

GLOBAL WORKING FROM HOME REPORT

March 2021



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The Covid-19 global pandemic & working from home

The transmission of the COVID-19 virus has required businesses to respond to this significant global challenge by rapidly shifting to working from home (WFH). According to Stanford research an incredible 42 percent of the U.S. labour force switched to WFH full-time in 2020.

WFH has created new operating models for businesses as they adapted very quickly. A huge task for businesses is to ensure employees remain engaged and motivated and can communicate effectively when working from home. In some cases, remote working has seen an increase in employee productivity, but as the line between work and home blurs, an adverse effect of WFH is isolation and additional stress on home life. The lack of structure and routine can make it harder for employees to find an appropriate work-life balance and this survey highlights some of these challenges.

The aim of this survey was to obtain deep insights directly from employees WFH during the pandemic, to help inspire sensitive action plans for both Human Resource departments and management teams when traditional in person engagement is no longer as feasible. Remote management and leadership is a new skill for many and this survey has captured some of the challenges managers have faced while adjusting to this new style of leadership.

WHY IS THIS SURVEY IMPORTANT NOW?

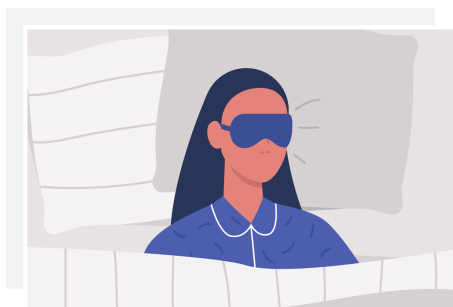
In this report, we present the findings of our Global Working from Home Survey to provide an in-depth understanding of the impact that remote working is having on the wellbeing of employees in the areas – Life, Mind, Food, Sleep, Work, and Active (Exercise).

WHAT IS COGNITIVE DISSONANCE?

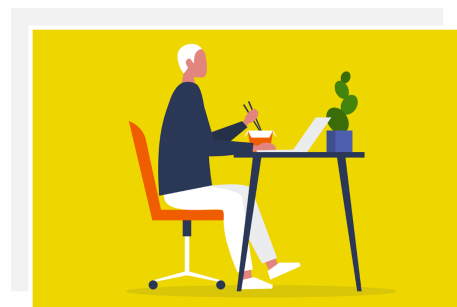
Cognitive Dissonance occurs when there is a difference between what an individual thinks (explicit response) and how they feel (implicit response). Traditional cognitive surveys aim to evoke rational, considered, non-intuitive, conscious based responses (explicit), while nonconscious responses evoke intuitive, instinctive, automatic responses (implicit).

For this survey we used both standard cognitive questionnaires to assess how participants **think they are feeling** (explicit) and Implicit Reaction Times (IRTs) to assess **how they are actually feeling** (implicit) about WFH. The greater the difference in implicit and explicit scores demonstrated, the higher the levels of Cognitive Dissonance among participants with regard to WFH.

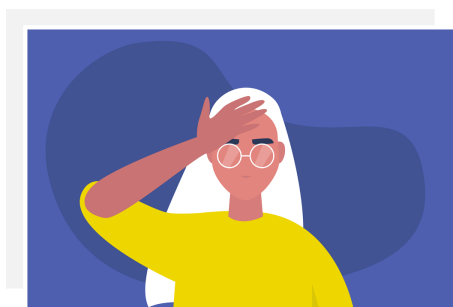
SOME KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE



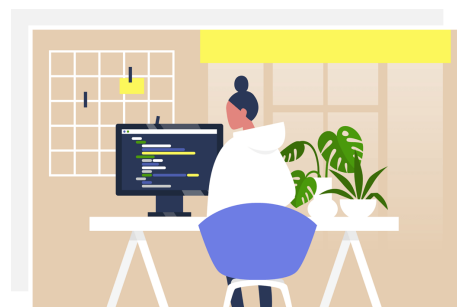
Employees are sleeping well while WFH and have a longer sleep with no commute.



WFH has a negative influence on employees in terms of eating healthily.



Employees are experiencing higher levels of stress in certain areas while WFH.



Employees do not feel they have adequate tools to work from home.

“

This report provides some key insights into how employees are coping in the six key areas of wellbeing. It is safe to say that everyone has been touched by this pandemic, making it a very human and very levelling experience. The report findings and recommendations will help businesses be able to focus and adjust further in support of their people.

”

Jason Brennan

Director of Wellbeing and Leadership, @ Wrkit, Coach and Author



Executive Summary

We surveyed a total of 4,388 employees from a wide range of organisations in 80 countries worldwide, including the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Canada, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, Kenya, and Hong Kong, with a variety of cohort sizes of employees working remotely. This survey used a combination of both traditional and new neurotech surveying, to uncover what employees are both thinking and feeling while adapting to their new workplace changes.

4,388

EMPLOYEES

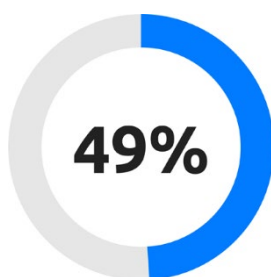
80

COUNTRIES

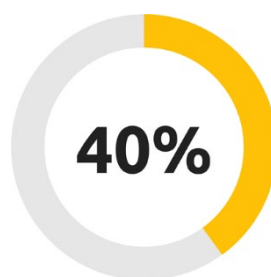
30

AFFIRMATIONS

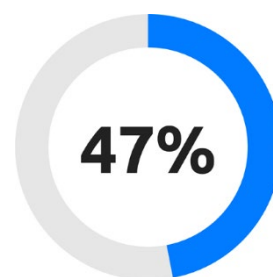
In the below icons and throughout this report, what is being displayed as a percentage is the results of either a positive, neutral, or negative association to a set of affirmations relating to each wellbeing pillar. A 0% score correlates to a 'very strong negative association' to a statement, whereas a 100% score correlates to a 'very strong positive association' to a statement. A score of 50% correlates to 'neither a positive nor negative reaction', therefore a more neutral association.



