

OCTOBER 2021

INVESTIGATING A BUSINESS ISSUE AT COLEG SIR GAR AND COLEG CEREDIGION

TO DEMONSTRATE THE LINK BETWEEN EMPLOYEE
HEALTH/WEELLBEING AND THE INCREASE IN
ABSENTEEISM RATES AT THE COLLEGE

NIA WILLIAMS - HR PARTNER





Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Qualification: Post Graduate Diploma in HRM

Module Name: Investigating a Business Issue from a HR perspective

Module Code: BMHR7006

Word Count: 7642 (10% over)

Student Name: Nia Williams

Student Number: 1806523

CIPD Membership Number: 53274221

By signing below, I confirm that the work presented is my own, unaided work. I understand the regulations pertaining to candidate malpractice and the action that may be taken as a result.

Signed: *N. Williams*

Date: 11 October 2021

Acknowledgments

I would like to say thank you to Coleg Sir Gar and Coleg Ceredigion for their continued support during my studies and allowing myself to have access to the necessary data and key stakeholders in order to reach the aims and objectives of this report.

Thank you to the key stakeholders who participated in the well-being questionnaires and interviews to support me with my studies and to demonstrate a direct correlation between poor health/well-being in the organisation and the increase in absenteeism rates.

I would also like to thank my HR colleagues for supporting me and giving valuable feedback on my report and helping me with creating and analysing data from my primary research.

A special thank you to my supervisor, Emma Roberts who has supported me throughout this report by providing me with timely feedback and support. Thank you also to my fellow CIPD students who have also supported me with this report by sharing their knowledge via WhatsApp and in class discussions.

Glossary of Terms

- COVID – Coronavirus
- CSG and CC – Coleg Sir Gar and Coleg Ceredigion
- HARP - Heightening your Awareness of your Research Philosophy
- HR – Human Resources
- PEST – Political, Economic, Social and Technological
- PID – Project Initiation Document

Executive Summary

This research report will demonstrate the link between employee health/Well-being and the increase in absenteeism rates at CSG and CC (Coleg Sir Gar and Coleg Ceredigion). In house research indicates that absenteeism surrounding mental health has increased by 11% from March 2020 to March 2021 with the most common absences consisting of stress, depression and anxiety. 70 Million workdays are lost every year with employees being absent from work with mental health related absences. This is the leading cause of sickness in the UK. This costs employers around 2.4 billion every year.

Secondary research supports this and the hypothesis that absenteeism rates are linked to poor health and Well-being. Organisations need to increase their focus on employee well-being to improve employee morale, engagement and develop a healthier culture and improve absenteeism rates.

Secondary research indicates that organisations are making wellbeing a focus which has not previously been the case (CIPD, 2021). Data confirms that factors that have contributed to the increase in mental health absences are COVID-19 and the new anxiety of returning to work (Caine, 2021). Other factors consist of, poor work-life balance and the fear of catching COVID in the workplace. To combat these, research has indicated that hybrid working will address poor work-life balance and the fear of returning to onsite working which results in better health and wellbeing resulting in fewer absenteeism rates (McKinsey, 2021), (BBC, 2021a). Secondary data also suggests that management training surrounding health and wellbeing is

important to combat stress and put mechanisms in place to stop high absenteeism (The Health Foundation, 2020).

Primary research was gathered by the use of qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (questionnaires) data. Data gathered from the questionnaire support the hypothesis that absenteeism is linked to poor health and wellbeing. The majority of participants confirmed their mental health has worsened during the pandemic and a large proportion of participants said they were anxious about returning to work which supports Caine's (2021) statement that people are experiencing anxiety which is leading to high absenteeism rates. 62% of participants also rated their well-being as poor. Suggestions provided by the participants on how to improve their well-being in the college consisted of management training on mental health, better communication from top-down, hybrid working, well-being site, more well-being and staff development days, yoga classes, walking/running clubs and more employee voice.

Research gathered from the interviews suggested that employees would welcome a hybrid approach to working moving forward as it will give employees the option to work from home and from the office to accommodate everyone's preference. They stated that this would improve their well-being and provide them with a work-life balance. Recommendations to improve health and Well-being consisted of hybrid working and being able to have the option to work at home to work around family commitments. Other suggestions consisted of, better communication from top-down in the organisation and more well-being and staff development days.

The main conclusions from the study have indicated that high absenteeism rates are linked to poor health and wellbeing within CSG and CC. This supports the hypothesis of the report. Focusing on employee well-being will translate to cost savings. Gray (2014) also supports this statement and believes that the cost of doing nothing to address mental health absences will lead to a rise in sickness and turnover rates.

The main recommendations arising from this report are for the need for management training on mental health, a hybrid working policy and a new wellbeing site. According to research, these will lead to happier and healthier employees which will decrease employee absenteeism rates.

Table of Contents

Table of Figures.....	10
1.0 Introduction.....	11
1.1 CSG and CC background	11
1.2 Background to the research purpose	12
1.3 Personal Motivation	12
1.4 Well-being defined	13
1.5 Current approach to Well-being	13
1.6 Aims and Objectives.....	14
1.7 Methodology approach	15
1.8 Key stakeholders.....	15
2.0 Literature Review.....	16
2.1 External Factors.....	16
2.2 Organisations perspective on Health and Well-being	19
2.3 Effects of health and Well-being on the organisation and the employee.....	21
2.4 Leading Organisations with their response to health and Well-being.....	22
• Google.....	22
• Facebook.....	22
• Pembrokeshire college.....	22
• Amazon.....	23
3.0 Methodology	24
3.1 Layer 1 – Philosophical stance.....	24
3.2 Layer 2 – Approaches	25
3.3 Level 3 – Strategy	25
3.4 Level 4 – choices	26
• Questionnaire.....	26
• Interviews	29
3.5 Layer 5 – Time Horizons	31
3.6 Layer 6 – Techniques and procedures (Results and analysis)	31
4.0 Results and analysis	31
4.1 Reliability and Validity	32
4.2 Questionnaire results (Appendix 10)	32
• Mental health has worsened during the pandemic.....	32
• Employees are anxious returning to campus.....	33

• 62 employees rated their well-being at work as poor.....	33
• 90 employees were unsatisfied with management support with regards to health and well-being.....	33
• Workload, Catching COVID in the workplace, returning to work, poor work-life balance are the main causes of stress at work.....	34
• Recommendations to improve well-being.....	34
4.3 Interview results	35
5.0 Conclusion	39
6.0 Recommendations	41
6.1 Management training on mental health and Well-being	41
6.2 Hybrid working policy	42
7.0 References	44
8.0 Appendix.....	54
Appendix 1.1 – Stakeholder analysis.....	54
Appendix 1 – Consent from the Executive Director of HR.....	55
Appendix 2 – Pest Analysis	56
Appendix 3 – Extract of PID submitted to supervisor	59
Appendix 4 – Extract of ethical form submitted to supervisor	63
Appendix 5 – Questionnaire on Google Forms	65
Appendix 6 – Questionnaire emailed by Exec.....	69
Appendix 7 – Pilot questionnaire	70
Appendix 8 – Interview Questions.....	71
Appendix 9 – Briefing document for interview	72
Appendix 10 – Questionnaire Results.....	73
Appendix 11 – Minutes from absence review meetings.....	78
Appendix 12 – Action Plan.....	85
Appendix 13 – Reflection statement.....	88

Table of Figures

Figure 1- CSG&CC HR Structure (Coleg Sir Gar, 2021)	11
Figure 2 - The research project journey (Anderson, 2013).....	15
Figure 3 - Power/Interest Grid for Stakeholder Prioritisation (Mendelow, 1981).....	16
Figure 4 - Short, medium and long term impacts (GOV.UK, 2020).....	17
Figure 5 - The Research Onion (Saunders et al, 2007).....	24
Figure 6 - Kirkpatrick's evaluation of management training (Kirkpatrick, 1996)	42

1.0 Introduction

1.1 CSG and CC background

Coleg Sir Gar and Coleg Ceredigion (CSG and CC) is a Further and Higher Education college consisting of seven base campuses made up of Graig, Ammanford, Gelli Aur, Pibwrlwyd, Jobs Well, Cardigan and Aberystwyth. CSG and CC offer a range of courses in A levels, NVQs, national diplomas, higher national certificates, foundation degrees and postgraduate programmes (Coleg Sir Gar, 2021).

There are 856 employees which are made up of lecturing, academic and business support staff. There are 10 employees within the human resources (HR) department made up of the following:

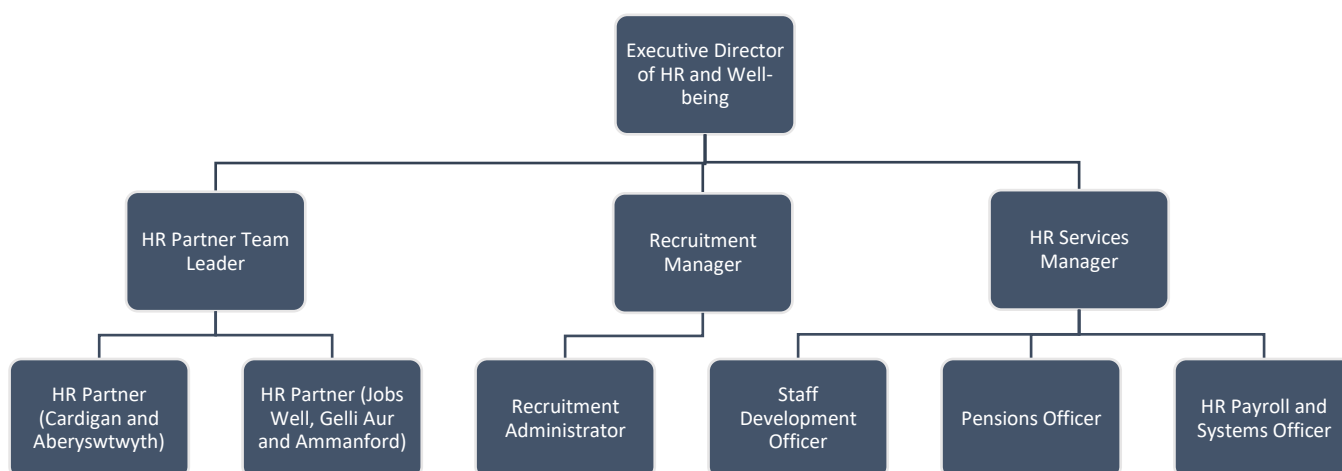


Figure 1- CSG&CC HR Structure (Coleg Sir Gar, 2021)

As a HR Partner, some responsibilities undertaken include, working with faculty and departmental heads to identify and plan recruitment needs, provide advice to managers and monitor absence management patterns (Personnel Today, 2006), (CIPD, 2021a).

1.2 Background to the research purpose

The purpose of this report is to investigate a business issue from a HR perspective. At CSG and CC, there has been an 11% increase in absences amongst employees from March 2020 to March 2021 (Coleg Sir Gar, 2021). When comparing the sickness absence rates to Pembrokeshire college, they have experienced a 6% increase in absences amongst employees during the same period. The most common absences at CSG and CC consist of stress, depression and anxiety. According to the Mental Health Foundation (2021), 70 million work days are lost every year due to employees being off work with mental health in the UK. This translates to a cost of 2.4 billion for organisations per year. According to CIPD (2021b), if employers focus on improving wellbeing in their organisations it will bring better employee morale and engagement, a healthier and more inclusive culture and lower sickness absence rates. Focusing on employee well-being will translate to cost savings. Gray (2014) also supports this statement and believes that if organisations do not address mental health absences in the workplace, it will result in a continued rise in sickness and turnover rates resulting in an increase in cost for employers.

Recent discussions amongst the Executive team in the college have focused upon improving well-being and sickness absence rates within the college which have increased significantly over the last year and a half during COVID-19.

1.3 Personal Motivation

A personal motivation has been receiving a recent promotion to HR Partner. The role consists of travelling around campuses and working closely with line managers and employees face to

face. This has led me to view this issue first hand and witness the low morale culture that exists.

1.4 Well-being defined

Oxford English Dictionary (2021) defines well-being as “the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy”. Mental Health Foundation (2015) challenges this definition further by explaining that well-being is a much broader concept than moment to moment happiness. It recognises that although it does include happiness it also includes how satisfied people are with their life as a whole, their sense of purpose and how in control they feel.

1.5 Current approach to Well-being

The college holds a well-being day for employees annually where they are encouraged to spend time away from work with colleagues. As well as this, the college also holds staff development days at the beginning of each term. As part of this, events such as mindfulness is provided for employees to attend (Coleg Sir Gar, 2021).

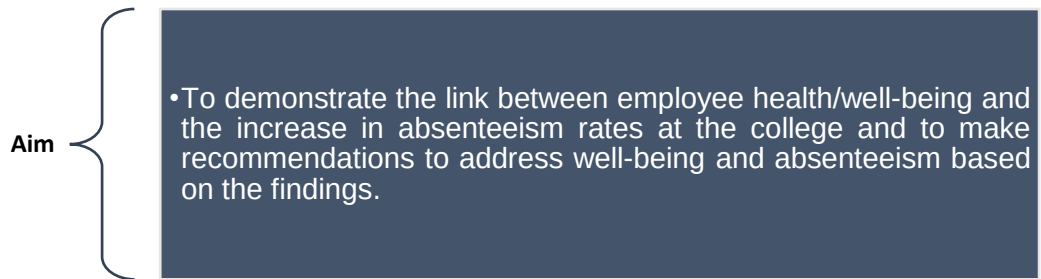
The college also has a free gym on-site and offers a cycle to work scheme to encourage a healthy and active lifestyle for employees. The college also provides employee benefits such as discounts through UNiDAYS (Coleg Sir Gar, 2021).

