



# WHAT ARE HONG KONG COMPANIES DOING TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEE WELLBEING?

## AN ANALYSIS OF COMPANY SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Every year the City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong (CMHA HK) invites member companies to undertake an assessment of their workplace mental health initiatives, providing an opportunity to audit their mental health and wellbeing activities against the Standards of the [CMHA HK Guide to Thriving at Work\\*](#).

The Guide to Thriving at Work is the keystone document for CMHA HK, setting out 8 Standards which underpin the development and implementation of an effective workplace mental health strategy, each of which comprise a set of key initiatives, spanning 13 categories, to achieve these Standards. The document is based on the CMHA UK Guide and was developed in partnership with CMHA HK founding members to reflect the corporate business culture of Hong Kong. The standards and initiatives of the HK Guide are the basis for the questions of the [CMHA HK Thriving at Work Assessment](#).

In 2021 CMHA HK introduced quantified assessment analysis, allowing us to make year on year comparisons of results across the cohort and for individual companies who completed the survey in these two years. These comparisons help to provide insights into how implementation of mental health strategies is progressing across different companies and corporate sectors in Hong Kong. In 2022, over 80% of CMHA Hong Kong member companies completed the survey and received a report analysing their results against the CMHA HK member average, as well as their 2021 results if available.

CMHA HK has 29 member companies of whom 11 joined within the 24 months leading up to the assessment period of April to May 2022. In this report these are referred to as 'new' members whilst those with a membership period >2 years are referred to as 'long-term' members and include our 10 founding members.



### Results

The average score for the 2022 CMHA HK Thriving at Work Assessment was 178 out of 300, or 59%, showing an overall improvement of 16% across all Standards since 2021.

- 10 companies completed the survey in both 2020 and 2022 and showed a marked improvement of 47% across the Standards, equivalent to 21% year on year improvement

\*The assessment is also available to non-member companies for a fee.

## Performance breakdown

As each Standard comprises a series of initiatives, we grouped initiatives with similar intent and analysed the results to identify in which areas the greatest advances were being made and where companies appear to be struggling to implement workplace mental health initiatives.

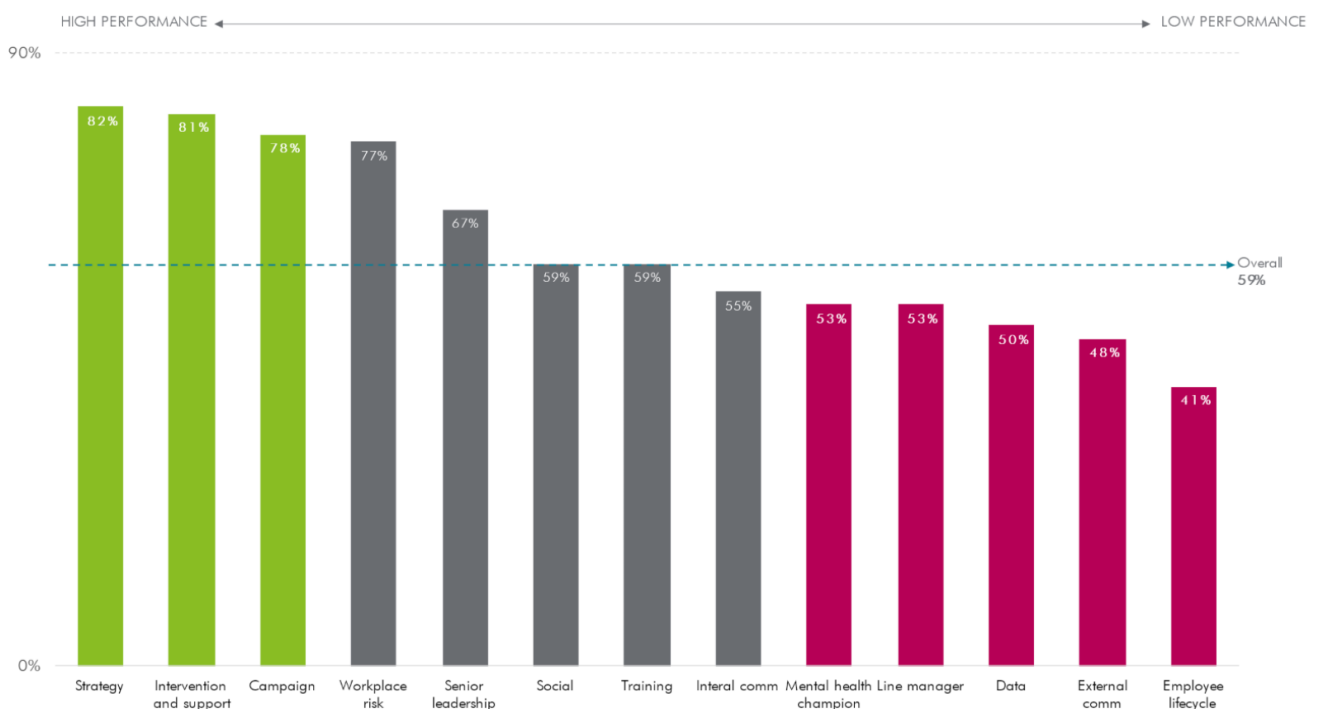
### The highest performing initiative groups were:

- 81% for intervention and support, which includes providing culturally appropriate in-house and external mental health support and access to preventive and early interventions,
- 78% in the use of external campaigns such as World Mental Health Day, Green Ribbon Campaign and similar, and
- 82% for initiatives to progress development of a mental health strategy to guide implementation.

### Initiative groups with room for improvement include:

- supporting employee lifecycle events (currently at 41%);
- external communication of the company's commitment to workplace mental health (48%);
- collecting and reporting data to progress and promote workplace mental health strategies (50%);
- appointing and developing mental health champions (53%), and
- providing support for line managers (53%).

## 2022 Hong Kong Thriving at Work Assessment Average Score (%)



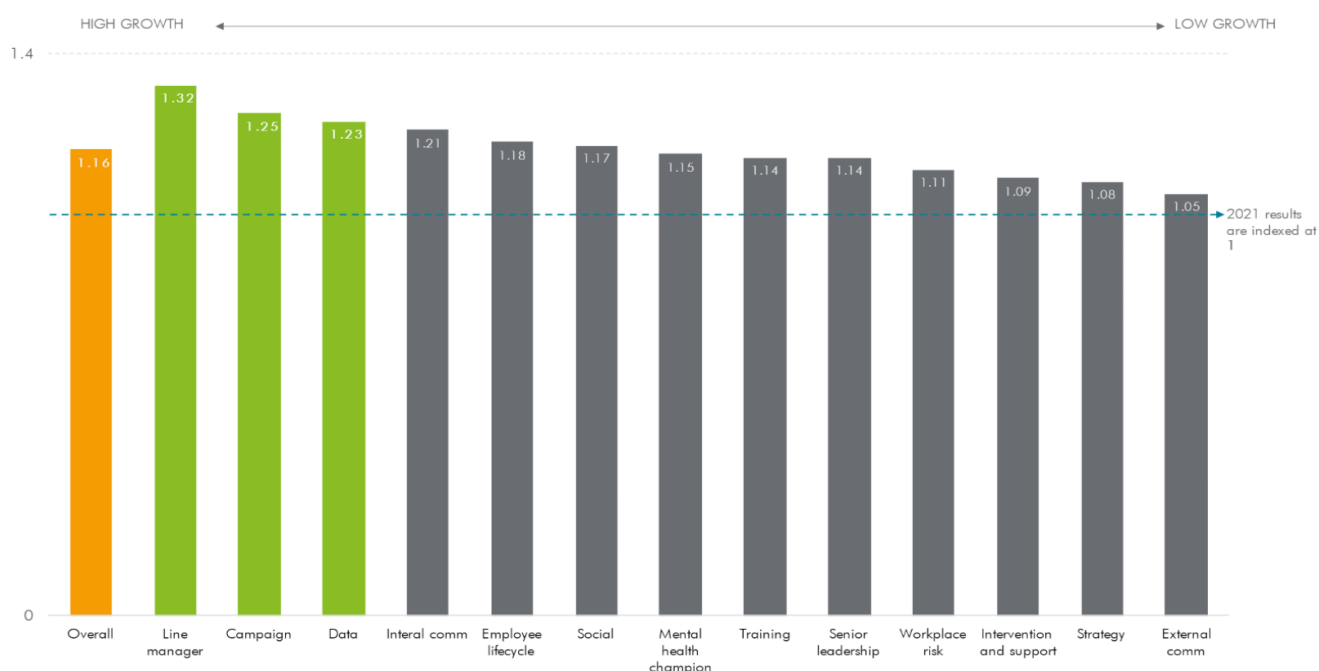
## Key message 1: Manager support shows greatest improvement