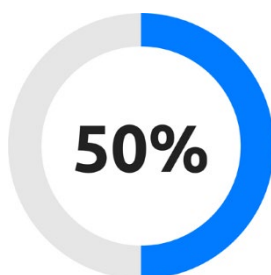
ACTIVE



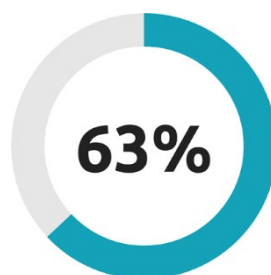
FOOD



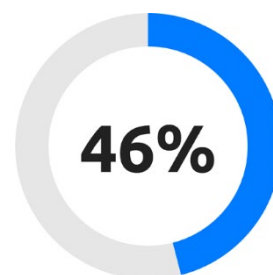
LIFE



MIND



SLEEP



WORK

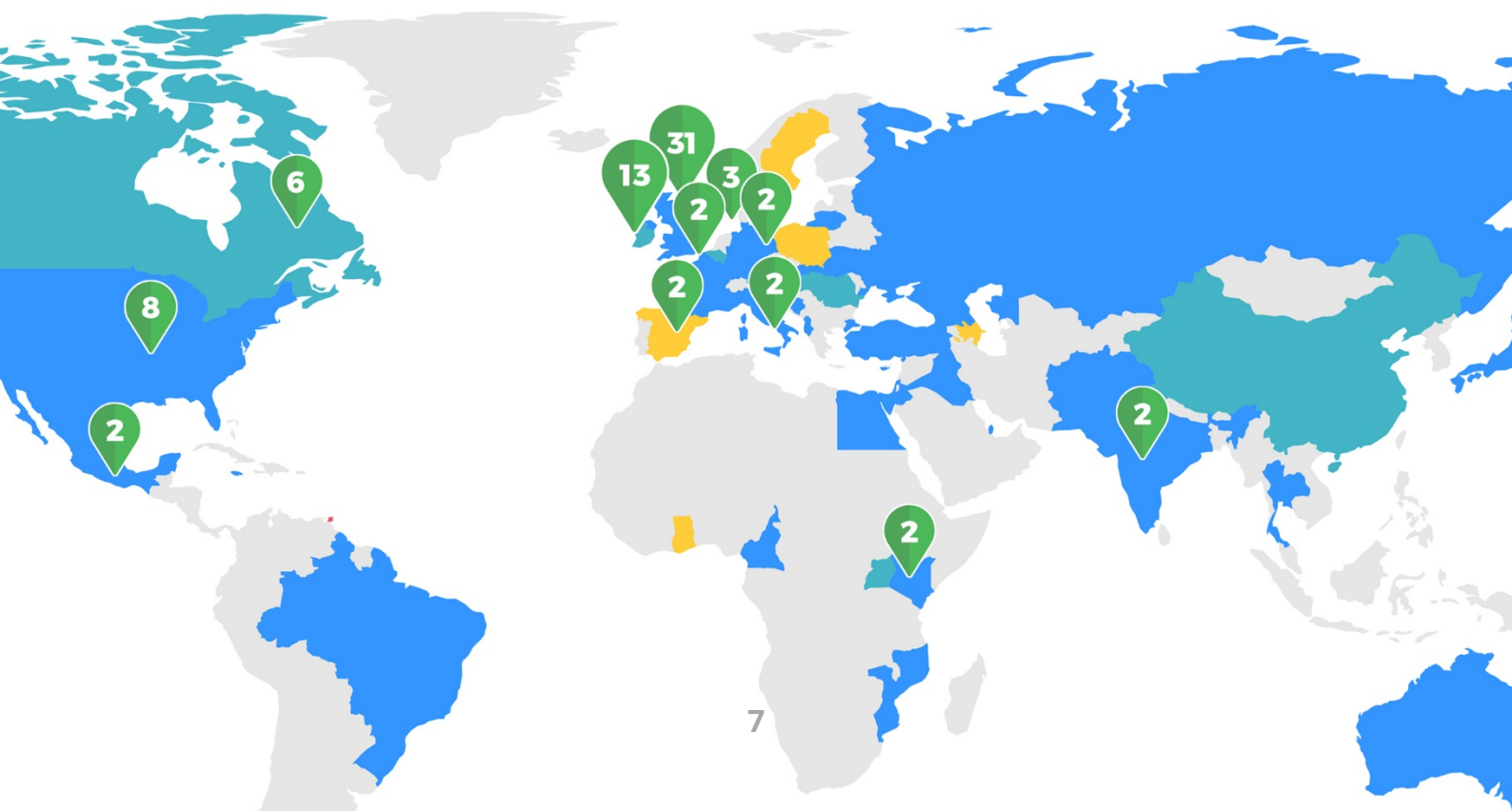
GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

The colours are an aggregated indication of all the affirmations which are worded positively, so that a high right-hand side colour means that all respondents in the cohort had a strongly positive association with the affirmations and working from home. The colours on the left-hand side of the key means people in this country showed a strongly negative association with the affirmations (when aggregated) regarding working from home.