In comparison to other organisations, employee well-being initiatives at CSG and CC is limited.

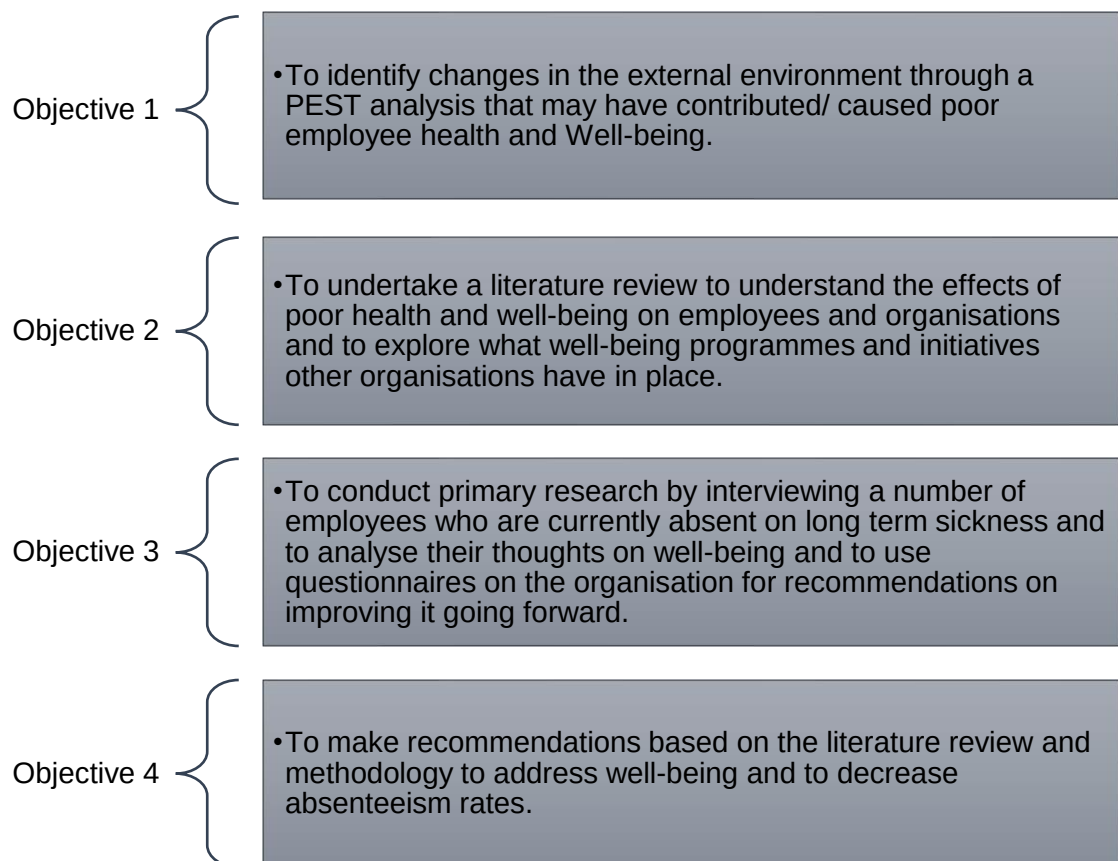
This will be further explored in the literature review of this report.

1.6 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this report is therefore to:



To achieve this aim, the following objectives will be undertaken:



This report will follow the research project journey (figure 2) created by Anderson (2013). This allows for progress to be monitored against initial expectations (Anderson, 2013).

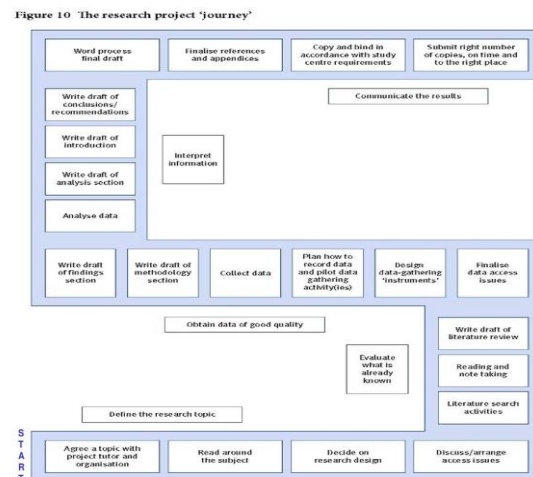


Figure 2 - The research project journey (Anderson, 2013)

1.7 Methodology approach

The research purpose is explanatory where the research will look to establish the relationship between health/well-being and the high levels of absenteeism rates (Greener, 2008).

The research approach that will be taken is the inductive approach (Saunders et al, 2019).

The research is about confirming that poor health and well-being in the college is causing an increase in absenteeism rates by studying the literature of others and through observation.

Both qualitative and quantitative research will be used such as questionnaires and interviews to gather data from employees to demonstrate this link and to make recommendations for the college moving forward.

1.8 Key stakeholders

According to MindTools (2021) and Mendelow (1981), it is important to conduct a stakeholder analysis when it comes to conducting projects as the actions that are undertaken can start to

affect more and more people. The more people that are affected, the more likely it is that some of them will have significant power and influence over the work that is being undertaken (Stakeholders). Appendix 1.1 outlines the main stakeholders for this report which contains the Executive board and HR, employees on long term mental

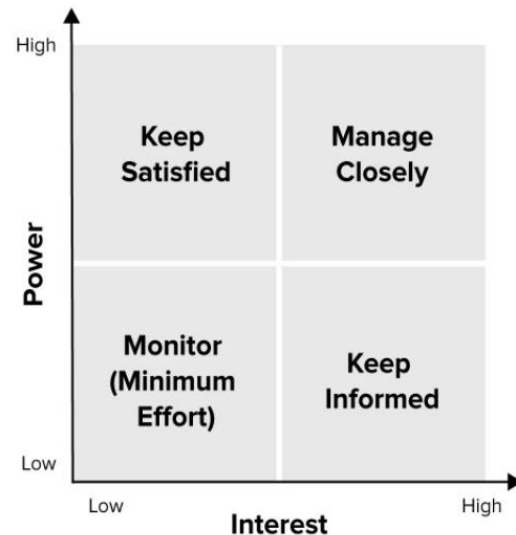


Figure 3 - Power/Interest Grid for Stakeholder Prioritisation (Mendelow, 1981)

health sickness and other employees of the organisation.

2.0 Literature Review

This section will look at achieving objectives one and two by looking at the external factors that may contribute to employee health and well-being. It will also look at the effects of poor health and well-being on employees and organisations and explore what well-being programmes and initiatives other organisations have in place. This section will also be taken into consideration when recommending ways to improve health and well-being in the college to decrease absenteeism rates.

2.1 External Factors

Appendix 2 outlines a PEST (Political, Economic, Social and Technology) analysis to help understand how the external environment has impacted health and well-being (CIPD, 2020).

- Social

According to The Health Foundation (2020) and (GOV.UK, 2020), COVID-19 has caused an increase in mental health due to isolation, working from home, job losses and reduced access to well-being and mental health services. According to GOV.UK (2020), COVID-19 has resulted in short, medium and long term impacts:

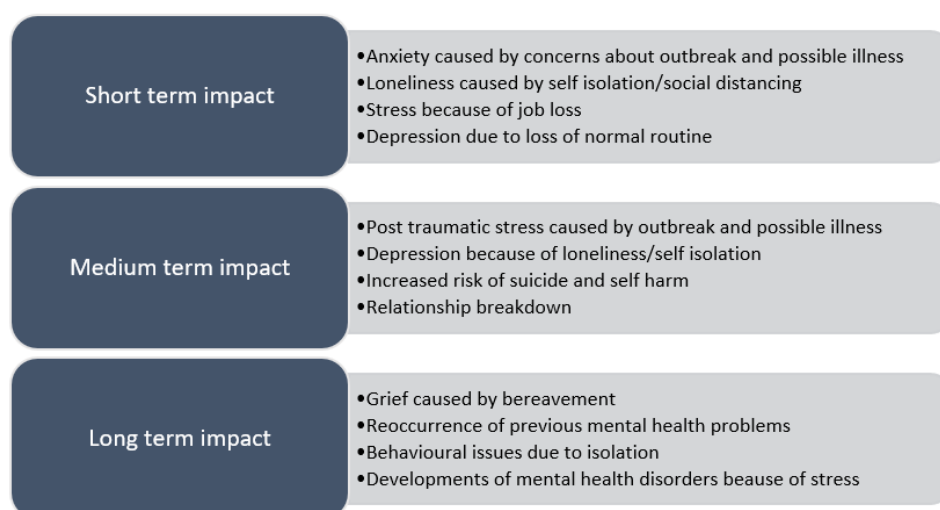


Figure 4 - Short, medium and long term impacts (GOV.UK, 2020)

According to Hywel Dda University Health Board (2021), an online mental health and well-being service has seen a 72% increase in the number of people in the Hywel Dda area seeking support as lockdown restrictions ease.

According to Caine (2021), people are also experiencing new anxiety: the fear of returning to work. This is because the pandemic has disrupted people's lives and people have got used to a new way of living and working. Companies are experiencing hesitation around what it looks like to return to work and as a result, mental health absenteeism rates are increasing.

Furthermore, BBC's research of 4,700 workers found that the majority never want to go back to the old ways of working (BBC, 2021a). The research found that only 12% want to return to

full-time office work, and 72% want a hybrid model moving forward. Giving employees the option of both will satisfy those that struggled with home working and will satisfy those that enjoyed working from home (BBC,2021a). A report by McKinsey (2021) also confirmed that the future of work is becoming more hybrid where employers are giving employees a mix of remote and on-site working for roles that are not essential to perform on-site. This is to combat employees feeling anxious after the pandemic and to also encourage productivity for employees where they can decide if they would want to be on-site or working from home. This report confirmed that most organisations (68%) do not yet have hybrid working in place.

Although the overall UK sickness absence rates have fallen to 1.8% in 2020, which is the lowest record since 1995, mental health absences are within the top 5 reasons for sickness absences with 11.6% of occurrences in 2020. Although the overall sickness absence figure since 1995 has been decreasing, mental health absences have increased from 49,893 in 2018-2019 to 50,893 in 2019-2020 (NHS, 2019), (NHS, 2020). This confirms data published by The Health Foundation (2020) and GOV.UK (2020).

According to NHS (2020), those within the age bracket of 18-34 have experienced an increase in mental health along with 65 and over. This is down to the younger generation finding it harder to not socialise with others and those over 65 having to self-isolate on their own (Young Minds, 2021). Statistics from the sickness absence system partially corresponds with this information. There are currently 7 employees on long term sickness with mental health-related absences. Of these, 2 are within the 18-34 age bracket, 3 over 65 and the others are between 35 and 64.

- Technology

Technology has also had an impact on health and well-being during COVID. The pandemic led to 86.0% of people working from home in April 2020. This is approximately 5.6 million people in comparison to 1.69 million in 1998 (Statistica,2021). Technology has allowed employees to work from home during the pandemic which has brought many benefits to the employee such as work-life balance, flexibility with childcare, less travelling time to and from work and cost savings. On the other hand, some have experienced the negative impact of technology which has impacted their health and well-being. As previously mentioned, some people have found that technology has led to isolation and less face to face interaction with the majority of interaction being held online which has impacted negatively on their mental health and well-being (Robinson, 2020).

According to Perna (2021), younger generations are facing more challenges in remote working compared to older generations. 60% of generation Z reported to be struggling with remote working and they also cited a lack of motivation at work and found it isolating working from home. This supports data provided by the NHS (2020) as mentioned above. Conflicting research by Tabassum (2020) suggests that those people between 65 and 74 have found it the most difficult in shifting from face to face to online working and have needed the most support with technology.

2.2 Organisations perspective on Health and Well-being

According to CIPD (2021b), research has indicated that employee health and well-being has been creeping up the corporate agenda. Research indicates that senior managers are making

it more of a priority from 61% in 2020 to 75% in 2021. There has also been a smaller increase in the proportion of managers that buy into the importance of well-being from 58% in 2020 to 67% in 2021. Almost half (46%) of organisations also lack a formal strategy or approach and tend to act on an ad hoc basis when it comes to health and well-being. Public sector organisations are said to be the most proactive on well-being. Organisations with up to 250 employees are more likely to be taking no action (7%) compared to larger organisations (16%). Additionally, only 26% of organisations have increased their well-being budget and 4% have decreased. 59% of organisations budget has remained the same (CIPD, 2021b), (Hesketh and Cooper, 2019).

According to the CIPD (2021b) report, 45% of people thought that their mental health during the pandemic has worsened with 47% not seeing any change and only 8% mentioning that it had been made better during the pandemic.

According to CIPD (2021b), COVID-19 is among one of the main causes of stress at work currently. The most common causes are management style (59%), COVID related anxiety for instance commute, catching COVID-19 in the workplace (23%) new work-related demands or challenges due to homeworking as a result of COVID-19 (31%) and poor work-life balance due to homeworking as a result of the pandemic (20%). Although management style accounts for 59% of the most common causes, the percentages relating to COVID account for 74% and therefore, is the main cause at the moment for stress in the workplace.

Data suggests that organisations are increasing their efforts to support mental health and improve well-being in organisations. There has been a large increase in the number of training

for staff to build resilience as well as in promoting a more flexible working culture going forward. There is also an increase in the number of mental health and well-being champions as well as mental health first aiders. There is fewer effort, however on training managers to support staff with mental health. According to Mental Health Foundation (2020), line managers are pivotal with managing mental health and improving well-being in the workplace. They deal mostly with health and champion a healthy culture for employees. Investing in managers will help them recognise the early stages of mental health and stress and put in place strategies to support staff that are affected. It is important they can signpost support and resources available for staff and not be experts in the field themselves (Mitchell, 2018). Google is an organisation that provides managers with access to online mental health training to learn how to recognise signs and behaviours that someone on their team may need additional support and how to refer that person to get help. As a result, Google is voted one of the best companies in the world for employee well-being (Fortune, 2021). This will be explained further below.

