

Recommendations

What all of us can do to minimise the risk of burnout

Preventing burnout in the workplace is a shared responsibility between employers and employees. There is a need for open dialogue about what a “good workplace” looks like in the modern world, to create the infrastructure for mentally healthy working environments.

By taking proactive steps to manage workload, prioritise wellbeing, and communicate effectively, both employees and employers can make these mutual expectations a reality and contribute to a healthier work environment.

Our research highlights how stress and burnout can affect each of us differently, and at different times of our lives. Our mental health is on a continuum, and with this in mind, it's crucial for us to know what “good mental health” looks like for us as individuals. Burnout is not just a workplace phenomenon but also exists outside of work. Times of stress at work, and outside of work, are inevitable, but knowing

what our individual triggers are, and understanding how they impact us, can help prevent challenging times escalating to burnout.

It's unsurprising that the majority of adults in the survey identified that “having a supportive network of family or friends outside of work” has helped to alleviate stress and prevent burnout. Interestingly, we can often find ourselves withdrawing from our loved ones in challenging times, which creates a vicious cycle. Keeping conversations going with those around us, and making time to spend time with others, can hugely benefit our mental health – particularly when we are struggling.

Our recommendations for employees

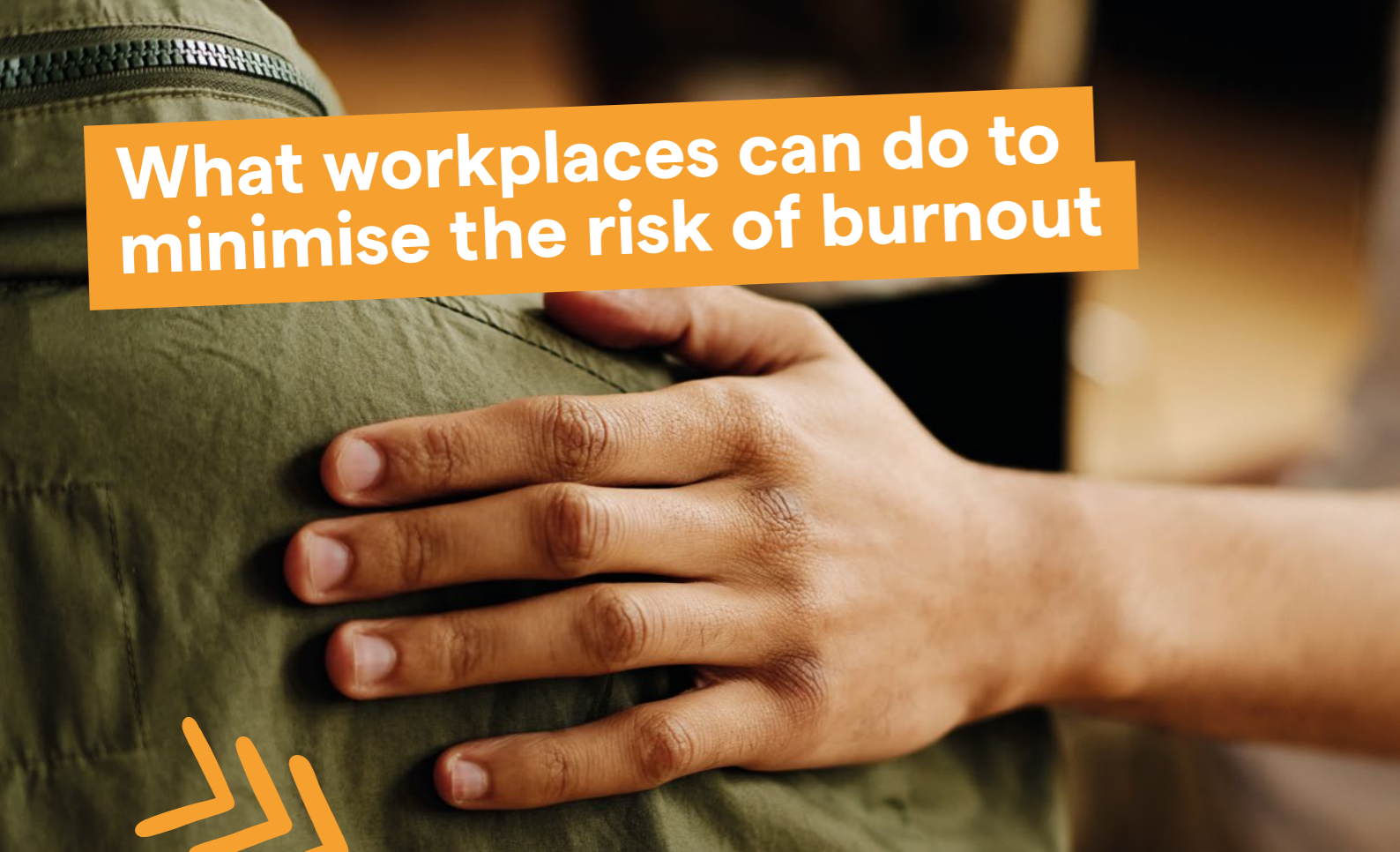
Whilst employers have a duty of care to protect their employees from harm, employees must also take responsibility for their own wellbeing to help to prevent burnout. Here are some strategies that employees should consider:

