

Taking the temperature 2024.



About the survey.

This is the third iteration of Hospitality Action's 'Taking the temperature' survey. The last time we ran the survey during the height of the pandemic it shone a light on the mental health pressures faced by an industry under severe strain during a time of unprecedented crisis.

Fast forward to 2024, and we see a sector that has made significant progress in terms of supporting the wellbeing of employees, with many more people feeling empowered to discuss their feelings and concerns.

But, due to ongoing cost-of-living pressures we find a workforce in which more people than ever before have suffered from poor mental health, and we still have much to do to ensure everybody in our industry feels able to reach out for support when they need it.

Hosted online the survey was promoted via targeted emails, social media and sector trade press support, with fieldwork and analysis in May and June 2024.

520 people responded to the survey, from a range of sectors. There was a broad mix of job roles and levels of experience.

- 20% of respondents were employers/owners
- 34% were managers/heads of department
- 46% were employees

Previous surveys were conducted in 2018 and 2020.

About us.

Whatever you do in hospitality, Hospitality Action is here to give you the help, advice and support you need when times get tough.

Serious illness, mental health issues, financial difficulties, family problems, or addiction: whatever challenges you might face, Hospitality Action is here to get you back on your feet and enjoying the job again. And when it's no longer possible to work, we help people prepare for the next phase of their lives.

Our range of support services helps hospitality people pick up the pieces after a setback. Each year we assist thousands of people through challenging times.

Hospitality Action. We've got you.

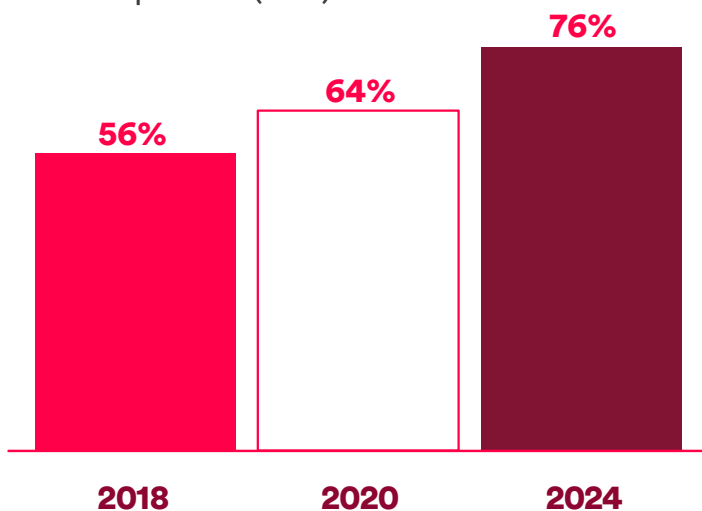


Main findings.

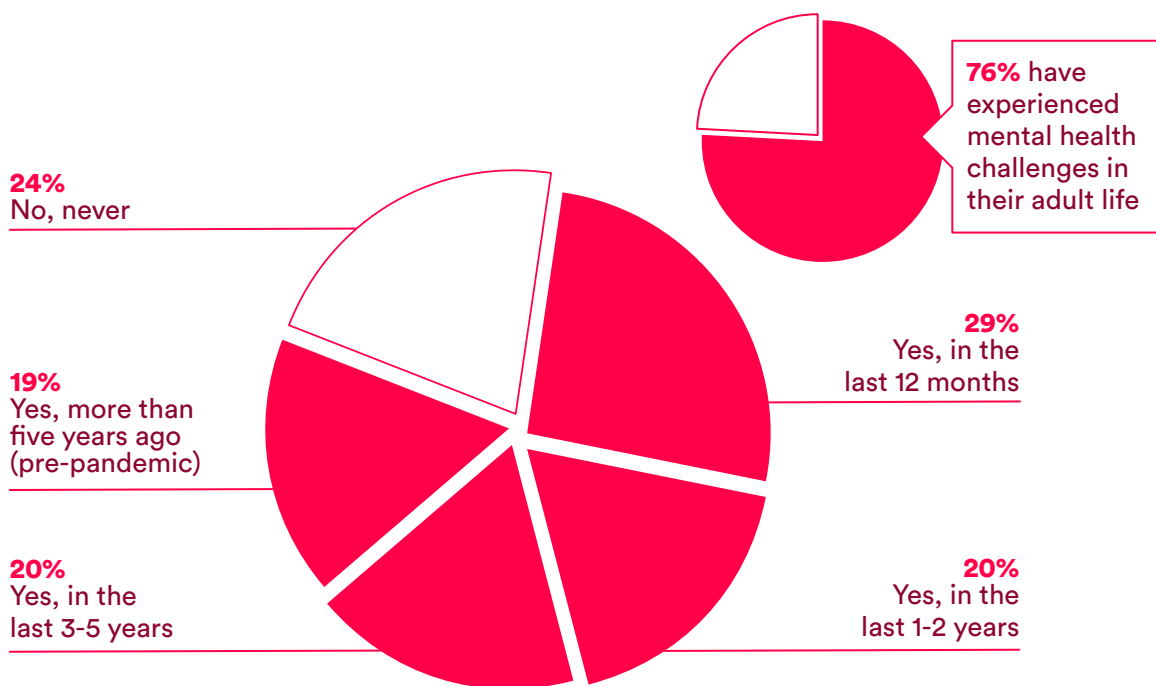
1. Increased awareness but persistent stigma.

