

Mindflow

Championing mental
health in construction

Survey Summary:

Undertaken by Trevor Steven and the Causeway team
during 2022/23.

Sample of 1400 survey responses collected



Forward

by Trevor Steven, CEO of Mindflow

When I first stepped onto construction sites as a mental health ambassador, I didn't know exactly what to expect. Coming from the world of professional football, I'd moved from one traditionally macho environment into another—but nothing could have prepared me for the sheer scale of the mental health crisis hidden behind hard hats and hi-vis vests.

Over the course of 18 months, I travelled the country speaking directly to over 1,400 site workers, from labourers to surveyors and what I heard was both sobering and deeply motivating.

More than half told us they were struggling with their mental health and many were living with anxiety, depression or worse, often in silence. And heartbreakingly, we learned that two construction workers still take their own lives every working day in the UK and sadly this is increasing.

This isn't just a statistic, it's a call to action. What began as a fact-finding mission quickly turned into a much bigger mission. And it became clear to me that we needed to do something tangible to save at least one life.

That's why we created Mindflow.

Mindflow is a charity born from the voices of workers and built on the belief that mental health must be valued as highly as physical safety in construction. We exist to create real change by normalising the conversation, embedding mental health standards into daily practice, and reaching workers in ways that truly resonate.

One of those ways is through football.

Football has always had the power to bring people together. On site after site, I saw how a simple chat about the weekend's match could open the door to deeper, more meaningful conversations. That's why we launched Mindflow Match-Ups, our outreach programme that brings ex-footballers like myself into construction settings to share experiences and spark honest, stigma-free discussions about mental health.

But we're not stopping there.

We've introduced the **Mindflow Mental Health Charter**, a set of clear, industry-wide standards designed to make well-being a non-negotiable part of site culture. And we're working to influence procurement practices, so that mental health support becomes mandatory in construction.

Mindflow is more than a charity, it's a movement. One that champions connection over silence, support over struggle, and prevention over crisis.

To every worker who's ever felt overwhelmed, isolated or unheard: we see you. We're here for you. And we're joining the dots to create a brighter future for the industry.

Trevor Steven
CEO, Mindflow



Key findings

More than half of UK construction site workers struggle with their mental health.

The top five mental health problems cited by respondents were: anxiety (40%), depression (37%), fatigue linked to low mood (28%), lack of self-confidence (25%) and feeling overwhelmed (25%).

Other responses when asked 'If you have experienced, or are currently experiencing, any sort of mental health problem, what would you describe it as?' included post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Just 21% said they have been diagnosed by a GP or other professional as having a mental health problem, which indicates there is a large group of construction site workers having to cope with undiagnosed symptoms

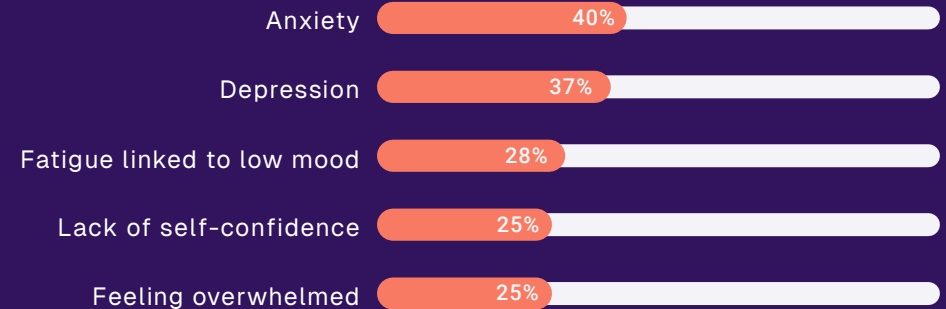


56%

of those surveyed were either currently experiencing or have experienced a mental health problem in the past.



The top five mental health problems cited by respondents were:



12%

have experienced, or are currently experiencing, suicidal thoughts



"These figures are frankly shocking and really highlight the need for intervention. Our survey was completed anonymously, meaning we couldn't intervene at the point of contact, but we did ensure signposting was in place so that people could access support if they needed it."

Trevor Steven, ex-Everton and England football player and Causeway mental health ambassador

Workers are plagued by worries about unrealistic deadlines, poor work/life balance and inadequate staffing.

