools that help people alongside the draw down. There are lots of safeguards around the draw down (e.g. value and volume) and it's interest free and can be spread out over multiple months alongside the other financial support that's available. It is far better than high % credit or falling into a spiral of debt and finance being a cause of mental health crisis etc

Completely agree with what Harpreet is saying regarding working in the office v working from home - some people are happy to come into the office and some aren't

It needs to be personal choice

Absolutely agree regarding recruitment - I am spending on average 2-3 days per month interviewing potential staff - and often without a successful outcome!

I agree, flexibility is a very important element of any job offering now

Our recruitment has been quite positive since introducing recruitment events

Hybrid working is not an option for all, can be difficult in a business where some staff are production and need to be in attendance mixed with colleagues who have the WFH option.

Would love to see the Team Charter template

We have them they were used to establish hybrid working pattern would like - seems to have worked.

These are good ideas Ella but when you're working globally across time zones and in emergencies, how do you manage these non-negotiables?

We tried a 3/2 hybrid working pattern but it didn't work so we've actually gone with complete flexibility which people have really responded to in a positive way. Our staff turnover has dropped considerably.

Love the idea of these principles - time to move, protected time for lunch and re-location time if switching between virtual and face to face.

Higher managers need more training around the benefits of flexible working

Where we have situations where hybrid doesn't work - teams where asked what they would like to do.  Through discussion they decided that they would adjust the times of the working day.

100% agree Harpreet!

Agree Harpreet, it's very easy to just carry on and work at home without getting out at all!

I like the idea of "We Will … "

Love the drive for co-creation of work coming from both Harpreet and Ella

Just as beneficial for the line-manager as for the staff member concerned (possibly with positive spill overs for HR and the wider organisation). An encouraging step forward to diverse talent acquisition, retention and growth. Sense of belonging and skillsets utilisation does have a positive impact on psychological safety

Perhaps this comes back to people feeling happier when they have a sense of control over their work.

Once-a-week conversations are highly constructive and liberating - need to have this as part of your wellbeing strategy.

Control is key!

A sense of belonging is so important

Going to try walking meetings as part of my once-a-week meetings, love the idea of this

We have The Listening Circle

Much of this seems to be coming back to supporting managers by helping them to create happy and productive teams.

Would be interested to hear more about the Listening Circle?

Starting your weekly team update meetings with 'check-ins' or asking the group to put in the chat a rating (1 to 5) of how they are feeling that day - can be really useful and gives the team a chance to see if their colleagues may not be 100% that day. You can also ask them to do ratings for different areas of their life: 'Work/ Health/ Family & Friends'

I've seen Action Learning Sets be really powerful (when set up and run effectively) within workplaces eg: https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/action-learning-sets-guide-june-2018-by-val-theadom.pdf

We have wellbeing champions and mental health first aiders but interestingly there isn't much take up on the support they offer so we're looking to make use of their skills in a different way

These are all great ideas, would be useful to hear from others who are in small companies (under 50 employees) as I'm sure there are great things going on that would work for my company

We have a Leadership and Management Development Academy, where after completing a questionnaire of needs, they are then sent a suggested profile of varied modes of sessions for them to access in house, including bite sized videos with supporting signposting, coaching etc also.  Also have managers forums for peer-to-peer support

We have a monthly team meeting. Once everyone is in the meeting, we go round the room and check in with everyone to see how they are feeling.

So right Adam. I reckon it is a common 'secret' that a big -long- mindset shift takes time and efforts. And that is precisely why there is hesitation at the C-level to embed humanistic values

I lead a lot of workshops and particularly for line managers, I always start by saying that you don't always need to know the answer or even expected to know the answer - but you can help find the answer with colleagues who need support

Fear of getting leadership out of their comfort zone...

It's so typical of an impatient 'now' society - culture change takes time and can't be delivered same day like ordering something from Amazon!

Agree Jon - set a plan and stick to it because it takes time - I wish you could order full psychological safety for an organisation from Amazon!

We have Mental Health First Aiders available during working hours

Getting senior leaders to document how they have got through difficulties is a VERY powerful role model for others.  we have used blogs and videos for this.

Love that comment, Ella. The managers I have worked with are scared of saying or doing something wrong so don't do anything at all. It's about being equipped to signpost, not solve.