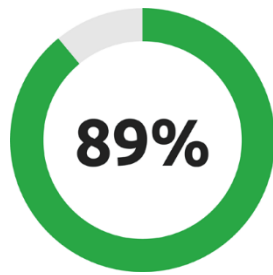
Highlighted below are countries that took part in the survey with over 90 participants. Countries with less than 2% participation have not been included in the map below.

31% United Kingdom	13% Ireland	8% United States
6% Canada	3% Netherlands	2% Belgium
2% Germany	2% India	2% Italy
2% Kenya	2% Mexico	2% Spain

SCORE

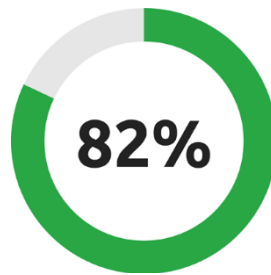


TOP SCORING AFFIRMATIONS



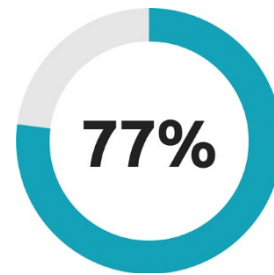
I'm sleeping longer with no commute

SLEEP



I'm staying connected with friends and family

LIFE



I feel physically well

ACTIVE

Of the 30 affirmations measured, the above received the strongest positive associations.

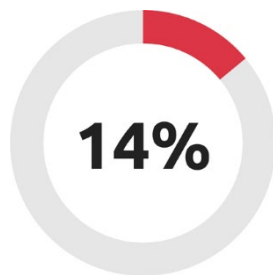
Employees reported the largest benefit of WFH is that they are sleeping longer with no commute (89%). According to research conducted by *Chatterjee et al. (2020)*, when working in the office, UK employees were spending an average of one hour per day commuting to work, which now they are avoiding while WFH. Harvard Business Review also estimates the average commute time for employees in the US has been reduced by 41 minutes per day since WFH.

The second highlight shows that participants say that they feel they are staying more connected with their family and friends (82%) while working from home and there are many possible reasons for this. Many participants are WFH with other members of their family also WFH or staying at home, meaning they have more quality time together, sharing breaks, lunches and cooking together in the evening.

Further, busy parents traveling to and from the office now have more flexibility with their time, to help both contribute to the household and share child minding and have more quality time with their children in the evenings. In some cases, friends or family both near and far might only have seen each other for special occasions such as birthdays or weddings but are now speaking virtually each week (*Sockrider et al., 2021*), allowing individuals to feel they are more connected to those close to them.

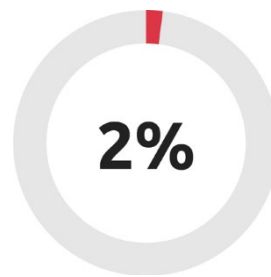
Finally, employees strongly agreed that they feel physically well (77%) and that their fitness has remained much the same. This may be due to the fact that individuals are saving time without the commute to work, allowing them to structure their days differently to allow for longer exercise routines.

BOTTOM SCORING AFFIRMATIONS



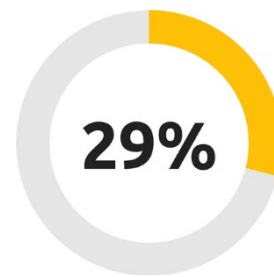
**I feel less stressed
working from home**

MIND



**I have the tools to do my
job from home**

WORK



I take regular breaks

ACTIVE

Of the 30 affirmations measured, the above received the strongest negative associations.

Mind is the pillar of wellbeing with the lowest scoring affirmation. Individuals strongly disagreed when asked if they feel less stressed while WFH (14%). Early into the pandemic and the initial lockdown, research highlighted that in the Republic of Ireland employees were working an extra 44% longer hours each week (*Irish Life Health of the Nation*).

With the closure of many schools and childcare facilities during COVID-19, many people with young children have also had to play the role of teacher, parent and employee simultaneously. In a study carried out by the United Nations it was found that the most prominent sources of stress while WFH included lack of structure or boundaries and not knowing when to switch off from work.

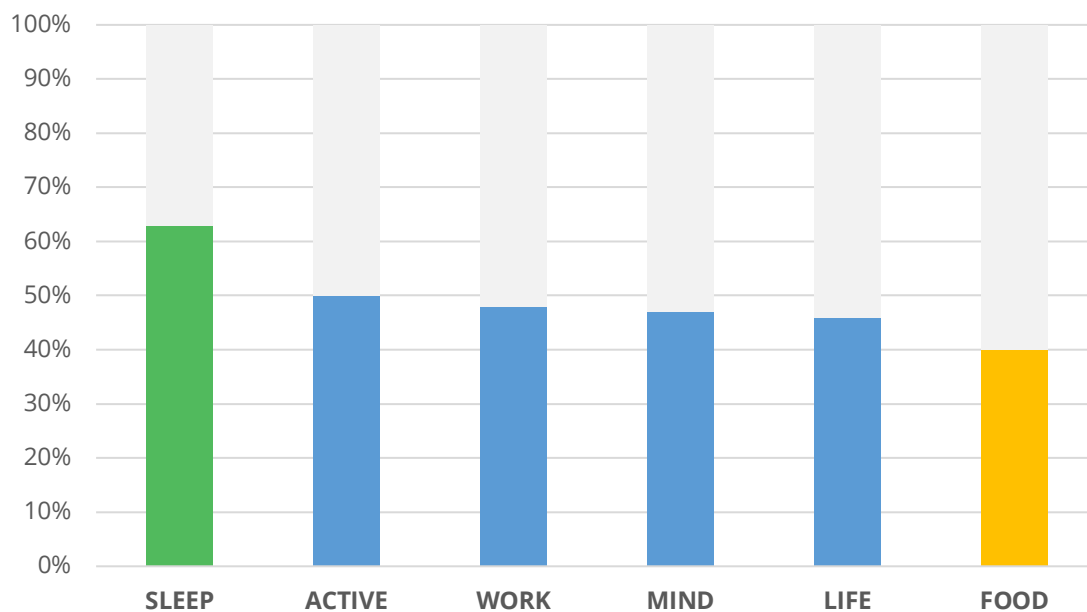
It is important to recognise also that the initial and ongoing effects of the pandemic are having a continuous influence on employees' stress levels, anxiety and a psychological and emotional toll in how they are coping with the high levels of uncertainty.

