

Working from Home

The Impact on Wellbeing in Six Countries

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Topics for Today

- Wellbeing during COVID-19
- The IES WfH Wellbeing Survey in six countries
- Job quality, management & wellbeing
- Evidence gaps & challenges
- Messages for Employers

Wellbeing During Covid-19

- Key workers: PPE, risk assessment, black, South Asian & Hispanic employees, mental health, trauma, burnout & 'moral injury'
- Vulnerable groups: older workers, those living with obesity & other high-risk comorbidities
- Employees working from home: physical & emotional wellbeing, lifestyle factors, management, culture, communications & work-life balance
- Workforce health as a 'business continuity' challenge

Homeworking & Wellbeing

- Millions of workers have been WfH since the start of the 'lockdown' — biggest & quickest mass shift in working patterns ever
- Pre-COVID19, only around 7% of U.S. workers had the option to regularly work from home (12% in the UK) – rose to 40-50% during 'lockdown'
- How have the physical & emotional health of workers been affected by WfH & what are the lessons for employers post-lockdown?
- Important not to over-medicalize – quality of management matters too

Drawing on Survey Data from 6 Countries

- IES was established in 1969 & is a not-for-profit applied research organisation focusing on labour market policy, HRM & wellbeing
- The IES Working at Home Wellbeing Survey has been tracking wellbeing since the start of the UK 'lockdown' in March
- Used the WHO5 Index of mental wellbeing
- We have data from over 6,100 respondents from UK, UAE, Mexico, Brazil, India & Ireland

