The CIPD

A partner and a voice for people professionals

157,430 members worldwide and **5,000+ volunteers** and associates

Offices in the **UK**, **Ireland**, **Middle East** and **Asia**

All committed to **championing better work and working lives**

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COVID-19 and mental wellbeing

Over two-fifths (42%) of HR professionals are 'extremely concerned' about the impact of the pandemic on people's mental health and a further two-fifths (40%) are 'moderately concerned'…

Employees: As a result of the COVID-19 lockdown, are the following better or worse off?
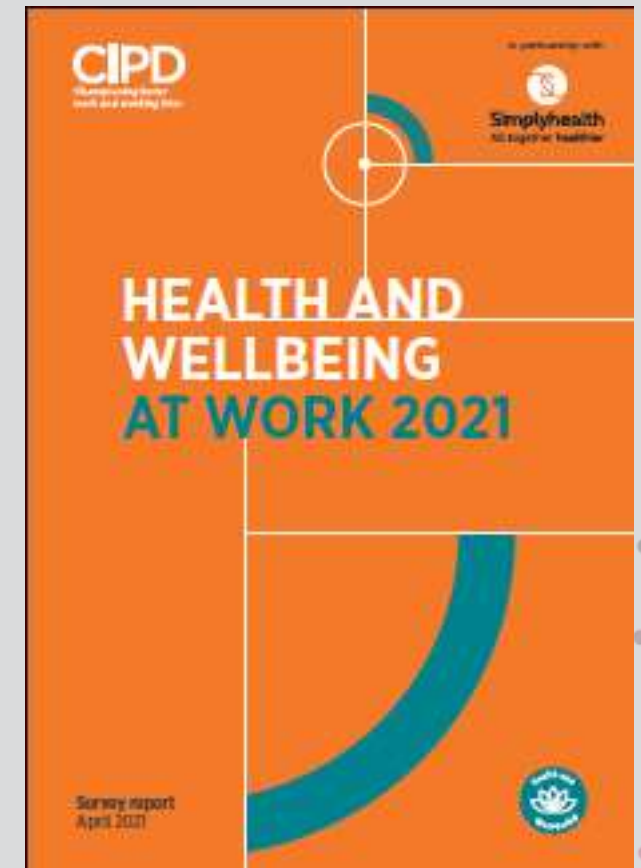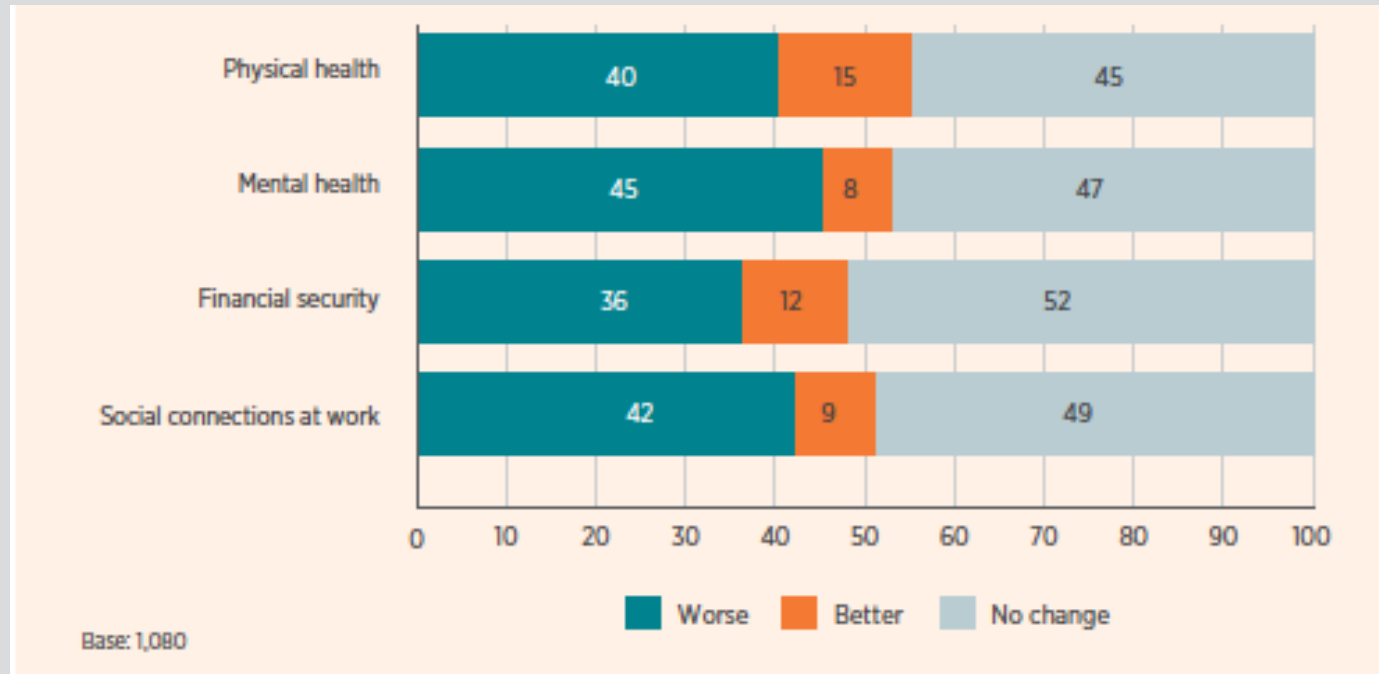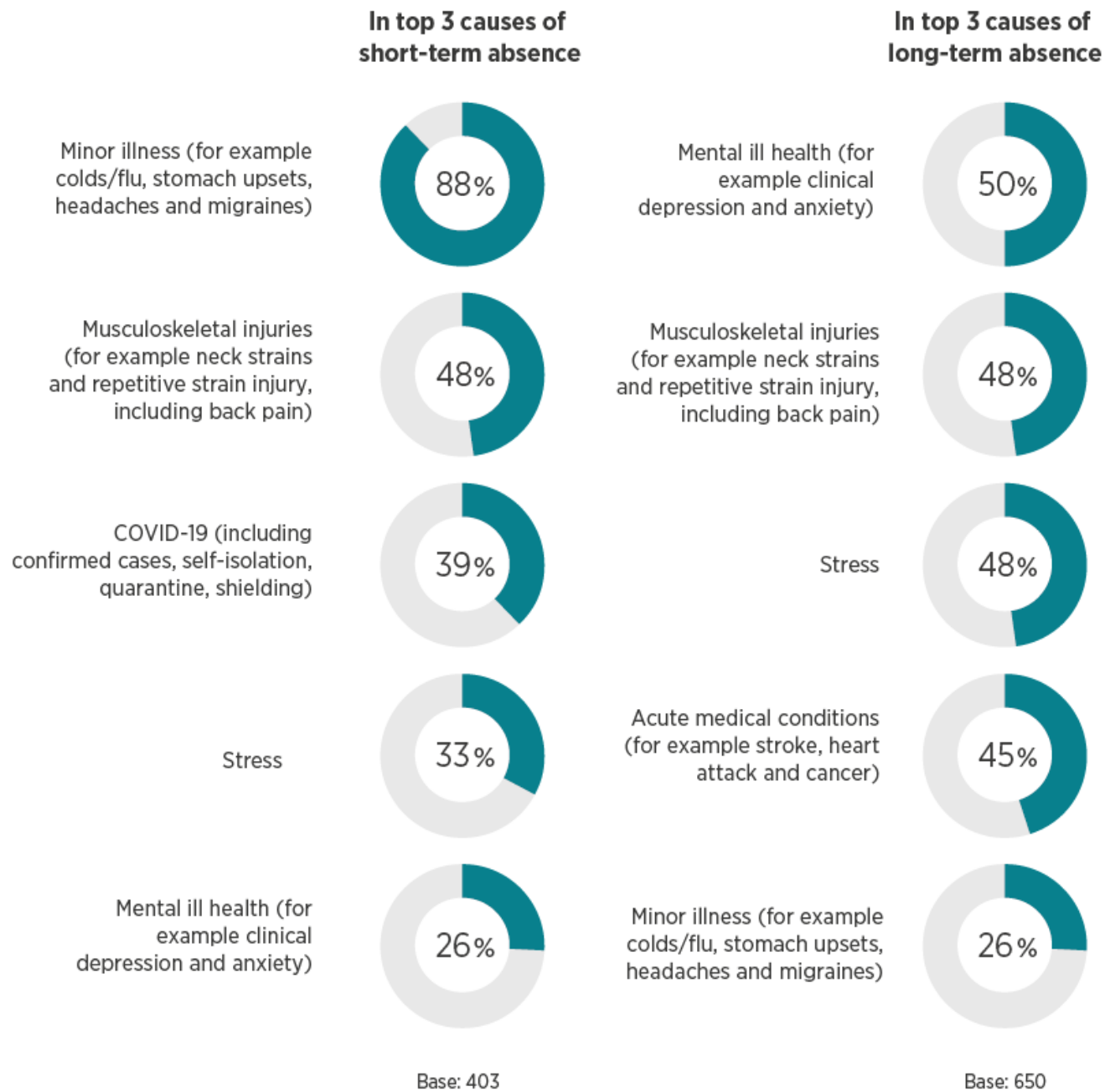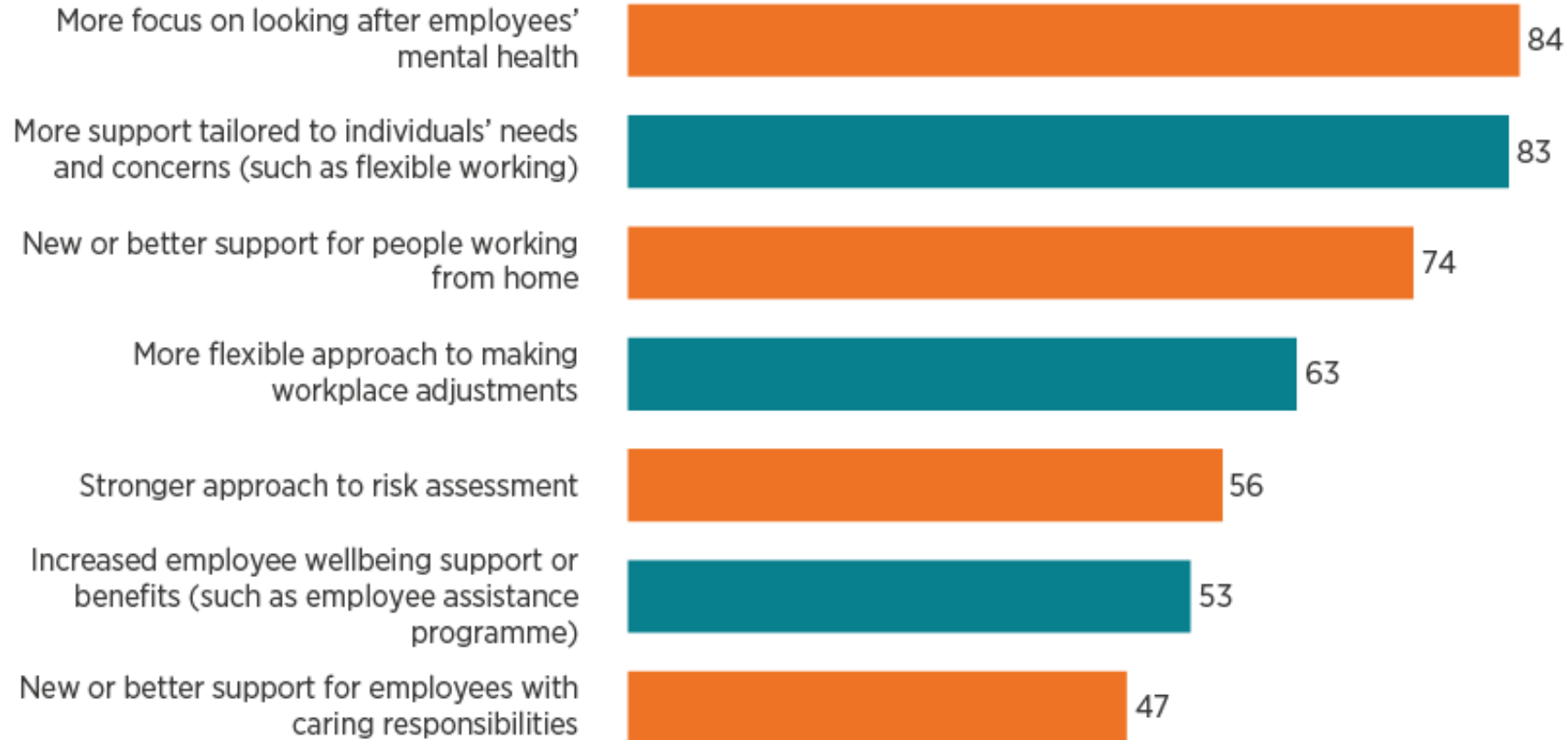
Figure 25: The most common causes of absence (% of respondents who include in their top three causes)