I've found that just talking to my team is the most powerful tool I have.

Spot on Wendy! Having relatable, representative leaders is vital. And celebrating diverse teams. These are the true role models as far as I am concerned

Balanced emotional wellbeing will prevent burnout

This has cemented for me that I work for a company that really does take this seriously and implements many of the good ideas discussed today, plenty of additional takeaways for me too.

And before burning out, something I have noticed across the financial sector for years now is quiet quitting (unengaged workforce that just does the minimum to earn the salary)

Is there a burnout signs - checklist available?

As well as managers checking in frequently with staff some staff also need to take some personal responsibility for their own health and wellbeing too

Yes, it's a two-way street.

Completely agree that those pressures can also come from outside of the workplace and can create a perfect storm of chronic stress. Parental burnout is also a phenomenon that exists but isn't yet well researched

As managers / leaders of a company I feel it is vital to remember that staff issue, physical, mental health, stress etc is not a 9-5 issue and is very important to recognize this and factor in help out with working hours

I agree Harpreet, changes in words, behaviours and physical signs from the norm for signs of burnout - that's why managers need to know their staff, as a whole person.

People need to know people - not just a manger and their team.

Ella - I'm so glad you said that!

That's right Jill! And managers are not necessarily leaders (or, even, they are not hired to be leaders)

We have a virtual coffee app that randomly pairs people from across the organization each month. Great way to meet people you don't interact with in your day-to-day job and find and make connections

As a Wellbeing Lead for the last few years supporting a company that has scaled from 30-200 approx to date, anchoring a strategy aligned with core company values is key. You have to have executive sponsorship and Leadership endorsement and then you see real wellbeing happening.

We run Yammer 'Active' groups to promote physical activity and they are always really popular

We have the coffee app too, that has interestingly put more pressure on to people to have to meet others too, and we've found the uptake dropping

## Tips from the webinar attendees will take back to their workplaces:

**[NB – we will upload a Team Charter [template here](#) as soon as possible, so please keep checking back]**

Walking meetings!

Team charter

The team charter and walk and talk meetings.

Team charter

Team charter is my take away

No one size fits all

Interested in the "Free Stuff"

Team charter/purpose statement

Walking meetings & early meeting check ins

Team Purpose Statements

Team charters and Action Learning Sets

Team charter - on our to do list anyway!!

Team Charter sounds like a brilliant idea.

Team charter

Having a psychologically safe culture and team charter

I like the idea of checking in with everyone during a meeting so were on the same page

Lead by example - be open and honest

Team charter.

I like the idea of the Team Charter!

Walk and talk meetings sound a great idea.

Also interested in the 'free stuff' 🙄

Team charter

Listening circle

Model and encourage more authenticity

Talk! Communication is key

Developing the culture and agreeing a team "purpose"

Make informed decision using data!

I will offer time to my line manager - if he wants to talk / off load

Talk and understand what is happening to your staff outside work as this has an impact on work-life.

I was reminded of walking meetings, this is something I introduced previously and would like to bring to my current role- would love more on the charter

Role models in senior management team, key!

Walk and talk meetings, team charter

100% data collection! Make a business case!

Love the team charter - hope we incorporate lots of this already, but good to have the discussion and make sure health and wellbeing is always on the agenda

## Thank yous

Thank you!

Great session

Thank you, this has been very useful.

Thank you - useful discussion!

Super discussion…thanks everyone

Thank you, some great points and helpful tips

Great session, thanks panel and attendees!

Thank you so much for a really interesting and thought-provoking hour. I got a lot from that! THANK YOU.

Thank you

Thank you , very useful.  Yes, great session.

Great session, Thank you

Thank you for an interesting session.

Thank you!

Thanks!

Thank you for a great session.

Thank you, great session

Thanks for the session - really valuable and insightful

Good session, thank you everyone

Thanks very much, really interesting

A huge thank you to all of you for this session - it has been one of the best I've attended in about 2 years and really resonates with the current environment and the complexities our managers are dealing with

Thank you

Thank you all

Thank you

Thanks

Thank you I'm grateful for your time and suggestions. I love the walk and talk meetings idea

Thank you!

Thank you all

Thank you

Thanks