Respondent Profile & Headlines



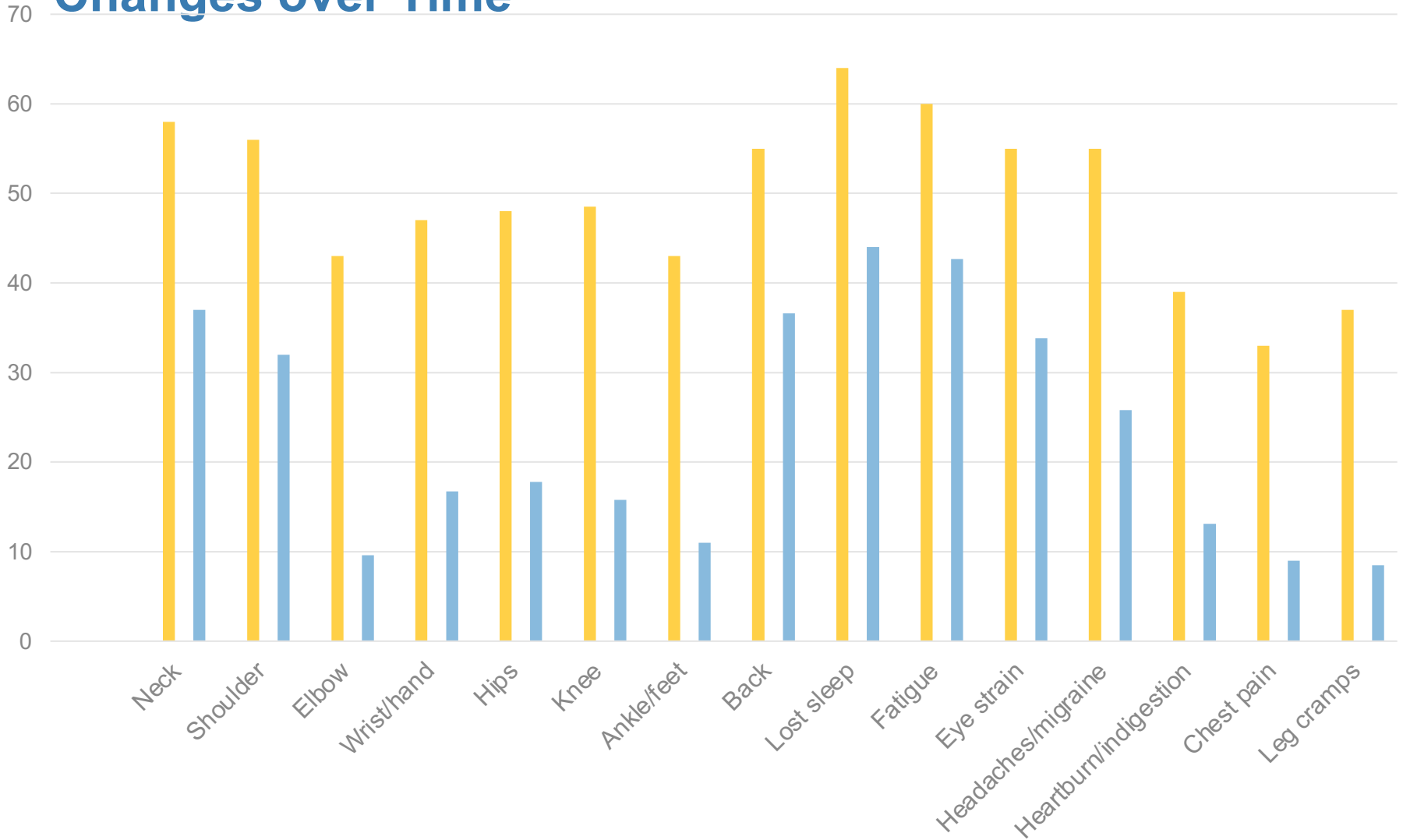
Some 'headline' data

	Ind	Mex	Sharj	Bra	UK	IRL
<i>Respondents</i>	922	689	1796	653	865	1179
Access to OH	57%	76%			73%	
MSK Pain	33%	69%	25%	56%	55%	45%
Eye Strain			43%	45%	55%	41%
Less exercise		44%	30%		60%	40%
Healthy Diet	82%	68%	78%		66%	70%
Presenteeism		33%	65%	52%	26%	
Good WLB	48%	72%	52%	42%	50%	68%
Boss Support	87%	84%	84%	80%	71%	
Productive	78%	78%	90%	76%	30%*	