Individuals strongly also disagreed when asked if they have the tools to do their job from home (20%). This is encompassed in the 'work' pillar of wellbeing. This pillar makes reference to workplace support, socialising, inclusion in the workplace, equipment etc. One of the key issues while WFH that employees are likely to miss from the office is adequate space and the ability to socialise. Many employees are sharing workspaces with other family members, have limited home office space and have multiple cohabitating workers which can be very distracting due to noise level. Other tools that employees may be missing are a comfortable office chair, an appropriate desk, adequate ventilation and the ability to manage their time in this new work environment.

An example of this is how participants disagreed when asked if they take regular breaks (29%). This is likely due to the lack of schedule or structured routine compared to when working in the office.

Employees WFH are also prone to working past their usual end of day worktime and may miss this cue, as they do not have to consider their commute and other factors leading to working overtime which may cause conflict at home and further increase stress for employees and potentially leading to burnout. According to *Palumbo (2020)* remote working has triggered an increase in work-related fatigue which may produce a physical and emotional exhaustion.

AREAS OF WELLBEING MOST AFFECTED

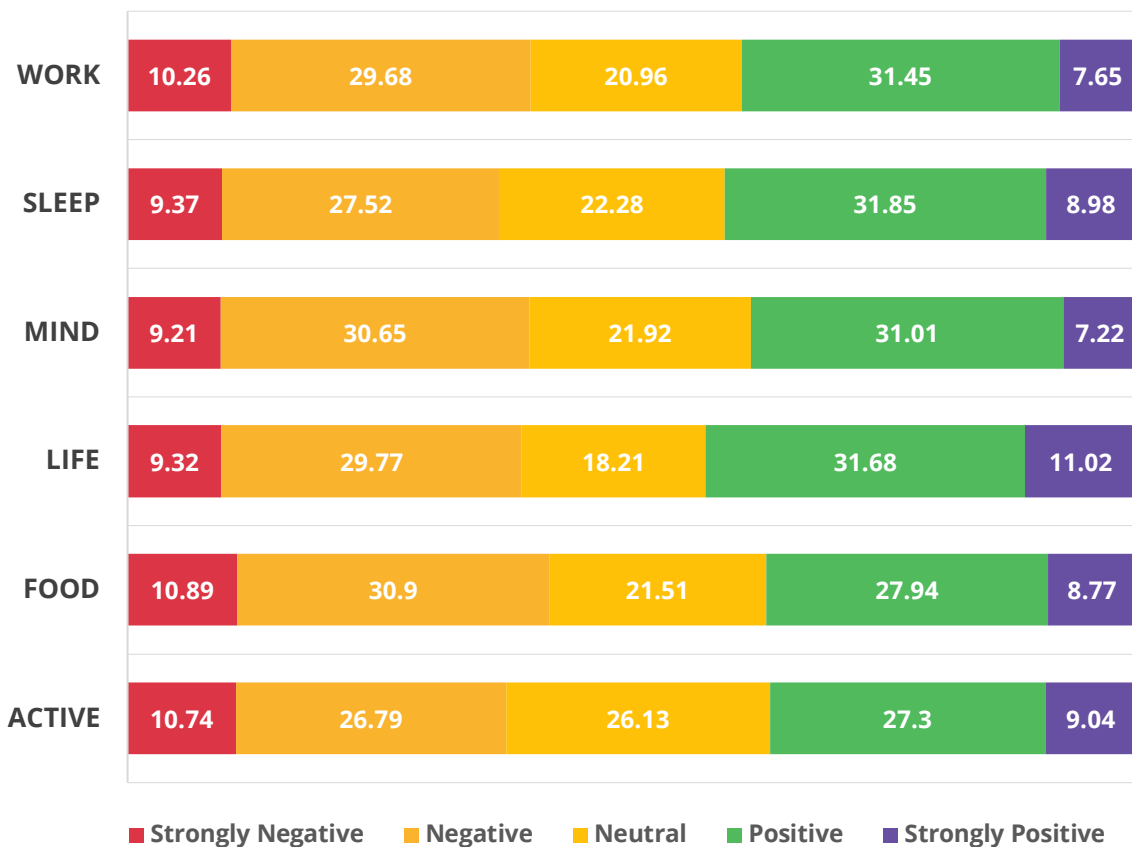


Dimension Analysis - The dimension breakdown chart (above) represents an aggregated overview of the areas of wellbeing with which participants have positive (**green**), neutral (**blue**), and negative associations (**yellow**).

Employees associate WFH most positively with sleep (63%). This is likely due to the fact that employees have more time to sleep without their commute to the office in the morning. Further, the extra time in the evenings might have an effect on employees' sleep hygiene before bed. Extensive research evidence shows that sleep health is crucial to positive employee outcomes.