When asked what they think contributes to poor mental health in the construction industry, 59% said long and irregular working hours.

This was followed by financial pressures (50%), lack of job security (45%), tight deadlines (43%) and site culture (41%).

More personal issues such as bereavement, divorce, and financial problems, as well as navigating parenthood, were also cited.

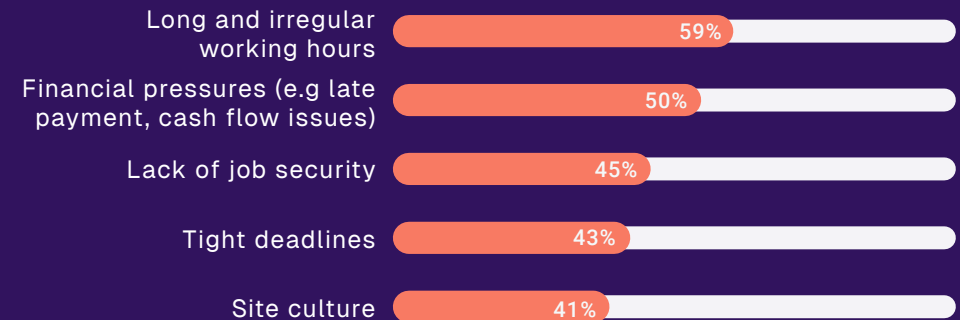
What's more, the transient nature of construction site work means employees get anxious about where their next job is going to come from.



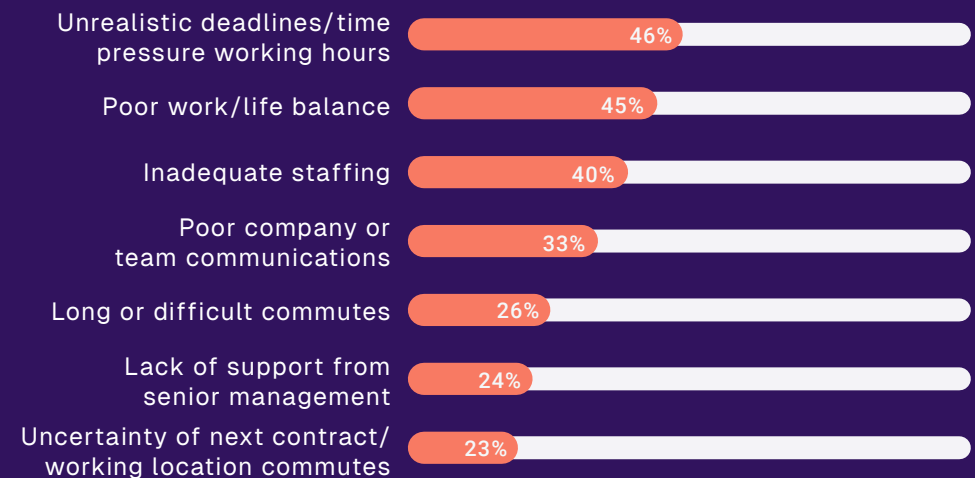
“[There is a] lack of support from the line management. [They tend to be] too interested in getting the job over the line. **I was told to leave my issues on the doorstep and not bring them to work.**”



What contributes to poor mental health in the construction industry



Workplace stress can be attributed to:





“The continual turnover of staff and management (the continued reliance on temporary agency labour) makes it **difficult to develop relationships with co-workers** in which open communication can actually feel comfortable.”



“Managers in the construction industry need to talk more about **positive things on site**. Most of the time they raise only negative points, making people feel under pressure and as though they aren’t doing enough.”



“[We] do not get full pay for mental health issues in the construction environment, which is poor considering construction is one of the worst for mental health and suicide deaths.”



The majority (80%) of employees agree that their company has a responsibility to support their mental health.

86% believe someone should be officially responsible for mental health and wellbeing at their place of work. Despite this, more than a third (35%) said they don't think their company is doing enough to support employees in this area.

