

# BODY IMAGE COMES WITH A COST TO MENTAL AND FINANCIAL WELLBEING

Submitted by: The Wellbeing Project

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When employers look to identify the drivers behind staff-related pressures, they naturally focus on workloads, team dynamics and even harassment. They appreciate that difficulties at home such as relationships, bereavements and other problems will affect how an employee feels at work too, but we rarely see them considering 'body image' perceptions as a drainer for wellbeing. Last year alone, 1 in 3 adults said they were so stressed about their body image that they felt overwhelmed and unable to cope.

This year's Mental Health Awareness Week (13th-19th May 2019 #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek) focuses on body image, and CEO of The Wellbeing Project, Sam Fuller, gives her view on how this transcends into wellbeing at work:

"Body image can affect people of all ages and have a direct impact on both their mental and financial wellbeing. There is often a perceived or real expectation of how someone should look and dress both at work and socially within friendship groups, creating real pressure to fit the mould. Social media constantly reminds individuals how they should look and dress; anxiety levels can spiral and confidence plummets along with self-esteem and belief as they try to keep pace with the changes and cost to their wallet.

"Furthermore, concerns over body image can lead to financial debt, as millennials overspend on items to build and enhance body confidence, with clothes, make-up and material items used to boost this perception. 'Fast fashion' has introduced a rise in throwaway items and the need to replenish them constantly with new brands, colours and shapes. We have seen employees' clothing/accessory purchasing patterns change, now filling their online 'baskets' and pressing 'buy' at one minute past midnight on payday. Clothes, aesthetic treatments and even gym memberships come before food, evidenced by the reported rise in the uptake of free fruit or subsidised meals at work towards the end of a month

"This high and fast spend on 'personal' items fits with rising concerns over body image. Obviously, not all financial burdens are related to image-conscious purchasing, but we do know that a large proportion of employees are struggling to make ends meet.

"We know that wellbeing support is on the radar for many employers, but we'd like to see this pushed to the forefront and made actionable. Mental health will not be disappearing, so enabling employees to develop and build their own resilience and wellbeing is key to how they respond to these rising worries and pressures. Those employers who embrace this approach will reap the rewards with a workforce that is more engaged, connected, happy and focused."

Note to Editors:

The Wellbeing Project's, Founder and CEO, Sam Fuller, is available for interview

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#### About The Wellbeing Project:

The Wellbeing Project was founded in 2007 and is a global consultancy delivering bespoke performance, wellbeing and resilience projects and programmes into businesses of all scale. We work with organisations to make it as easy as possible to create a culture of wellbeing where employees excel and businesses thrive. Offering wellbeing audits and strategic planning, along with a variety of coaching, training and development programmes, ranging from comprehensive modular programmes to interactive, bitesize bursts of knowledge with practical takeaways, tools and techniques. With over 10 years of experience and insight into the wellbeing arena, The Wellbeing Project is trusted and respected by business owners and industry associations.

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