Employees WFH had neutral associations in terms of mind (50%), active (48%), life (47%), work (46%), and food (40%) meaning there was not an overly significant feeling towards a positive or negative impact either way. This demonstrates that WFH is not having an unduly major impact on employees in these areas of wellbeing as they adapt to the new style of working.

The score of 40% in food is low. There are many possible explanations for why people are struggling with their diet while working from home, including the fact that snacks are readily available at all times, there is less structure to the day surrounding lunch hours and even boredom from lack of social contact. Studies have shown that stressors such as pandemic-related income loss can lead to “comfort eating”.



The above chart presents the results for each pillar according to the traditional 'likert scale' approach of surveying

Dimension Analysis - The above dimension analysis provides a more detailed description of the strength of associations that employees have with specific areas of wellbeing, giving more colour and insight than the aggregate data.

Employees WFH had the strongest positive association with life (11.02%). A possible explanation for this is that employees have more time to spend with their families while working from home. Employees may feel they have more control over their lives while WFH than they might in an office environment and might feel WFH allows for more independence and is more relaxed in their familiar home environment, meaning they have more psychological freedom to adjust their work schedule to suit their lifestyle and comfort levels.

Employees WFH had the strongest negative association with food (10.89%). A recent survey by *Sato et al. (2020)* also found that WFH increased the frequency of snacking. As an adaption to stress many people do increase their intake of palatable food (*Sinha & Jastreboff, 2013*). Further, the stay-at-home guidelines and WFH has increased time sitting down of up to an extra four hours per day and time spent doing sedentary activities such as watching television which can also be linked to increased snack consumption.

“

We are going through some very tough times globally, which is impacting our personal health. One of the most empowering things you can do at times, when so much feels out of our control is to manage our health by taking charge of things like our diet. Our immune system is the most powerful weapon we have against disease and a strong immunity means our body is better able to fight off illness.

”

Nicola Flood

Nutritionist and Owner of The Queen of Health

Cognitive Dissonance

WHAT IS COGNITIVE DISSONANCE?

Cognitive Dissonance can be described as the difference between what an individual thinks (explicit) and how they feel (implicit).

For this survey we used standard questionnaires to assess how participants *think they are feeling* (explicit) and Implicit Reaction Time (IRT) measures to assess how they are *actually feeling* (implicit) about WFH. This then highlighted a difference between a perceived impact and an actual impact of WFH on wellbeing. The greater the difference in implicit and explicit scores demonstrated, the higher the levels of Cognitive Dissonance among participants.

MOST COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Employees displayed the highest rate of cognitive dissonance when asked if they had the tools to do their job effectively from home. When asked explicitly (measure of thinking) employees strongly agreed that they had the tools to do their job from home. However, the implicit measure (measure of feelings) demonstrated that subconsciously employees did not actually feel this way. Many employees who are now WFH are sharing their space with other occupants of the household, which can lead to distractions and make it difficult to focus on work tasks when compared to working in an office (*Lopez-Leon, Forero, & Ruiz-Díaz, 2020*). The implicit results take into account not just the tools necessary for work, but how the person is feeling about doing work continuously in a home environment.

Employees also displayed a high level of cognitive dissonance when asked if they feel less stressed working from home. Although employees explicitly stated that they feel less stressed working from home, the implicit measure indicated that this was not true. This discrepancy between their perceived attitude toward stress and their actual attitude might be because employees are unaware of their heightened stress levels when working from home. WFH can intensify work-family conflicts that increase stress because it blurs the boundaries between home and workplaces (*Wolor, Dalimunthe, Febrilia, & Martono, 2020*).

Similarly, when asked if they can balance their home-life from their work-life employees explicitly stated that they could manage. However, implicit measures indicated that this was not true and that employees do not feel that they can balance their homelife and work-life. One possible explanation for this is that employees think they should be able to balance their work and home life better as they are spending more time at home and have more flexibility to balance work and family demands (*Dockery, & Bawa, 2020*). However, with a lack of routine, adequate space and proper schedule when working from home employees are finding it difficult to switch off from work, take enough breaks, leave their work environment (home) and focus on self-care. In addition the effects of an ongoing pandemic will be influencing feelings related to restricted movement and being at home continuously.

