

1 in 3 Gen Z employees say they've experienced a mental health problem, new research finds

- **Gen Z employees reported to have experienced more mental health issues than any other cohort, finds new research from Fruitful Insights, in partnership with Legal & General Group Protection.**
- **16-26 year olds represent the most financially stressed of all generations. Yet their happiness at work is more about cultural factors than it is about money.**
- **77% say they are likely to leave their employer. Only 23% say they're committed to staying.**

Gen Z employees (16-26 year olds) report having experienced more mental health issues related to stress, anxiety and depression than any other cohort in the last 12 months. 77% say they are likely to leave their employer, while only 23% say they are committed to staying. And although they represent the most financially stressed out of all generations, their happiness at work is more about cultural factors than it is about money.

These represent just some of the important findings to come out of a new report from Fruitful Insights, in partnership with Legal & General Group Protection, entitled *Gen Z – Shaping the future of UK workplaces*.

Both organisations say these findings underlie:

- the employer role in supporting the wellbeing of their Gen Z employees and the implications of not doing so
- the need to consider that wellbeing is subjective, so genuinely understanding workforce needs is key
- the evolving understanding that 'good work is beneficial for health' and should be considered a goal in recovery, prevention and levelling up wellbeing for the working age population.

The report is based on analysis of Fruitful Insights' UK employee population data. It looks at what employers need to think about when managing their Gen Z employees, as they become the mainstay of the UK workforce. By 2033, Gen Z will make up over a third of the working population, as Baby Boomers will have probably all retired.

“The fact that 1 in 3 Gen Z employees say they've experienced mental health problems should be a big concern for people and business; with implications for Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI), Environment Social Governance (ESG) and, ultimately, performance.

“This finding could be related to life stage stressors and different expectations of life and work in comparison to older peers. And/or it could be symptomatic of Gen Z's greater awareness and understanding of their own mental health and a greater willingness to reach out for help.

“Any which way, recruitment and retention is a big problem with this cohort but, at the same time, the value Gen Z place on cultural aspects represents a big opportunity that needs to be grasped. Business has a vital role to play in supporting the wellbeing of Gen Z; providing greater purpose and community to this group, relevant benefits and services, and communication that not only connects, but that also contributes to creating the conditions for a better wellbeing culture.”

Mike Tyler, Chairman and Co-Founder of Fruitful Insights

The concept of a job for life seems completely alien to Gen Z

Unlike their elders in the Baby Boomer group (age 59+ currently), Gen Z employees are the least likely to expect to have a job for life.

When asked whether they had experienced any major life events over the last 12 months, job loss represented the number one life event impacting this group. This came ahead of marriage/serious relationship, birth of a child, divorce/relationship break up, serious or legal conflict with someone, death of a close friend or relative, serious ill health of a relative and moving home.

Money can't buy happiness: a truism at all ages

Gen Z employees don't focus exclusively on money when they decide if they're happy at work. The following were found to all play a big role: feeling valued at work; feeling that the employer cares about their wellbeing; having confidence in the business and its ethos; and flexibility about how they work at home and in the workplace.

The research also asked participants whether they felt the company treats everyone fairly, irrespective of gender, race or ethnicity. Four in 10 (41%) Gen Z employees either disagreed or were neutral on this statement.

Additionally, 70% lack a sense of fulfilment in their lives and 45% 'rarely' or 'sometimes' have a positive outlook.

Meanwhile, nearly 45% of Gen Z employees surveyed, say they'd like to work from home 2-3 days a week. This brings implications for workplace technology and the ability to afford the same digital experience at work as Gen Z employees enjoy in their personal lives, says Fruitful and Legal & General.

Embrace social media in communications, but don't overdo it

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the report states that Gen Z employees are active social media users and often share very direct feedback in social forums. To communicate effectively, employers should be present and appropriately active in such workplace channels; especially digital videos and podcasts.*

However, although flexible working patterns and a natural affinity for technology may offer many advantages, they may be leading to feelings of isolation for some, according to the report findings.

In comparison to other generations, Gen Z employees feel more disconnected from their local communities and that they have less people in their lives they can depend on to help them.

“Gen Z are the true digital natives. But being always on, isn't always good. There are indications in this report that the use of digital technology may be inadvertently leading to some less than healthy outcomes.

“Balance and choice across the spectrum of face-to-face to digital seems key; in terms of how support is accessed and how it's communicated. Embrace social media but don't assume that's the only way Gen Z want to receive information. And don't assume that information, on its own, leads to wellbeing.

“Group income protection insurers and intermediaries have an important part to play in all of this, using tools like Fruitful Insights and making full use of Legal & General's in-house vocational clinical team, as well as our strategic communication toolkit.”

Vanessa Sallows, Claims and Governance Director at Legal & General Group Protection

Legal & General Group Protection partnered exclusively with Fruitful Insights last year to help clients with 100+ employees using a range of products quantify the impact of employee wellbeing on productivity. Based on this intelligence, intermediaries and their clients can identify priorities, action plans and follow-up assessments to help improve wellbeing and performance. Meanwhile, Legal & General's in-house, multidisciplinary, vocational clinical team provide support to both employers and employees that is shaped and guided by its person-centred philosophy and the underlying belief that 'good work is beneficial for health'.

Click here to access [Gen Z – Shaping the future of UK workplaces](#).

Notes to editors

*Although digital natives, Gen Z are not the biggest users of the internet, smartphones and social networks right now; Gen X are slightly ahead. However, Gen Z represent the biggest digital video viewers and podcast listeners. Source: <https://www.insiderintelligence.com/content/uk-digital-habits-by-generation-2023#page-report>

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**at 31 Dec 2022*

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