2.3 Effects of health and Well-being on the organisation and the employee

As mentioned previously, well-being is closely linked with health and productivity (Gray, 2014). Those employees who are in good physical, mental and emotional health are more likely to deliver optimal performance in the workplace in comparison to those that are not (Johnson et al 2017), (Stringer, 2016). When employees are healthy and happy they have a better quality of life, lower risk of disease and injury and increased productivity (Adams,2019, (Alimo-Metcalf et al 2008). It can also reduce absence as employees will be happy and enjoy work, reduce presenteeism and reduce recruitment costs (Hasson et al, (2020), (CIPD, 2021b).

2.4 Leading Organisations with their response to health and Well-being

- Google

Employees at Google have access to onsite wellness and healthcare services such as fitness centres and classes to keep employees fit (Google, 2021a), (Putnam, 2015). They allow employees to take a vacation, volunteer or change their workday to meet their personal and business needs (Google, 2021). The company has employee forums on a weekly basis where employees can ask any question they want. There is also Googlegeist which is the company's biggest survey where it seeks feedback (Google, 2021a). With such a programme in place, they were also named the 2014 "Best company to work for". Providing benefits mentioned above leads to employee motivation which leads to employees becoming more creative with innovative products and more entrepreneurial. As result absenteeism rates and turnover rates are low (Fortune, 2021), (Putnam, 2015).

- Facebook

Facebook allows for employees to request to work from home permanently to avoid the new social anxiety as mentioned by Caine (2021). For those employees whose work requires them to be in an office, the company is recommending they be on-site at least half of the time and they will be allowed to work on a hybrid schedule (BBC, 2021c). Facebook provide counselling and provide a wellness programme that includes gym membership and mindfulness apps etc. Similarly, to Google, they also provide fitness classes for employees to join in (Facebook Careers, 2021).

- Pembrokeshire college

Primary research has indicated that Pembrokeshire College has an internal well-being programme in place where they have created a site for employees dedicated to well-being. Examples include mindfulness videos, yoga classes, a list of discounts, book chat, useful links to help with health. The idea is to bring employees together to share interests, share any concerns and build friendships. Information gathered by the HR department mentioned that sickness absence rates have decreased over the years as they have increased their focus on mental health and well-being. This is evident in their sickness absence figures where they have experienced less of an increase in absences (7%) compared to CSG and CC (11%).

- Amazon

An example of a company with poor well-being is Amazon. A BBC investigation into Amazon in 2013 revealed that employees were walking 11 miles a day where they are expected to collect orders every 33 seconds. This has resulted in many panic attacks and hospital admissions from employees fainting in the warehouse. This has increased absenteeism and turnover rates (BBC, 2013).

To summarise, research has indicated that there has been an increase in mental health-related absences such as depression and anxiety. Research has also indicated that previously there has not been a large focus on well-being in organisations however, this is creeping up the organisation's agenda. Factors that have contributed to these absences are COVID-19 and the new anxiety of returning to work. Other factors consist of poor work-life balance and the fear of catching COVID in the workplace. Research suggests that hybrid working combats poor work life-balance and the fear of returning to work which results in better health and well-

being resulting in fewer absenteeism rates. Management training on mental health and well-being is also important to implement in an organisation to combat stress and put in place early mechanisms to stop high absenteeism. Facebook, Google and Pembrokeshire college are all examples of organisations that have put in place mechanisms to focus on the health and well-being of employees. As a result, absenteeism rates are low.

3.0 Methodology

This section aims to achieve objective 3. Before undertaking the methodology section of this report, a project initial documentation (PID) was created for approval from my tutor (Appendix 3) along with an ethical form (Appendix 4). Approval was also granted by the Executive board and the HR Partner Team Leader (Appendix 1).

Saunders et al (2007) research onion model is made up of different layers which represent the various stages which a researcher must pass through when putting together an effective methodology (Figure 6).

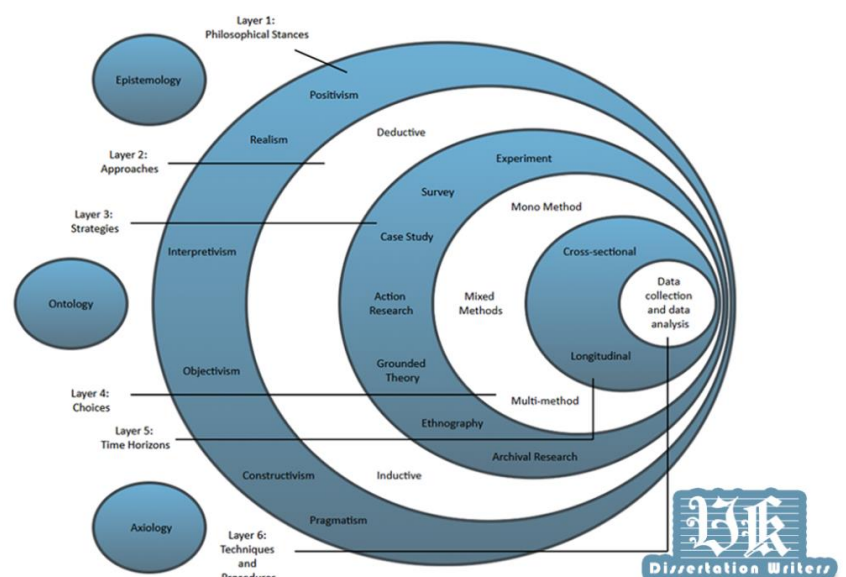


Figure 5 - The Research Onion (Saunders et al, 2007)

3.1 Layer 1 – Philosophical stance

To explore my research philosophy, HARP (Heightening your Awareness of your Research Philosophy) can be used which is a reflective tool designed by Saunders et al (2019). After completing this assessment, it has indicated that I am an interpretivist. According to Saunders et al (2019), “interpretivism holds the belief that reality and knowledge are socially constructed by human beings. It refers to theories about how the human mind can obtain knowledge of the world”. Interpretivists argue that research should focus on the respondents view of the world through the use of unstructured interviews where the researcher may generate more valid information. They therefore use qualitative data. This type of data will be undertaken in this report.

The purpose of this research is explanatory where this research will look to establish causal relationships between variables (Greener, 2008). In this case, the relationship between poor health/Well-being in the college and the high levels of absenteeism rates.

3.2 Layer 2 – Approaches

The research approach that has been undertaken is the inductive approach. According to Saunders et al (2019) an inductive approach starts with a theory to explain through research and observation that the theory is correct. In this case, the research is about confirming that poor health and well-being in the college is causing an increase in absenteeism rates by studying the literature of others and through observation.

3.3 Level 3 – Strategy

According to Greener (2008), the research strategy describes how the researcher intends to carry out the work. The action research strategy will be used where the recommendations that

I will make will make a difference to the organisation. This research report is about promoting change for the organisation and improving the health and well-being of employees and overall reducing absenteeism rates. Another research strategy that will be used is case study research strategy which will involve more than one way of deriving data about the organisation. For instance, this research report will include talking to people such as those employees that are currently absent from work with mental health/well-being related absences and will also include survey data to find a correlation between poor mental health and well-being and the increase in absenteeism rates.

3.4 Level 4 – choices

Both primary and secondary data can be used in research. Primary research involves collecting data first hand such as questionnaires and interviews. Secondary research involves data that is already published such as journals and books. Data can also be qualitative (based around words or feelings) or quantitative (data contains statistics) (Perkins & Woodhams, 2016, p.92). This research report will be using the mixed method approach where it will use questionnaires (quantitative) and interviews (qualitative).

- **Questionnaire**
- **Benefits and drawbacks of Questionnaires**

Questionnaires involve researchers producing documents which detail specific questions that respondents then provide an answer for (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Questionnaires are cheap and fast to administer in comparison to interviews. They are more convenient for respondents as they can be completed in their own time. The drawbacks of questionnaires is that it is

difficult for the researcher to prompt and gather more information from certain answers provided. It is also difficult for the researcher to ask complex questions. There is also the risk of responses being low and respondents may not want to answer all questions (Bryman and Bell, 2006).

For this research report, questionnaires have been distributed to get a feel for the health and well-being of employees and to gather their suggestions for improvements moving forward. This particular method was selected because of how fast it is to administer and the wide audience that it can reach in a short period of time (Bryman and Bell, 2015), (Fisher, 2014).

- **Questionnaire design**

When creating a questionnaire, questions need to be clear and concise (Diaz de Rada, 2005). According to Oppenheim (1992) questions should either be open (where the researcher requires a few words or sentences of explanation) or closed (where the researcher requires a yes/no answer or a tick box). A combination of open and closed questions were used for this questionnaire. A variety of question formats was also used such as lists, rating, yes/no and open essay (Greener, 2008).

A questionnaire was created using Google forms (Appendix 5). Google forms is a free online tool that allows researchers to collect information easily and efficiently. Google forms stores the feedback received for the researcher to analyse in detail. Forms also allow for graphs to be created on the spreadsheet (Google, 2021b).

Before taking part in the questionnaire, a summary of what the questionnaire was about was explained along with the benefits for participants. The questionnaire detailed confidentiality

and made participants aware that the questionnaire was anonymised. It also made participants aware that the questionnaire would be used for the organisation and for a university context. Included were details of my supervisor should the participant want to raise any concerns with the university. All of the above were mentioned at the start of the questionnaire and in the email that was emailed to all staff (Appendix 6). When creating the form, I selected the feature to make participants anonymous. Participants were asked at the beginning to tick a box to confirm that they were happy to participate in the questionnaire and that their data would be used to gather information relating to well-being in the organisation and used for a university context. As this is an anonymous questionnaire employees were not able to withdraw their answers after they had submitted.

- **Pilot**

Before sending the questionnaires out to the organisation I decided to pilot the questionnaire with 3 people from the registry department to get their views and opinions on the questionnaire and to see if it was obtaining valuable data before sending it out to the entire workforce. A pilot indicates if the response options were clear, if certain questions are necessary, if respondents can answer the question and if the questions are unbiased (Greener, 2008).

Results from the pilot indicated that two questions were not needed as participants were unsure how to answer the question. These are listed in red in appendix 7. All other questions were obtaining valuable data and participants confirmed that the questions were clear.

- **Participants**

This questionnaire was distributed to the entire organisation (856 employees) therefore, the convenient sampling method has been selected where the sample is chosen for ease/convenience rather than through random sampling. It is used for short term projects. Where this sampling method is used, the results cannot be generalised to the population (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

A one-week completion date was given to have enough time to analyse the data. This was emailed out by the Assistant Principal as he has the administration rights to post on the gateway and to send an email to “all staff” (Appendix 6).

- **Interviews**
- **Benefits and drawbacks of interviews**

According to Horn (2009) interviews are normally classified as a qualitative method of gathering data. Interviews involve listening in contrast to questionnaires where they complete it in their own time. They allow for the researcher to dig deeper and gather more detail. Researchers can probe employees when they want them to expand on certain points. It is useful when trying to understand complex issues such as employee health and well-being. Interviews can be time consuming to organise and analyse the results provided (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Another issue with arranging interviews is the employees themselves cancelling.

Interviews are vital for those employees that are currently absent from work to demonstrate the link between poor health and well-being and absenteeism rates and to gather their opinions and recommendations on how to address the issue moving forward. The time commitment involved in interviewing is therefore worthwhile because of the benefits that

interviewing these employees will bring. I will also arrange the interviews in advance with plenty of time to re-arrange if the employee cannot make the original interview date.

- **Participants**

With the sample size selected (7) being those employees that are currently on long term sickness, the purposive sampling method has been selected where I have used my judgement to select a sample.

- **Interview design**

The literature review helped formulate the interview questions as included in appendix 8.

These interviews were conducted through employee absence review meetings. These are conducted every 3 months between the employee the manager and HR. During these meetings HR take lead to find out how the employee is doing and to find out what support the college can put in place for them. Before arranging the interviews with the employees, they were asked by telephone if they were willing to take part in a discussion relating to their health and well-being during their absence review meeting. This was later followed up by a briefing document (Appendix 9). This explains that the results would be fed into a research report to potentially make changes for the organisation going forward. It also explains that the research is part of my final year CIPD research report and data will be shared with my supervisor at UWTSD. Outlined in the document is my supervisor's details should the participant have any concerns with how the data is being used within a university context. Confidentiality of the data was also explained to each employee and information on how participants can withdraw their data after the interview. It was also explained that if any sensitive issues would arise it would

be dealt with under the organisations policies. As health and well-being is a sensitive topic, I have also included counselling details within the document.

When conducting interviews, it is important to remain in control of the conversation and to ask open questions to get the employee talking. It was also important to repeat responses back to participants to ensure that details recorded were accurate (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The questions asked were split into 3 sections for instance, looking back, now and the future. This was done for the conversation to be structured and for it to flow better for the employee. During these interviews, I asked the manager to act as a scribe to ensure that all responses were captured. These interviews were conducted over one-week.

3.5 Layer 5 – Time Horizons

Cross sectional time horizon will be used for this research report where this research is limited to a specific time frame from the period of June to the end of August (Anderson, 2013).

3.6 Layer 6 – Techniques and procedures (Results and analysis)

This will be explored further in section 4.0.

4.0 Results and analysis

Results from the questionnaire are provided in a pie chart created by Excel. According to Texas State Auditor's Office (N.D) the advantages to using pie charts is that it is visually simpler than other types of graph, summarises a large data set in visual form and it requires minimal additional verbal or written communication.

