

Mental Health and Wellbeing

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Lecturer in Biomedical Science, University of Salford,
BACP-registered Psychotherapist

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About Caroline



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

Professional self

Then

Personal self

Undergraduate degree

Technician

R&D Scientist

PhD

Post-Doc

Lectureship

Programme Leader

Lockdown

Psychotherapy training

Staff Wellbeing Lead

Lecturer and Psychotherapist

Anxiety

Imposter syndrome

Anxiety

Imposter syndrome

Started therapy

Found sports as an outlet

Increased confidence

Lockdown

More stress, more therapy!

Started Private Practice

Lecturer and Psychotherapist

Now

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About Tunch

- Biomedical Scientist (HCPC-Registered)
- Mental Health Advocate
- Associate Lecturer
- Researcher

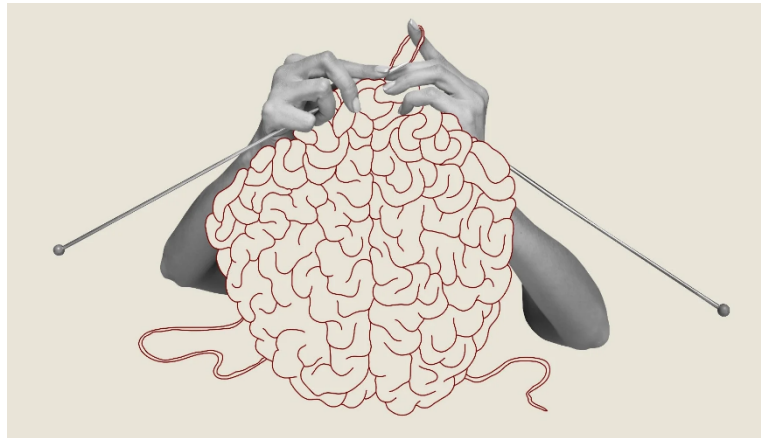
🎓 Educational Degrees..
BSc, PgDip, MSc, MSc, MBA

🔬 Work & Career progress...

🧪 Professional Development...
CPDs, audits, competencies....

👤 Research...
Conferences, publications...

• Holidays, Family & Friends..



Behind every dataset is a human story...

Behind every workforce statistic is someone struggling silently....

- *Pressure*
- *Demand*
- *Failures*
- *Finances*
- *Transport*
- *Loneliness*
- *Exhaustion*
- *Responsibilities*
- *Promises*
- *Getting understood..*
- *Uncertainty*
- *Instability*
- *Silence*
- *Resilience*
- *Guilt*
- *Expectations*
- *Sacrifices*
- *Isolation*

What is good mental health & Why does it matter?

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What is Mental Health?

... is a state of **psychological**,
emotional, and **social** well-being
that enables people to **cope** with
life's stresses, realise their
abilities, learn, work, and
contribute to their communities ...



The infographic features a central illustration of a human head profile in silhouette. Inside the head, a white circle contains a tangled, scribbled line representing mental complexity. A person in a blue shirt and orange pants stands to the right, holding a long, thin black line that extends from the head. The background is light blue with faint icons of clouds, raindrops, and a plant. The text is arranged in a clear, structured layout.

MENTAL HEALTH

IS...

- A part of everyone
- Something to look after
- Real and complex
- Really important
- Something you can change

ISN'T...

- A sign of weakness
- All in your head
- Something you can just snap out of
- Always a negative thing
- Something to be ashamed of

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What is Good Mental Health?

- * The ability to **function, adapt, and cope** with daily pressures
- * Maintaining **emotional**

Good mental health is not the absence of stress - it is the ability to manage it without losing yourself

- * **Sense of purpose, control, and self-worth**
- * Being able to **rest, recover, and reset** not just perform
- * Sustaining **healthy relationships** and communication

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Why Does It Matter?

