

# LESSONS FROM LOCKDOWN

ORGANISATIONAL WELLBEING

APRIL 2021

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN  
SHP AND HEALTHY WORK COMPANY

**SHP**



**HEALTHYWORK**  
COMPANY

enabling thriving cultures



# BACKGROUND

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In the early days of lockdown #1 in the UK, **Healthy Work Company** conducted a survey on personal wellbeing. As lockdown #3 now eases, and many organisations look to the safe return of employees to offices/sites, we are now following up in collaboration with **Safety and Health Practitioner** with the results of a recent organisational wellbeing survey.

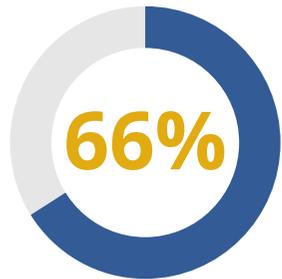
This report presents the results of a survey designed for senior organisational leaders and influencers in HR, Health and Safety and Wellbeing with either a country specific or global remit. Our objective is to provide some indications of best practice for wellbeing practitioners.

We conducted an online survey to identify where organisations have looked to focus their wellbeing efforts during the pandemic, what they already had in place, and how they will build from here. Fieldwork was conducted March - April 2021.

We spoke to 211 senior organisational leaders and influencers in HR, Health and Safety and Wellbeing, spanning large (1,000+ employees) through to medium (50-999) and small (1-49) organisations.

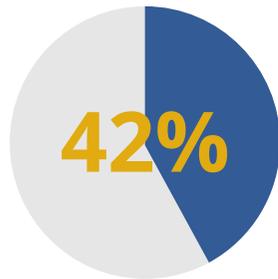


# SUMMARY



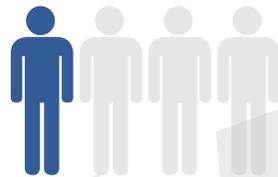
of organisations are expecting to embrace a more flexible working model

Organisations have adopted a range of approaches to help employees during lockdown. The most commonly observed approach was providing flexibility and autonomy: in where, when, and how people work, with 66% also expecting to embrace a more flexible working model moving forward.



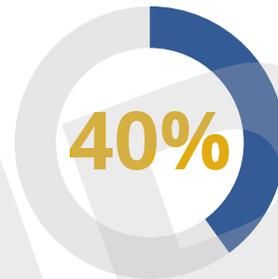
of boards report health and wellbeing are now a primary concern

The lockdown has been a catalyst for the Boards of many organisations to talk more about employee wellbeing. 42% of Boards reported more conversations and spontaneous feedback was provided and that health and wellbeing is now a primary organisational concern.



only 1 in 4 Board/Senior Managers are trained in understanding their own wellbeing

Just 1 in 4 (28%) of organisations report that their Board/Senior Managers are trained in understanding their own wellbeing and the difference they can make to others. Only 43% have trained their people managers in understanding wellbeing.



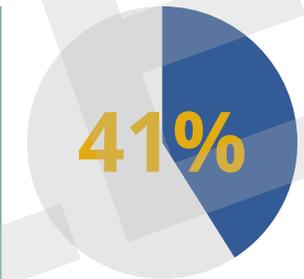
of wellbeing strategies are driven by HR and/or H&S

The wellbeing strategy of almost half of organisations is driven by HR and/or H&S with the budget often held by HR (40%). This often means a low adoption of training of the senior team! When the strategy is driven by a senior committee rather than HR and/or H&S, we see lower adoption in initiatives beyond flexible working.