**data from Felstead et al, 2020*

Physical Health During Lockdown – UK

Changes over Time



Source: Bajorek, Mason & Bevan, 2020

■ Apr-20 ■ Jun-20

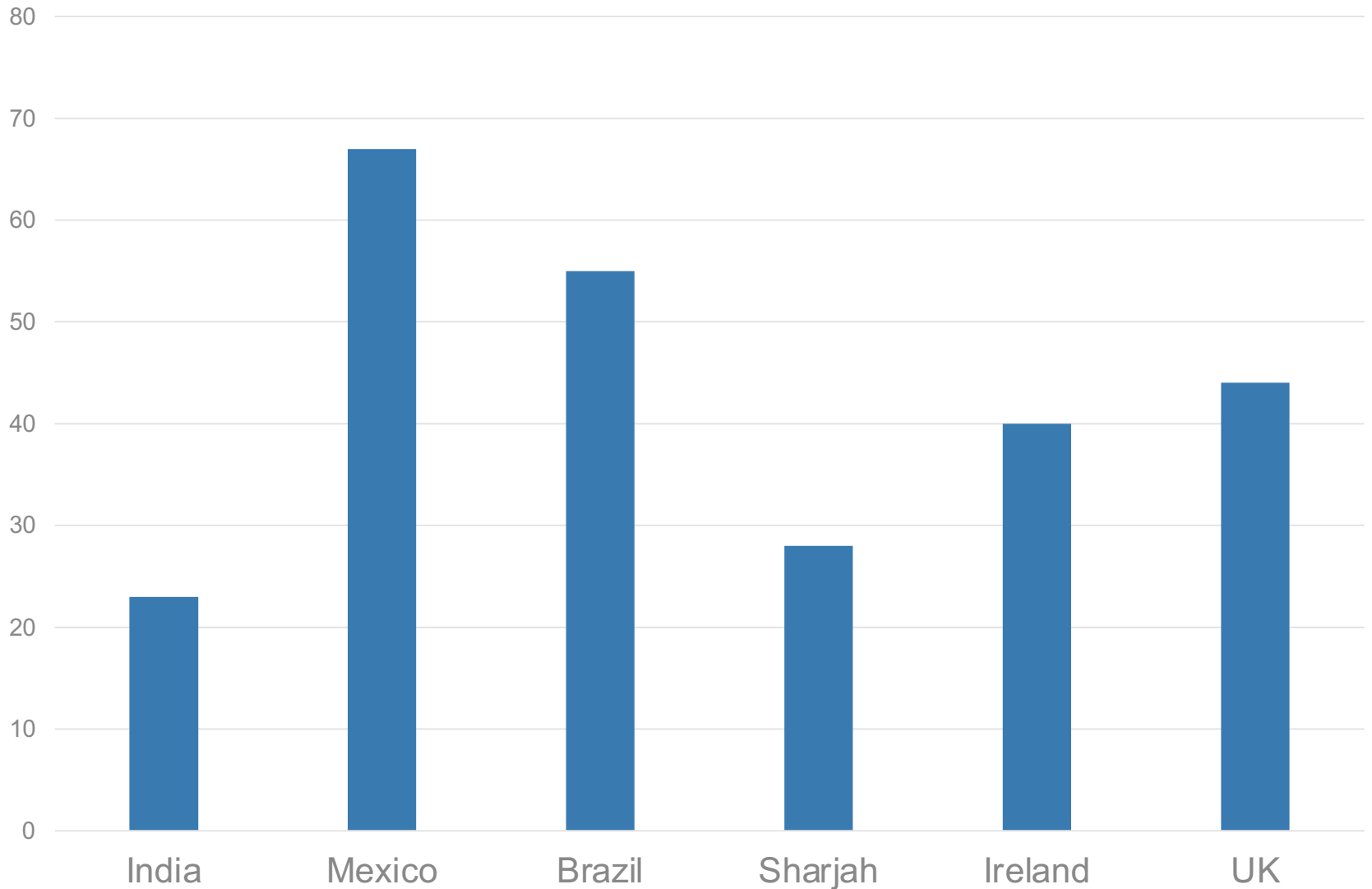
Sleep & Fatigue



Energy, fatigue & working time

- Many report positive experiences (less commuting, feeling valued, more autonomy)
- But many say work pressure is too much
- Many don't have enough time to get their work done
- Many are working longer hours than contracted
- Sleep & fatigue seem to suffer across many who WfH and no improvements apparent

Losing Sleep During Covid-19 (% of respondents)