Despite significant progress in recent years, it is evident that we still have a long way to go when tackling mental health issues within our industry.

Fuelled by the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and strained household finances our survey has revealed a significant increase in the proportion of hospitality workers reporting mental health issues in their careers, rising from just over half (56%) in 2018, two-thirds (64%) in 2020, to more than three-quarters (76%) in 2024.

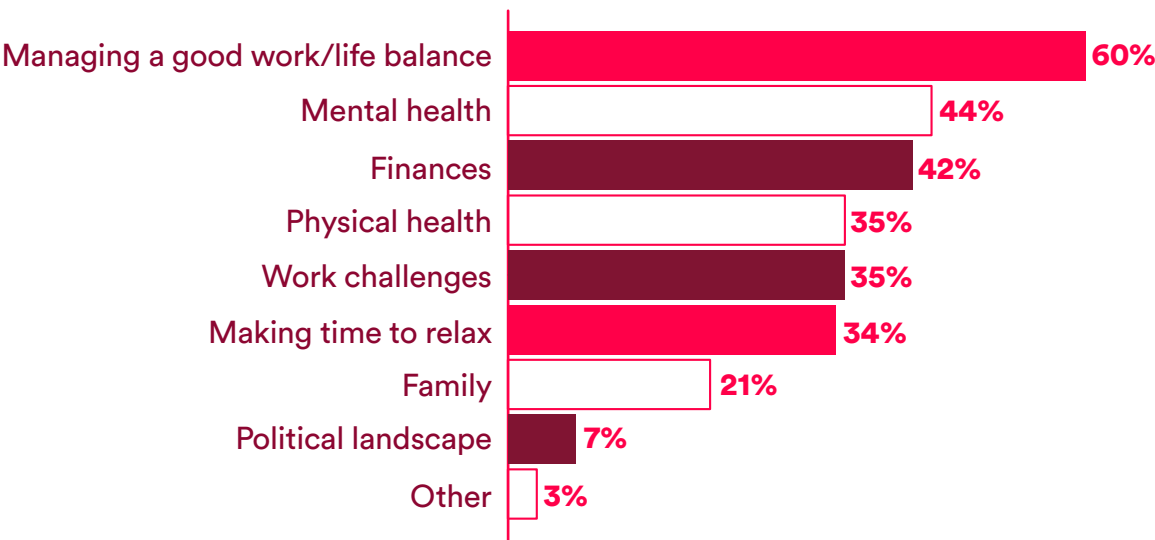


The proportion of respondents experiencing mental health problems has risen from just over half in 2018 to three-quarters in 2024. Notably, 49% of respondents have experienced poor mental health in the last two years, which further highlights the ongoing negative impact of the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis.