4.1 Reliability and Validity

According to Greener (2008), reliability is another term for consistency/repeatability over time.

The research that has been undertaken is transparent and clear meaning that the reader can undertake the same method themselves and produce the same results. Results generated are also reliable and valid as it was piloted as previously mentioned previously.

External validity is when the results can be generalized beyond the immediate study. This research is not generalized as the study has only been conducted within CSG and CC and can therefore not be applied outside of the organisation. This research is only applicable for those that participated in the study as only 169 employees out of 856 employees took part in the questionnaire and 7 in the interview.

4.2 Questionnaire results (Appendix 10)

As previously stated, this was sent out to 856 employees with a completion date of one week.

The response rate was 169 representing 20% of the organisation. This response rate was low however, according to Lindemann (2021) it is common to have between 5%-30% response rate to surveys. Ways to combat this is for surveys to be short and focused which was adhered to for this questionnaire. It is important to recognise that the results are therefore not representing the organisation as a whole however, it gives some insight into the culture and Well-being at the college.

- **Mental health has worsened during the pandemic**

Results indicated that 113 employees (67%) agreed that their mental health worsened during the pandemic with only 46 employees (27%) answering no and 10 employees (6%) answering “prefer not to disclose”. This corresponds with research conducted by NHS (2019) and NHS (2020) where they indicate that mental health absences have increased.

- **Employees are anxious returning to campus**

51 employees (30%) said that they were anxious about returning to campus permanently, with 14 (24%) saying that they were worried about catching COVID in the workplace. Further results indicated that 42 employees (25%) do not understand why they cannot continue working from home. Only 35 employees (21%) said they were excited to return to work and see their colleagues. These results have indicated that 92 employees that took part in the questionnaire were worried/anxious. This demonstrates that there are high levels of anxiety within the workplace which is one of the leading causes of employees being absent from the workplace. It also supports Caine (2021) where it is claimed that people are experiencing new anxiety: the fear of returning to work. According to Caine (2021), this is resulting in absenteeism.

- **62 employees rated their well-being at work as poor**

When asked “how would you rate your well-being at work currently?” 62 employees (37%) rated their well-being as poor. Only 3 employees rated their well-being as Excellent. This demonstrates that there is poor well-being in the college.

- **90 employees were unsatisfied with management support with regards to health and well-being**

When asked, “How satisfied are you with management support with regards to your health and well-being this term?” 67 employees (40%) graded it as a 2 with 1 being unsatisfied and 5 being satisfied. A further 23 employees (14%) graded it as 1 bringing the total of employees that were unsatisfied to 54% representing more than half of the employees that took part in the questionnaire. Only 16 employees (9%) said they were satisfied with management support. The others were neither satisfied nor unsatisfied. When asked “please indicate your

reasons”, 23 employees answered. Of these 23 responses, the most common 2 themes were lack of support (57%) and lack of communication/contact (43%). These two answers demonstrate that managers need training to support employees around health and well-being and improve their communication. This links back to the research by Mental Health Foundation (2020) where line managers are pivotal with managing mental health and improving well-being in the workplace. Investing in managers will help them recognise the early stages of mental health and stress and put in place strategies to support staff that are affected and reduce absenteeism rates.

- **Workload, Catching COVID in the workplace, returning to work, poor work-life balance are the main causes of stress at work**

When asked “what are the main causes of stress at work?” 51 employees (30%) said it was workload, 41 employees (24%) said it was catching COVID in the workplace, 34 employees (20%) said it was returning to work and 33 employees (20%) said it was poor work-life balance. Only 10 employees (6%) said it was because of working from home during the pandemic.

132 employees (78%) said they would like a hybrid approach to working in comparison to 37 employees (22%) saying no. This data corresponds with data by CIPD (2021b) mentioned previously.

- **Recommendations to improve well-being**

When asked “what suggestions would you make to improve the well-being in the college moving forward?” there was mixed responses as it was an open question. 39 employees (23%) said that management training with regards to mental health needed to be improved and 37 employees (22%) said that there needs to be better communication from the top-down

in the college. 32 employees (19%) recommended hybrid working and having the option to work at home to suit around family life. 17 employees (10%) recommended having a well-being site for employees to access. A further 10 people (6%) suggested having more well-being days, 15 employees (9%) wanted more staff development days and 12 people mentioned having regular yoga classes (7%). 3 people mentioned having walking/running clubs (2%) and a further 4 people (2%) said they would like more employee voice.

4.3 Interview results

An interview was conducted with 7 employees that are currently on long term sick with mental health issues. The questions asked are listed in appendix 8. These interviews went smoothly, with all 7 employees agreeing to participate and use their data. Employees were honest and detailed in their responses and helped me achieve objective 3. Appendix 11 are minutes from the interviews with each employee. The answers provided by each employee have been categorised into common themes below.

- **4/7 employees liked working from home**

When asked “how did you find working from home during the pandemic?” 4 employees said that they liked working from home as it allowed for a better work-life balance. It allowed them to work around their caring and family responsibilities with one in particular saying:

“I really enjoyed working from home, it allowed me to have a better work-life balance and fit my work around family responsibilities. It’s allowed me to save on travelling as well, which has helped my well-being. Normally it would take me 45 minutes to and from work, but when I’m working from home I can spend more time with my family”. (Participant 1, age 34, Male)

One however said that they *“missed face to face interaction with colleagues however, technology enabled me to stay in contact with them”* (Participant 5, age 56, Male).

2 employees mentioned that they did not enjoy working from home during the pandemic with one saying *“I felt isolated as I live on my own”* (Participant 7, age 34, Female) and the other saying *“I felt lonely because I missed that office interaction – being online isn’t the same”* (Participant 3, age 47, Male). This corresponds with data suggested by Robinson (2020).

- **Financial stress, anxiousness and isolation were the main stresses during the pandemic**

When asked what are the main stresses during that time was, the following responses were provided:

“My worry was financial as my partner was on furlough. I was worried he would lose his job, and I wasn’t certain about my future within the college and potential redundancy. Covid was also a worry, and the thought of someone close catching it was a massive stress of mine”. (Participant 6, age 38, Female).

All 7 employees mentioned COVID as stress as outlined in Appendix 11. Isolation was also mentioned. These all correspond with data by The Health Foundation (2020) and (GOV.UK, 2020),

- **Hybrid working is welcomed by all 7 employees**

When asked “how would you feel about a hybrid approach to working and would this make the above better?”, 4 employees said that the college should consider this moving forward as

it would help with a better work-life balance. They mentioned that it worked during the pandemic, and it would work going forward.

“This is definitely the way forward. We’ve proven during the pandemic that it can work, so there’s no reason why this can’t be an option going forward. It would help massively with a better work-life balance” (Participant 4, age 59, Female).

1 employee mentioned that it would cut down on travelling time to and from work which would help with her well-being. The other 2 employees would personally like to be back on-site because they live on their own, however explained that it would be beneficial to other employees to provide them with this option which is also what is suggested by BBC (2021a).

“I wouldn’t personally like to work from home because I live on my own, but giving people the option to work from home some days of the week would benefit those that prefer to work from home and have family responsibilities” (Participant 3, age 47, Male).

- **Recommendations to improve well-being**

When asked “what suggestions would you make to improve the well-being in the college going forward?” similar responses to the questionnaire was provided such as hybrid working and being able to have the option to work at home some days to work around family commitments, better communication from top management down, training for management, and more well-being and staff development days:

“I would recommend hybrid working – I think this would definitely improve well-being in the college. It gives employees flexible working, and I think currently we are quite old fashioned

with the way that we work. I think we need to move with the times!" (participant 1, age 34 Male).

"Having the option to work at home and in the office would improve the well-being. It means that people can work around family commitments and have a better work-life balance. I think more staff development days would be beneficial too! I don't think we have enough to develop employees and managers. Also, maybe more well-being days to connect more with colleagues and get away from a stressful environment!" (Participant 2, age 41, Female).

"I would recommend better communication from top management down. I think top management are quite distant at the moment and this is evident through the culture. I would also say training for management as well around mental health and well-being. I think this would benefit management to support employees better and notice the signs early to prevent absenteeism". (Participant 3, age 47, Male).

5.0 Conclusion

To conclude, data within CSG and CC has indicated that absenteeism surrounding mental health has increased. Secondary research has indicated that there has been an increase in mental health-related absences such as depression and anxiety (The Health Foundation, 2020), (GOV.UK, 2020). Research has also indicated that previously there has not been a large focus on well-being in organisations however, this is creeping up the organisation's agenda (CIPD, 2021b). Factors that have contributed to these absences are COVID-19 and the new anxiety of returning to onsite working (Caine, 2021). Other factors consist of poor work-life balance and the fear of catching COVID in the workplace. Research suggests that hybrid working combats poor work-life balance and the fear of returning to onsite working which results in better health and Well-being resulting in fewer absenteeism rates (McKinsey, 2021), (BBC, 2021a). Management training on mental health and well-being is also important to implement in an organisation to combat stress and put in place early mechanisms to stop high absenteeism (The Health Foundation, 2020).

Primary data gathered from the questionnaire supported the hypothesis that absenteeism is linked to poor health and well-being. Participants supported secondary research where 67% of employees confirmed that their mental health has worsened during the pandemic. 92 employees said they were worried/anxious about returning to the workplace which supports Caine's (2021) claim that people are experiencing new anxiety: the fear of returning to work which is leading to high absenteeism rates. 62% of participants also rated their well-being as poor. Suggestions provided by the participants on how to improve well-being in the college consisted of management training on mental health, better communication from top-down,

hybrid working, well-being site, more well-being and staff development days, yoga classes, walking/running clubs and more employee voice.

Similarly, primary research gathered from the interviews suggested that employees would welcome a hybrid approach to working moving forward as it will give employees the option to work from home and from the office to accommodate everyone's preference. They stated that this would improve their well-being and provide them with a work-life balance. Recommendations to improve health and well-being consisted of hybrid working and being able to have the option to work at home some days to work around family commitments. Other suggestions consisted of, better communication from top-down in the organisation and more well-being and staff development days.

Research has indicated that the high absenteeism rates are linked to poor health and well-being within CSG and CC. It is important to highlight that the primary research only represents a proportion of the organisation and not as a whole however, data suggests that there is strong evidence to support the hypothesis. To improve the health and well-being in the organisation and to reduce absenteeism rates those recommendations suggested by employees should be explored. These recommendations are used within companies such as Google and Facebook where absenteeism rates are low because they prioritise health and well-being (Google, 2021a), (Facebook,2021).

6.0 Recommendations

Appendix 12 outlines an action plan for the following recommendations.

6.1 Management training on mental health and Well-being

Primary and secondary research has indicated the importance of management training in mental health to improve wellbeing in organisations. MHFA Wales deliver training to managers in organisations (MHFA Wales, 2021). To begin with, 16 faculty managers will be given the training at a cost of £2,200. The training consists of E-learning and face to face delivery. This will appeal to all generations and learning styles. The face to face delivery will be delivered in a lecture theatre at Graig campus. It will be delivered at the start of the new year in January 2022 as part of staff development day. I will take the ownership of organising the event by liaising with the staff development officer and MHFA Wales.

The training will be evaluated through Kirkpatrick's evaluation model as identified in figure 6 (Kirkpatrick, 1996). Testing the training on 16 faculty managers and evaluating the training will indicate if the training has reduced mental health absences in the workplace. If it has, this indicates training managers reduces absences within the organisation. When we are certain that it delivers results, this can be rolled out to other managers.

Level 1 - reaction (customer satisfaction)	Level 2 - learning	Level 3- behaviour	Level 4 - Results
To measure customer satisfaction, HR will ask line managers to complete an evaluation survey on their experience from undertaking the training (Hamblin, 1974). This will be done at the beginning of February. A questionnaire will also be distributed to the organisation to see if employees have seen a difference in management towards mental health and wellbeing. This will also be distributed in February via google forms.	To evaluate if learning has taken place, a quiz will be used to measure their knowledge before the training and afterwards to see if there has been a change in knowledge, skill and attitude. This will be evaluated in January 2022 during the training.	To evaluate if behaviour has changed as a result of the training, a focus group will be set up to see if managers have put any of their learning to use with employees. This will be evaluated in September 2022 to give line managers time to put the theory into practice.	The overall aim is to decrease mental health absences within the college. The purpose of the training is to deliver this aim. To determine if the training is successful, mental health absences are expected to decrease. This will be evaluated in September 2022.

Figure 6 - Kirkpatrick's evaluation of management training (Kirkpatrick, 1996)

6.2 Hybrid working policy

Research has indicated the need for hybrid working to improve employee wellbeing. A hybrid working policy should be implemented with guidance and advice from ACAS on how to create one for the organisation (Acas, 2021a). I will work alongside the Executive Team, my HR colleagues and Unions in order to implement this policy. There are no costs in producing the policy other than the time invested in creating the policy from all parties involved. These costs are minimal in comparison to the long-term benefit and cost savings it will bring as it will lead to greater well-being and reduced absenteeism rates. This will be implemented in January 2022. To evaluate the effectiveness of the hybrid policy a satisfaction survey will be distributed to employees to find out if they find this beneficial to their wellbeing. This will be evaluated in March 2022. The purpose of the hybrid policy is to improve wellbeing in the college. To determine if the policy is successful, mental health absences are expected to decrease. This will be evaluated in September 2022.

6.3 Well-being site

Research has indicated the need for more well-being initiatives. One way to do this is by creating a well-being site similar to Pembrokeshire college. The idea is to create one place where the employee can access details on employee benefits and well-being initiatives such as mindfulness videos, yoga classes, discounts, useful links to counselling, details on any running/walking/book clubs. Running and walking clubs were common recommendations made by employees in the interviews and questionnaires. Including a section where employees nominate another employee to add a blog onto the system where they detail what they do for their well-being will also be included. This will bring employees together to share interests, and build friendships. This will contribute in improving wellbeing in the organisation.