LEAST COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

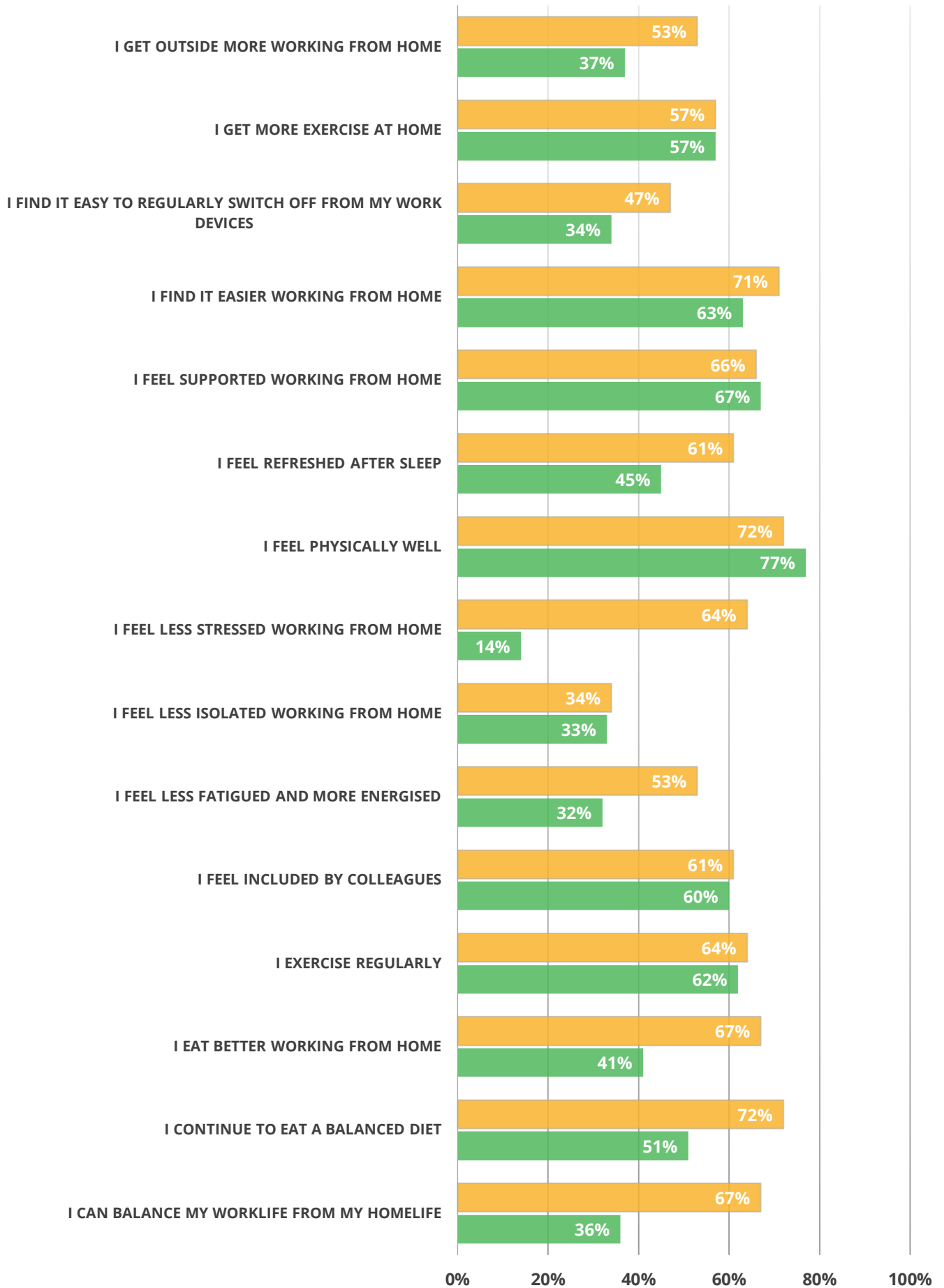
When asked if they felt less isolated working from home, employees disagreed both explicitly and implicitly. This demonstrates that employees are aware of their feelings of isolation when working from home and isolation is having a real impact and is a real factor for employees WFH during the pandemic. Loneliness is a common challenge with remote work (*Hoffman, Garner, Koong, & Woodward, 2020*) and so it is important that employees recognise how they are feeling in order to actively seek social support from others and structure in this essential aspect of a work environment.

Employees had similar implicit and explicit scores when asked if they exercise regularly. On both measures, they agreed that they are exercising regularly which is good news as exercise yields a favourable health and mental impact when performed in moderation (*Lim & Pranata, 2020*). This indicates that employees are more conscious of the need for regular exercise while WFH.

Finally, employees also had a strong cognitive alignment when asked whether they are feeling well, they strongly agreed both explicitly and implicitly. This may be due to the fact that the population at large is constantly being reminded about the physical symptoms of COVID-19. Employees may be experiencing downward comparison such that they are feeling well when they compare themselves to those who are suffering with the symptoms of COVID-19. It could also indicate that there is a strong preference for WFH that is allowing them to feel more well in themselves, when compared to how they were feeling in their previous working schedule when continuously working from an office environment.