The importance of this result is underlined by the fact that support and training for managers was highlighted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Labor Organisation (ILO) as a key driver of organisational change to support workplace mental health in their guidelines and policies released in 2022. (*WHO Guidelines on Mental Health at Work and Mental Health at Work Policy Brief, 2022*)

Over the period 2021 to 2022, across all sectors, support for line managers increased by 32% as reflected in advances in Standard 5 of the CMHA HK Guide to Thriving at Work. Initiatives in this standard include manager guidelines and HR support, manager education on employee resources, training in mental health awareness and how to conduct conversations on mental health and wellbeing with direct reports.

## 2022 Hong Kong Thriving at Work Assessment Average Score

(2021 averages are indexed at 1)



## Key message 2: Membership duration as an indicator of performance

Analysis of data across all sectors and Standards found that companies who had been members of CMHA HK for two or more years outperformed new members (<2 years) across the board.

- Scores for long term members averaged 213 (71%) and these members showed an improvement of 23% over the period 2021 to 2022.

The greatest disparity in scores between these two member groups was in:

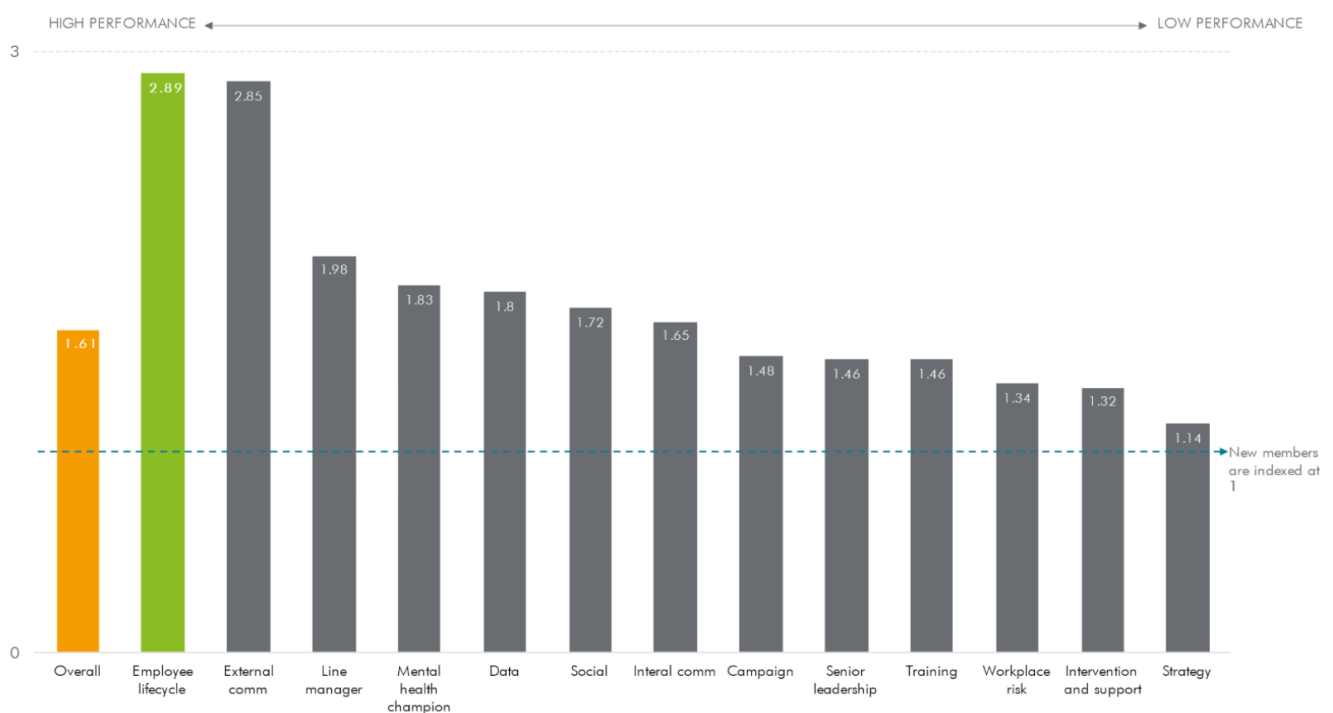
- providing mental health support for employees linked to lifecycle events (approx. 3 times higher)
- making a public statement on the company's commitment to workplace mental health (approx. 3 times higher)
- guidance and training for managers (approx. twice as high).