- * Directly impacts **performance, accuracy, and safety**

Judgement and decision-making

***In high-responsibility professions, mental health is not optional
it is foundational.***

- * Shapes **learning, productivity, and engagement**
- * Determines **long-term career sustainability**
- * Impacts **identity, motivation, and overall wellbeing**

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Institute of
Biomedical Science

Workplace pressure and burnout

Sign of burnout:

- Fatigue
- Increased stress and emotional exhaustion
- Difficulty maintaining concentration and motivation
- Increase in errors
- Feeling overwhelmed
- A sense of dread or anxiety

This affects:

- Wellbeing of staff
- Team morale and support
- Attention to detail in critical tasks



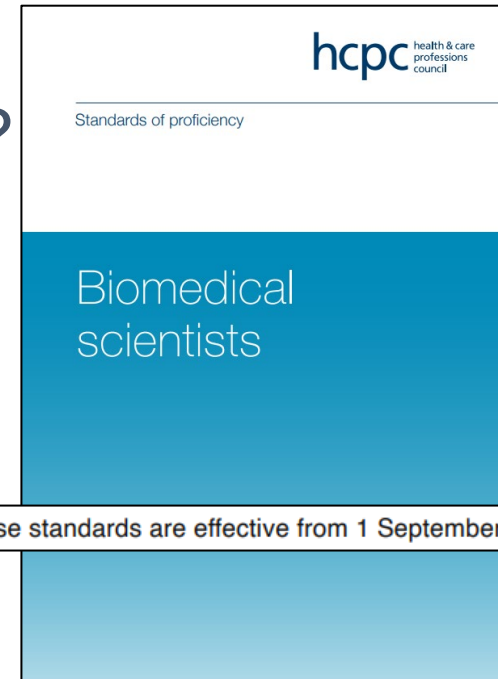
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Poll: Are you familiar with these standards related to mental health and wellbeing?

Registrants must:

3.2: understand the importance of their own mental and physical health and wellbeing strategies in maintaining fitness to practise.

3.4: develop and adopt clear strategies for physical and mental self-care and self-awareness, to maintain a high standard of professional effectiveness and a safe working environment.



Linking wellbeing to HCPC Standards of Proficiency

According to the HCPC SoP, biomedical scientists must:

- Identify anxiety and stress in themselves and recognise the potential impact on their practice (3.1)
- Understand the importance of their own mental and physical health and wellbeing strategies in maintaining fitness to practise (3.2)
- Understand how to take appropriate action if their health may affect their ability to practise safely and effectively, including seeking help and support when necessary (3.3)
- Develop and adopt clear strategies for physical and mental self-care and self-awareness, to maintain a high standard of professional effectiveness and a safe working environment (3.4)
- Empower and enable individuals (including service users and colleagues) to play a part in managing their own health (15.3)



Wellbeing-Related Changes to the HCPC Standards

| | <u>Current Standards (2023)</u> | <u>Previous standards (pre-2023)</u> |
|------------|---|--|
| 3.1 | identify anxiety and stress in themselves and recognise the potential impact on their practice | understand the need to maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct |
| 3.2 | understand the importance of their own mental and physical health and wellbeing strategies in maintaining fitness to practise | understand the importance of maintaining their own health |
| 3.3 | understand how to take appropriate action if their health may affect their ability to practise safely and effectively, including seeking help and support when necessary | understand both the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career-long learning |
| 3.4 | develop and adopt clear strategies for physical and mental self-care and self-awareness, to maintain a high standard of professional effectiveness and a safe working environment | |
| 8.5 | identify anxiety and stress in service users, carers and colleagues, adapting their practice and providing support where appropriate | be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with service users and others |

Previously the word “wellbeing” featured only once and was specifically referring to the wellbeing of service users, not registrants.

The words “anxiety” and “stress” now also appear, referring to identification of anxiety and stress in oneself (SOP 3.1) and in service users, carers and colleagues (SOP 8.5).

“Emotional burden” is also now mentioned in SOP 1.2, related to managing your workload safely and effectively.

How well equipped are you to meet these standards?

