

# Building employees' resilience post pandemic

How the Covid-19 learnings  
can support employees to  
shift from anxiety to resilience



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# Highlights

- Help employees to gain confidence to move forward and adapt to a post Covid world.
- Encourage your people to take greater control of their mental and financial wellbeing.
- Support employees to build strong emotional and economic foundations, so they are always prepared should the unexpected happen.

The pandemic has brought insecurities and fears into the lives of many employees. We've faced a lot of uncertainty and quickly had to adapt to a new reality. As a result of the pandemic, numerous businesses have had to close their doors for good, which has led to many experiencing job losses, either directly or they've witnessed close friends and family lose their jobs. And, in many cases, others have seen their salaries reduced.

In addition, loneliness derived from working from home has put a strain on the wellbeing and work/life balance of many. According to a survey by TotalJobs<sup>1</sup>, 74% of young workers have experienced loneliness during lockdown, with the average number of people we interact with daily halved (down 51%) since March last year.

However, 2021 is thankfully bringing some relief with the Government's cautious roadmap to reopen and restart the economy, as well as a steady flow of vaccination roll-outs. More than a year since the introduction of the first UK lockdown, it's time to reflect on how far we have come and how we could use some of the lessons learned to become a happier, healthier and more resilient workforce.

This guide, written by mental health and wellbeing experts, Rightsteps, and employee benefits and wellbeing specialists, Secondsight, offers **5 essential tips** on how you could help employees to build resilience and become mentally and financially stronger.

<sup>1</sup> Lockdown loneliness & the collapse of social life at work, August 2020 [https://www.totaljobs.com/advice/lockdown-loneliness-the-collapse-of-social-life-at-work?WT.mc\\_id=E\\_A\\_AF\\_AWIN\\_TJ&awc=21134\\_1617707089\\_12f76d140a68888b23fe691521f067b7](https://www.totaljobs.com/advice/lockdown-loneliness-the-collapse-of-social-life-at-work?WT.mc_id=E_A_AF_AWIN_TJ&awc=21134_1617707089_12f76d140a68888b23fe691521f067b7)

# 1

## Embracing a healthy mindset

Looking after our physical and mental health is important. This can be done by simply finding time to exercise, eat healthier, spend quality time with friends and family, by sleeping and resting adequately, spending more time outdoors and engaging in pleasurable activities or hobbies.

As an employer, asking how your people are feeling and taking the time to listen with care can make a big difference. Allowing flexible working where possible and encouraging regular breaks can also help everyone feel valued and well supported.

Happy employees feel more engaged and connected with your organisation, resulting in less absenteeism, more productivity and increased retention levels.



# 2

## Dealing with anxiety

The COVID-19 outbreak has been a difficult and stressful time for many. Feeling worried or anxious about returning to face to face work is understandable. We all need to bring our ingenuity and adaptability into our work practices; this can include being aware of physically safe boundaries, weighing up the need for face-to-face contact, with considerations of social distancing and time spent with people.

Decision-making can feel difficult and adaptations may be required to help ensure everyone's safety. Encourage your people to discuss any concerns they might have with their manager, colleagues, friends and family.

We can also refer to policies and guidance from different sources such as government, professional bodies and unions, too.



# 3

## Keeping up with lockdown savings

Covid has changed the way we live and some of these changes have had a positive impact on our finances. Many households have unintentionally saved money<sup>2</sup> thanks to lockdown restrictions, as going out, commuting to work and travelling were simply not allowed.

Of course as restrictions are lifted, we will start spending more again. They'll be a number of us booking that much needed holiday as a form of celebration, however it's also important to keep up with the good savings habit and continue putting some money aside for a rainy day. Second sight's research last year<sup>3</sup> highlighted that almost half of employees have nothing to fall back on should a financial emergency arise.



