



2025 TELUS Mental Health Barometer

The state of mental health and wellbeing in New Zealand workplaces:

Evidence-based insights to reshape your wellbeing strategy.



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Executive summary

In this report, we examine workplace mental health insights and trends in workplaces across New Zealand, drawing from 5 TELUS Mental Health Index (MHI) reports published in 2024 and early 2025. Each report surveyed 1,000 employed adults in New Zealand, capturing insights across age, gender, industry and region. We've also included data from a special report on high-trust organisations.

Challenges like anxiety and isolation remained persistent in New Zealand last year. The lasting impact of the pandemic, ongoing economic instability and evolving work environments have created a scenario where employee wellbeing has been under strain, and the impact on productivity in the workplace is greater than ever.

Continued progress will depend on sustained attention to the factors that most influence employee wellbeing.

The following trends outline the key dynamics shaping the mental health of the New Zealand workforce today:

1. Mental health challenges remain widespread, with anxiety and isolation continuing to affect large portions of the workforce
2. Mental health and productivity are closely linked and ongoing risk levels pose challenges for engagement and performance
3. Workplace culture and trust can play a pivotal role in employee mental wellbeing and retention



There is a clear link between employer support and employee wellbeing. Healthy leadership and tangible support are essential for employees who experience better mental health and higher productivity outcomes, which every business owner strives for. This underscores the need for organisations to prioritise wellbeing.



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Mental health in the workplace remains an area of concern.

In many New Zealand workplaces, issues like anxiety, isolation and chronic stress have become more widespread and deeply felt in recent years.

These challenges are not evenly distributed. Women and younger employees are disproportionately affected, reporting higher levels of anxiety and persistent feelings of disconnection. Financial stressors such as rising debt and economic instability are also compounding the strain on employee wellbeing.

Together, these pressures underscore the urgent need for a more holistic, organisation-wide approach to supporting mental health and ensuring employees feel seen and heard.



41%

of workers in New Zealand **face constant stress**, with those under 40 impacted the most.



Findings

More than one-third of the working population continues to be at high mental health risk since 2022.



37%

of workers in New Zealand are at **high mental health risk** in March 2025, compared to 36% in April 2022.

Anxiety and isolation remain pervasive, with younger employees bearing the brunt.



70%

In 2024, workers under 40 are 70% more likely than workers over 50 to find it increasingly difficult to be motivated at work.



41%

of workers face constant stress, with those under 40 impacted the most.



37%

of employees report feeling anxious, while 34% of employees report feeling isolated.

Findings

Women face additional pressures that affect their mental wellbeing.

Men in New Zealand are 40% more likely than women to report no personal stress.



Since 2023 women in New Zealand have had significantly lower mental health scores than men.



The mental health score of women in New Zealand at the start of 2025 was 3.5 points lower than men.

Financial insecurity is a significant driver of declining mental health in the workplace.



54% of employees say financial concerns are the primary source of personal stress.



42% of workers want to improve their financial management, but 21% of those have not made any progress towards their goal.



42% of employees do not have emergency savings and their mental health score is 17 points lower than the national average and nearly 26 points lower than workers with emergency savings.

How employers can support better mental health.

1

Offer and promote mental health education and training on a regular basis.

Providing [learning opportunities](#) on mental health is critical to address the issue of more and more employees with high mental health risk.

Regular workshops, training and awareness campaigns, tailored to address specific concerns by gender or age group, can help reduce stigma, build understanding and empower employees to support themselves and others.

3

Recognise gender differences and offer support for women's mental health and wellbeing.

The disparities in mental health outcomes across gender and age groups highlight that different demographics require tailored support. Employers must recognise these challenges and implement targeted support measures for these groups.

Tailored programmes such as employee resource groups, flexible work arrangements and enhanced manager training and mental health support could be particularly beneficial in addressing the specific needs of women of all ages.

