



# “Wellness Wednesday” The little things that make a big difference

## Mental health and Wellbeing

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**Definition of Mental health by the World Health Organisation (WHO):** “state of well-being in which an individual realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to contribute to their community”

### Background

- Research has already found that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on mental health<sup>1,2</sup>
- Workplace challenges like home-working, furlough, shielding, self-isolating and concerns about safety, meant that everybody has been affected
- Early on, feelings of isolation, anxiety, worry, grief, uncertainty and stress were emerging as significant issues
- This led to a recognition that paying attention to mental health and wellbeing was as important as the direct health consequences of the virus

### Aim

In response to feedback from a Wellbeing Survey in May 2020, and as part of a wider plan to support physical and mental wellbeing, we developed the following objectives:

- To keep mental health and resilience front of mind
- To keep in regular contact with our workforce
- To signpost the support and resources available
- To provide advice on how to look after oneself during challenging times.
- To mitigate feelings of isolation and disengagement

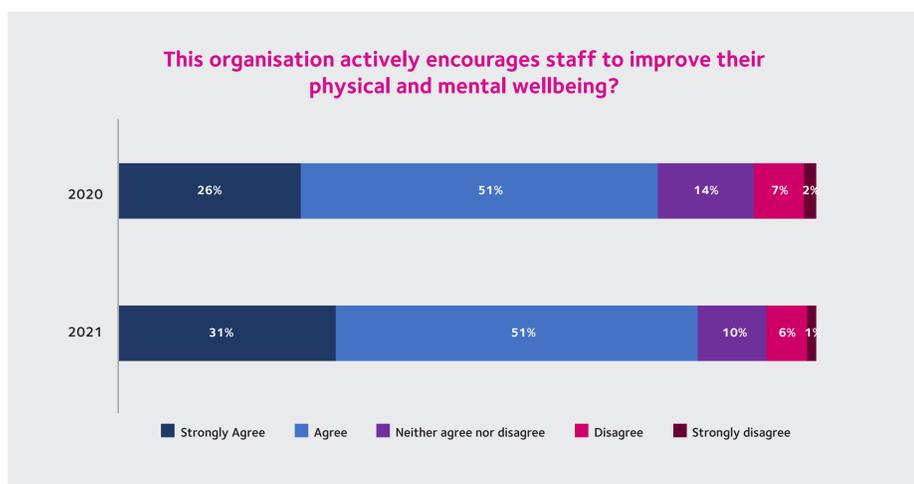
### Results

In June 2021 we conducted a Wellbeing pulse survey and the results indicated that the Wellbeing actions introduced by the organisation, one of which is the Wellness Wednesday email, are already having an impact.

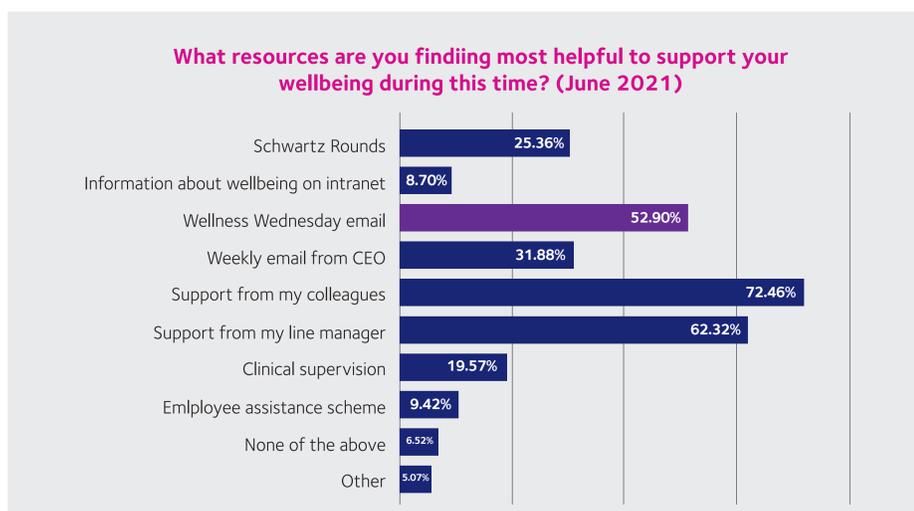


### Method

- A “Wellness Wednesday” email was developed as a way of raising awareness of wellbeing
- Everyone receives a weekly email about mental health and wellbeing-related subjects, including resilience, coping with change and uncertainty, and anxiety management
- Online talks, webinars, events and resources are also shared, along with raising awareness about diversity and inclusion
- The email is written in a relaxed and upbeat tone to facilitate connections with staff



The pulse survey also showed that while support provided by managers and colleagues are still of the most importance, our Wednesday Wellness email is also a valued resource:



“I send them to my home email address to be able read them at home”

“I keep them all in a separate folder”

“Thank you, that’s exactly what I needed to hear today!”

### Conclusions

- Our Wellness Wednesday email is an example of how small things can have a significant impact
- The ongoing feedback from the organisation has been very positive, which has led us to identify the email as contributing to positive levels of staff engagement
- The main objective is to keep mental health and wellbeing a priority by signposting to all of the additional resources available
- We plan to continue to support our employees in this way going forward

1 Pierce M, Hope H, Ford T, Hatch S, Hotopf M, John A et al. Mental health before and during the COVID-19 pandemic: a longitudinal probability sample survey of the UK population. Lancet Psychiatry 2020; 7(10): 883-892.  
2 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development: Impact of COVID-19 on working lives. Available at <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/work/trends/goodwork/covid-impact> [Accessed 9/6/2021]