How well supported are Biomedical Scientists to meet mental health and wellbeing



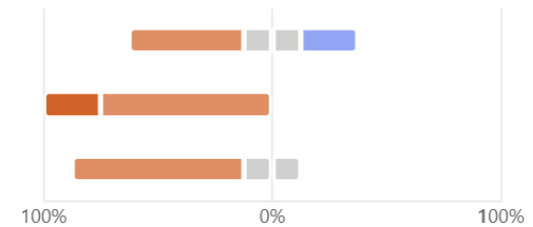
Biomedical Scientists

● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree or disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree

I feel confident I can use self care strategies to stay well at work

I can identify anxiety and stress in colleagues and service users

I understand how to take appropriate action if my mental health affects my ability to work



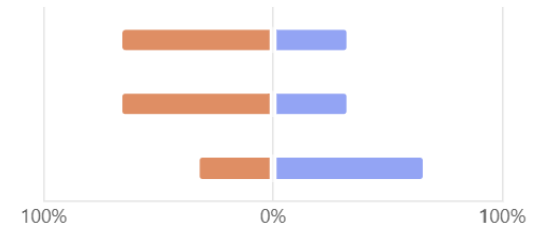
Physiotherapists

● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree

I feel confident I can use self-care strategies to stay well at work

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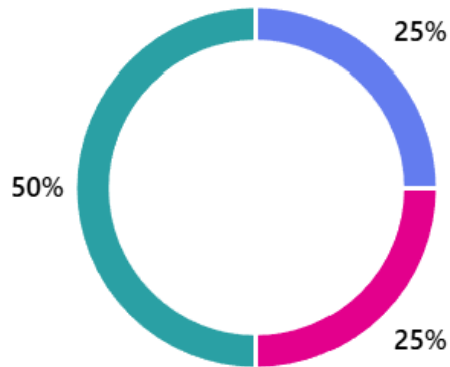


Preliminary data from Caroline Topham, Fared Patil and Ahmed Hassan

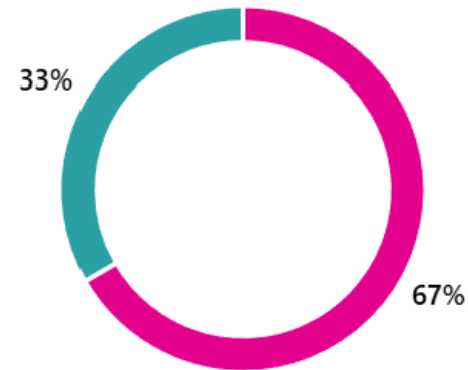


Are these standards improving your mental health and wellbeing at work?

Biomedical Scientists



Physiotherapists



- Yes
- No
- Not sure yet
- Other

Preliminary data from Caroline Topham, Fareed Patel and Ahmed Hassan

Poll:

What are the symptoms of work-related stress or anxiety?

Please select as many answers as apply to you, feel free to type in the chat with additional points

Common causes of stress at work..

- * a lack of control of our workload
- * high demands on our time and energy and lack of clarity about responsibilities
- * fear of redundancy or changes
- * poor line management and lack of support
- * difficult relationships with colleagues
- * bullying or harassment in the workplace
- * workplace discrimination

**None of these are
easily controlled at
an individual level**

***We are trained to detect disease in patients
but not distress in ourselves***

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UK-wide research study

*Giving Biomedical Scientists a
Voice*



Focus areas:

- Mental wellbeing
- Professional support
- Inclusion & diversity

Target:

- Biomedical workforce across all roles

**First step toward evidence-based
workforce change**

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Biomedical scientists:

- Critical but often invisible workforce

Limited literature on:

- Burnout
- Inclusion
- Workplace culture in labs

Policy gap:

- HCPC standards exist → but lived experiences vary

**You cannot improve
what you do not measure.**

Working in the Biomedical Profession?

Share your experiences of wellbeing, support
and inclusion in the biomedical profession

A UK-wide research study exploring professional experiences across the biomedical profession
Your perspective will help build national understanding and inform future support strategies.

WHO CAN TAKE PART

- Working in any biomedical laboratory or diagnostic role in the UK
- Includes biomedical scientists, trainees, assistants, support and technical staff
- Aged 18 years or above

WHAT THE STUDY EXPLORES

- Mental wellbeing in professional practice
- Experiences of burnout and workplace pressure
- Access to professional support
- Inclusion and sense of belonging

WHY YOUR PARTICIPATION MATTERS

- Helps generate national evidence on professional wellbeing
- May inform future professional support initiatives
- Contributes to research aiming to strengthen laboratory services

STUDY DETAILS

- Confidential online survey
- Takes approximately 15-20 minutes
- Participation is voluntary

**YOUR
EXPERIENCE
MATTERS**



This study is led by Arden University
In collaboration with University of Salford
Principal Investigator: Tunch Akmandor
E-mail: takmandor@arden.ac.uk

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Some Preliminary Data...