2

Encourage open conversations about mental health issues, including anxiety and sentiment of isolation.

The widespread anxiety and feeling of isolation, especially among younger employees, highlights the need for employers to recognise the vulnerability of these groups.

Managers need training to recognise signs of distress, demonstrate concern for wellbeing and confidently discuss EAP resources while normalizing their use and encouraging employee outreach.

4

Promote financial wellbeing programmes to help alleviate financial stress.

Addressing financial insecurity is crucial for improving mental health, reducing stress and supporting overall employee wellbeing.

Offer resources like financial advice, debt management tools and retirement planning support. These initiatives can alleviate [financial uncertainty](#) and enhance employees' overall wellbeing, at all stages of life.

Mental health has a significant effect on workplace productivity.

As mental health challenges grow more widespread, their impact is increasingly visible across core aspects of business performance.

Employers are facing tangible consequences. Declines in productivity, reduced engagement, rising turnover and burnout are taking a toll on the workforce. The MHI research demonstrates that social isolation and financial stress are amplifying these effects, contributing to a cycle of instability that affects both personal wellbeing and professional outcomes.

Addressing these issues requires more than isolated initiatives and demands a sustained commitment to supporting employee mental health.

36%

of employees in New Zealand find it more **difficult to be motivated at work.**



Findings

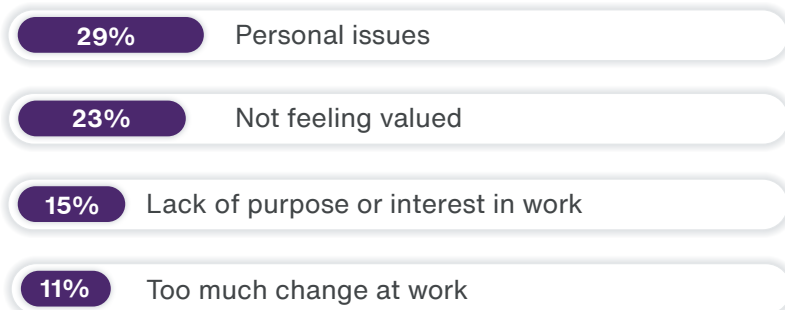
The persistence of mental health risks and generational differences point to long-term productivity challenges.

In 2024, 33% of workers in New Zealand had a mental health score of 50 or below. These workers experienced three and a half times the productivity loss compared to those with scores of 90 or higher.

In 2024, 33% of New Zealand employees reported that their mental health was negatively impacting productivity at work:



36% of employees in New Zealand find it more difficult to be motivated at work. This decline is attributed to various factors such as:



High workloads are the leading cause of stress and burnout, leading to productivity losses.

63%

of workers feel somewhat or extremely burnt out.

25%

of workers refer to high workload as the leading source of burnout.

40%

of workers feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities or commitments.

Findings

Social isolation and lack of trust can affect mental health and workplace performance.



Employees in New Zealand without trusted work relationships are **two and a half times more likely to feel isolated** and report lower mental health.



18%

of employees **avoid attending any social events.** These employees have a mental health score 24 points lower than those who look forward to attending social events to see new and familiar people.



41%

of employees **engage in activities that promote social wellbeing** such as spending time with friends or participating in community events on a weekly basis.

How employers can increase productivity through proactive mental health strategies.

1 Train managers to better support their staff by building trust-based relationships.

The increase in high mental health risk points to growing challenges for workplace productivity. Building trust between workers and their managers is essential.

Training managers on how to build trust with employees and within teams will reduce the anxiety related to isolation and enable employees to cope more effectively with work stress.

3 Create opportunities to reduce isolation and build social connections at work.

A lack of trust-based social connections at work is a critical issue that impacts both mental and physical wellbeing. Employers must create an environment that fosters trust and promotes strong team relationships.

Aim to foster a culture of inclusivity and collaboration, offering mentoring programmes and regular opportunities for peer interaction, both virtually and in person. This is especially important for younger employees who are more prone to feeling isolated.