	In top 3 causes of short-term absence	**In top 3 causes of long-term absence**
Minor illness (for example colds/flu, stomach upsets, headaches and migraines)	88%	
Mental ill health (for example clinical depression and anxiety)		50%
Musculoskeletal injuries (for example neck strains and repetitive strain injury, including back pain)	48%	48%
COVID-19 (including confirmed cases, self-isolation, quarantine, shielding)	39%	
Stress	33%	48%
Acute medical conditions (for example stroke, heart attack and cancer)		45%
Mental ill health (for example clinical depression and anxiety)	26%	
Minor illness (for example colds/flu, stomach upsets, headaches and migraines)		26%

Base: 403   Base: 650

COVID-19: Supporting people's health & wellbeing

Figure 2: Additional measures to support employee health and wellbeing in response to COVID-19 (%)

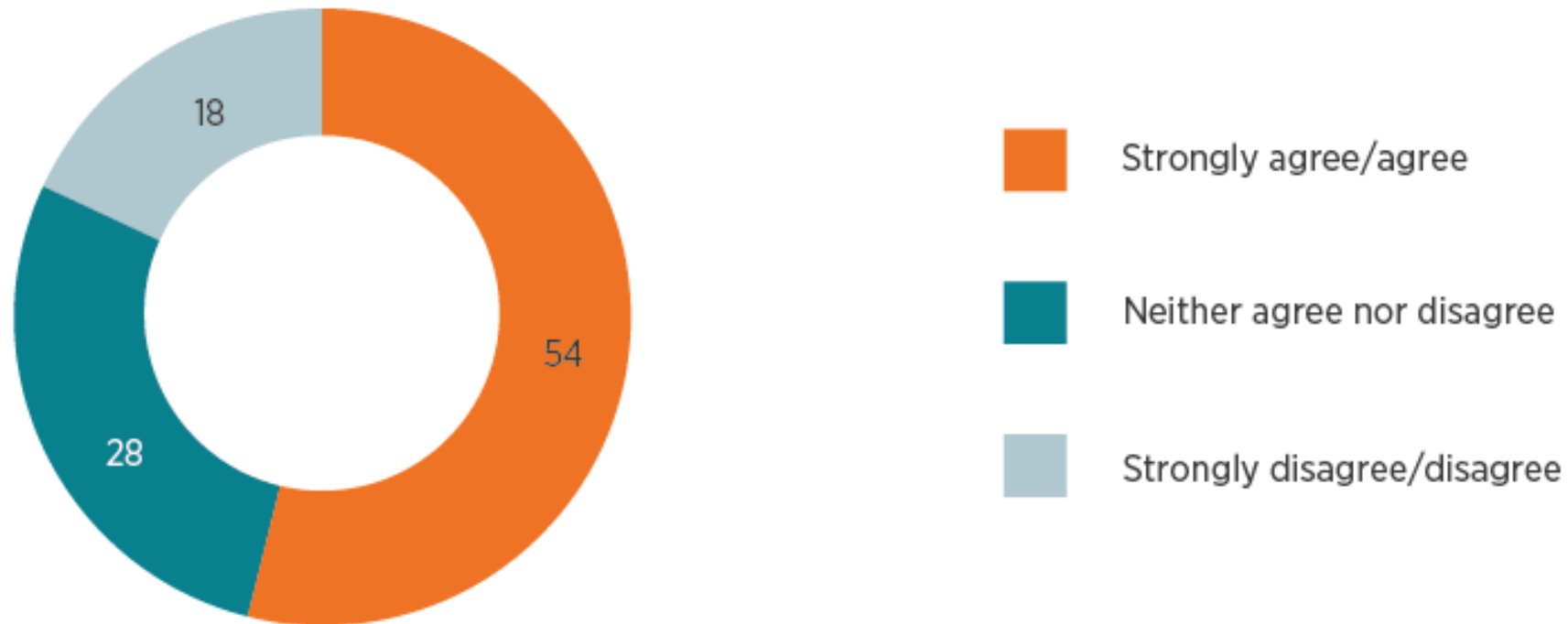| Measure	%
More focus on looking after employees' mental health	84
More support tailored to individuals' needs and concerns (such as flexible working)	83
New or better support for people working from home	74
More flexible approach to making workplace adjustments	63
Stronger approach to risk assessment	56
Increased employee wellbeing support or benefits (such as employee assistance programme)	53
New or better support for employees with caring responsibilities	47