● Never
 ● Seldom
 ● Sometimes
 ● Often
 ● Always

I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work

My working time can be flexible

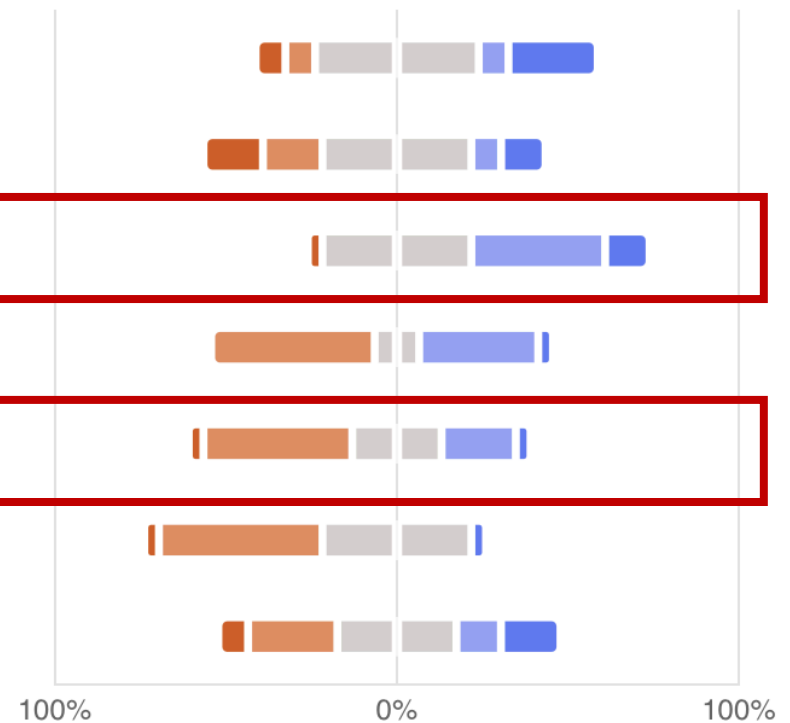
My colleagues are willing to listen to my work-related problems

When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will work out in practice

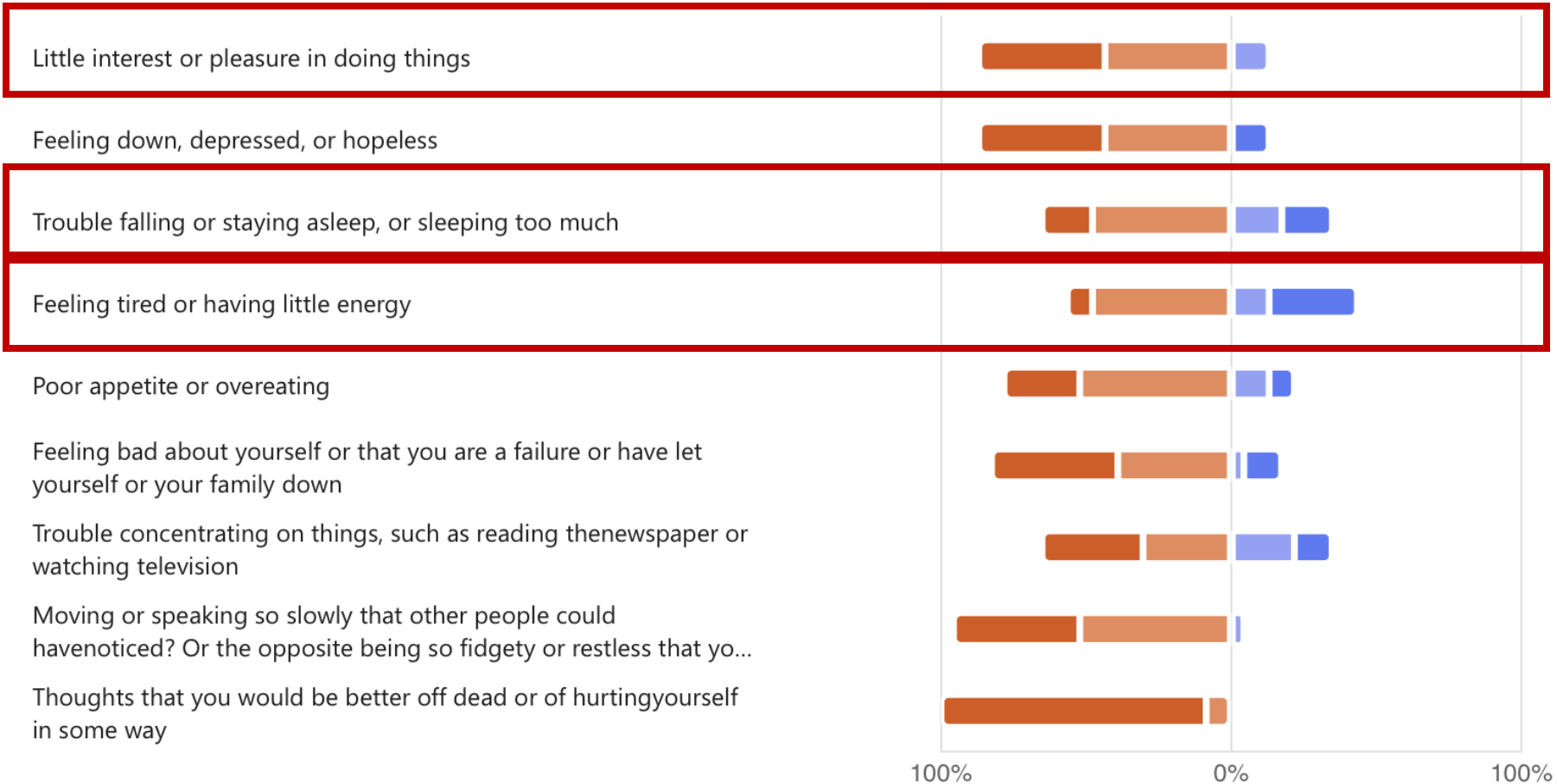
I am supported through emotionally demanding work