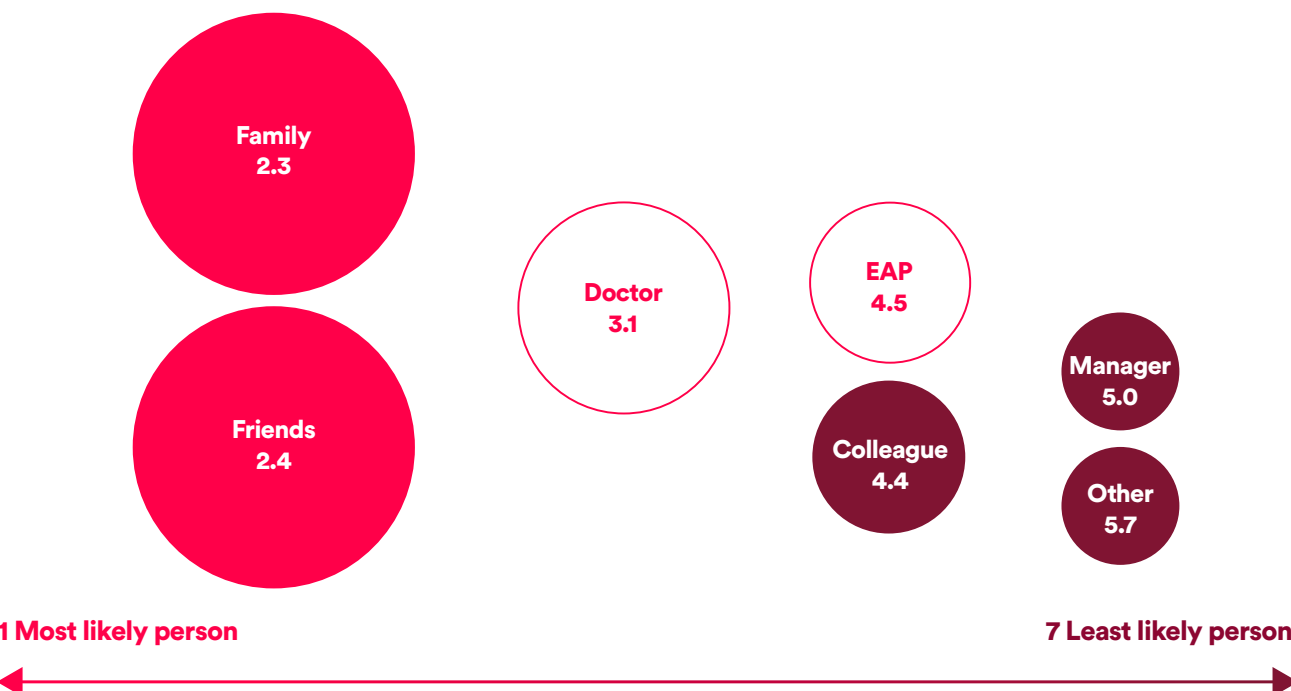
2. Workplace and life challenges.

The drivers of anxiety in the hospitality industry are clear. Both managers and employees cite work/life balance, mental health and household finances as the main sources of personal worry. The correlation between deteriorating finances, poor mental health and workplace pressure are borne out by the surge of calls we have experienced to our helplines over recent months.



When seeking help employees are understandably more likely to turn to friends and family or their GP.

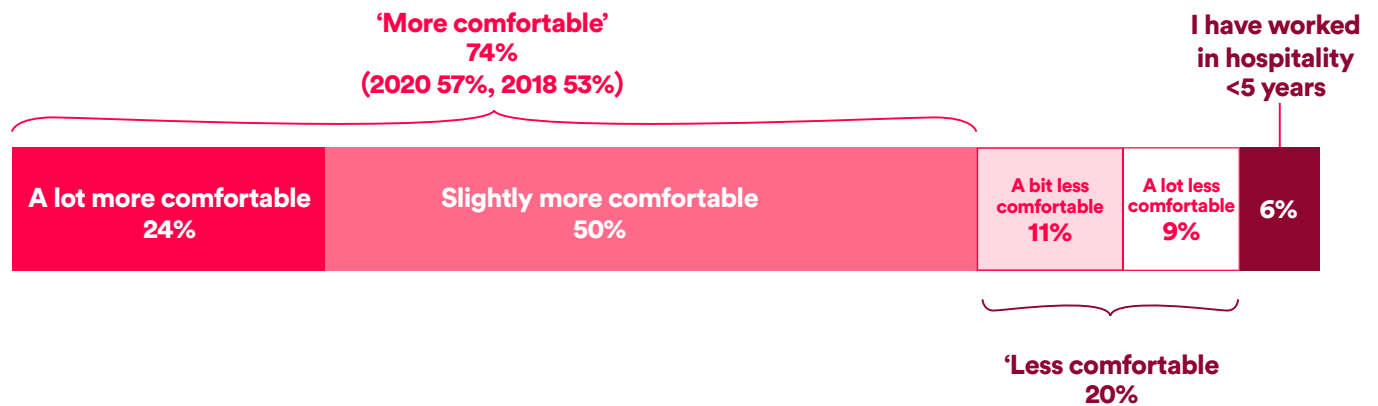
When they do ask for help in the workplace, they would prefer to approach their Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or seek help from a colleague before their line manager. This indicates the importance businesses should place on having a high-quality EAP that's well communicated. It's also important to choose an EAP such as ours that provides additional services to managers, such as a managerial advice line and managed referrals, to empower managers to support colleagues seeking help.