As can be expected, new members generally focussed their attention on initiatives to establish good workplace practices and included the following:

- developing a mental health and wellbeing strategy (76% of initiatives addressed)
- providing interventions and support to employees (68% of initiatives addressed)
- addressing workplace risk and creating a safe working environment (65% of initiatives addressed)
- leveraging off existing campaigns to promote mental health (62% of initiatives addressed).

## 2022 Hong Kong Thriving at Work Assessment Average Score – Companies who had been members of CMHA HK for 2 or more years

(New member averages are indexed at 1)



### Key message 3: Employees report increased mental health issues but are unaware of mental health resources offered by employers

The Thriving at Work Assessment is a self-reported survey for companies to audit their progress on initiatives which support workplace mental health strategies. The other side of this equation is how these strategies and initiatives are received by employees, how they impact on employee wellbeing, and how company culture is changing to be more supportive of employee mental health.

In 2022 CMHA HK undertook an employee wellbeing survey to gather data to answer these questions and more, following similar surveys which had been undertaken with the support of Oliver Wyman in 2017, 2018 and 2020.

While a full report of the survey is currently being prepared, preliminary analysis of the data indicates that:

- 40% of employees had experienced mental health issues in the last 12 months (up from 27% in 2020 and 23% in 2018)
- 48% of employees were unsure of the mental health support resources and services offered by their employer
- while 63% of employees knew who to approach to discuss their mental health concerns, 42% were not at all/not quite confident to discuss these concerns with their manager
- 20% of employees who had experienced mental ill health in the past 12 months and had made use of employer resources and services found them beneficial, while 24% found them not helpful.

## Key message 4: Legal sector high performers

CMHA HK members are predominantly from the Finance, Legal, Insurance and Consulting sectors of the professional services industry in Hong Kong. Analysis of survey data by sector found that the highest performance was in the legal sector with an average score of 207 (69%), outperforming other sectors by 23%. The legal sector also outperforms their peers across all initiatives and particularly in

providing mental health support targeting events across the employee lifecycle (54% higher in the legal sector).

Finance was the second highest performer with an average score of 183 (61%), outperforming other sectors by 3%.

## Going forward – areas for improvement

The results of the Thriving at Work Assessments show significant improvement in key areas including support for line managers and use of data to drive decision making. However, these continue to be among the lowest performing initiatives but are recognised as key to developing mentally healthy workplaces.

Evidence that many employees are unaware of the mental health resources offered by their employer shines a light on the need for improved internal communication on the strategies and initiatives available and would be well supported with the introduction of mental health champions to signpost their peers to resources and initiate mental health discussions to help break down the prevailing stigma associated with mental health.

## Conclusion

Workplace mental health is increasingly recognised by industry leaders as a key management issue, both as a duty of care for employees and as part of good business practice. In 2022 this was further emphasised with the release of research and policy documents by the WHO and the ILO, focussing on the creation of mentally healthy workplaces.

The Thriving at Work Assessment gives companies a tool to audit their business practices in regard to workplace mental health, set targets for further development, and identify support from CMHA HK in the resources and training that we offer. By collecting, analysing and reporting this data to companies that undertake the assessment we can provide clear guidance on where companies can focus their efforts in this important area of employee management.

In Hong Kong, the CMHA HK has been operating for close to 5 years and our long-term members are showing strong advances in the implementation of employee mental health initiatives. A key strength of the CMHA HK is our membership and alliance model; as new members join existing long-term

members are willing to share their experience and learning with new members. Additionally, the resources we develop are shaped to meet the business needs of our member companies and many are also shared with the broader Hong Kong corporate community.

The City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong is a not-for-profit membership organisation. We are an alliance of businesses, working together with mental health experts and partner organisations, to achieve our vision that every workplace will protect, support and create positive mental health for their people.

As a member-led organisation, CMHA HK will continue to facilitate our members' progress through high quality training and regular best practice sharing, provided at the level and pace required by our members to support their development of employee wellbeing strategies.

For further information, please visit our [website](#) or [contact us](#) directly.

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香港城市精神健康聯盟

**City Mental Health  
Alliance** HK

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We provide training, events, resources, research and practical support for companies wishing to create mentally healthy workplaces.

## CONTACT US

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