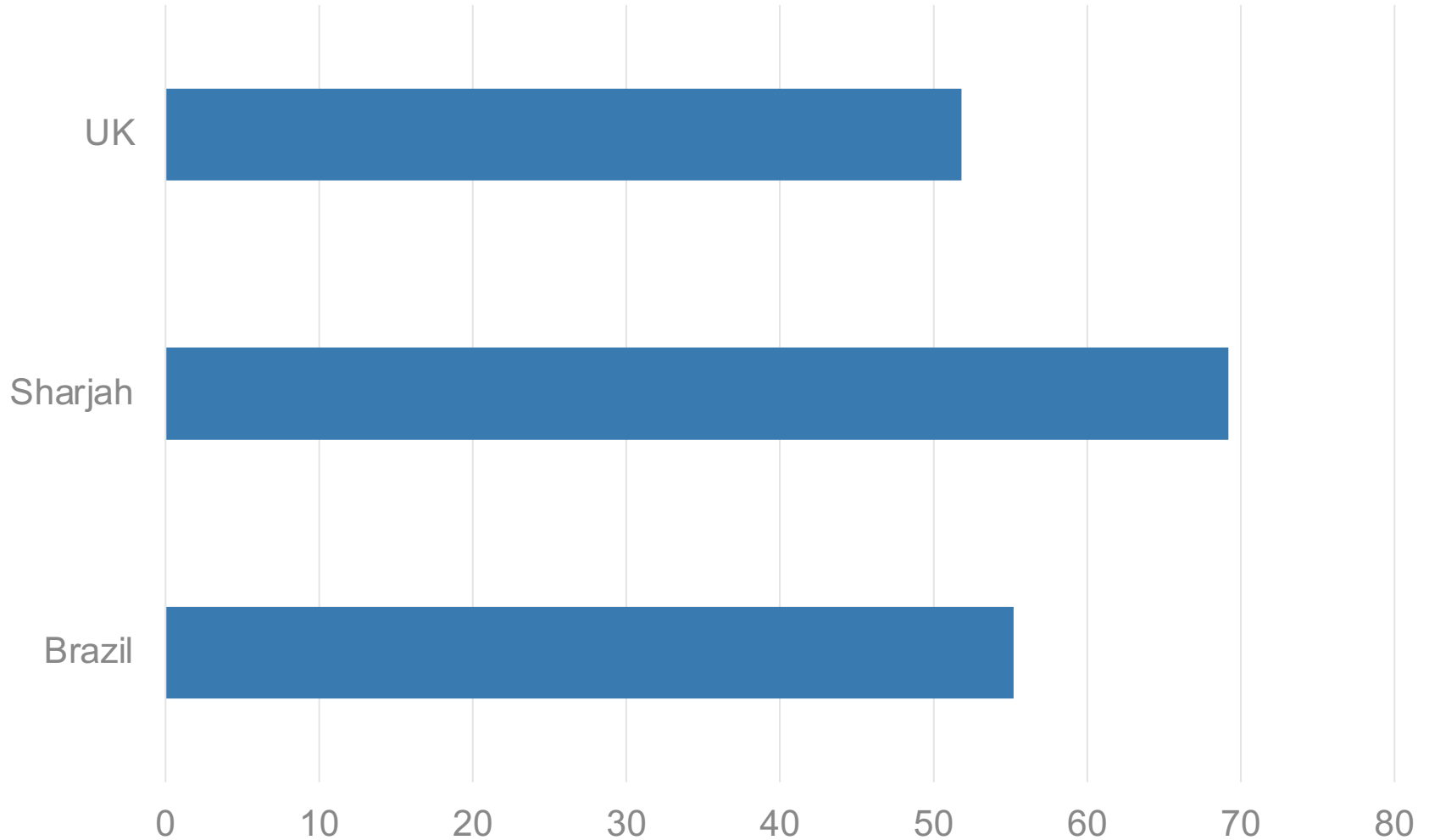
Mental Wellbeing



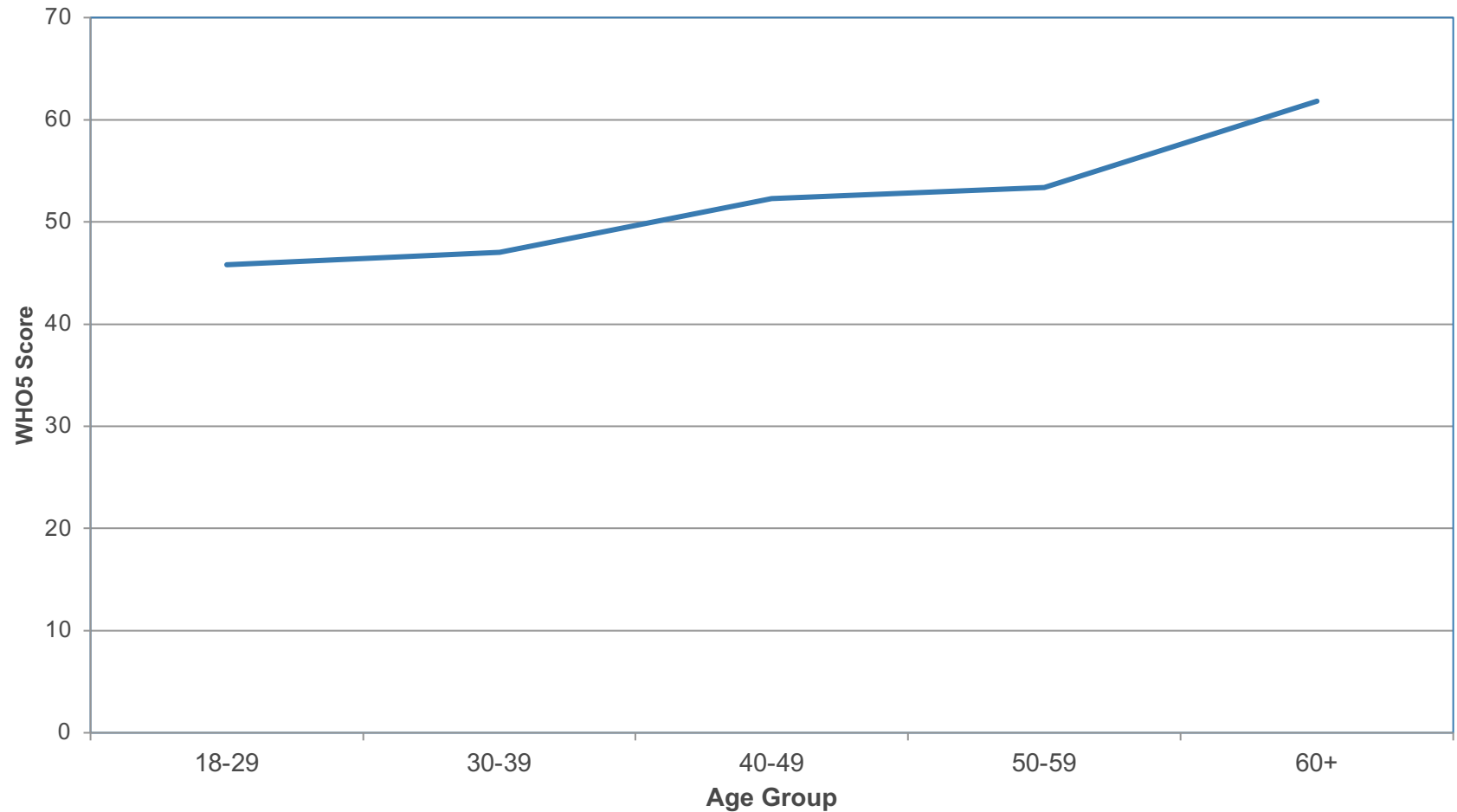
How is Mental Health Faring? (1)

- The WHO5 Index is an internationally validated measure of mental wellbeing
- Many younger workers had lower scores & this group had more concerns about finance, housing, job security, isolation etc
- The mental health of long-term homeworkers (pre-COVID19) was much better than those new to 'lockdown'

WHO5 Scores for Homeworkers



Mental Health Worse Among the Young (UK)