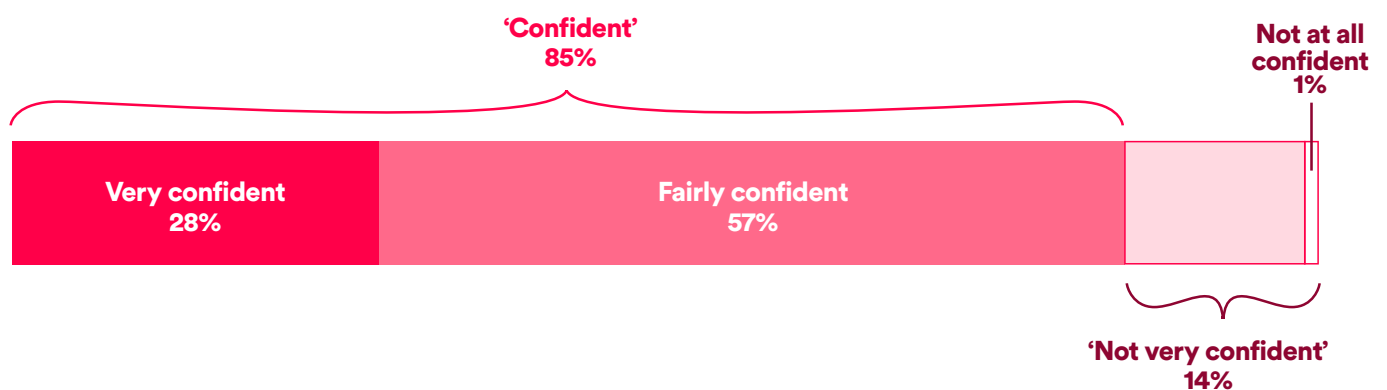
3. Comfortable, but cautious.

Employees' comfort levels in discussing mental health issues vary widely, suggesting that creating a truly open and supportive environment is still a work in progress.

Generally speaking, three-quarters of respondents feel more comfortable than they did before talking about mental health concerns with their employer.

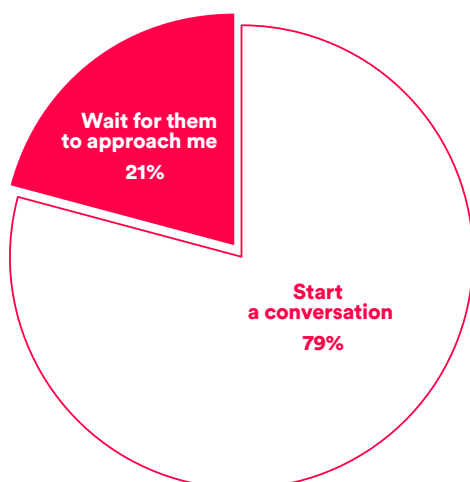


Furthermore, thanks to the huge efforts made by the industry to raise awareness of mental wellbeing, 85% feel confident they can recognise the signs to look out for in a colleague, an improvement of 5% on our last survey.

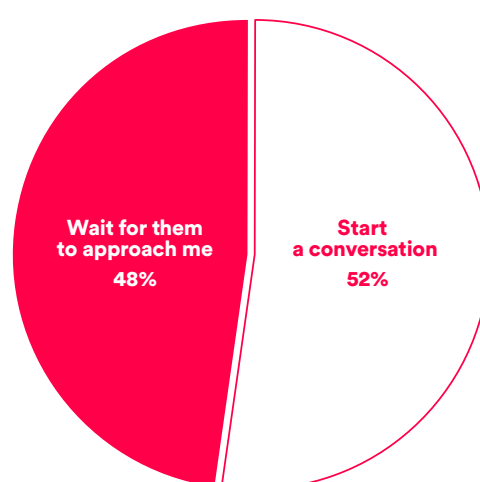


Interestingly, if a respondent noticed a colleague struggling, 79% would feel confident to approach their colleague. But if they were struggling themselves only 48% would like a colleague to approach them, which shows there's still work to do when it comes to removing the stigmas people still hold about discussing their own mental health.