1 in 6 organisations don't have a wellbeing strategy

1 in 6 organisations don't have a wellbeing strategy, which is more likely to be observed in small/medium sized organisations.



of organisations took on additional wellbeing training

During lockdown there was 'moderate uptake' (41%) of additional training in wellbeing. *Intro to Mental Health and Wellbeing* is the most popular, however nearly half of organisations (43%) are yet to conduct it. Individual Resilience training and Financial Wellbeing training top the list of courses organisations planned for the future.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 Having a wellbeing strategy is essential to planning resources (time and money) and this should be based upon the needs of your workforce and the stress risk factors in your organisation.
- 2 Strong communication between the Board and the department driving the wellbeing strategy is fundamental to ensuring the Board and Senior Managers are up-skilled in understanding their own wellbeing and the difference they can make to others.
- 3 Training should be delivered to all - ensuring the right training for the right stakeholder. This may include some wellbeing and resilience awareness for all staff, should certainly include training for people managers in having wellbeing conversations, and may include some peer-to-peer support such as wellbeing conversations training for all staff and Mental Health First Aid for some.
- 4 Returning to offices and sites will introduce a new set of organisational challenges, which will require:
  - Continuously eliciting employee feedback
  - Putting in place practices with sufficient flexibility
  - Taking appropriate actions when required as the situation develops.

*Final note: Throughout the report, a set of 'other' organisations emerge which don't follow the normal/standard practice. With such fragmentation it is not possible to draw conclusion as to whether these approaches are overall more or less effective than more mainstream approaches that are easier to quantify, but likely within this subset we'd find the mavericks, pioneers, innovators and more. This serves to remind us that all organisations are truly unique and there is no 'one size fits all' approach.*

# KEY LOCKDOWN INITIATIVES

Organisations have adopted a range of approaches to help employees. The most commonly observed approach was flexibility and autonomy: in where, when, and how people work.

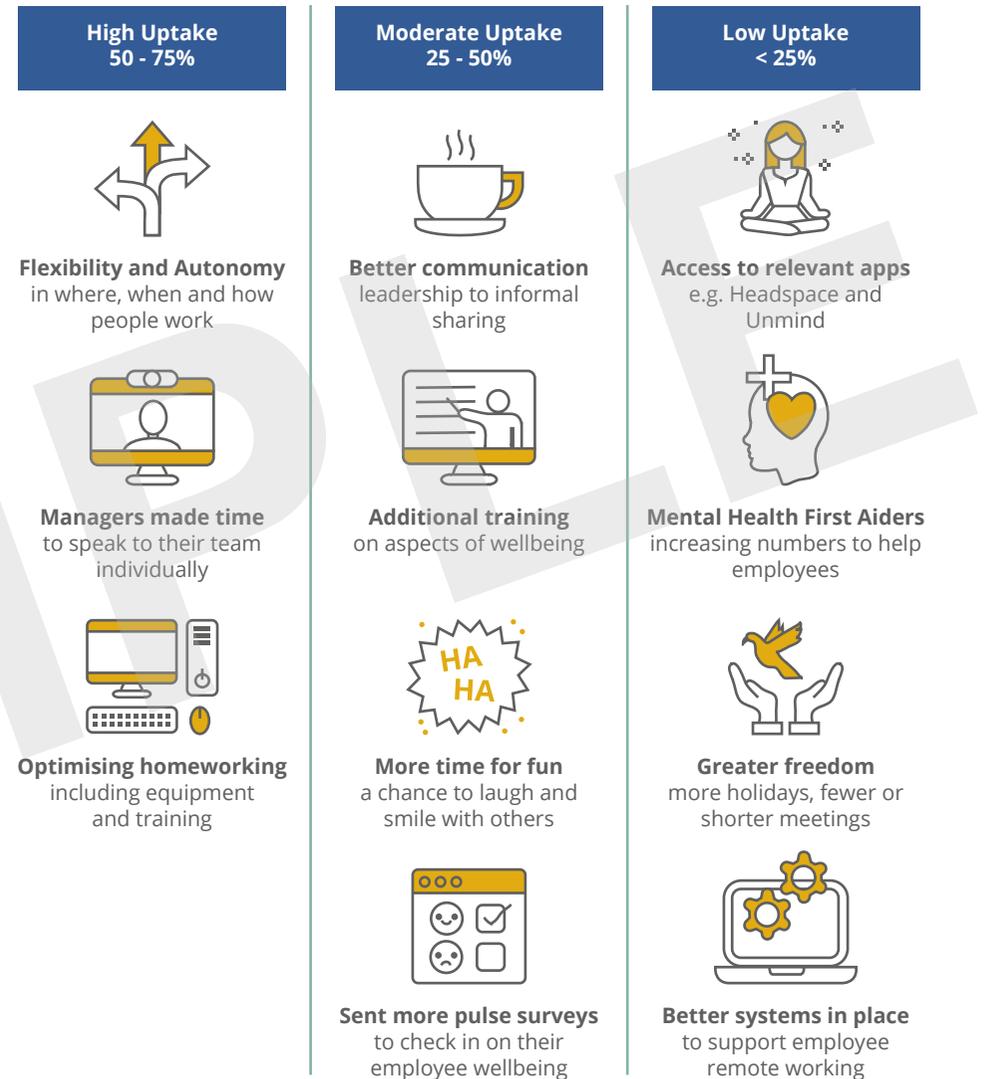
We see a huge adoption of approaches and techniques to help employees handle the impact of the pandemic (Fig. 1), with every single organisation we spoke to embarking on at least one change. On average, organisations adopted at least five initiatives, with large organisations adopting more than six.

