

## Workforce Wellbeing Research Summary

### Background

In 2022 the Museums Association launched research into wellbeing in the sector, continuing our commitment to fair working conditions and treatment, from pay to bullying to equity and inclusion.

We define wellbeing as the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy; wellbeing is affected by our experience of life and our experience of work.

The aims of the research were to provide a clear picture of the sector by identifying:

- the current individual wellbeing of those working in and with museums
- organisational factors affecting individual wellbeing
- ideas and priorities for action to effect positive change.

A research questionnaire was completed by over 650 individuals from across the UK.

### Key findings

The key findings from our research are outlined below:

- a majority of respondents reported good life satisfaction (71%), however a majority of respondents reported less good or significantly low work satisfaction (58%)
- the key factors at work affecting wellbeing related to excessive demands (53%), not feeling recognised (48%) and not feeling valued (44%)
- a third of respondents didn't feel cared for and felt that workforce wellbeing was not prioritised in their organisation
- museums have adopted a variety of approaches to wellbeing, the most common being employee assistance programmes and mental health first aiders
- there were several responses where no wellbeing support was in place at all, or respondents did not have access
- respondents were more likely to have a positive experience of wellbeing at team level (over 50%), with line managers and colleagues contributing to this positive experience
- factors contributing to positive work satisfaction were having an empathic manager, a supportive team, engaging job content and opportunities for hybrid working
- there has been a clear shift to hybrid working, with only 30% describing their role as being onsite
- 20% of respondents stated their organisation has not adopted hybrid working
- 87% of hybrid workers said that working in this way had a positive impact on their wellbeing.

## Our wellbeing campaign

- We will work with museums to raise awareness and showcase good practice so that they can put in place programmes and support for their workforce and for the communities they serve.
- We will work to improve wellbeing within the workforce through advice, support, and programmes.
- We will work with museums to actively support community wellbeing.

The campaign should be embraced by museums, sector support organisations, funders, leaders, trustees, and managers, and all those with a duty of care for others.

## Recommendations

Below are the recommendations resulting from our research into workforce wellbeing. We have not included recommendations for individuals, as we feel all too often the responsibility for workforce wellbeing is levelled at the individual, rather than addressing cultural, structural, and resourcing deficits.

Organisations and managers should...

1. Commit to creating a culture of care, prioritising wellbeing for all, including freelancers and volunteers.
2. Centre wellbeing proactively in all planning, budgeting, risk assessment and decision-making.
3. Ensure all activities are sufficiently resourced to deliver successfully without excessive demands and negative impacts on wellbeing.
4. Ensure wellbeing support is accessible to all, especially those in front-of-house roles and working with communities, where the challenges may be greater.
5. Regularly review policies and practices; and the efficacy of wellbeing interventions to ensure they deliver their wellbeing aims and are still relevant and meaningful.
6. Measure wellbeing regularly, for example in employee satisfaction surveys or exit interviews to inform good practice and improvement.
7. Develop skills to support the wellbeing of others, as part of management programmes, training, and induction.
8. Centre people in all conversations, acknowledging the emotionally laden work undertaken, for example as part of team meetings and annual appraisals.
9. Create tailored conversations to identify what works best for people; experience of work and wellbeing measures should be focussed on the individual.
10. Explore the possibilities of implementing hybrid working; for roles that can only be done onsite explore other benefits such as additional leave and wellbeing days.

For more information and support relating to workforce or wellbeing [visit our website](#) or email [cpd@museumsassociation.org](mailto:cpd@museumsassociation.org).