This site will be created using the Google website where employees will be able to access the site via the internal gateway. Internal expertise in the college will be able to help HR create this, meaning that the only cost involved are the cost of time creating the website. This should take approximately 2 months to create. The hourly rate of those creating the website is minimal considering the long-term benefits of the website and the future cost savings such as reduction in absenteeism rates and turnover. This will be implemented by 31 January 2022.

7.0 References

1. Acas, (2021a). *Hybrid Working*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.acas.org.uk/hybrid-working> (Accessed 28 September 2021).
2. Acas, (2021b). *Health and Wellbeing*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.acas.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing> (Accessed 26 August 2021).
3. Adams (2019). *The value of Worker Well-being*. [Online]. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0033354919878434> (Accessed 05 July 2021)
4. Alimo-Metcalfe, B., Alban-Metcalfe, J., Bradley, M., Mariathasan, J. and Samele, C. (2008), "The impact of engaging leadership on performance, attitudes to work and wellbeing at work: A longitudinal study", *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, Vol. 22 No. 6, pp. 586-598.
5. Anderson, V. (2013) *Research methods in human resource management*. 3rd ed. London: Chartered Institute of personnel and Development.
6. Anderson, V., (2014). Approaches to gathering data in HR research. In: *Research methods in Human Resource Management*. London: CIPD , pp. 133-155.
7. BBC (2021a). *Coronavirus: How the world of work may change forever*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20201023-coronavirus-how-will-the-pandemic-change-the-way-we-work> (Accessed 07 June 2021).
8. BBC (2021b). *How many people have been vaccinated in Wales*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-55855220> (Accessed 19 August 2021).

9. BBC (2021c). *Facebook remote working plan extended to all staff for long term*.
[Online]. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-57425636> (Accessed 12 September 2021).
10. BBC (2013). *Amazon Workers face increased risk of mental illness*. [Online].
Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-25034598> (Accessed 12 September 2021).
11. Bryman, A. and Bell, E., (2015). *Business research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University. Press.
12. Bryman, A. (2006) *Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: how is it done?*
Qualitative
13. Caine, P (2021). *After a year of remote life, new anxiety emerges: returning to work*.
[Online]. Available at: <https://news.wttw.com/2021/03/11/after-year-remote-life-new-anxiety-emerges-returning-work> (Accessed 07 June 2021).
14. Coleg Sir Gar (2021). *Coleg Sir Gar About*. [Online]. Available at:
<https://www.colegsirgar.ac.uk/index.php/en/about> (Accessed 07 August 2021).
15. CIPD (2021a). *HR Business Partner Roles*. [Online]. Available at:
<https://www.cipd.co.uk/careers/career-options/hr-business-partner-roles> (Accessed 06 May 2021).
16. CIPD (2021b). *Well-being at work*. [Online]. Available at:
<https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/factsheet#gref> (Accessed 06 May 2021).

17. CIPD (2020). *PESTLE Analysis*. [Online]. Available at:
<https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/strategy/organisational-development/pestle-analysis-factsheet#gref> (Accessed May 2021).
18. Diaz de Rada, V. (2005). "Influence of Questionnaire Design on Response to Mail Surveys". *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 8 (1): 61-78.
19. Facebook Careers (2021). *Resources you need to thrive*. [Online]. Available at:
<https://www.facebook.com/careers/facebook-life/benefits> (Accessed 12 September 2021).
20. Fisher, C. D. (2014). Conceptualizing and measuring wellbeing at work. In P. Y. Chen & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Work and wellbeing* (pp. 9–33). Wiley Blackwell.
21. Fortune (2021). *The 100 Best companies to work for*. [Online]. Available at:
<https://fortune.com/best-companies/2017/google/> (Accessed 12 September 2021).
22. Gray, R. (2014). *Employee engagement closely tied to health and Well-being*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/content/features/employee-engagement-closely-tied-to-health-and-Well-being> (Accessed 07 May 2021).
23. Google (2021a). *How we care for Googlers*. [Online]. Available at:
<https://careers.google.com/how-we-care-for-googlers/> (Accessed 12 September 2021).
24. Google (2021b). *Forms*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.google.co.uk/forms/about/> (Accessed 12 September 2021).

25. GOV.UK (2020). *Public Mental health and Well-being and COVID-19*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/public-mental-health-and-Well-being-and-covid-19> (Accessed 16 June 2021).
26. Greener, S (2008). *Business Research Methods*. Ventus Publishing Aps.
27. Hasson, G. & Butler, D., (2020). *Mental Health and Well-being in the Workplace*. London: Wiley.
28. Hesketh, I. & Cooper, C., (2019). *Well-being at work. How to Design, Implement and Evaluate an Effective Strategy..* London: Kogan Page.
29. Horn (2009). *Researching and writing dissertations: a complete guide for business students*. 1st ed. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
30. Hywel Dda University Health Board (2021). *Mental Health Support Service sees a 72% rise in people in Hywel Dda area seeking support as more people access NHS services digitally*. [Online]. Available at: <https://hduhb.nhs.wales/news/press-releases/online-mental-health-support-service-sees-a-72-rise-in-people-in-hywel-dda-area-seeking-support-as-more-people-access-nhs-services-digitally/> (Accessed 07 June 2021)
31. IOSH, (2021). *Managing Occupational Health and Wellbeing*. [Online]. Available at: <https://iosh.com/training-and-skills/iosh-training-courses/managing-occupational-health-and-wellbeing/> (Accessed 25 August 2021).
32. Johnson, S., Robertson, I. & Cooper, C.,(2017). *Well-being, Productivity and Happiness at work*. London: Springer international Publishing .

33. King, B (2021). *Unemployment rate: How many people are out of work?* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52660591>) (Accessed 19 August 2021).
34. Kirkpatrick, D. (1996). Great ideas revisited. *Training and Development*. January. Pp54-59.
35. Kirkpatrick, D. (1994). *Evaluating training programs: the four levels*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
36. Lindemann, N (2021) *What's the average Survey response rate*. [Online]. Available at: <https://surveyanyplace.com/blog/average-survey-response-rate/> (Accessed 12 September 2021).
37. NHS (2019). *Mental Health Act Statistics, Annual Figures 2018-19*. [Online]. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-act-statistics-annual-figures/2018-19-annual-figures> (Accessed 17 June 2021)
38. NHS (2020). *Mental Health Act Statistics, Annual Figures 2019-20*. [Online]. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-act-statistics-annual-figures/2019-20-annual-figures> (Accessed 17 Jun2 2021).
39. McKinsey (2021). *What executives are saying about the future of hybrid working*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/what-executives-are-saying-about-the-future-of-hybrid-work> (Accessed 15 July 2021).
40. Mendelow, A L (1981). *Environmental Scanning – The impact of the Stakeholder concept*. [Online]. Available at:

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Environmental-Scanning-The-Impact-of-the-Concept-Mendelow/7b361652157989c77ed442dd387ec9b1a9b99632?p2df>

(Accessed 15 May 2021).

41. Mental Health at Work (2021). *Mental Health in the Workplace*. [Online]. Available at:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/mental-health-workplace#:~:text=Mental%20health%20problems%20are%20all,%C2%A32.4%20billion%20per%20year>. (Accessed 07 August 2021).

42. Mental Health Foundation (2020). *Managing Mental Health in the Workplace*.

[Online]. Available at:

https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/CR00233_Ebook_dualbranded_interactive.pdf (Accessed 12 September 2021).

43. Mental Health Foundation (2015). *What is Well-being, how can we measure it and how can we support people to improve it?* [Online]. Available at:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/blog/what-Well-being-how-can-we-measure-it-and-how-can-we-support-people-improve-it> (Accessed 07 August 2021).

44. MHFA England (2021). *Mental Health Skills for Managers*. [Online]. Available at:

<https://mhfaengland.org/organisations/workplace/mental-health-skills-for-managers/>
(Accessed 18 July 2021).

45. MHFA Wales (2021). *Mental Health First Aid Wales*. [Online]. Available at:

<https://mhfwales.org/> (Accessed 16 July 2021).

46. Mind (2021). *Workplace*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/>

(Accessed 10 September 2021).

47. Mind (N.D). How to promote wellbeing and tackle the causes of work-related mental health problems. [Online]. Available at: https://www.mind.org.uk/media/a/4662/resource3_howtopromotewellbeingfinal.pdf (Accessed 10 September 2021).
48. Mindtools (2021). *Stakeholder Analysis*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_07.htm (Accessed 07 May 2021).
49. Mitchell, D., (2018). *50 Top Tools for Employee Wellbeing*. London: Kogan Page
50. ONS (2021a). *GDP monthly estimate, UK: May 2021*. [Online]. Available at: [https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/gdpmonthlyestimateuk/may2021#:~:text=UK%20gross%20domestic%20product%20\(GDP,levels%20seen%20in%20February%202020](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/gdpmonthlyestimateuk/may2021#:~:text=UK%20gross%20domestic%20product%20(GDP,levels%20seen%20in%20February%202020). (Accessed 19 August 2021).
51. ONS (2021b). *ILF: ILO redundancy rate: UK: All: SA*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/redundancies/timeseries/beir/lms> (Accessed 19 August 2021).
52. Oppenheim, A.N. (1992). *Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement*. London, St.Martins Press.
53. Oxford English Dictionary (2021). *Well-being defined*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/well-being> (Accessed 07 August 2021).
54. People Management, (2019). *What should be in a line manager's wellbeing toolkit?* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/experts/advice/line-managers-wellbeing-toolkit-and-what-should-be-in-it#gref> (Accessed 07 August 2021).

55. Perkins, G. & Woodhams, C., (2016). Using Information in Human Resources. In:
2nd, ed. *Studying Human Resource Management*. London: Chartered Institute of
Personnel and Development, pp. 92-94.
56. Personnel Today (2006). *Making it as a HR business Partner*. [Online]. Available at:
<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/trade-secrets-making-it-as-an-hr-business-partner/> (Accessed 07 May 2021).
57. Perna, M (2021). *4 Challenges for remove Gen-Z workers and how to overcome them*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/markcperna/2021/02/02/4-huge-challenges-for-remote-gen-z-workers-and-how-to-overcome-them/?sh=4a7d84f8d1c4> (Accessed 19 August 2021).
58. Putnam, L., (2015). *Workplace wellness that works*. Canada: Wiley.
59. Renee Baptiste, N. (2008), "Tightening the link between employee wellbeing at work and performance: A new dimension for HRM", *Management Decision*, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 284-309.
60. Robinson, B (2020). *Is working remote a blessing or burden? Weighing the pros and cons*. [Online]. Available at:
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/bryanrobinson/2020/06/19/is-working-remote-a-blessing-or-burden-weighing-the-pros-and-cons/?sh=4f2c948440a9> (Accessed 12 September 2021).
61. Saunders, M., Lewis, P., Thornhill, A. and Bristow, A. (2019) *Research Methods for Business Students*, 5th ed., Harlow: Pearson Education.

62. Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2007). *Research Methods for Business Students*, (6th ed.) London: Pearson.
63. Statista (2021). *Number of employees that work from home in the UK 1998-2020*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/312345/working-from-home-in-the-united-kingdom-levels-employed-uk-y-on-y/> (Accessed 10 July 2021).
64. Stringer, L., (2016). *The healthy workplace*. London: AMACOM.
65. Tabassum, N (2020). *How are older people adapting to digital technology during the COVID-19 pandemic*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/blogs/how-are-older-people-adapting-digital-technology-during-covid-19-pandemic> (Accessed 21 June 2021).
66. Texas State Auditor's Office, (N.D). *Data Analysis: Displaying Data – Graphs*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.preciousheart.net/chaplaincy/Auditor_Manual/11grphd.pdf (Accessed September 2021).
67. The Health Foundation (2020). *Emerging Evidence on COVID-19's impact on mental health and health inequalities*. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/blogs/emerging-evidence-on-covid-19s-impact-on-mental-health-and-health> (Accessed 20 May 2021).
68. Wall, T., Cooper, C. & Brough, P.,(2021). *The SAGE handbook of Organizational wellbeing*. London: Sage Publishing.