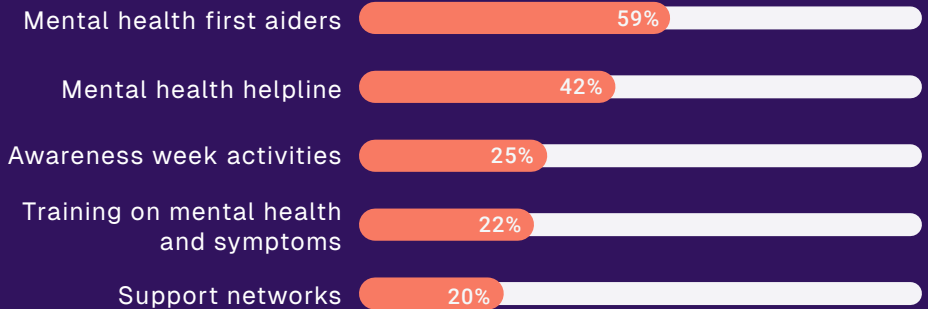
Flexible working was cited by just 19%, and the reality is bleak in some cases. Staff can be expected to sacrifice their holiday allowance to deal with personal issues like caring for loved ones or finding a new place to live, which is causing added stress.



“[There are a] few mental health posters to cover [themselves] but personally [I] believe it's a front. In 10 years of working in construction, I've never experienced a site that seems to really care about your mental wellbeing.”



The most common mental health and wellbeing initiatives currently in place are:



85%

believe someone should be officially responsible for mental health and wellbeing at their place of work.



“A big reason for mental health issues in construction is the fact **you don’t get financially supported if you require time off to fix yourself.** In other sectors, employees will receive full pay for a period of sickness absence. As a construction worker, this isn’t the case and is a major contributing factor and catalyst to these high suicide rates.”



The majority think using technology to manage mental health is a good idea.

We asked participants what sort of technology they thought would be useful.



78%

would be in support of tech that gives them direct access to external, confidential support such as counsellors, a dedicated helpline or chat function.



72%

are open to having access to an app or a website that provides information and resources to help them manage their mental health.



66%

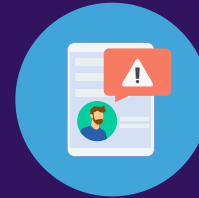
would welcome technology that automatically checks in on their physical wellbeing.



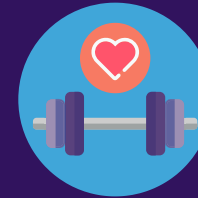
65%

are in support of technology that monitors their work patterns to make sure they are taking breaks and working for a safe amount of time.

Other suggestions included:



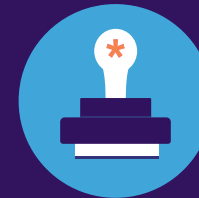
An app that allows you to report concerns about others



Gym incentives



Lessons in breathing techniques



Regulations to force employers to implement better mental health by improving work/life balance



Company team-building events

Two-thirds of respondents said they would feel comfortable with an employer monitoring their mental health and wellbeing, if they remained anonymous. And half would be happy to be monitored even if it wasn't done anonymously.

These results show there is a preference towards intervention on site and a willingness to open up about mental health if the opportunity arose through active monitoring.

The majority (67%) of workers we spoke to were football fans

What's more, **58%** said they would or might be more likely to access mental health support if their **chosen club offered it**.

Of those, **32%** cited a **sense of trust and loyalty** to the club as a reason, while **22%** said it would provide a **sense of anonymity**, and **19%** said the club wouldn't judge them.



“While [it's] good to have workplace support, sometimes a **distraction outside of work might be more beneficial**. Even if [you're] not a football fan, the ability to meet/mix with people from the sport and discuss matters could be a help.”



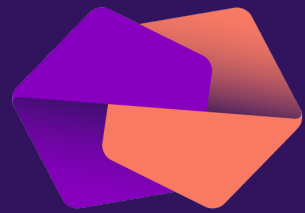
“Using connections to football and the lessons learned in sport helped people to speak more freely about their mental health.”

Trevor Steven, ex-Everton and England football player and Causeway mental health ambassador





“I’m not a football fan but I do think that, for those that are, this [would be] such a great initiative, giving **an avenue of communication in another male-dominated environment**. It’s about breaking down barriers and taboos and making it acceptable to talk and communicate; any channel that can break down this stigma and culture of not talking about how you’re feeling is long overdue and can only be a good thing.”



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