

Fact sheet

The business case for wellbeing

Mental health problems are common

In 2016, a survey of New Zealanders 15 years and older showed:



80% Either had personal experience of mental illness or knew of others who had.¹



30% Personally had an experience of mental illness.¹



33% Reported some degree of depression and/or anxiety.¹



1 in 4 Adults reported medium or high levels of psychological distress.¹

A Ministry of Health Survey² found



1 in 2

Meet the criteria for a mental illness at some point in their lives.

Across the world³



2 in 6 at work

1 in 6 people suffer from symptoms of mental illness. Another 1 in 6 suffer from symptoms associated with mental ill health such as worry, sleep problems and fatigue.

Cost benefits of wellbeing programmes

Looking after employee mental health and wellbeing saves businesses money.



Average return per \$1 spent on mental wellbeing programmes was \$4.20.⁴



Workplace cultures that value employee wellbeing are linked to having the strongest productivity.⁵

10%

Organisations that prioritise employee engagement and wellbeing outperform the average by approximately 10% on the Financial Times Stock Exchange 100 Index (FTSE 100).⁶



Higher levels of psychological wellbeing and employee engagement are linked to better performance, productivity, customer satisfaction and organisational citizenship.⁹

Costs from not taking action

Cost from low levels of mental wellbeing at work:³

- Absenteeism
- Presenteeism (being at work while feeling unwell)
- Reduced work performance
- Increased turnover rates
- Higher accident and injury rates
- Higher health care costs
- Higher worker compensation premiums
- Poorer organisational citizenship behaviours
- Greater counter productive work behaviours

In 2014, estimates showed that New Zealand:

6.7 million days

Lost approximately 6.7 million working days to absence.

\$1.4 billion

The direct costs of absence alone amounted to \$1.4 billion across the economy.



On average, employees have nearly three times as many presentee days as absentee days resulting in much higher 'hidden' costs of poor mental health.



The average cost to New Zealand employers of absentee and presentee days is estimated at over \$1,500 per year, per employee.⁷

The Law



Workplaces have a legal responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 to manage risks to mental health and wellbeing just like they do any other health and safety risk.⁸



Both the Human Rights Act and the Employment Relations Act lay out responsibilities and obligations for workplaces to ensure workers experiencing mental health problems are not discriminated against, do not face harassment and have access to reasonable accommodations.