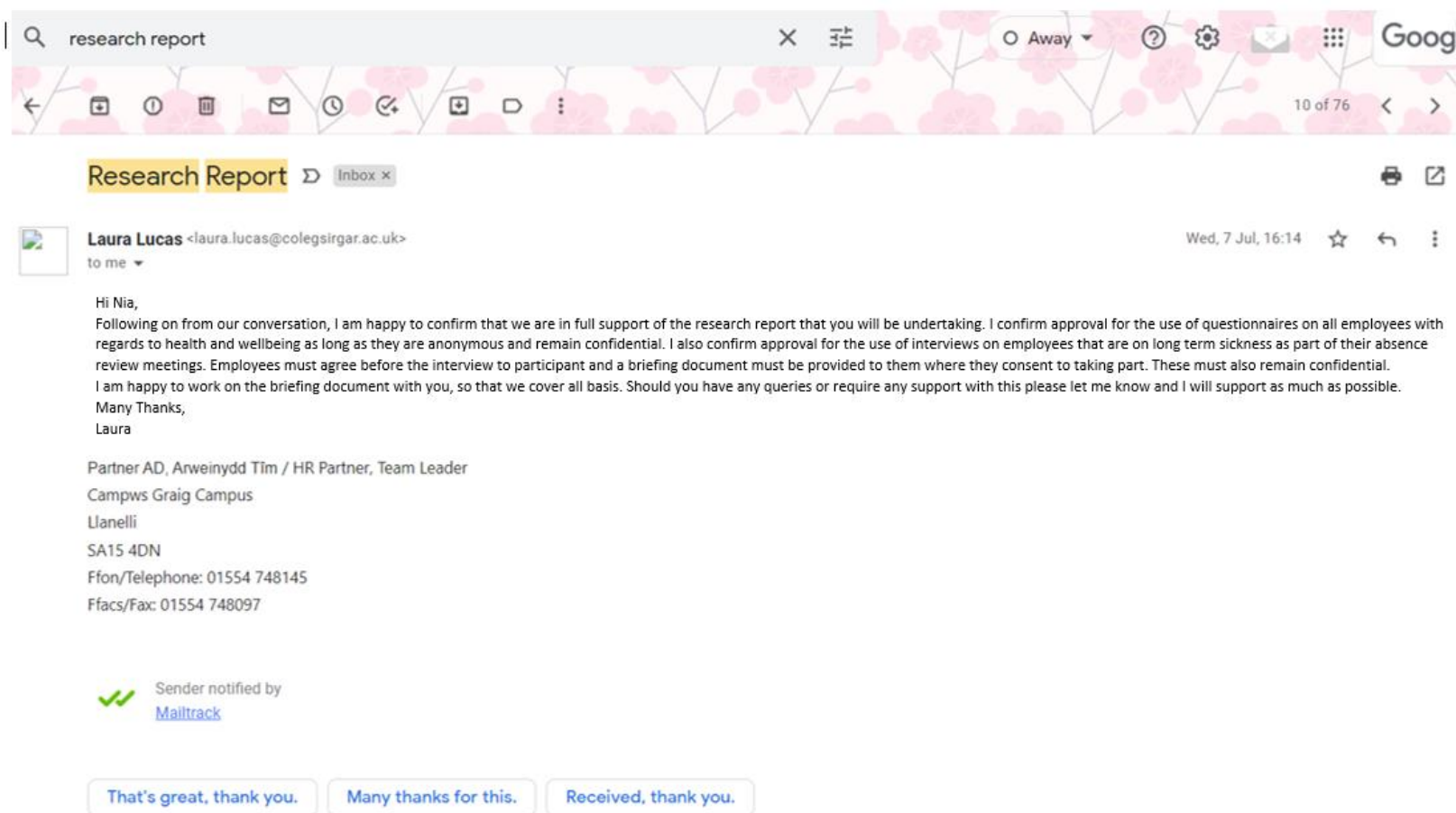
69. Warr, P., & Nielsen, K. (2018). *Wellbeing and work performance*. In E. Diener, S. Oishi, & L. Tay (Eds.), *Handbook of well-being*. Salt Lake City, UT: DEF Publishers.
70. Young Minds (2021). *Coronavirus: Impact on young people with mental health needs*. [Online]. Available at: <https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/reports/coronavirus-impact-on-young-people-with-mental-health-needs/> (Accessed 04 July 2021).

8.0 Appendix

Appendix 1.1 – Stakeholder analysis

Executive board and HR	They are high power stakeholders as they have consented for this report to be undertaken (See appendix 1 for formal declaration from HR Partner Team Leader). They also have the highest interest as they have the most interest in tackling the issue of high absenteeism in order to save costs for the college. They therefore fit into the category of “manage closely”. This means that during this report, I will fully engage with them and make the greatest efforts to satisfy them by meeting with them regularly and presenting accurate data to them. (Mendelow, 1981)
Employees on long term mental health sickness	They have high power over the research being conducted, as their opinion is valuable to understand their thoughts on well-being at the college and whether it links to their absence and what improvements they want going forward. They will also have high interest as they will be interested in contributing to improving their own health and well-being. They will also need to be managed closely (Mendelow, 1981).
Other employees of the organisation	They will also have high power over the research being conducted as it is important to have the opinions of all of the organisation to form an accurate representation of the college. They will also have high interest as they will be interested in contributing to improving well-being at work (Mendelow, 1981).

Appendix 1 – Consent from the Executive Director of HR



Appendix 2 – Pest Analysis

POLITICAL	• The Government has had a major influence over the pandemic where parliament introduced the stay at home rule, national lockdown, social distancing, mask wearing and furlough scheme. All of these had a major impact on the health and well-being of individuals where people were frightened and anxious about catching the virus themselves and family members having it. This is still the case now, even though most people in Wales have had been vaccinated (BBC, 2021a).
ECONOMIC	• GDP is estimated to have grown by 0.8% in May 2021 which is the fourth consecutive month of growth but remains 3.1% below the pre-coronavirus pandemic levels seen in February 2020. • During these periods, recession and redundancies are high (ONS, 2021a). • Organisations are carefully trying to manage their finance to avoid redundancies. • In October – November 2020, redundancy was at its highest with 14.5 per 1,000 employees being made redundant in comparison to 3.8 per 1,000 employees in February 2020 (prior to the pandemic) (ONS, 2021b). • Redundancy figures have improved with it being 3.6 per 1,000 employees in April – June 2021 (ONS, 2021b). • Nevertheless, organisations are trying to be savvy to avoid entering a period of uncertainty again (King, 2021). • With the impact of the recession and redundancies, this has caused distress to employees financially over the pandemic period as people have been fearful that they will lose their jobs and not have income. This is one of the reasons for the increase in mental health as it has contributed to poor Well-being (King, 2021). • Coronavirus has not disappeared and people are still fearful that the country could enter another lockdown where jobs and recessions could be a threat again (King, 2021).
SOCIAL	• According to The Health Foundation (2020) and (GOV.UK, 2020), COVID-19 has caused an increase in mental health due to isolation, working from home, job losses and reduced access to Well-being and mental health services. • According to GOV.UK (2020), COVID-19 has resulted in short, medium and long term impacts. • According to Hywel Dda University Health Board (2021), an online mental health and Well-being service has seen a 72% increase in the number of people in the Hywel Dda University Health Board area seeking support as lockdown restrictions ease across the country. • According to Caine (2021), people are also experiencing a new anxiety: the fear of returning to work. This is because the pandemic has caused disruption to people's lives and people have got used to a new way of living and working. Companies are experiencing hesitation around what it looks like to return to work

	and as a result mental health absenteeism rates are increasing. This has been seen within the college lately, with a number of employees reportedly telling their line manager their concerns who have informed HR. The exact number of people who experience this new anxiety is uncertain at this point, but primary research will indicate further. • Furthermore, BBC's future forum research of 4,700 workers found that the majority never want to go back to the old ways of working and being in the office all week (BBC, 2021a). Research found that only 12% want to return to full time office work, and 72% want a hybrid remote office model moving forward. Giving employees the option of both will satisfy those that struggled with home working and will satisfy those that enjoyed working from home (BBC,2021a). A report by McKinsey (2021) also confirmed that the future of work is becoming more hybrid where employees are giving employees a mix of remote and On-site working for roles that are not essential to perform On-site. This is to combat employees feeling anxious after the pandemic and to also encourage productivity for employees where they can decide if they would want to be On-site or working from home. This report confirmed that most organisations (68%) do not yet have a detailed vision in place for hybrid working. • Although the overall UK sickness absence rates has fallen to 1.8% in 2020, which is the lowest record since 1995, mental health absences are within the top 5 reasons for sickness absences with 11.6% of occurrences in 2020. Although the overall sickness absence figure since 1995 has been decreasing, mental health absences has increased from 49,893 in 2018-2019 to 50,893 in 2019-2020 (NHS, 2019), (NHS, 2020). This confirms data published by The Health Foundation (2020) and GOV.UK (2020). • According to NHS (2020), those within the age bracket of 18-34 have experienced an increase in mental health along with 65 and over. This is down to the younger generation finding it harder to not socialise with others and those over 65 having to self-isolate on their own. Statistics from the sickness absence system partially corresponds with this information. There are currently 37 employees on long term sickness with mental health related absences. Of these, 17 are within the 18-34 age bracket, 3 over 65 and the others are between 35 and 64.
TECHNOLOGICAL	• Technology has also had an impact on mental health during COVID. The pandemic led to 86.0% of people working from home in April 2020. This is approximately 5.6 million people in comparison to 1.69 million in 1998 (Statistica,2021). • On one hand technology has allowed for employees to work from home during the pandemic which has brought many benefits to the employee such as work life-balance, flexibility with childcare, less travelling time to and from work and cost savings but on the other hand some have experienced the negative impacts of technology which has impacted on their health and Well-being. • As previously mentioned, some people have found that technology has led to isolation and less face to face interaction with the majority of interaction being held online which has impacted negatively on their mental health and Well-being.

	• According to Perna (2021), younger generations are facing more challenges in remote working compared to older generations. 60% of generation Z reported to be struggling with remote working and they also cited a lack of motivation at work and found it isolated working from home. • Conflicting research by Tabassum (2020) suggests that those people between 65 and 74 have found it the most difficult in shifting from face to face to online working and have needed the most support with technology.
--	---

Appendix 3 – Extract of PID submitted to supervisor

1. Name	Nia Williams
2. Organisation name:	Coleg Sir Gar and Coleg Ceredigion (CSG and CC)
3. Type of business/background	Further and Higher Education college consisting of 7 base campuses including Llanelli (Graig), Ammanford, Gelli Aur, Pibwrlwyd, Jobs Well, Cardigan and Aberystwth. CSG and CC offer a range of courses in A levels, NVQs, National diplomas, higher national certificates, foundation degrees and post graduate programmes.
4. Number employed by organisation:	Approximately 856 employees made up of Lecturing, academic and business support staff.
5. Number employed within human resources (HR) department (if applicable):	• 2 HR Partners • 1 HR Partner Team Leader • 1 Executive Director of HR and Well-being • 1 Pensions Officer • 1 Payroll Officer • 1 HR Officer and Staff Development • 1 HR Services Manager • 1 Recruitment administrator (Vacant) • 1 Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) Manager (Vacant)
6. HR functions:	• Recruitment and Selection • Absence Management • Employee Relations • Employee Engagement • Payroll • Pensions • Policies • Contract management
7. Job title:	HR Partner
8. How long have you been in this job?	I have been employed as a HR Partner since May 2021. Previously employed as Assistant HR Officer and HR administrator within CSG and CC.
9. Outline main purpose of your job:	Partner all academic and business departments, to support day to day people management, providing professional advice and guidance to deliver operational solutions.
10. List the HR responsibilities within your job:	• Work with academic and support departments, attending Faculty Meetings, departmental meetings and organising regular one to one meetings.

	• Work closely with faculty and department heads to identify and plan recruitment needs in conjunction with the recruitment team. • Support the recruitment and selection process, including shortlisting, interviewing and appointment. • Provide advice to managers and ensure the process is carried out effectively in accordance with college policies and procedures, legislation and good practice. • Co-ordinate preparation of accurate job offers/contracts of employment ensuring legal compliance. • Deliver day one induction programme for all new starters and manage onboarding process and reviews to ensure optimum engagement of new employee. Organize and host Principal's welcome event. • Support the probationary journey ensuring policy and process compliance and providing advice and guidance. • Liaise with recruitment team and HRIS team to contribute to optimum workforce planning and forecasting. • Provide advice and guidance in relation to all family leave matters ensuring compliance with policy and ensure relevant risk assessments are carried out in line with health and safety regulations. • Monitor absence management patterns and identify timely interventions ensuring adherence to College policies. Support the maintenance of accurate records and provide regular management information on absence levels. • Provide expert professional advice and guidance on absence management and liaise with Occupational Health and other support mechanisms where appropriate, ensuring compliance with employment law. • Provide expert professional advice and support on disciplinary, grievance, capability and harassment and discrimination issues. Guide and support
--	---

	investigations, formal hearings and appeals, ensuring compliance with employment law. • Support both informal and formal performance management interventions. • Maintain and develop professional knowledge and capability to ensure expert support and guidance including current employment law legislation and best practice, sharing knowledge and experience within the HR Partner team. • Maintain regular and routine communication and liaison with the Recruitment and HRIS teams to ensure smooth operational delivery. • Conduct exit interviews for all leavers, analysing and mapping trends. • Contribute to the development and implementation of HR policies, practices and procedures. • Ensure and monitor compliance with Welsh Language Standards within the HR department, and working closely with Welsh language team. • Develop and deliver training on HR policies and process for line managers as required. • Champion college core values and behaviors and the Well-being of all staff. • Proactively identify, and assist with the development and implementation of improvements to systems and procedures to enhance efficiency • Carry out any other duties as directed by the Principal/Chief Executive commensurate with the grade of the post at the initial place of work or other locations within the College.
11. Name of person mainly supporting your report?	Name: Laura Lucas Job title: HR Partner Team Leader Relationship to you: Team Leader

12. Aim of report:

Aim: To critically analyse the cause and the link between poor employee Well-being and the increase in absenteeism rates at the college and to make recommendations to address Well-being and absenteeism based on the findings.

13. Objectives of report:

Objectives:

1. To identify changes in the external environment through a PEST analysis that may have contributed/ caused poor employee Well-being.
2. To undertake a literature review to understand the effects of poor Well-being on employees and organisations and to find ways that CSG&CC can improve Well-being based on findings from organisations who have a successful Well-being programme in place.
3. To conduct primary research by interviewing a number of employees who are currently absent on long term sickness and to analyse their thoughts on Well-being and to use questionnaires on the organisation for recommendations on improving it going forward.
4. To make recommendations based on the literature review and methodology to address Well-being and to decrease absenteeism rates.

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

Full Name:		Nia Williams			
Tick all boxes which apply:		Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student	☐

Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	
Campus:	
E-mail address:	
Contact Telephone Number:	
For students:	
Student Number:	1806523
Programme of Study:	Human Resource Management (Postgraduate)
Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Emma Roberts

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
			Date	
If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
	Institute Research Committee	☐		
	Other (write in)	☒	HR Team Leader – Laura Lucas	

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines.