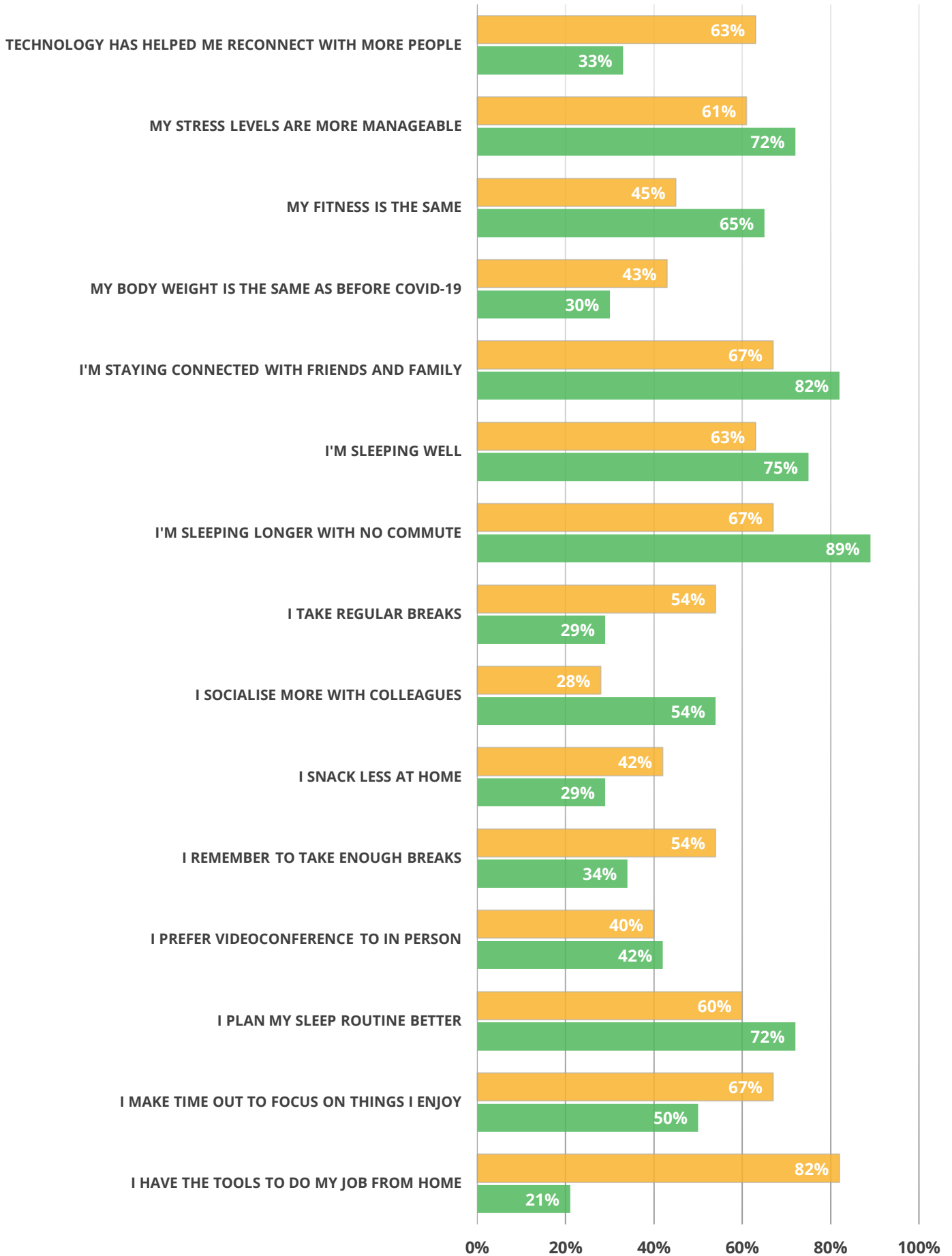
DETAILED ANALYSIS: QUESTIONS 01-15

■ EXPLICIT SCORE
 ■ IMPLICIT SCORE



DETAILED ANALYSIS: QUESTIONS 16-30

EXPLICIT SCORE IMPLICIT SCORE



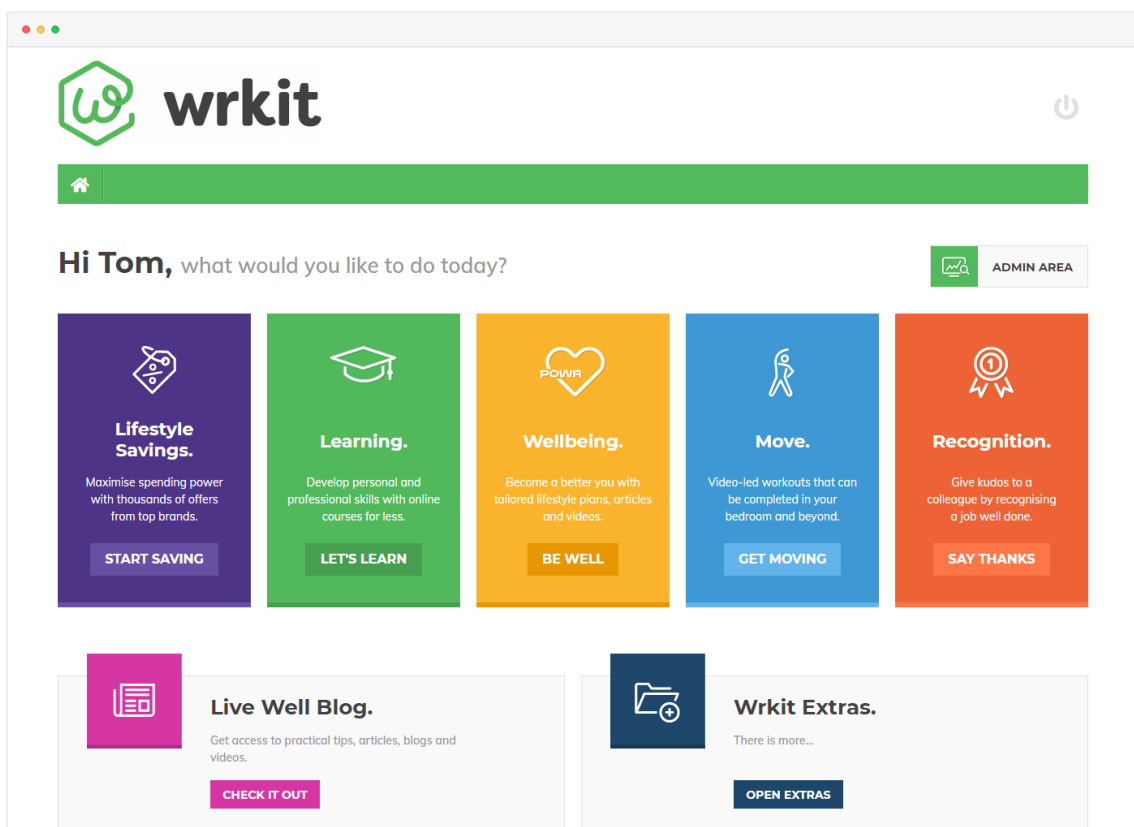
About Us



Wrkit specialises in the creation of better, healthier working environments using an online suite of data driven Employee Engagement and Retention tools. It is the one stop platform to nurture talent, engage and motivate staff, support their lifestyle and wellbeing. Wrkit believes passionately that nurturing employee’s wellbeing and engagement results in greater productivity and overly staff performance. We solve the key challenges that businesses face by helping them gain insight into their company activity through our unique Engagement Dashboard, providing greater insights into how engaged staff are and to help focus on key areas and ongoing effective interventions.