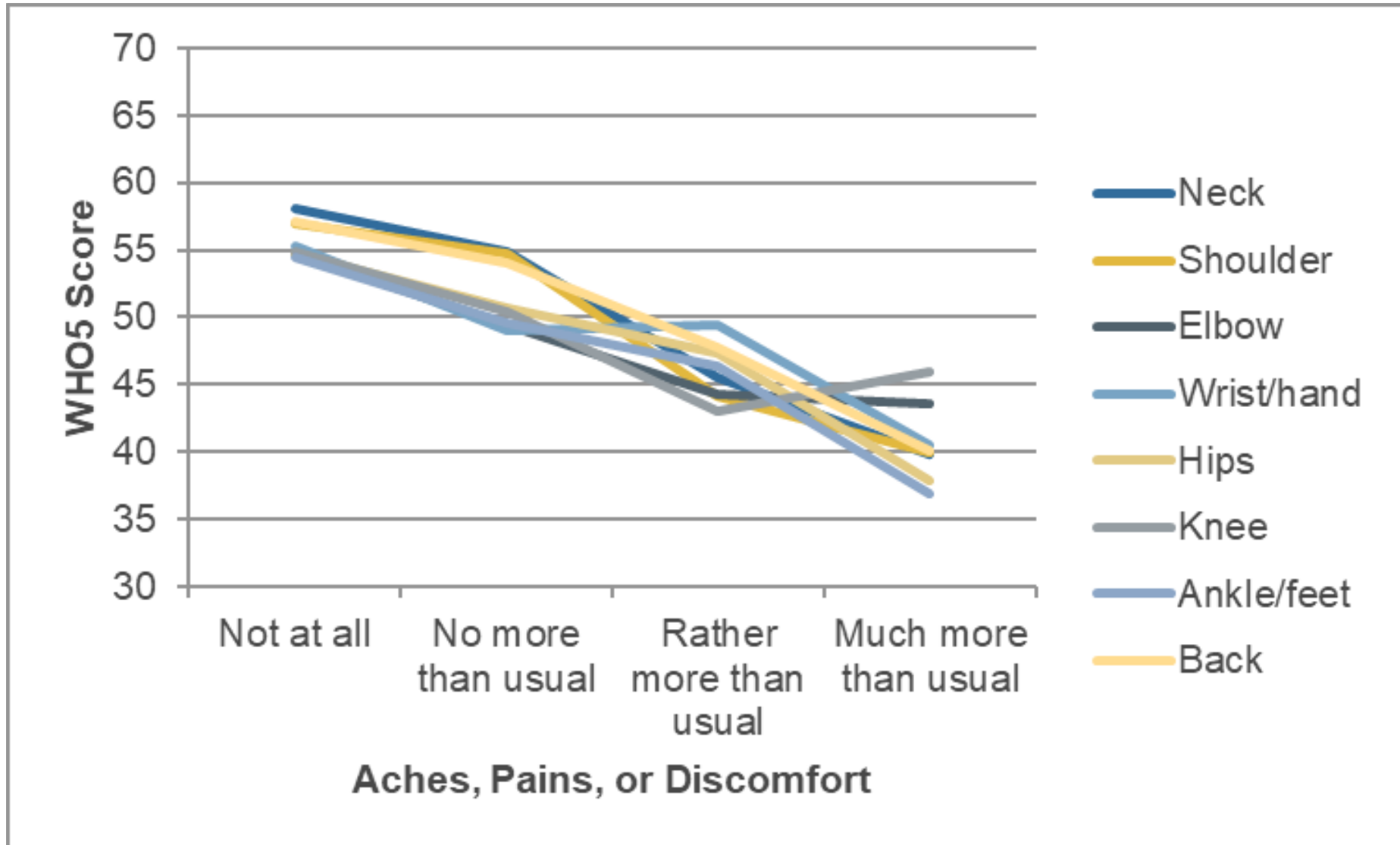


Source: Bajorek, Mason & Bevan, 2020

How is Mental Health Faring? (2)

- Better mental health among those who:
 - Are committed to/engaged with their employer
 - Derive satisfaction from work and have autonomy & control over what they do
 - Are content with work-life balance
 - Feel supported & motivated to WfH
 - Have more frequent contact with their boss
 - Have fewer physical health problems
 - Intend to stay with their employer

Physical & Mental Health are Linked (UK)