<u>UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice</u>	☒
UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
	☐

Appendix 5 – Questionnaire on Google Forms



Health and Wellbeing Survey at CSG and CC 2021

Dear employee,

Please could you take 5 minutes to complete a survey on health and wellbeing at CSG and CC. This is a 10 question survey conducted through the University of Wales Trinity Saint David as part of Nia Williams' CIPD research report. This survey is designed to gather data on Health and Wellbeing at the college and to find recommendations on how to improve wellbeing moving forward.

All answers are anonymous and once complete participants will not be able to withdraw their answers. All answers will remain confidential and data will only be used within the organisation and will only be shared with Nia's supervisor at the University. If you have any concerns with how this information is being used within a university context, please contact Emma Roberts via email on e.roberts@uwtsd.ac.uk.

The closing date for this survey is 12 Noon on Friday 3rd September 2021.

If any participants wish to contact Nia regarding the survey please contact Nia.Williams@colegsirgar.ac.uk

Thank you for participating in the survey.
Diolch.

 nia.williams@colegsirgar.ac.uk (not shared) [Switch accounts](#) 

I agree to participate in the survey. Once complete, I will not be able to withdraw my answers.

☐ I agree to participate in the survey

☐ I disagree

[Next](#) [Clear form](#)

Section 2 of 4

The Following question is regarding your wellbeing during the pandemic:

Description (optional)

Did your mental health worsen during the pandemic?

☐ Yes
 ☐ No
 ☐ Prefer not to disclose

After section 2

Continue to next section

Section 3 of 4

The following questions are regarding your wellbeing since returning to campus:

Description (optional)

How do you feel about returning to campus permanently? *

Short-answer text

How would you rate your wellbeing at work currently?

Poor

1

2

3

4

5

Excellent

Grade how well you have been supported by the college since transitioning back to on site working *

Unsupported

1

2

3

4

5

Very supported

QuestionsResponses

How satisfied are you with management support with regards to your health and wellbeing this term?

12345

UnsatisfiedVery satisfied

If you answered "unsatisfied" to the previous question, please indicate your reasons.

Long-answer text

What are the main causes of stress at work?

Column 1

Returning to work

Working from home during the pandemic

Lack of management support

Work Load

Catching COVID in the workplace

Poor work life balance

None

Other (Please specify)

QuestionsResponses

Other (Please specify)

Would you like a hybrid approach to working moving forward? *A hybrid approach is a combination of working from home and on site*

Yes

No

What suggestions would you make to improve wellbeing in the organisation going forward?

Long-answer text

What is your age group?

Column 2

16-24

25-34

35-44

45-64

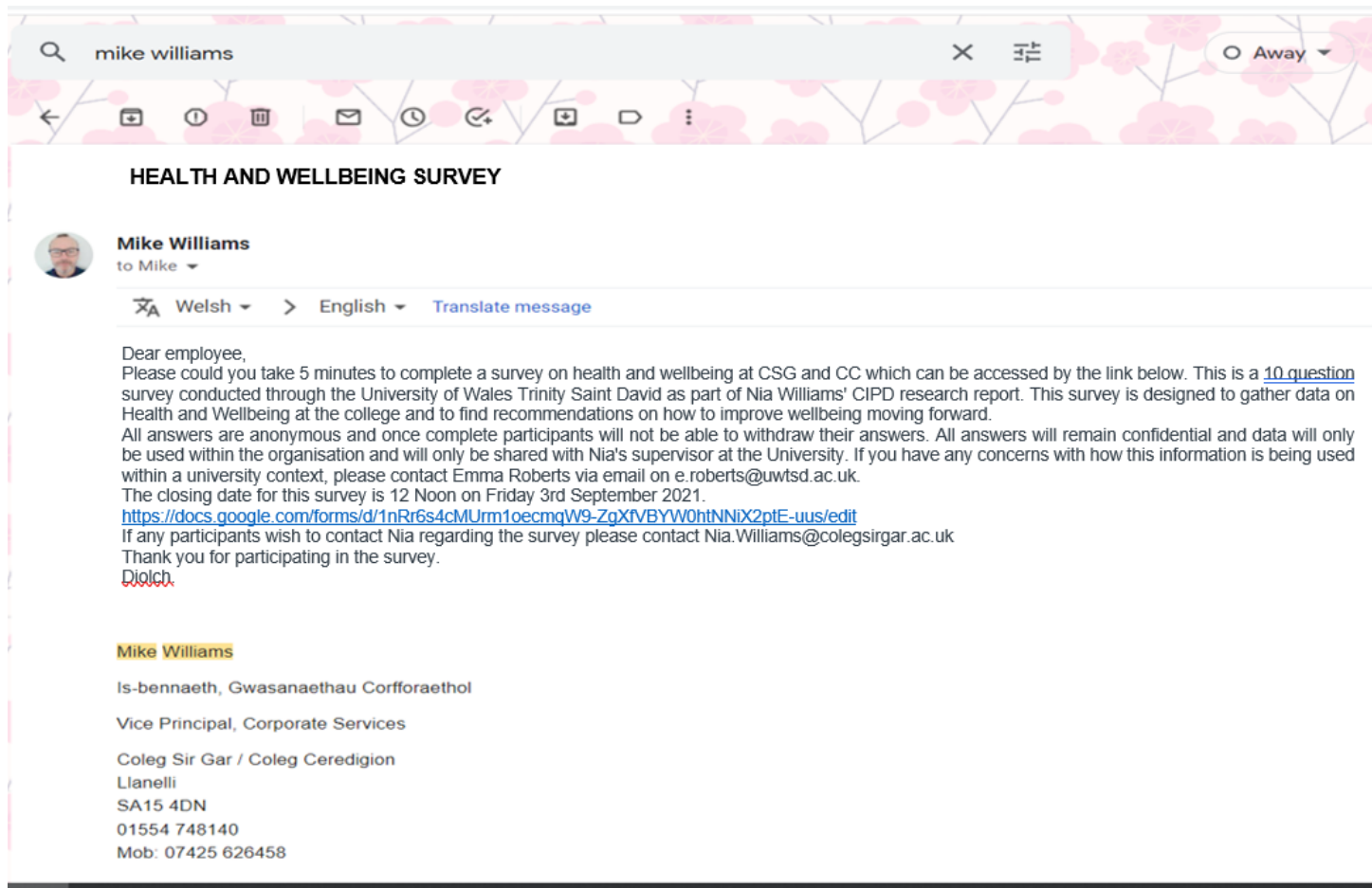
65+

Section 4 of 4

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the survey. Diolch yn fawr.

Description (optional)

Appendix 6 – Questionnaire emailed by Exec



Appendix 7 – Pilot questionnaire

How satisfied were you with management support during the pandemic when working from home?

1 to 5
(1 – unsatisfied, 5 – satisfied)

If you answered "unsatisfied" to the above question, please indicate your reasons.

How satisfied are you with management support with regards to your health and Well-being this term?

1 to 5
(1 – unsatisfied, 5 very satisfied)

If you answered "unsatisfied" to the above question, please indicate your reasons

Appendix 8 – Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Looking Back

1. How did you find working from home during the pandemic?
2. What were the main stresses during that time?
3. How do you feel about a hybrid approach to working?

Now

4. Thinking about how you felt when you first went off work and how you feel now, how would you rate your Well-being? Has it worsened or has it stayed the same?
5. How much was home/personal related?

Future

6. What suggestions would you make to improve the Well-being in the college going forward?



Participant Briefing document

This interview is part of a research study to measure health and well-being in the college and to find recommendations on how to improve the well-being in the organisation moving forward. This is an opportunity for you as an employee, to contribute to research by sharing your views and recommendations.

This interview is part of Nia Williams's CIPD research report. All answers provided are confidential and data will only be used within the organisation and will only be shared with Nia's supervisor at the UWTSD. If you have any concerns with how this information is being used within a university context, please contact Emma Roberts via email on e.roberts@uwtsd.ac.uk.

As this is a sensitive issue, please see below details of the college counsellor should you need further support:

Karina.Evans@colegsirgar.ac.uk

If at any time you wish to withdraw your data, please contact Nia.Williams@colegsirgar.ac.uk by 31st August 2021.

Please sign and date the document below to confirm that you give your consent to take part in the study and understand that your participation in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw your data at any time up to the closing date.

Name: _____

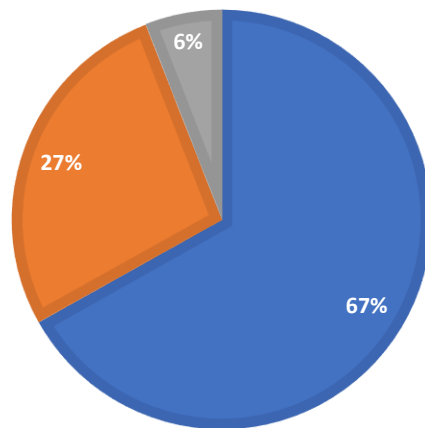
Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 10 – Questionnaire Results

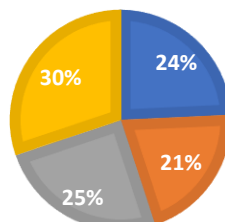
DID YOUR MENTAL HEALTH WORSEN DURING THE PANDEMIC?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Prefer not to disclose



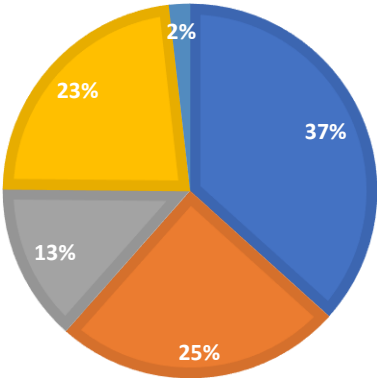
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT RETURNING TO CAMPUS PERMANENTLY?

■ Worried about catching covid
■ Excited to see colleagues/ interaction
■ Why can't we continue to work from home?
■ anxious



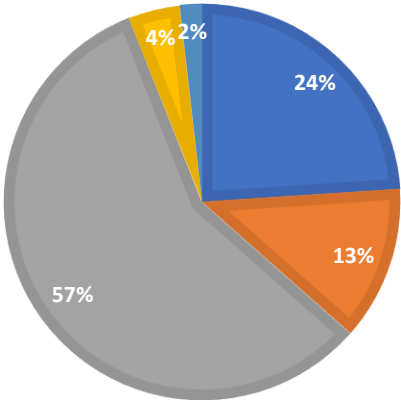
**HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR WELL-BEING AT
WORK CURRENTLY?**

■ 1 (Poor) ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 (Excellent)



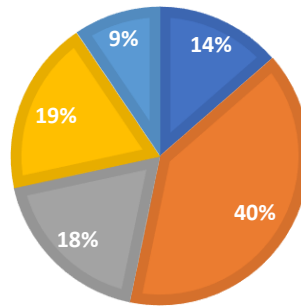
**GRADE HOW WELL YOU HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED BY
THE COLLEGE SINCE TRANSITIONING BACK TO ON
SITE WORKING**

■ 1 (Poor) ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 (Excellent)



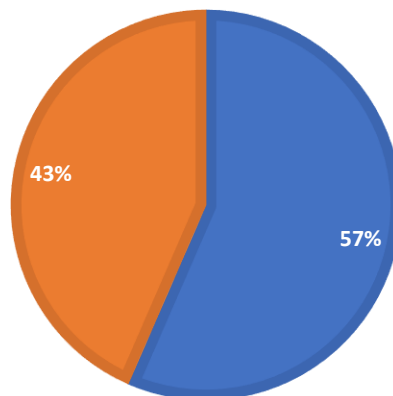
**HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH MANAGEMENT
SUPPORT WITH REGARDS TO YOUR HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING THIS TERM?**

■ 1 (Unsatisfied) ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 (Satisfied)

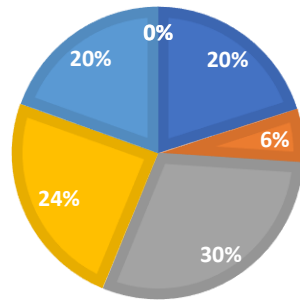


**IF YOU ANSWERED UNSATISFIED TO THE
PREVIOUS QUESTION, PLEASE INDICATE YOUR
REASONS**

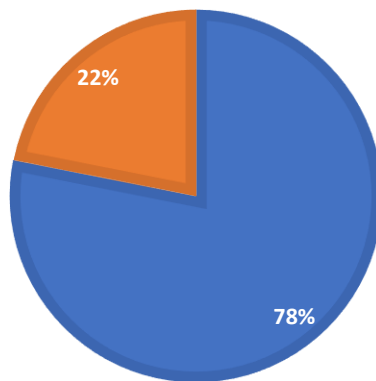
■ lack of support ■ Lack of contact/poor communication