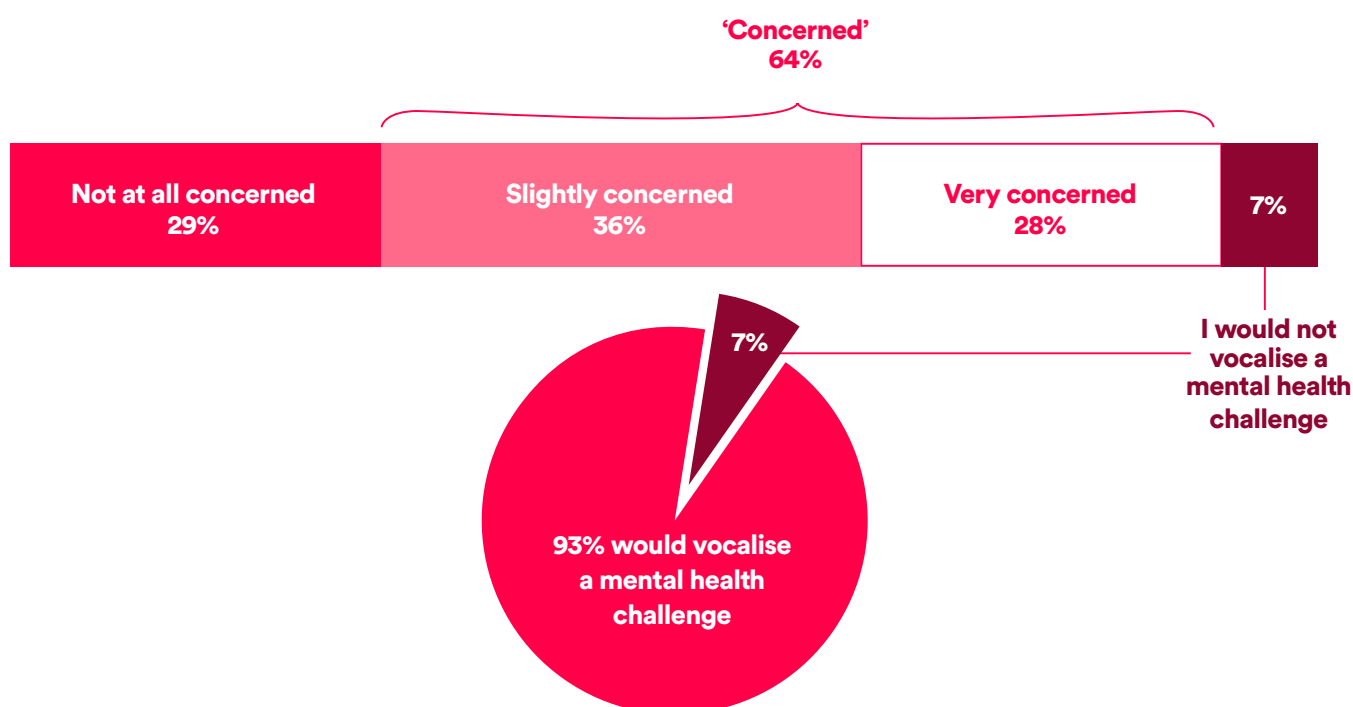
If concerned about a colleague's mental health, I would prefer to...



If suffering from a mental health problem, I would prefer a colleague...



Employers should also note there are still concerns about the impact this candour could have on their future job prospects with 64% expressing concern about their progression after disclosing a mental health challenge.