Base: 539
Note: This question was not asked of the 13% of respondents who reported their organisation hadn't taken any steps to improve employee health and wellbeing.

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Managing the mental health risks arising from COVID-19

Figure 15: My organisation has been effective at identifying and managing the mental health risks arising from COVID-19 (%)

Strongly agree/agree: 54
Neither agree nor disagree: 28
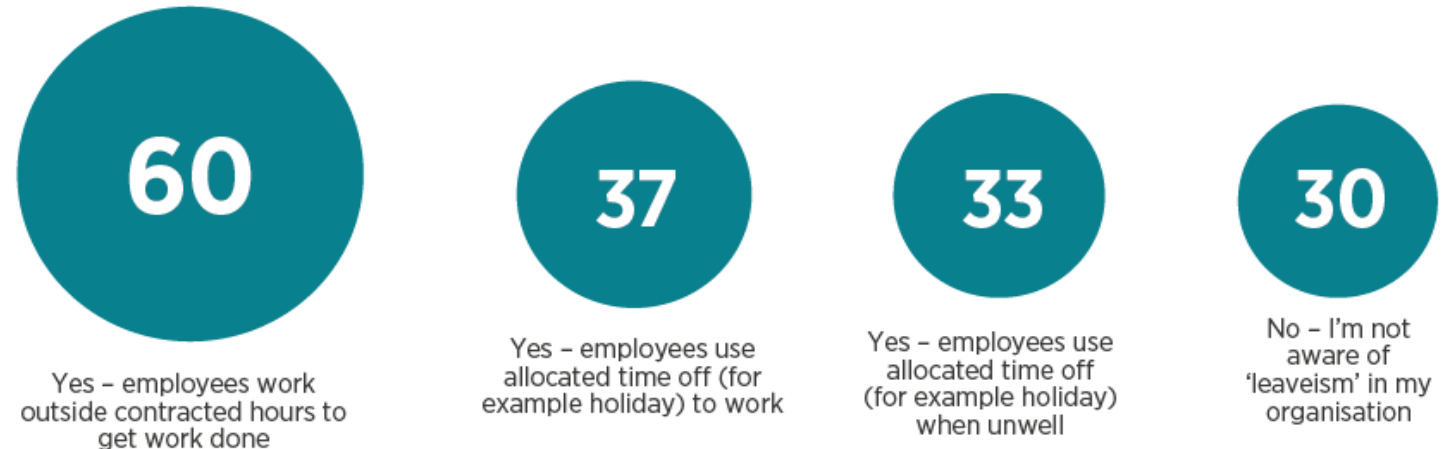Strongly disagree/disagree: 18

Base: 468

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Unhealthy practices

Like 'presenteeism'…

Figure 16: Are you aware of 'presenteeism' (people working when ill) in your organisation over the past 12 months? (%)