- **Using tools, such as the [Mental Health UK Stress Bucket](#)**, can help prompt a realistic perspective on what you find challenging, as well as some of the positive strategies you have learnt to manage stress levels. Once you begin to recognise these factors, it is easier to act upon them.
- **Reflect on what good mental health looks like for you at this point in your life.** Complete a Mental Health UK “[Wellness Action Plan](#)” and consider what steps need to be put into place if you or someone else recognises signs you are struggling.
- **Many workplaces offer Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) that provide counselling services.** The counselling offered may only be short-term (i.e., up to six sessions), if this is the case consider speaking to your GP for longer-term support.
- **Champion mental health in the workplace.** All of us experience stress at times, but positive role-modelling, encouraging openness, and compassion are powerful tools for creating healthy and productive workplaces.
- **Set boundaries to promote a healthy work-life balance.** Clearly define work hours and avoid regularly working beyond them. Turn off work phones and put devices out of sight outside of working hours. When faced with excessive workload or unrealistic deadlines, ascertain if there is flexibility around delivery times, and what further support would be helpful to alleviate pressure and stress.

- **Use breaks to rest and recharge during the working day.** Regularly stepping away from your desk or workspace can help to reduce stress levels. Take advantage of your allocated annual leave, and plan regular breaks and holidays to unwind.
- **Pay attention to physical and mental health,** focusing on the four pillars of health: sleep, exercise, nutrition, and stress. Engage in activities that bring joy and relaxation outside of work.
- **Discuss workload and expectations with your manager.** Be open about challenges you may be facing and seek support when needed. When possible, learn to delegate, ask for assistance, or share workload with colleagues.
- **Establish achievable, realistic goals and deadlines.** Break large projects into smaller tasks to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- **Build a network of supportive peers at work.** Share concerns and experiences with trusted coworkers who will be able to listen and suggest constructive techniques and solutions.
- **Incorporate mindfulness techniques into your daily routine.** Take short breaks for meditation or deep breathing exercises.



What workplaces can do to minimise the risk of burnout



Employers have a duty of care to protect both the physical health and mental health of their employees. So, they need to equip themselves and their colleagues with working practices that encourage positive mental health at work.

The modern world has thrown up huge social and technological changes for society, which in turn presents employers with unrivalled challenges in protecting colleague wellbeing – but through a collaborative approach with employees, there is a way forward.

As our report demonstrates, no two individuals will react the same to stressors in the workplace, so managers must take an individualist approach to preventing burnout in the workplace. Workplaces require unique approaches because workforces encompass a complex blend of different needs, personalities, and cultures. Therefore, the role of the employer is to adapt their knowledge and understanding of their workforce, create opportunities in recognising the impact of mental health, and to encourage inclusivity and psychological safety in the workplace.

Workplaces that prioritise mental health are becoming higher on the agenda for the younger workforce, so employers need to take action to attract and retain the future workforce. Our research highlights that younger adults are more likely to speak to their manager if they were experiencing high or extreme levels of pressure and stress at work, but they are also the group that are most likely to take time off work due to poor mental health caused by pressure or stress.

There are some highly effective tools and interventions that can support workplaces to manage employee mental health. However, we must acknowledge that our workforces consist of humans, and ultimately if we expect individuals to consistently manage unrealistically high or increased workloads, then this will lead to more employees experiencing burnout.

Our recommendations for employers

- **A strategy, policy or plan for employee mental health** should be proactively implemented, and regularly reviewed, to prevent chronic stress and burnout, as well as to treat it.
- **Managers should be equipped to feel informed of workplace mental health plans**, and comfortable in supporting colleagues' mental health, whilst maintaining boundaries. Foster open communication between employees and management and consider setting up employee peer support groups.
- **Regularly check in with employees to discuss workload and challenges.** Wellbeing Plans can help to identify what good wellbeing looks like for each employee, as well as what it looks like when things aren't so good.
- **Ensure that workloads are reasonable and achievable.** Monitor workloads and redistribute tasks when necessary. Set realistic deadlines and avoid piling too much work on individuals.
- **Encourage opportunities for employees to consider their mental health**, and recognise when positive practice is identified. Managers should also promote a healthy work-life balance, encouraging employees take regular breaks and ensuring these breaks are taken, including ensuring employees use their full annual leave entitlement. Where overtime is required, employers should discourage excessive overtime and set clear expectations for what is required.
- **Senior leaders should be visible in how they maintain their own wellbeing.** This is a powerful tool in promoting mental health in the workplace, and can "give permission" to a workforce to do the same. Senior leaders and managers should maintain a healthy work-life balance and refrain from working when they are unwell.
- **Offer training sessions – such as those delivered by Mental Health UK** – to help employees and managers understand the importance of good mental health and how to maintain it, including how to have supportive conversations, and the importance of role modeling mentally healthy behaviour at work.
- **Acknowledge and appreciate employees' hard work and achievements.** Implement a fair and transparent rewards system to recognise good performance based on accomplishments but prioritising mental wellbeing over excessive work.
- **Foster a culture of care and collaboration**, encouraging team-building activities and social interactions for all staff while considering individual differences. Avoid stigmatising language around mental health and mental illness.
- **Provide and communicate confidential access to resources** such as counselling services or Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs).
- **Have robust and clearly communicated policies and procedures in place** to address workplace bullying and harassment. Promote a zero-tolerance policy for such behaviours.
- **Conduct regular assessments of workplace stressors and burnout risks.** Adjust policies and practices based on employee feedback and changing work conditions. By implementing these strategies, employers can create a healthier work environment that reduces the risk of burnout and fosters the wellbeing of their employees.