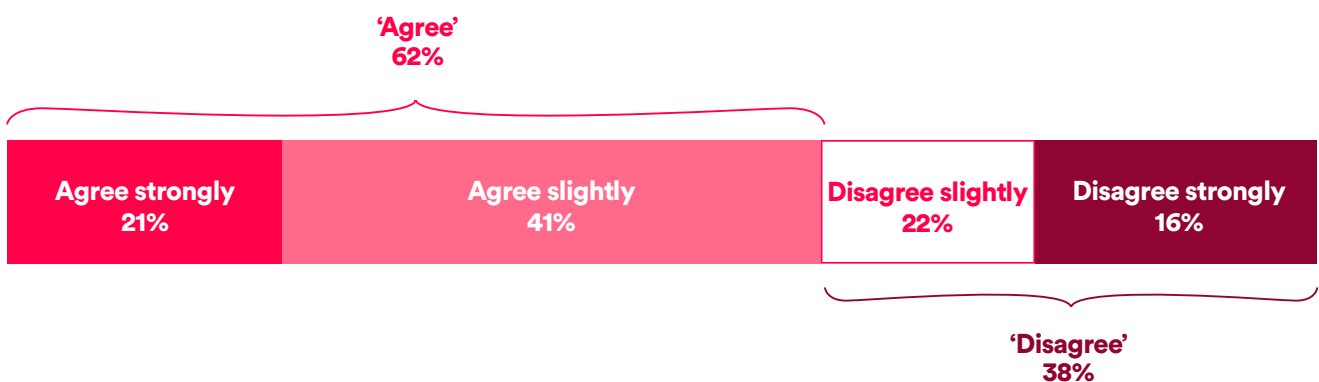


The lost third highlights the need for better workplace support.

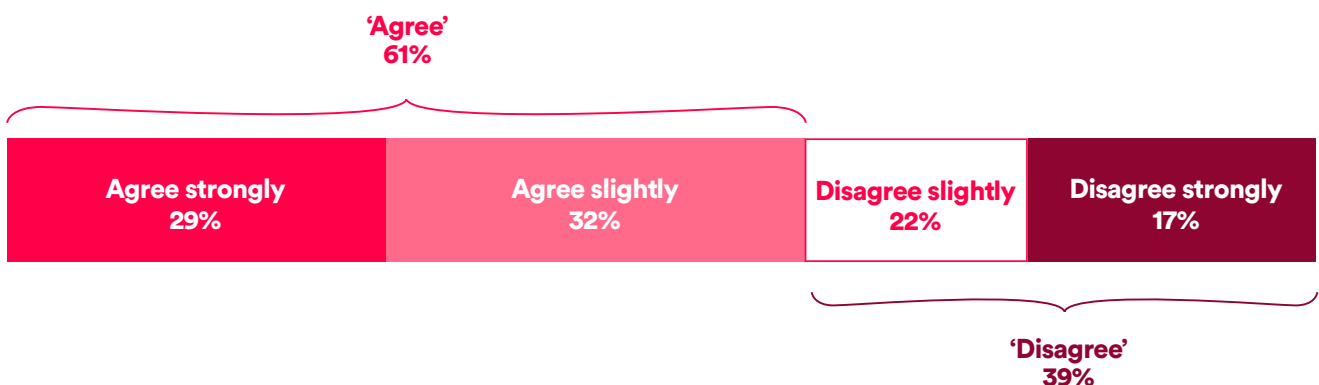
There is a stark polarisation within our results which merits further consideration and can inform action from employers.

While two-thirds of respondents feel their employer has created an environment where they can discuss their mental health and that they have a good work/life balance there is a significant third of respondents who feel neither to be the case. It is this 'lost third' where the industry must focus our efforts in the future.