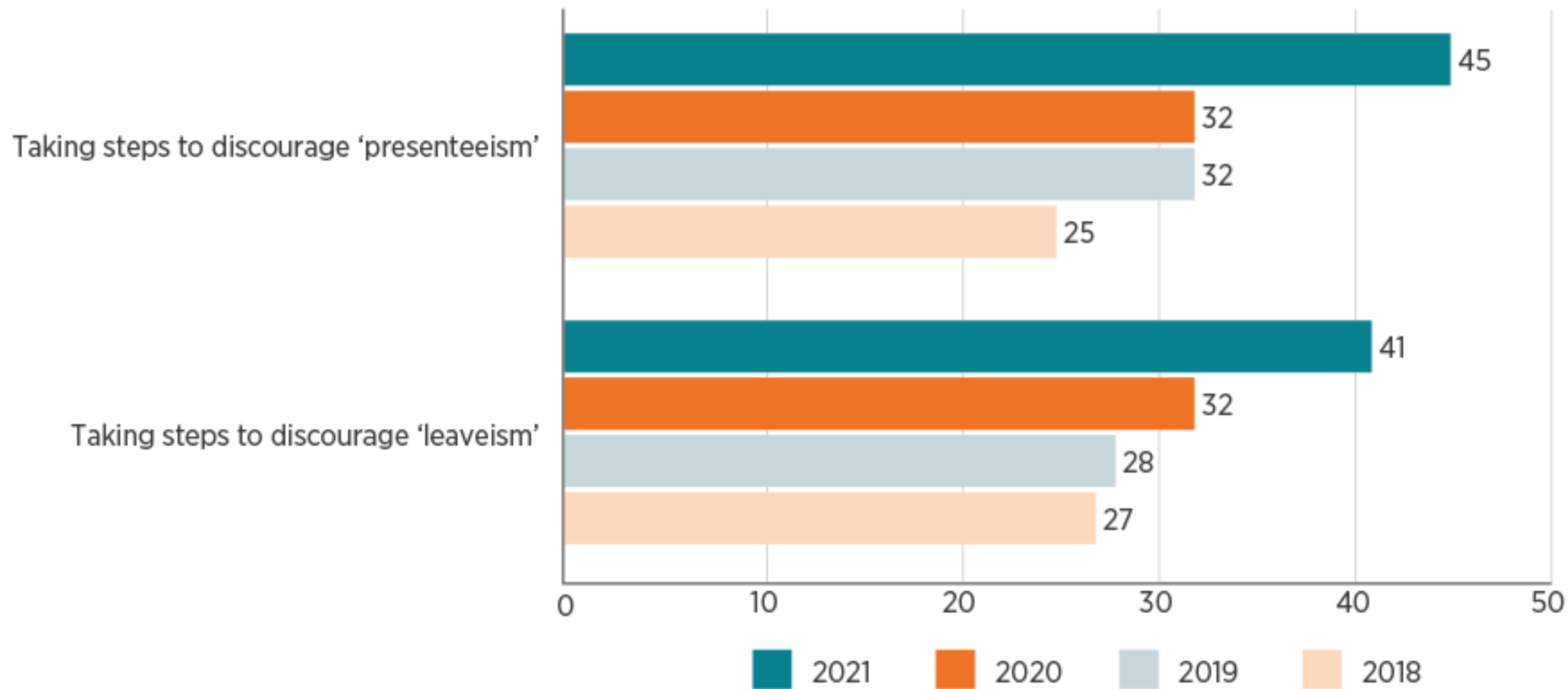**75%** Among employees in the workplace

77% Among employees who work at home

16% Not observed any 'Presenteeism'

Base: 468

…and 'leaveism'

Figure 17: Have you observed 'leaveism' in your organisation over the last 12 months? (%)

60 Yes – employees work outside contracted hours to get work done

37 Yes – employees use allocated time off (for example holiday) to work

33 Yes – employees use allocated time off (for example holiday) when unwell

30 No – I'm not aware of 'leaveism' in my organisation

Base: 511

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Figure 18: Organisations that have taken steps to discourage 'presenteeism' and 'leaveism' over the last 12 months (% of those experiencing 'presenteeism'/'leaveism')

Taking steps to discourage 'presenteeism'
- 2021: 45
- 2020: 32
- 2019: 32
- 2018: 25

Taking steps to discourage 'leaveism'
- 2021: 41
- 2020: 32
- 2019: 28
- 2018: 27

Legend: 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018

Base: 'Presenteeism' – 389 (2021); 661 (2020); 558 (2019); 557 (2018); 'Leaveism' – 358 (2021); 565 (2020); 452 (2019); 548 (2018)

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Supporting occupational health
and wellbeing professionals

Presenteeism during the COVID-19 pandemic

Risk factors and solutions for employers

Professor Gail Kinman and Dr Christine Grant

With contributions from Dr Noreen Tehrani and Dr Gavin Breslin

To reduce presenteeism, organisations should:

- Identify the RISKS and CAUSES.