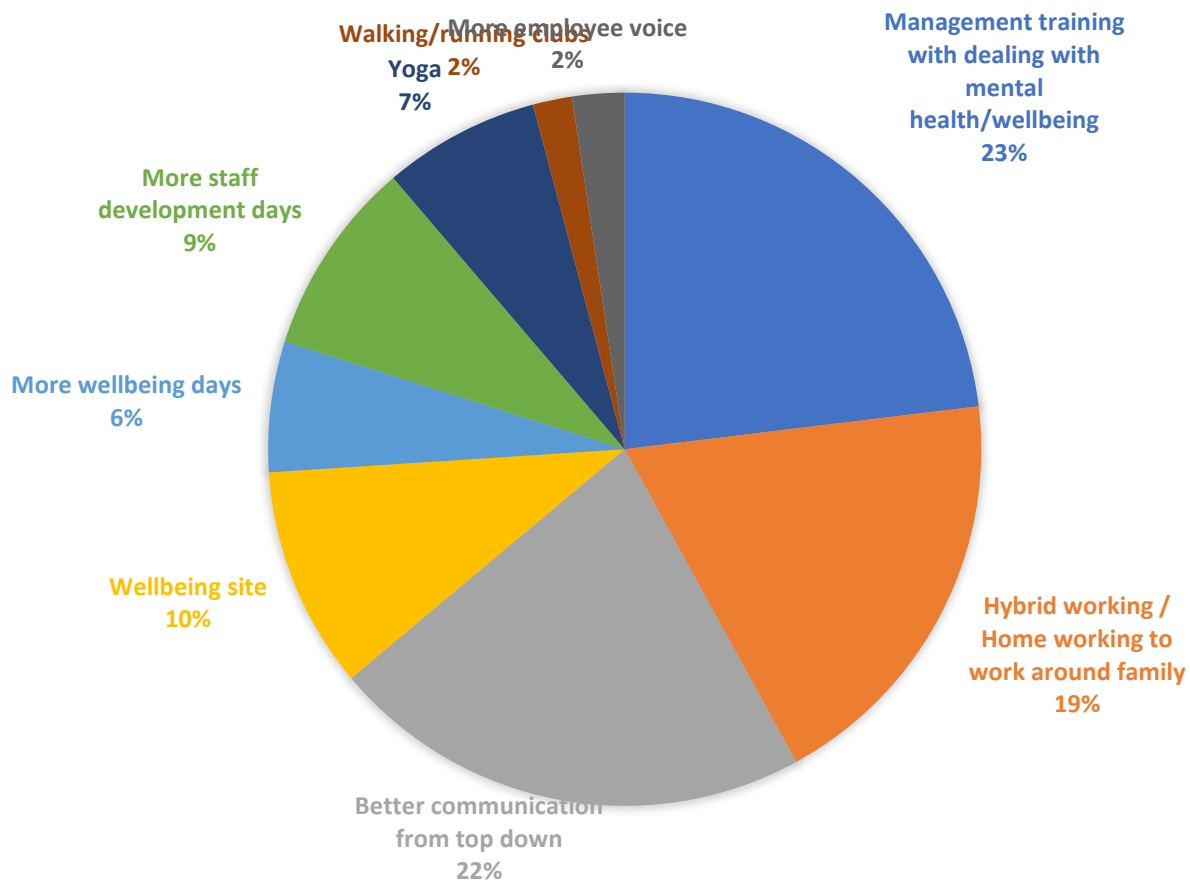
WHAT ARE THE MAIN CAUSES OF STRESS AT WORK?



WOULD YOU LIKE A HYBRID APPROACH TO WORKING MOVING FORWARD?



WHAT SUGGESTIONS WOULD YOU MAKE TO IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING IN THE COLLEGE MOVING FORWARD?



Participant 1, age 34 Male

1) How did you find working from home during the pandemic?

I really enjoyed working from home, it allowed me to have a better work life balance and fit my work around family responsibilities. It's allowed me to save on travelling as well, which has helped my well-being. Normally it would take me 45 minutes to and from work, but when I'm working from home I am able to spend more time with my family".

2) What are the main stresses during that time?

I felt worried that myself or a close family member would catch COVID. I think everyone in lockdown was scared of this.

3) How would you feel about a hybrid approach to working and would this make the above better?

Yes, I would love it if it could be an option. As touched on before, it just allows for a better work life balance and it suits me with family life. And it means that having a hybrid approach to working I don't have to travel in every day as this takes a lot of time! It's better for my well-being having that mixture.

4) What suggestions would you make to improve the well-being in the college going forward?

I would recommend hybrid working – I think this would definitely improve well-being in the college. It gives employees flexible working, and I think currently we are quite old fashioned with the way that we work. I think we need to move with the times!

Participant 2, age 41 Female

1) How did you find working from home during the pandemic?

Yes, really enjoyed it. I was able to have a better work life balance. As soon as it came to 5pm, I could spend time with my family. It suited me really well with young children.

2) What are the main stresses during that time?

I was worried about COVID and someone in my family getting it especially my parents. I was worried of the unknown as well. I didn't want to return to work knowing this was still about and I could potentially pass it on to a family member

3) How would you feel about a hybrid approach to working and would this make the above better?

I would like it to be an option! I can't see why it can't be now especially with everyone being able to work from home during the last year and a half. I understand that we also need to be On-site, so having a mixture of On-site and home working would be amazing! It means I get to spend more time with my family as well.

4) What suggestions would you make to improve the well-being in the college going forward?

Having the option to work at home and in the office would improve the well-being. It means that people can work around family commitments and have a better work life balance. I think more staff development days would be beneficial too! I don't think we have these enough to develop employees and managers. Also, maybe more well-being days to connect more with colleagues and get away from a stressful environment!

Participant 3, age 47 Male

1) How did you find working from home during the pandemic?

I felt lonely because I missed that office interaction – being online isn't the same.

2) What are the main stresses during that time?

My partner had COVID, and I was stressed because he was so unwell with it. I was also anxious that the rest of us would get it after seeing how unwell he was. Another stress was the feeling of isolation and being away from family members. It was really hard to be away and distance ourselves from loved ones.

3) How would you feel about a hybrid approach to working and would this make the above better?

I wouldn't personally like to work from home because I live on my own, but giving people the option to work from home some days of the week would benefit those that prefer to work from home and have family responsibilities

4) What suggestions would you make to improve the well-being in the college going forward?

I would recommend better communication from top management down. I think top management are quite distant at the moment and this is evident through the culture. I would also say training for management as well around mental health and well-being. I think this would benefit management to support employees better and notice the signs early to prevent absenteeism.

Participant 4, age 59 Female

1) How did you find working from home during the pandemic?

I liked working from home. It allowed me to care for my elderly mother around work time. I felt connected with my work colleagues with various Google meet meetings so it was exactly like being in work but at home. I didn't feel like I missed working in the office at all. It allowed me to be more independent with my learning on the job.

2) What are the main stresses during that time?

Catching COVID and passing it on to my mother. Keeping her safe was my priority and it was very stressful.

3) How would you feel about a hybrid approach to working and would this make the above better?

This is definitely the way forward. We've proven during the pandemic that it can work, so there's no reason why this can't be an option going forward. It would help massively with a better work life balance

4) What suggestions would you make to improve the well-being in the college going forward?

I recommend hybrid working for all employees. I hope this does get implemented or otherwise it's very frustrating considering we have been working from home during COVID.

Participant 5, age 56 Male

1) How did you find working from home during the pandemic?

I missed face to face interaction with fellow colleagues however, technology enabled me to stay in contact with them

2) What are the main stresses during that time?

Although I didn't catch COVID, it was something that was always on my mind. You become paranoid that you may have it, or pass it on to others. It still plays on my mind now!

3) How would you feel about a hybrid approach to working and would this make the above better?

I hope this will be an option moving forward. I would like a combination where I can have the option to work On-site and at home if needed. It's worked during the pandemic, so I can't see why this can't be an option moving forward.

4) What suggestions would you make to improve the well-being in the college going forward?

I would recommend hybrid working for all the reason discussed. Silly if we don't. I know that so many people I've spoken to have said that its frustrating that it hasn't been implemented yet.

Participant 6, age 38 Female

1) How did you find working from home during the pandemic?

Yes, I liked working from home. I felt prepared and had all the equipment with me to be able to do so. It suited my lifestyle with the children and with my partner. I felt like I could log off after work and be able to get on with house work. I could also be more practical in my lunch hour by doing small things like putting the washing out which really helps! I felt like it really helped my Well-being because normally I would cram it all in after work and I don't feel like I have a rest then.

2) What are the main stresses during that time?

My worry was financially as my partner was on furlough. I was worried he would lose his job, and I wasn't certain about my future within the college and potential redundancy. Covid was also a worry, and the thought of someone close catching it was a massive stress of mine.

3) How would you feel about a hybrid approach to working and would this make the above better?

I would fully embrace this if it was an option! I would love to have a combination of working On-site and working from home. It allows us to have face to face interaction and it also allows us to have time away from the office to work independently on work without being interrupted. It also would suit me with my home life.

4) What suggestions would you make to improve the well-being in the college going forward?

Definitely hybrid working! Maybe working on Well-being classes like yoga, running, walking clubs sort of thing!

Participant 7, age 34 Female

1) How did you find working from home during the pandemic?

I personally felt isolated because I live on my own. I would choose to be on-site rather than at home because I need the social interaction from face to face, telephones etc to help with my Well-being. Otherwise I feel depressed and lonely, like I experienced during lockdown.

2) What are the main stresses during that time?

Covid was everyone's stress at that time. The fear of someone close having it and being admitted to hospital. COVID is still a big risk now with cases increasing, so this will always be a stress of mine.

3) How would you feel about a hybrid approach to working and would this make the above better?

I would prefer to be on-site working because I live on my own. I get too lonely if I had to continue to work from home when I return to work. I do think giving people the option to do a mixture of the two would be good as those that prefer to work from home can still continue to do so some days of the week. I think it would improve the well-being of staff providing them with a mixture.

4) What suggestions would you make to improve the well-being in the college going forward?

Management training around health and well-being. I don't think management have had the chance to do the training because of their workload, but I do think moving forward this should be prioritised. They will be able to put mechanisms in place to support employees better and improve the well-being within the department before employees have to resort to sickness.

Appendix 12 – Action Plan

Recommendation	Training	Provider	Training Type and location	Person responsible to organise	Participants	Cost	Completed by	Strategic Impact
The need for management to develop and learn new skills and knowledge on how best to manage, support and improve mental health and wellbeing of employees. The overall aim is to decrease mental health absences in the workplace.	MHFA for 16 faculty managers	MHFA Wales	E-learning and face to face delivery (blended learning). The training will be provided on-site, in the lecturer theatre at the Graig campus.	NW to work with the staff development officer and MHFA Wales.	16 Faculty Managers	2,200 for 16 faculty managers.	3 rd January 2022, during staff development day.	Testing the training on 16 faculty managers and evaluating the training will indicate if the training has reduced mental health absences in the workplace. If it has, this indicates training managers reduces absences within the organisation. When we are certain that it delivers results, this can be rolled out to other managers.
Hybrid Working policy to improve employee wellbeing.	Advice and guidance from ACAS on how to create a	Acas	NA	NW to work along side HR colleagues, Executive Team and	NA	Costs of creating policy by those involved.	January 2022	The purpose of the hybrid policy is to improve wellbeing in the college. To determine if the

	hybrid working policy.			Unions to create hybrid working policy.		These costs are minimal in comparison to the long-term benefit and cost savings it will bring as it will lead to greater well-being and reduced absenteeism rates.		policy is successful, mental health absences are expected to decrease. This will be evaluated in September 2022.
Wellbeing site	NW to work with IT to create wellbeing site for employees.	NA	The wellbeing site will be created on Graig campus.	NW to work with IT to create website.	For all employees to engage with the website to help improve wellbeing.	The hourly rate of those creating the website is minimal considering the long-term benefits of the website and the future cost savings such as reduction in absenteeism	This should take approximately 2 months to create. This will be implemented by 31 January 2022.	The idea is to create one place where the employee can access details on employee benefits and well-being initiatives such as mindfulness videos, yoga classes, discounts, useful links to counselling, details on any running/walking/book clubs. Running and walking clubs were common recommendations made by employees in the interviews and

						rates and turnover.		questionnaires. Including a section where employees nominate another employee to add a blog onto the system where they detail what they do for their well-being will also be included. This will bring employees together to share interests, and build friendships. This will contribute in improving wellbeing in the organisation.
--	--	--	--	--	--	---------------------	--	---

Appendix 13 – Reflection statement

1. What challenges you met with and how you coped and dealt with them

The main challenges were working full time and working on the research report whilst still trying to maintain a personal life and have annual leave. I felt it was difficult to keep on schedule with regards to what was outlined in the PID. I tried to overcome this by working on my research report lunch times during work in order to free up my evenings in order to have a work life balance.

2. What you consider to be the main strengths and weaknesses of your RR

The main strengths of the RR report are the number of respondents that I received for my questionnaires in 1 week. I didn't expect to have so many responses in a short period of time. This can also be seen as a weakness as only 169 out of 856 responded which means that results cannot be totally generalised for the entire organisation. It does however give us some idea of how the organisation feels and their recommendation on how to improve wellbeing in the organisation. Another strength is that the report itself looks professional in order to present to the Executive Board on the findings of the report and the recommendations to improve wellbeing in the future. Another strength would be the amount of literature that I have gathered to support the hypothesis that absenteeism rates is linked to poor health and wellbeing in the organisation. The interviews also conducted strengthens the hypothesis further.

3. How undertaking the RR has helped to develop you professionally and personally

The RR has allowed me to take control of an issue within the organisation and find recommendations to improve wellbeing moving forward. This has allowed me to show my capability to the Executive team and it has allowed me to become more confident in dealing with complex issues with employees.

4. What changes you would make in conducting a similar investigation in the future

Changes that I would make when conducting a similar investigation in the future would be to start my primary research early in order to give employees longer than 1 week to complete a questionnaire. By doing this, it would allow for more respondents to take part and the study would be more accurate as it would be representing more of the organisation's population. I would also meet with my tutor in between my feedback and my assignment due date to receive one last feedback before submission.

5. What advice you would give to forthcoming students

I would recommend that future students start their report as soon as possible and to plan effectively. I would recommend that they keep on track with the planned schedule and not go off track as it is hard to pull it back and complete everything on time. I would recommend that they start their primary research as early as possible as this is what took the longest to plan and analyse. I would also recommend that they make use of the 5 hours that they are allocated with their tutor in order to make the most of the feedback and to strengthen the report.