Three in five respondents agree they have a good work/life balance



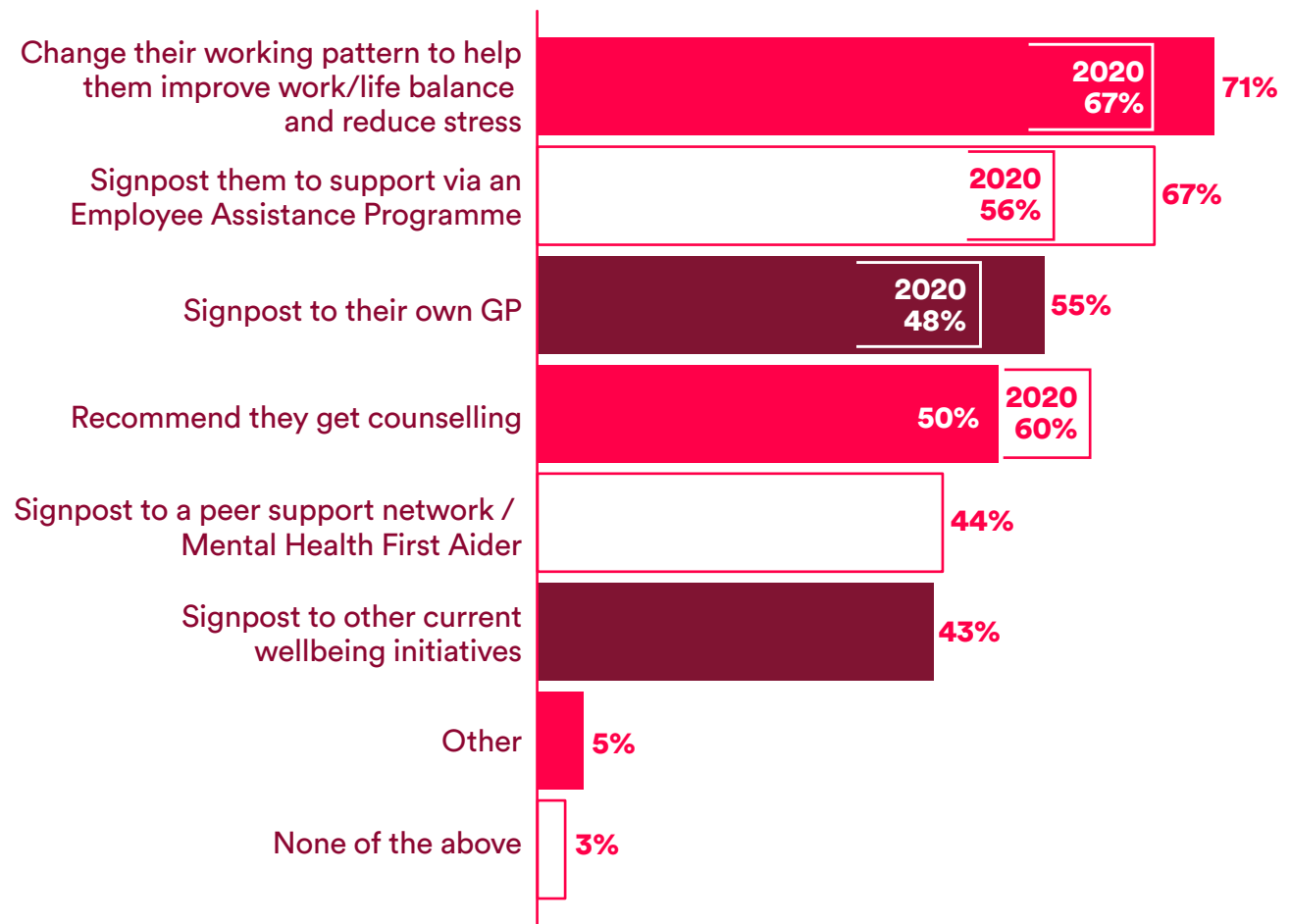
Broadly the same three in five also agree that their workplace has created an environment where they can openly discuss mental health issues within the team.



In both cases the third who give the most negative viewpoint tend to be employees with **fewer years of experience** which indicates employers have some way to go to spread their wellbeing messages equally amongst the organisation.