- Undertake a REVIEW of absence management policies and practices.

- ENSURE that the organisational culture values and promotes employee health.

- CONSULT staff about their experiences of presenteeism and INVOLVE them in decisions about how to manage it.

- MONITOR their workload and working hours to ensure they are not overloaded.

- IDENTIFY the support they need.

- ENABLE staff to take sick leave when required.

- IMPLEMENT an employee wellness programme to highlight the importance of self-care.

https://www.som.org.uk/Presenteeism_during_the_COVID-19_pandemic_May_2021.pdf

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What are the top causes of stress at work?

Figure 10: The most common causes of stress at work in top three causes (%)

59 — Workloads/volume of work

32 — Management style

31 — New work-related demands or challenges due to homeworking as a result of COVID-19

25 — Non-work factors – relationships/family

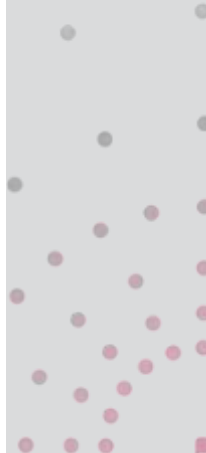**23** — COVID-related anxiety (for example fear of contagion in the workplace/commute)

22 — Non-work factors – personal illness/health issue

20 — Poor work–life balance due to homeworking as a result of COVID-19

20 — Relationships at work

Mental wellbeing and line managers

Mental health

43%
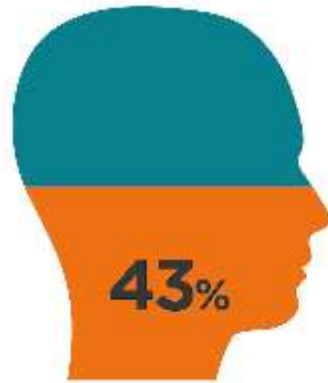
43% of organisations have trained managers to support staff with mental ill health, but...

• 38% say managers are confident to have sensitive discussions/signpost staff to expert help
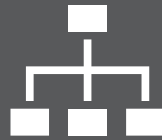
38%

• 31% of people professionals say managers are confident and competent to spot the early warning signs of mental ill health.

31%

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The role of line managers is key

Build relationships based on trust and have sensitive and supportive 121s to discuss any changes or support needed with empathy/compassion