2 Understand and address stress at its source.

Addressing sources of stress, such as manager relationships, workload issues and job insecurity concerns, can improve employee mental health while helping to boost organisational efficiency and performance.

Equip your managers with tools and resources to identify different work stress sources and address the issues at the root of the situation to help improve mental health and wellbeing.

4 Provide enhanced mental health resources that include financial literacy and support.

Financial stress directly impacts productivity, making it essential for employers to address it through comprehensive EAPs.

EAPs should include mental health counselling, financial assistance, legal support, nutritional guidance and a culturally sensitive approach with the Rongoa Maori Support line. This can help employees manage life stressors that reduce workplace performance.

A positive workplace culture drives better mental health and retention.

As workplace culture shapes the employee experience, its influence on mental health and retention is impossible to ignore.

When trust, respect and support are absent, employees are more likely to feel isolated, disengaged and burnt out. Employees say they lack trusted relationships at work, and many report little to no access to mental health education or wellbeing resources. This disconnect between what employees need and what they experience is eroding morale and driving turnover.

Rebuilding that trust and investing in visible, consistent support must be a priority for any organisation serious about long-term wellbeing and performance.

70%



Highly engaged employees report 70% higher wellbeing compared to their less engaged counterparts.



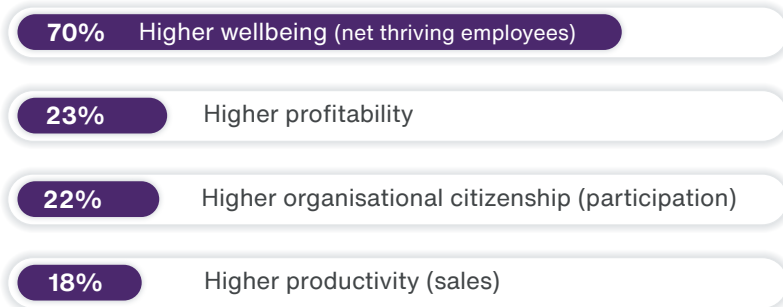
Findings

Building trust and providing wellbeing support can be more significant than salary increases.



45% Approximately 45% of employees in New Zealand **lack trusted relationships at work.**

Highly engaged employees deliver significantly stronger business outcomes across key performance areas.



36% of employees would **prefer better support for their wellbeing over a 10% salary increase.**

Unresolved conflicts and poor psychological safety can erode employee wellbeing.



14 points lower MHI score

Employees who perceive they cannot speak up about concerns at work without fear of punishment or humiliation have a mental health score **14 points lower than those who feel safe speaking up.**

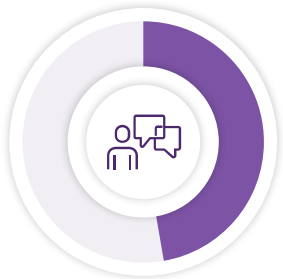


13 points lower MHI score

In New Zealand, poor handling of harassment, bullying and unhealthy conflicts is a risk as seen in mental health scores that are **13 points lower than in supportive environments.**

Findings

Many workers lack awareness and satisfaction of mental health and wellbeing programmes at work.



55%

of workers don't know or say their employer **doesn't offer an EAP.**



21%

of workers **do not know if their employer provides mental health benefits, or report that their employer does not provide mental health benefits.**

Employees want clear mental health and wellbeing support.



Only **47%**

of employees in New Zealand are **satisfied with their employer's mental health coverage.**

How employers can cultivate better workplace culture through mental health activities.

1

Build a culture of trust, safety and open communication.

Trust and respect are essential for employee engagement, and their absence can lead to higher burnout, turnover and disengagement.

Encourage regular feedback, transparency and safe spaces for employees to raise concerns without fear. Address issues like harassment and conflict swiftly and recognise behaviours that foster trust and inclusion to reduce isolation and empower mental wellbeing.