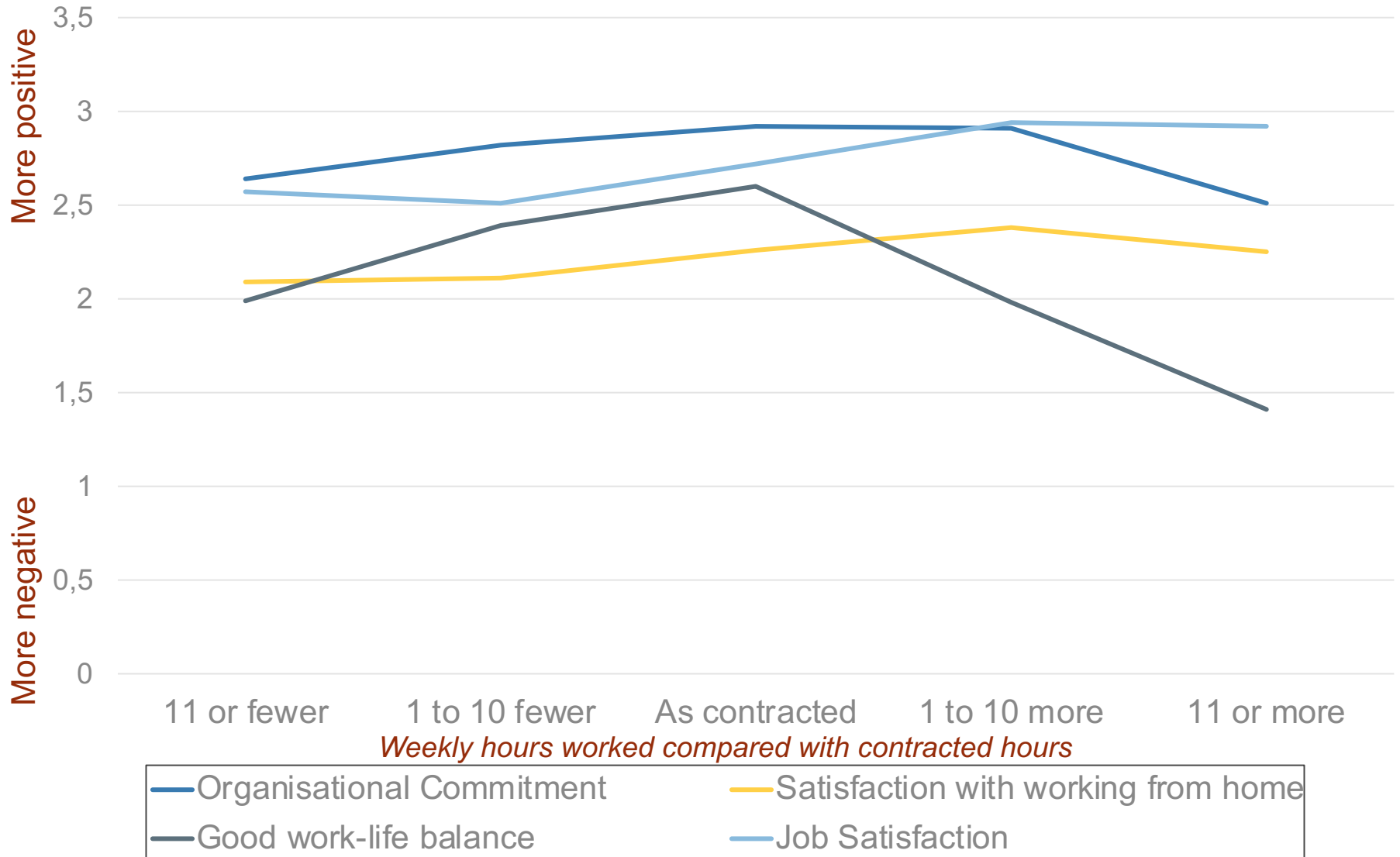
Work-Life Balance, Communication & Morale



Good Work IS Good for Wellbeing

- Being trusted to work remotely & feeling involved in decision-making (voice)
- Variety, control, feeling valued & a having a sense of accomplishment from work
- Managing the work/life boundaries
- Contact with boss & team members

Satisfaction with WfH – Working Hours Compared to Contracted Hours (UK)