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/saving/article-9122813/Britain-predicted-saving-record-sums-lockdown.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.second-sight.com/resources/2020-research-workplace-employee-benefits-wellbeing/>



# Keeping up with lockdown savings

As an employer, you could simplify your employees' lives and help them change their habits by promoting payroll deducted savings, for example.

You could also influence their mindset and encourage them to build an emergency fund. As a general rule of thumb, the minimum someone should have is three months expenditure, ideally growing this to six months of outgoings over time. This sum should give the financial security to overcome potential shocks.

Even if one is unable to work for an extended period of time, it gives them some breathing space and they know that immediate financial commitments are taken care of.

Once the emergency fund is in place, it's time to start focusing on medium and long term savings.



# 4

## Taking greater control of finances

Success in life is 80% psychology (believing in yourself) and 20% mechanics (your actions)<sup>4</sup>. In other words, it all comes down to mindset. This applies to many areas of our lives but even more so when money is concerned, as finances can be daunting for some and therefore easily overlooked.

Good financial wellbeing means being and feeling in control of your finances. A lack of confidence in your finances means you may find it difficult to plan for your future, enjoy the present, and it can have a negative impact on your overall health too.

A report by Neyber<sup>5</sup> has revealed that three in five employees (62%) felt they were affected by money worries. More than half (52%) were borrowing to meet basic financial needs. This results in poor employee mental health, increased absenteeism and lost productivity.



<sup>4</sup> <https://www.tonyrobbins.com/stories/coaching/the-psychology-of-a-winner/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/financial-wellbeing-neyber-report-2019/>



# Taking greater control of finances

It's important to take steps to improve long-term financial wellbeing and, as an employer, you could facilitate this. Encourage your employees to check whether they are living within their means by using a budget calculator, so they can analyse their income vs expenditure; they should also be encouraged to consider the workplace benefits available to them. Your existing employee benefits can play a big part in supporting employees' economic foundations, particularly pension, health and protection benefits. With this information in hand, your people can start setting goals and creating a plan to achieve them, which will not only improve their financial wellbeing but also give them peace of mind.

Financial wellbeing initiatives in the workplace should also be considered as a way to motivate employees to assess their finances. Financial education programmes, access to digital wellbeing guidance and structured money management content can certainly improve employees' financial knowledge. This goes hand in hand with a good communication plan to encourage employees to make the most of the resources available and give them the push they need to take positive steps towards their financial wellbeing.



# 5

## Listen, learn and adapt

We had to quickly learn how to work remotely and adapt to the digital way of work life, now that we are going back to our workplaces, we should bear in mind that employees may have different expectations and feelings about the new/old normal.

It's important to keep listening to what your people have to say; ask for feedback during meetings, send out regular surveys that can be answered anonymously, just to encourage honest responses.

By speaking with and learning about your workforce, you can shape what actions you may need to take to improve employee wellbeing and resilience. It's important employees feel safe and empowered, so they know you care about their wellbeing. And, in return your people will appreciate your organisation, perform better in their role and become more loyal.



# Conclusion

The pandemic has more than ever placed employees' mental health and wellbeing at the front of businesses' considerations. Flexibility, psychological support, wellbeing guidance, financial help, mental health support – the responsibilities now expected to be shouldered by employers. It might sound overwhelming but providing support to employees doesn't need to be something overcomplicated or expensive.

Employers can have a positive impact on employees' mental and financial health by simply raising awareness of the importance of looking after themselves, encouraging positive behaviours and influencing their mindset through workplace wellbeing initiatives.



# Contact us

Discover how our wellbeing portal could help improve your people's health and overall wellbeing:

Visit: [second-sight.com](https://second-sight.com)

Email: [info@second-sight.com](mailto:info@second-sight.com)

Call: 0330 332 7143\*

Or, visit: [rightsteps.co.uk](https://rightsteps.co.uk)

Email: [info@rightsteps.co.uk](mailto:info@rightsteps.co.uk)

Call: 0161 2385264



\* Calls are charged at your standard landline rate.

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