Provide ongoing guidance – to help managers support employees in complex and challenging situations and refer for expert help
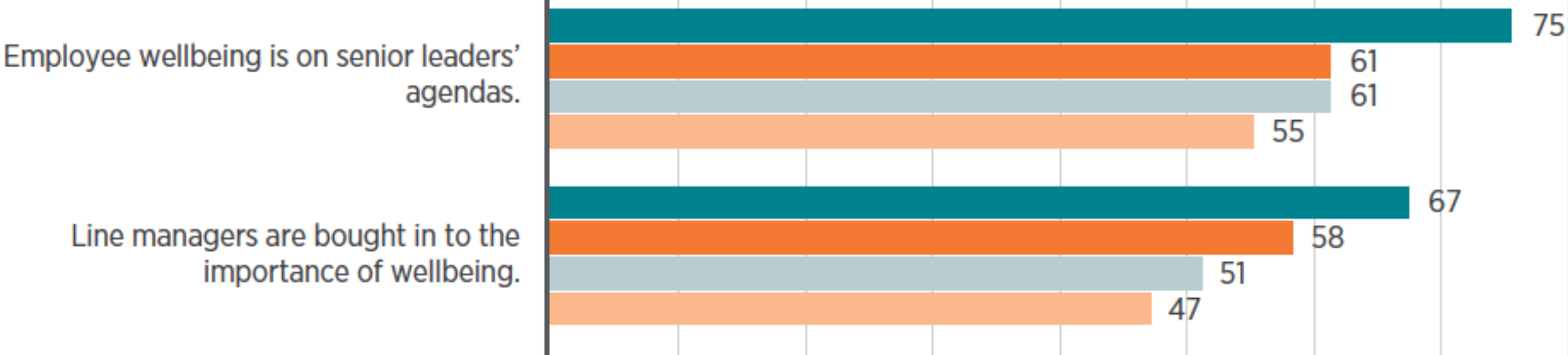
Line manager wellbeing - line managers themselves will be under acute pressure to manage conflicting demands
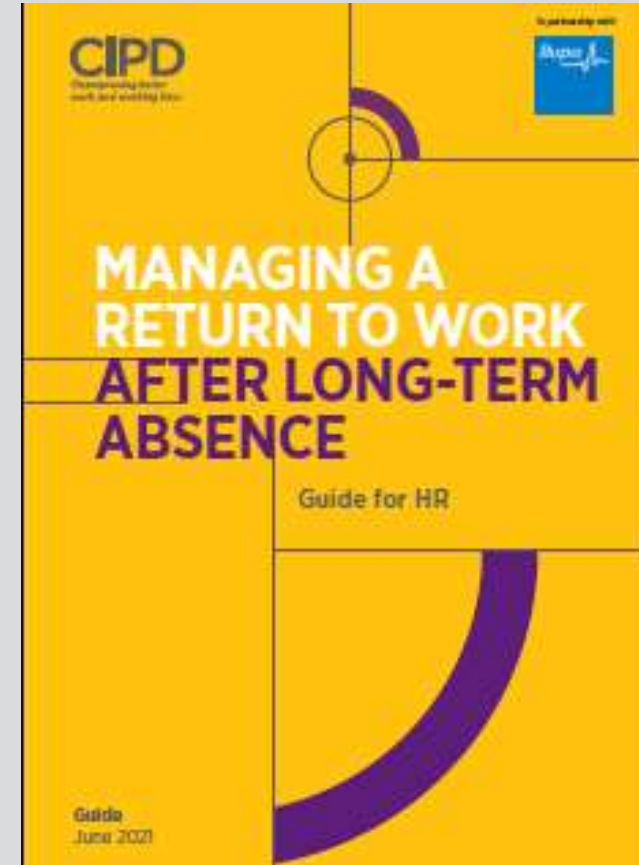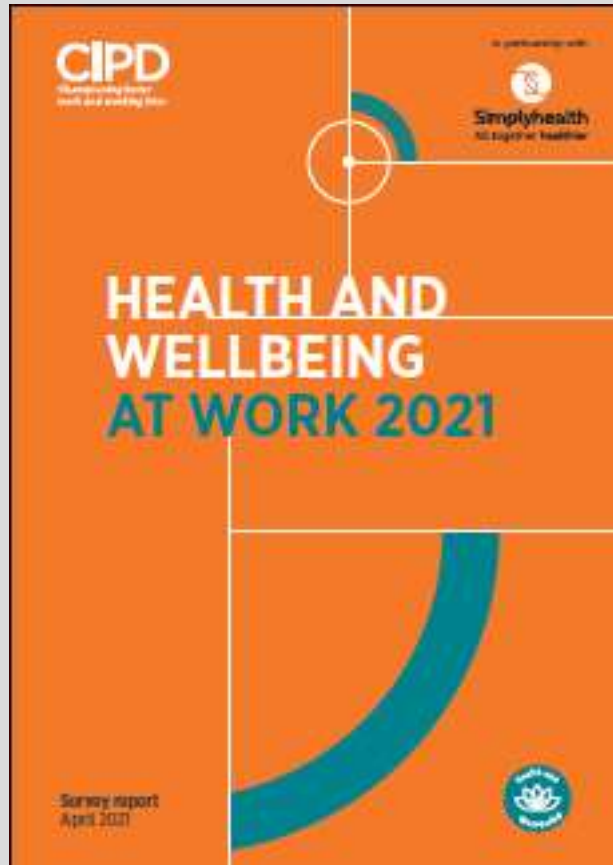
Manage absence and promote good health and wellbeing: provide effective and flexible support for individuals

The pandemic has made employee health and wellbeing a priority in the boardroom…

Employee wellbeing is on senior leaders' agendas.	
	75
	61
	61
	55

Line managers are bought in to the importance of wellbeing.	
	67
	58
	51
	47

…let's keep it that way!

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www.cipd.co.uk/healthandwellbeing

Thank you

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