Resources and tailored support

Finding support

If you or someone you know is in urgent need of lifesaving help, please call 999 or go to your nearest Accident & Emergency (A&E) department. For non-emergency medical help call 111.

Further support can be accessed via the organisations below.

Mental Health UK

Mental Health UK works UK-wide to deliver both national and local services that enable and empower people to understand and manage their mental health in a person-centered and empathetic way. Our website has a wealth of information and resources you can use to manage your own mental health and support others with theirs.

[mentalhealth-uk.org](https://www.mentalhealth-uk.org)
info@mentalhealth-uk.org

Rethink Mental Illness

Operating in England, Rethink Mental Illness deliver services that keep people safe and well in the community, preventing their needs from escalating, supporting independent living and empowering people to know their rights and to access the support and care that they are entitled to. The Rethink Mental Illness Advice Service offers practical help on issues such as the Mental Health Act, community care and welfare benefits, living with mental illness, medication and care.

[rethink.org](https://www.rethink.org)
advice@rethink.org
0808 801 0525 (Freephone)

Change Mental Health

Working across Scotland, Change Mental Health place the individual at the heart of what they do and build the support they need to move forward with their lives. Their Advice and Support Service is open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm, where advisers can signpost callers to local support that most fits their needs, including their own Change Mental Health services. Change Mental Health offer initial advice on money worries and help to deal with emergencies.

[changemh.org](https://www.changemh.org)
advice@changemh.org
0808 8010 515 (Freephone)

Adferiad

Adferiad is a member-led charity that provides help and support for people with mental health, addiction, and co-occurring and complex needs, to maximise their personal potential, and achieve a better quality of life. Operating across Wales, their expert staff and volunteers apply a whole person approach to help people in all areas of their lives so they can live with dignity and as independently as possible.

[adferiad.org](https://www.adferiad.org)
01492 863000 (North Wales)
01792 816600 (South Wales)

MindWise

MindWise is a leading mental health charity in Northern Ireland. Through their 30 key services, they support the recovery of 9,000 people affected by mental health issues every year, including carers, families and children. We campaign for change and fight stigma and discrimination.

[mindwisenv.org](https://www.mindwisenv.org)

Samaritans

Samaritans provides a free helpline available 24/7 for anyone needing emotional support. Whether you are struggling to cope or need someone to listen they will listen without judgement or pressure.

[samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)
jo@samaritans.org
116 123

Shout

Providing free confidential 24/7 crisis support across the UK for anyone experiencing a mental health crisis or in need of support.

[giveusashout.org](https://www.giveusashout.org)
info@giveusashout.org
Text SHOUT to 85258

Hub of Hope

An online database of national and local mental health support. Bringing community, charity, private and NHS mental health support and services together in one place, searchable by postcode and type of support.

[hubofhope.co.uk](https://www.hubofhope.co.uk)

NHS

The NHS website contains a comprehensive A-Z guide on physical and mental health conditions, providing information on symptoms, possible treatments, medications, etc. Also provides access to your NHS account supporting you to find local services, book appointments with your GP etc.

[nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)

Your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Many workplaces offer Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) that provide counselling services. We suggest contacting your HR department at work to enquire about what support services they have in place, such as an EAP or other service. The counselling offered may only be short-term (i.e., up to six sessions), if this is the case consider speaking to your GP for longer-term support.

Tailored support offered by Mental Health UK's Workplace Mental Health and Training team

Mental Health UK has a dedicated workplace mental health and training team. We pride ourselves on our tailored approach to supporting mental health at work. We can work on a retainer basis in partnership with organisations, providing consultancy to ensure we understand the challenges and objectives of each organisation we work with to tailor a long-term transformational package to help create and maintain mentally healthy workplace cultures.

Our support includes:

- Mental Health Awareness training for managers
- Mental Health Champions training
- Facilitated Peer Support groups
- Therapeutic coaching
- Consultancy
- Talks and Webinars on pertinent mental health topics

[mentalhealth-uk.org/workplace-mental-health](https://www.mentalhealth-uk.org/workplace-mental-health)