3

Plan for ongoing communications about your mental health and wellbeing programmes.

It's not enough to have a mental health and wellbeing programme, you need to excel at the way you deliver it and promote it actively. Since the workforce is diverse, it's essential to consider varied communication channels to inform your workers of key resources available to them, especially when crises arise.

Enable managers to educate their team members and guide them on finding the support they need.

2

Provide a respectful work environment and lead with empathy.

When employees feel unsafe or witness unresolved workplace conflicts, it affects their wellbeing,

Provide training on inclusive, empathetic leadership and ensure managers are equipped to handle conflict resolution. Managers who prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of their team members can help close the mental health score gap seen in employees who don't have support.

4

Provide tailored and easy-to-access mental health resources.

Employees are open about the support they want – especially around stress, mental health and relationship with leaders. Employers who meet these needs can foster a culture of trust, engagement and wellbeing.

EAP's should offer multiple access points including by phone, digital tools or in-person sessions to meet the needs of each unique worker, where they are in their mental health journey. Including self-guided or self-paced programmes can also engage individuals who may not be ready for 1:1 counselling.

Conclusions and outlook

Making mental health a priority leads to positive business outcomes.

As organisations continue to prioritise employee wellbeing, the availability of [mental wellbeing](#) services has proven to be a key driver of positive outcomes. From improved mental health to enhanced productivity and lower turnover, these services not only benefit employees but also contribute to the overall success of the business.



Improved employee mental health.

Employees in New Zealand who rate [their employer's support for mental wellbeing](#) as excellent have a mental health score that is 23 points higher than those reporting poor employer support. Workers rating their employer's support for mental wellbeing as poor lose 59 days per year in productivity compared to 28 days lost by workers rating employer support as excellent.



Increased employee productivity.

Mental wellbeing services can help reduce challenges such as stress and anxiety, which are key contributors to lost workdays. Employees supported by these services are more engaged, focused and productive, leading to greater efficiency in the workplace.



Enhanced job satisfaction and retention.

Access to mental wellbeing services positively impacts job satisfaction, as employees who feel supported by their employer are more likely to stay. This not only strengthens retention but also fosters a positive work environment and a more engaged workforce.



Lower absenteeism and presenteeism.

Mental wellbeing services help address mental health issues quickly, reducing absenteeism by providing timely support. They also combat presenteeism, when employees are physically present but unable to perform to their full potential due to mental health struggles.



Cost savings and positive ROI.

By reducing absenteeism, healthcare costs and turnover, employers can experience significant cost savings. Additionally, the retention of experienced employees reduces recruitment and training expenses, providing a positive return on investment for companies offering mental wellbeing services.



Improved workplace culture and morale.

Offering mental wellbeing services fosters a caring, supportive work culture where employees feel valued and respected. This positive environment can lead to improved morale, greater collaboration and an engaged workforce, which can benefit organisational performance.

Key takeaways for New Zealand leaders.

The trends and insights presented in this report underscore a critical need for organisations to adopt a holistic approach to mental health. Enhanced training for both employees and leaders, along with comprehensive wellbeing services tailored to the unique needs of different generations, genders and other demographic groups, emerges as a key solution.

Trend 1

Mental health in the workplace remains an area of concern.

Insights and actions

1. Offer and promote mental health education and training regularly
2. Encourage open conversations about mental health issues, including anxiety and sentiment of isolation
3. Recognise gender differences and offer support for women's mental health and wellbeing
4. Promote financial wellbeing programmes to help alleviate financial stress

Trend 2

Mental health has a significant effect on workplace productivity.

Insights and actions

1. Train managers to better support their staff by building trust-based relationships
2. Understand and address stress at its source
3. Create opportunities to reduce isolation and build social connections at work
4. Provide enhanced mental health resources that include financial literacy and support

Trend 3

A positive workplace culture can drive better mental health and retention.