Relationships at work are strained

My line manager encourages me at work



● Not at all ● Several days ● More than half the days ● Nearly every day





Steps to Improve Mental Health (Self-Care)



Connect: Build strong relationships with friends and family.



Be Active: Regular exercise boosts mood and physical health.



Learn: Acquire new skills to boost confidence and purpose.



Give: Acts of kindness can improve wellbeing.



Mindfulness: Pay attention to the present moment

Poll:

What support exists in your organisation?

Please select as many answers as apply to you,
feel free to type in the chat with additional
points

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If we want better healthcare systems, we need healthier healthcare professionals.

This research is not just data it is a starting point for change!



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If we ignore mental health, we don't
just risk burnout we risk the quality of
care, science, and systems
themselves.

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How to support yourself

Share what you are experiencing with the people in your life

Talk to your line manager if you feel able to

Access your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) counselling support

NHS employee support: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/support-now/>

Self-refer for NHS talking therapies: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/find-nhs-talking-therapies-for-anxiety-and-depression/>

MIND wellness action plan: <https://www.mind.org.uk/media/lbahso3x/mind-wellness-action-plan-workplace.pdf>

If you have the capacity to contribute in our research and have your say by completing our surveys:

How well supported are
Biomedical Scientists to meet
mental health and wellbeing



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- * NHS Mental Health Services: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/>
- * NHS England Mental Health Helpline: **0300 131 7000** (Available 7am–11pm, 7 days a week)
- * NHS Scotland Mental Health Helpline: call **NHS 24** on **111** (Free, confidential, 24/7)
- * Breathing Space (Scotland): **0800 83 85 87** (evenings/weekends)
- * NHS Wales: call **NHS 111** and select **option 2**
- * C.A.L.L. (Wales): **0800 132 737**
- * Lifeline (Crisis Response) (Northern Ireland): **0808 808 8000** (24/7, free)
- * Samaritans: **116 123** (Free, confidential, 24/7)
- * Mind: **0300 123 3393**
- * Shout: Text **85258** (Free, confidential text support, 24/7)
- * HOPELINEUK: call **0800 068 4141** (Monday to Friday, 10am to 10pm, and 2pm to 10pm on weekends and bank holidays).

IBMS Wellbeing Resources:

- * <https://www.ibms.org/my-ibms/ibms-additions/wellbeing-support.html>