4. What employers currently do, and what they should consider next.

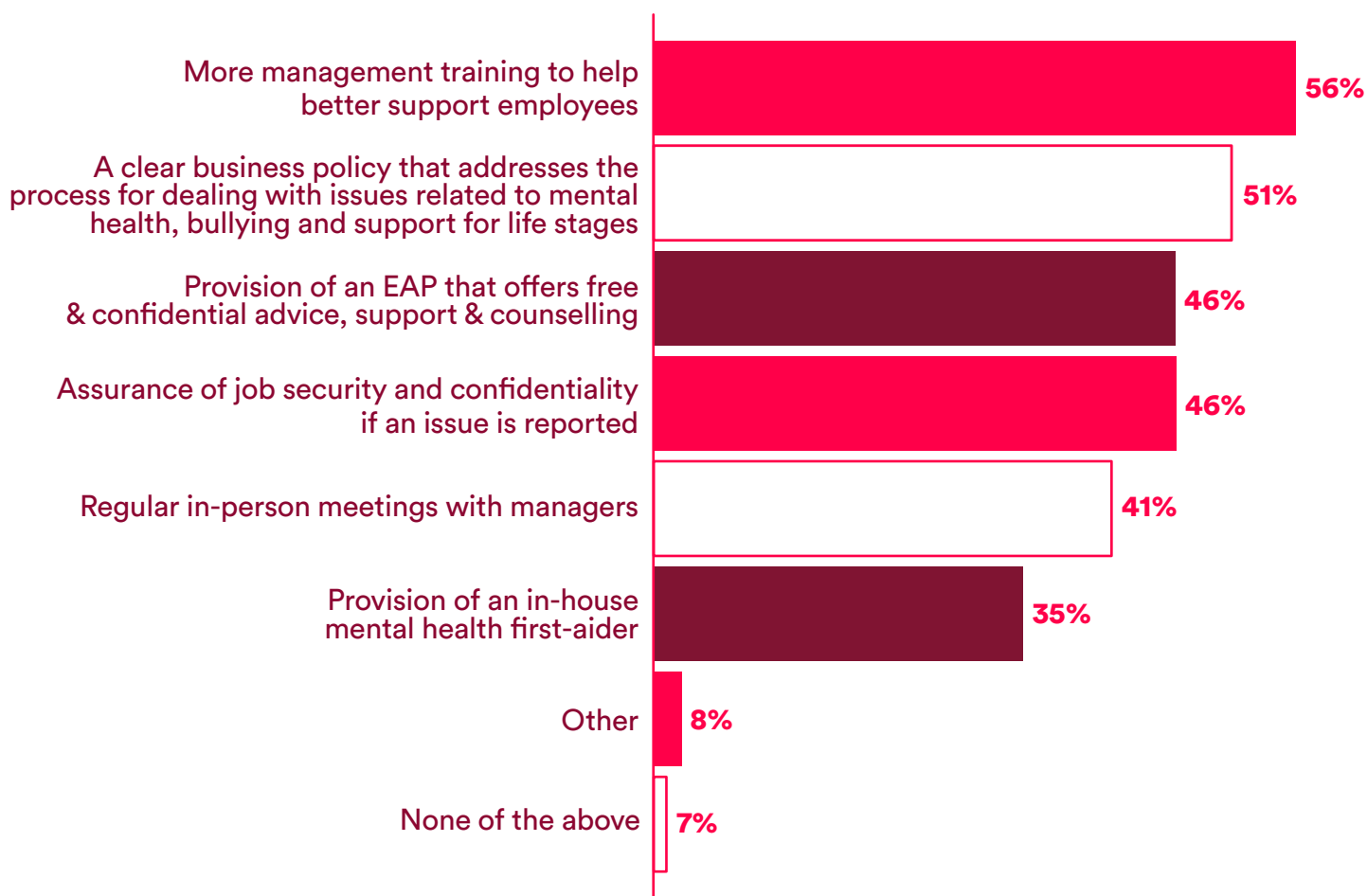
The good news is that managers are attuned to the needs of their staff and are keen to offer practical support.



They are quick to offer flexibility on hours. It's also encouraging to see the growing importance of Employee Assistance Programmes such as ours which are now recommended by managers in 67% of cases compared to 56% in our last survey.

Respondents know that the industry continues to be a challenging place and they are realistic in anticipating what they think are the likely challenges employers will face in the near future. 45% anticipate that achieving a good work/life balance will be a challenge for colleagues within their business. Workload pressures (43%) and long hours (40%) are also predicted to be an issue in their company (43%).

When it comes to suggesting what their company can do to improve the working environment, we can further see the vital role managers play.



More training, supported by robust policies, and the provision of an EAP are closely followed the desire for more reassurance and face time with their manager.

EAPs play a vital role in ensuring positive outcomes in the workplace as they provide confidential support and access to specialist expertise.

While many organisations are taking steps to prioritise mental health, the divided opinion on the effectiveness of support suggests a need for more comprehensive and effective mental health communications strategies that reach all parts of the business.

Similarly given employees' varied comfort levels in discussing mental health issues suggests that creating a truly open and supportive environment is still a work in progress.

Addressing these issues could lead to better mental health outcomes.

How Hospitality Action can help.

Hospitality Action's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is designed purely to improve and safeguard the wellbeing of the UK hospitality sector. We do this by providing the most comprehensive suite of services with the highest clinical standards for the best possible price.

As your sector's benevolent charity, our sole focus is to provide a bespoke service to keep your workforce as healthy, happy and motivated as possible and to make it easy for our people to access high quality support whenever and wherever they need it 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.

Over ten years we have grown our EAP to protect over 200,000 hospitality lives spanning more than 500 employers. Our service is valued because operators know it's tailor-made to address their teams' challenges at home and work.

We understand the stresses of high-pressure work environments, long hours and high living costs. We know how to help people if they experience relationship problems, poor mental health, addictions or if they fall into debt.

Our EAP consists of a core set of universal services augmented with additional tiers of support. In addition, we include highly focused support for managers via managerial advice and a managed referral pathway. HR teams are supported with bespoke data and content to drive their wellbeing strategy.

Uniquely amongst EAP providers should a hardship grant be required by any qualifying recipients of EAP support we're able to point them towards our grant-giving team for consideration.

To find out more about how we can be part of your organisational wellbeing journey contact us on **020 3004 5500** or email **eap@hospitalityaction.org.uk**

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We've got you.