Insights and actions

1. Build a culture of trust, safety and open communication
2. Provide a respectful work environment and lead with empathy
3. Plan for ongoing communications about your mental health and wellbeing programmes
4. Provide tailored and easy-to-access mental health resources

Getting started

How to promote wellbeing at work.

Mental health benefits provide employees with personalised paths to greater life satisfaction, creativity and resilience. TELUS Health offers access to a range of convenient, digital-first tools designed to enhance employee mental health and wellbeing.

Select the EAP that aligns with your organisation's wellbeing strategy.

Support for every stage of life.

TELUS Health EAP is a holistic, flexible solution designed to proactively support your workforce's mental, emotional and financial wellbeing. Employees and their families receive immediate, confidential assistance through various channels, both with professionals and self-guided, ensuring support is always readily available.

[Explore our EAP](#)

Support workplace wellbeing and engagement.

Backed by academic research and designed to promote behaviour change, TELUS Health Wellbeing helps educate, engage and inspire employees to achieve their personal wellbeing goals. Features from this solution are provided as part of any of our EAP programmes.

[Explore TELUS Health Wellbeing](#)

Honouring te ao Māori through culturally grounded care.

TELUS Health's Rongoā Māori services integrate traditional Māori healing into its wellbeing programmes, with support that reflects Māori values and practices. The offering includes mirimiri and romiromi (bodywork), karakia (prayer), rongoā rākau (plant-based remedies such as balms, oils and teas), whakawhiti kōrero (support and advice) and honohono (energy work). These practices are delivered alongside TELUS Health's broader services to ensure culturally informed and respectful care for Māori kaimahi and their whānau.

[Learn more about Rongoā Māori services](#)

Wellbeing Check supports wellbeing through proactive insight.

TELUS Health's Wellbeing Check provides organisations with a way to understand the health risks and wellness needs of their employees through confidential employee assessments. The service is designed to surface actionable insights across areas such as mental, physical, and lifestyle health, helping employers tailor their wellbeing strategies and provide targeted support before issues escalate. It acts as an early intervention tool that informs planning while respecting employee privacy.

[Explore the Wellbeing Check service](#)

About the TELUS Mental Health Index.

The mental health and wellbeing of a population are essential to overall health and work productivity. The Mental Health Index (MHI) provides measures of the current mental health status of employed adults. Increases and decreases in the MHI are intended to predict cost and productivity risks and inform the need for investment in mental health support by businesses and governments.

Quarterly reports

This report draws from quarterly TELUS Health Mental Health Index findings. To explore individual reports and access the data, visit the full archive:

[View all the published MHI reports](#)



Methodology

This report is primarily based on an analysis from 5 New Zealand surveys conducted quarterly in 2024 and early 2025. Some data related to the MHI has been extracted specifically for this year-in review report. We've also included a special report on high-trust organisations. The data for each MHI report was collected through an online survey of 1,000 people in New Zealand, who were employed during each of the data collection periods or who were employed within the previous six months. Participants were selected to represent the age, gender, industry and geographic distribution of New Zealand and respondents were asked to consider the previous two weeks when answering each question.

Calculations

The TELUS Mental Health Index is based on a response scoring system that turns individual responses into point values. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and a lower risk of mental health issues. Scores between 0 and 49 correspond to distress levels, scores between 50 and 79 correspond to strain levels, and scores between 80 and 100 correspond to optimal levels of mental health.



TELUS Health is on a mission to become the most trusted wellbeing company in the world by enhancing the overall efficiency of healthcare and championing workplace wellbeing. By integrating advanced healthcare technology with comprehensive employee support services, TELUS Health provides a holistic approach to primary and preventive health and wellbeing for 157 million people across 200 countries. We are committed to revolutionising healthcare to ensure people receive the support they need and employees thrive both personally and professionally. Together, let's make the future friendly.

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