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### Hybrid working model best for mental health, survey finds

Employees who are able to split their working time between home and a formal workplace are 40% less likely to experience mental health difficulties, new research has shown.

Youth mental health charity [stem4](#) surveyed 1038 working parents and carers across the UK to mark [Parent Mental Health Day](#) (27<sup>th</sup> January). It found that four in ten overall (39%) were experiencing mental health problems – most commonly stress (62%), depression (54%) and anxiety (50%).

When asked what had negatively impacted their mental health during the pandemic, 29% identified work pressures – more than the number who cited factors such as relationship difficulties (15%). One in five (20%) said not being able to work had affected their mental wellbeing.

Four in ten (40%) people working from home, and the same number of those working outside their home, were experiencing mental health difficulties. However, those whose working pattern combined time at home with time at a formal workplace were significantly less likely to experience problems with their mental health (29%). Only one in five (19%) working parents say their employer currently allows hybrid working. Six in ten (57%) work solely from home, and one in four (23%) in a formal workplace (23%).

**Dr. Nihara Krause, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and founder of stem4**, said: “One of the few positive outcomes of the pandemic is that it’s provided a unique opportunity to test how we can all work differently, and rethink working structures that create value, whether that’s a reduced commute for employees or increased productivity for the employer. However, what this survey confirms is that as workers re-emerge from the pandemic they are not rested. As a consequence of two years of uncertainty, the blurring of the boundaries between home and work-life, less flexibility to relax in their usual ways such as going on holiday or seeing friends, means people are presenting with exhaustion and poorer mental health. With one in four working parents now experiencing mental health difficulties, the pandemic has left people feeling overwhelmed, unable to cope, and lacking balance in their life, Hybrid working may afford employees the time they need to recover.”

The survey also explored the levels of support workers felt that they were receiving. Almost half (49%) said their employer had supported their mental health and wellbeing somewhat during the pandemic, with 23% saying they had received a lot of support. However, 28% said their employers had not supported their mental health at all.

People working in journalism or the media were the most likely to say their employer had supported their mental health and wellbeing a lot (68%). This was in stark contrast with healthcare (15%), social care (11%) and creative arts (10%). Workers in the leisure and tourism industries were the most likely to say that their employer had not supported their mental health at all (87%).

Dr. Krause said: “Our survey shows that work can be a significant cause of stress, but also a valuable source of support. It’s hugely welcome that so many workers say they’ve had some kind of help from their employers. However, it’s a matter of concern that this varies so widely, and also that people working in the caring professions are among the least likely to feel supported themselves.”



The survey was carried out ahead of [Parent Mental Health Day](#) (27th January) a new annual campaign from stem4. The theme of this year's campaign is balance and how to #TiptheBalance to positive.

**What has negatively impacted parents' mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic**

1. Effect of lockdowns, e.g., home schooling, loss of income (45%)
2. Fear of a family member becoming ill (36%)
3. Fear they (the parent) would become ill (33%)
4. Work pressures (29%)
5. Financial worries (28%)
6. Effect of not being able to work (20%)
7. Loneliness (19%)
8. No time for their own mental health (18%)
9. Family relationship difficulties (15%)
10. Putting family first (14%)

**What would improve parents' mental health and wellbeing going forward**

1. Increase monthly income to pay essential bills (36%)
2. A guarantee that schools will remain open over the next year (32%)
3. Better work-life balance (28%)
4. More time to look after their own mental health (26%)
5. Better access to health services generally: GP, mental health services, and hospital appointments (25%)
6. Free/affordable childcare (23%)
7. Equal distribution of unpaid chores in the home (21%)
8. Better home living conditions (19%)
9. Access to more paid work (17%)
10. Better access to children's mental health services (17%)

**How working parents rate their employers' support of their mental health and wellbeing**

Profession	A lot	Somewhat	Not at all
Journalism/media	68.10%	31.90%	0.00%
Insurance/pensions	64.60%	35.40%	0.00%
Marketing/PR	46.90%	53.10%	0.00%
Property/construction	41.30%	34.00%	24.70%
Law	30.20%	43.80%	26.00%
Engineering/Manufacturing	29.50%	36.70%	33.80%
Scientific services	28.50%	71.50%	0.00%
Transport/logistics/distribution	28.10%	24.90%	47.00%
Charity/Not for Profit	25.10%	55.20%	19.70%
Retail (buying and selling)	21.90%	50.40%	27.70%
Hospitality/events	19.80%	47.00%	33.20%
Public services/Government	19.80%	49.80%	30.40%
Technology/IT	19.30%	57.40%	23.40%
Energy and Utilities	15.60%	63.90%	20.40%
Healthcare (doctor/nurse)	15.30%	58.70%	26.00%
Leisure/sports/tourism	13.30%	0.00%	86.70%
Social care	11.10%	54.70%	34.20%
Performing arts	10.20%	51.80%	38.00%
Creative arts and design	10.10%	61.20%	28.60%

## **Notes to editors**

### **About the research**

\*Survey of 1028 regionally representative parents (with children aged from 0 to 18 living in the family home) carried out between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

### **For more information, regional breakdowns and case studies, contact:**

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<https://stem4.org.uk/parentmentalhealthday/>

### **About Parent Mental Health Day #PMHD & #TiptheBalance to Positive**

stem4's [Parent Mental Health Day](#) (PMHD) encourages **understanding** and **awareness** of the importance of parents' mental health and its impact on the whole family system. With this year's theme being 'balance', the day aims to get parents and carers to take a moment to reflect on the balance they have in their lives and to take positive steps to make change.

The past two years have been like no other, with a huge impact on the population's mental health. With ever-changing restrictions, it is easy for parents to overlook their own mental health as they juggle daily tasks. Parent Mental Health Day is here to shine a light on the unsung heroes who have parented under changed circumstances throughout the pandemic, but now need some focus on themselves. By getting parents, carers and employers engaged in discussions, PMHD aims to challenge the stigmas surrounding parents' mental health, promote steps to positive mental health, and lend its voice to campaigning for early intervention and more resources for mental health services for all age groups.

stem4, a charity that supports young people to build positive mental health, is proud to be the founder of Parent Mental Health Day in the UK, which started in 2022.

<https://stem4.org.uk/parentmentalhealthday/>

### **#PMHD 2022: #TiptheBalancetoPositive**

#### **About stem4**

stem4 is an award-winning charity that supports teenagers with their mental health. It provides evidence-based education, builds resilience, enhances motivation to change, early digital intervention through its suite of 4 mental health apps, and signposts to ensure early intervention and action. stem4 focuses on commonly occurring mental health issues in teenagers including eating disorders, anxiety, depression, self-harm, and addiction.

The charity works with students, parents and teachers in secondary schools and colleges, and with health professionals such as GPs and school nurses through its conference programme and digitally-delivered workshops suitable for PHSE in schools. The stem4 digital portfolio of mental health apps has widespread use nationally and internationally. **stem4** is also included in the Royal College of GP toolkit, the NHS Good Thinking Website, NHS App Library and Orcha Library.