Highest uptake across these initiatives were for:

- Flexibility and autonomy: in where, when, and how people work
- Managers making more time to speak to their team individually
- Optimising set-up for home working, including equipment and training

Furthermore, there was moderate uptake of better communication (from leadership, and also via informal sharing sessions), additional wellbeing training, making more time to have fun with other team members, and sending more pulse surveys to understand employee wellbeing.

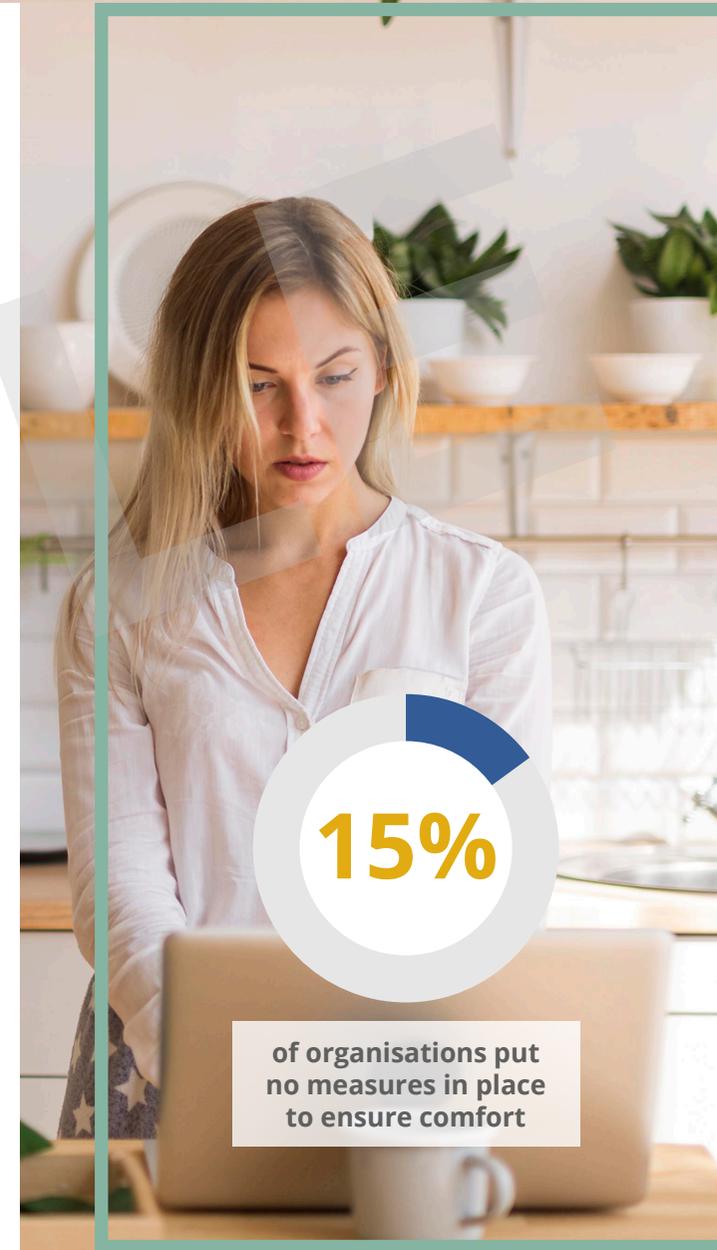
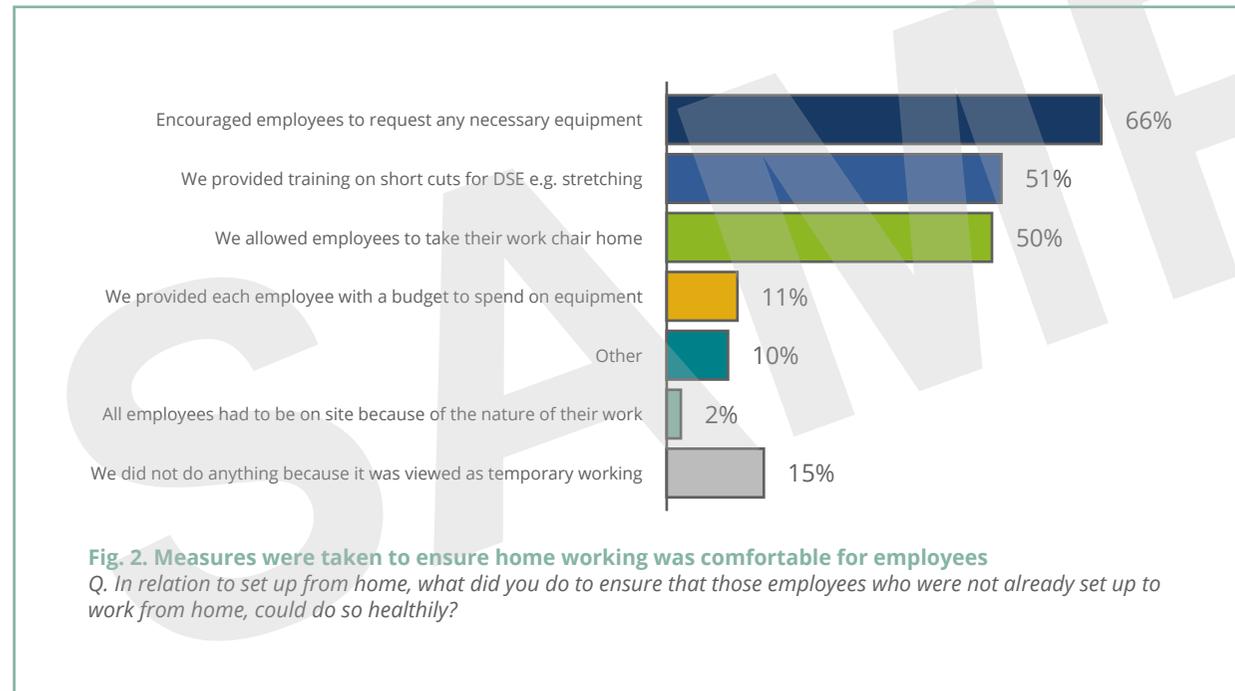
Those activities adopted by fewer than 1 in 4 organisations, included access to wellbeing apps (e.g. headspace), increased number of Mental Health First Aiders, greater freedom around holidays and meetings, and finally better systems in place to support remote working.



**Fig. 1. Uptake in a range of wellbeing initiatives through the pandemic**  
Q. Which of the following wellbeing initiatives did you start during lockdown? (total sample n=211)

# HOMEWORING

Regarding employees' home working situation, we saw most organisations putting measures in place to ensure this was as comfortable as possible, for example requesting necessary equipment or allowing them to take their work chair home (Fig. 2) but 15% did nothing to ensure this because it was regarded as "temporary".



**15%**

**of organisations put no measures in place to ensure comfort**