Drawing on over 15 years’ experience in the benefits sector and client feedback has led to the creation of this complete platform, offering businesses and HR leaders a method to attract, nurture and retain employees.

Our Wrkit team is an essential component in impacting a company culture, to ensure ease of accessibility for all of workforce WFH. Communication is a key component, and our team help spread the news through planned launches, regular email updates, posters and in-house events.



Our Wrkit team is an essential component in impacting a company culture, to ensure ease of accessibility for all of workforce WFH and communication is a key component of this. Our team help spread the news through planned launches, regular email updates, posters and in-house events.

Support is guaranteed as Wrkit commits to regular check-ins to support all your endeavours and companies can avail of comprehensive training for leaders, wellbeing teams and advocates and we also offer a variety of expert online workshops and on-site visits for all staff.

- **POWR** up your workforce and create a healthy workforce, by reducing stress and improving contentment with this tailored solution created by our clinical directors, psychologists and lifestyle experts. POWR empowers employees to proactively manage their wellbeing with access to this wellbeing and lifestyle tool, clinically based with hundreds of tailored plans, articles, videos and multimedia content, it is convenient and fun to use. POWR helps to increase self-awareness and engage users in social challenges to boost workplace culture. With real-time, anonymised access to data, POWR allows managers to monitor team, department or company-wide progress, helping employees perform at their best.
- **Move**. Encourage your employees to get up and be active with guided exercise videos created by Move. Designed to be conducted in the comfort of your own home, Move is the perfect solution for employees WFH to remain physically active. Move can be implemented as a standalone module or integrated with POWR.
- **Recognition**. Complement your 'thank you' culture with digital recognition by reinforcing your company values and showing your workforce how they are valued. Give and receive kudos for a job well done and help spread the word with a company news feed. Monitor stats with powerful analytics and provide rewards when people deserve a little more for going the extra mile. Redeem rewards from a large catalogue of brands or cash out the recognition. Monitor rewards sent and received with an insights dashboard.
- **Lifestyle Savings**. Support your staff's financial wellbeing by maximising their spending power with savings on everyday living and luxury brands, offering an

exclusive company branded savings platform, with savings from top brands and everyday spends. Popular categories include travel, fashion, entertainment, insurance, food and technology. Save with vouchers, cashback, ecodes, shopping cards and more.

- **Learning.** Enable your workforce to continuously learn with online courses for less. Access to high quality online education from some of the world's leading learning institutions. Easy upskilling with a variety of personal and professional learning opportunities for all staff. Online skill development courses including photography, financial trading, digital marketing, HR admin, languages, health, psychology, excel, presenting skills and nutrition.
- **HR Host.** Make all your relevant company documents and links available in one central location on the Wrkit platform and avail of simple pre-set templates. All platforms are fully branded in your company colours and logo and choose your own name for this tile for a truly personalised experience.

Our Wrkit team is an essential component of impacting your company culture, to ensure easy of accessibility for all of your workforce, to easily connect whether at their desk, on the go or WFH. Communication is key and our team help you spread the news through planned launches, regular email updates, posters and in-house events. Support is guaranteed as Wrkit commits to regular check-ins to support all your endeavours. Avail of comprehensive training for your wellbeing team and advocates and we also offer a variety of expert online workshops and on-site visits.

Find out more on <http://wrkit.com>

Truthsayers is a neurotech firm whose mission is to enable happier, more authentic workplaces for millions of organisations worldwide by fundamentally changing the way people engage at work, by giving all stakeholders a voice and leaders the tools to listen. Used by many of the world’s largest consultancy practices in their client engagements, Neurotech® platform combines neuroscience with technology and data to deliver insights that simply have not been made available to businesses before.

- Uses the combined power of neuroscience, psychology, technology, and data analytics.
- Suitable for any organisation, in any industry.
- Easy to use – No technical or scientific knowledge or experience required.
- It’s fast. Results are available within five minutes of respondents completion of the survey.

Product Names:

- E-CUBED® | WELL_HAPPY® | STRESSASSESS™ | CONDUCT_R™



Assessments provided by Truthsayers include:

E-CUBED®

Measuring Employee Emotional Engagement

- Discovers how employees truly feel.
- Identifies causes and possible solutions to low morale, off-target employee retention, wellbeing problems, and performance issues.

WELL_HAPPY®

Health & Wellbeing Survey

- Holistic view of the physical, mental, social, financial, and workplace aspects of employees' health and wellbeing.
- Teams, functions, and locations analysed and compared easily to see difference across the business, and be alerted to any early warning signs.
- Summary conclusions and powerful correlation analytics help to focus on the most important issues first and provide deep insights into the relationship between different aspects of health and wellbeing that no other survey does.

STRESSASSESS™

Employee Mental Health Assessment

- Safe and secure way to proactively manage employees' mental health and provide insights and evidence that you need to be compliant.
- Real-time reporting available at the touch of a button showing how the company is performing.

CONDUCT_R™

Neuro Risk Assessment

- Measures risk assessment of project and operational teams and how it changes over time.
- Makes it easy for CROs, COOs, Operation Managers, and Programme Managers to gauge and understand their risk environment based on unmoderated, intuitive sentiment of staff.
- Compare effectiveness of risk controls and policies between cohorts in the organisation.
- Discover which teams or functions needs the most support