Challenges & Evidence Gaps



Challenges & Gaps

Remote
Working

Job Design &
Crafting

Line Manager
Capability &
Health

Work-Life
Balance

Absence &
Presenteeism

Prevention &
Early
Intervention

Performance
& Productivity

Upskilling in
Lockdown

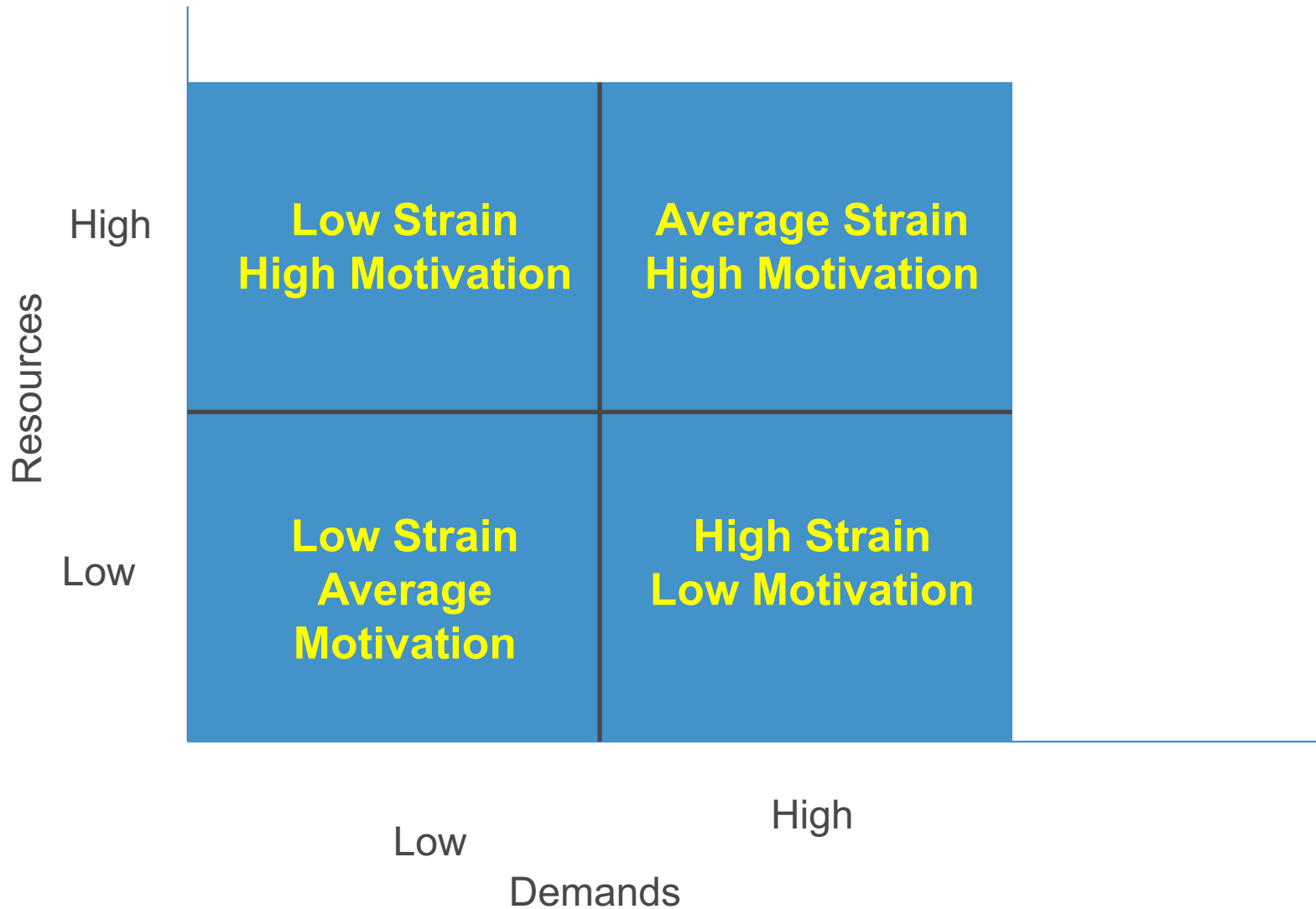
Vocational
Rehabilitation

Mental Health –
Demands/resources

Trades Union
Roles

Inequality &
Inclusivity

Job Demands - Resources Model



Action Areas for Employers

- Ergonomic adjustment and health & safety risk assessments for MSK conditions
- Support & guidance on 'lifestyle' risks such as sleep, exercise, diet, solitude
- Flexible working & 'boundary' management for employees with caring responsibilities
- Connectivity & mental health – formally via line managers & co-workers; informally through messaging, social events, peer support
- Alertness and action on financial wellbeing & 'Burnout'

Questions for Employers

- Are senior leaders more convinced now that Wellbeing should be a strategic priority? Beyond a 'business continuity' risk?
- Can OH/HR grasp the opportunity to 'mainstream' workforce health or will it revert to being about employee benefits, fruit & Pilates?
- What HR processes & health promotion practices need to be reassessed in the light of Covid-19 and if WfH becomes a core component of work organisation?

Thanks to our partners

Global Centre for Healthy Workplaces

Arogya World, India

HSPM, Mexico

Health Promotion Department, Supreme Council for
Family Affairs,
Emirate of Sharjah, UAE

FGV EAESP, Brazil

Mental Health First Aid, Ireland

Further information:

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