

Addressing HR burnout

Short-term and long-term
strategies to tackle burnout
in HR professionals



It's no secret that HR has its hands full.

Our media research uncovered that in the last 12 months, these HR topics dominated discussion in the industry:

- ✔ Staff wellbeing
- ✔ Artificial intelligence
- ✔ Workplace equity



It doesn't stop there! HR professionals are also feeling the pressure to keep up with recent Government regulatory changes, such as the **Employment Rights Bill**.

There is so much for HR professionals to manage, and frankly, cracks in the industry are beginning to show as burnout within HR is becoming increasingly common

In just the last few months, multiple studies have surfaced, with headline stats such as **a third of HR professionals are considering quitting due to burnout** and **more than 40% of HR teams feel overwhelmed**.

How can you be expected to effectively support the workforce if you yourself are struggling?

The very nature of HR requires you to put employees first, but this poses the question: **who looks after HR?**

In this guide, I've compiled some short-term and long-term changes you can make to help minimise burnout, providing tangible actions you can take away and implement today, as well as some food for thought to improve the future.

Short-term strategies

As an HR professional, you are expected to be the beacon of wellbeing in your business, championing mental/physical health as well as work-life balance.

I'm not here to regurgitate information you already know.

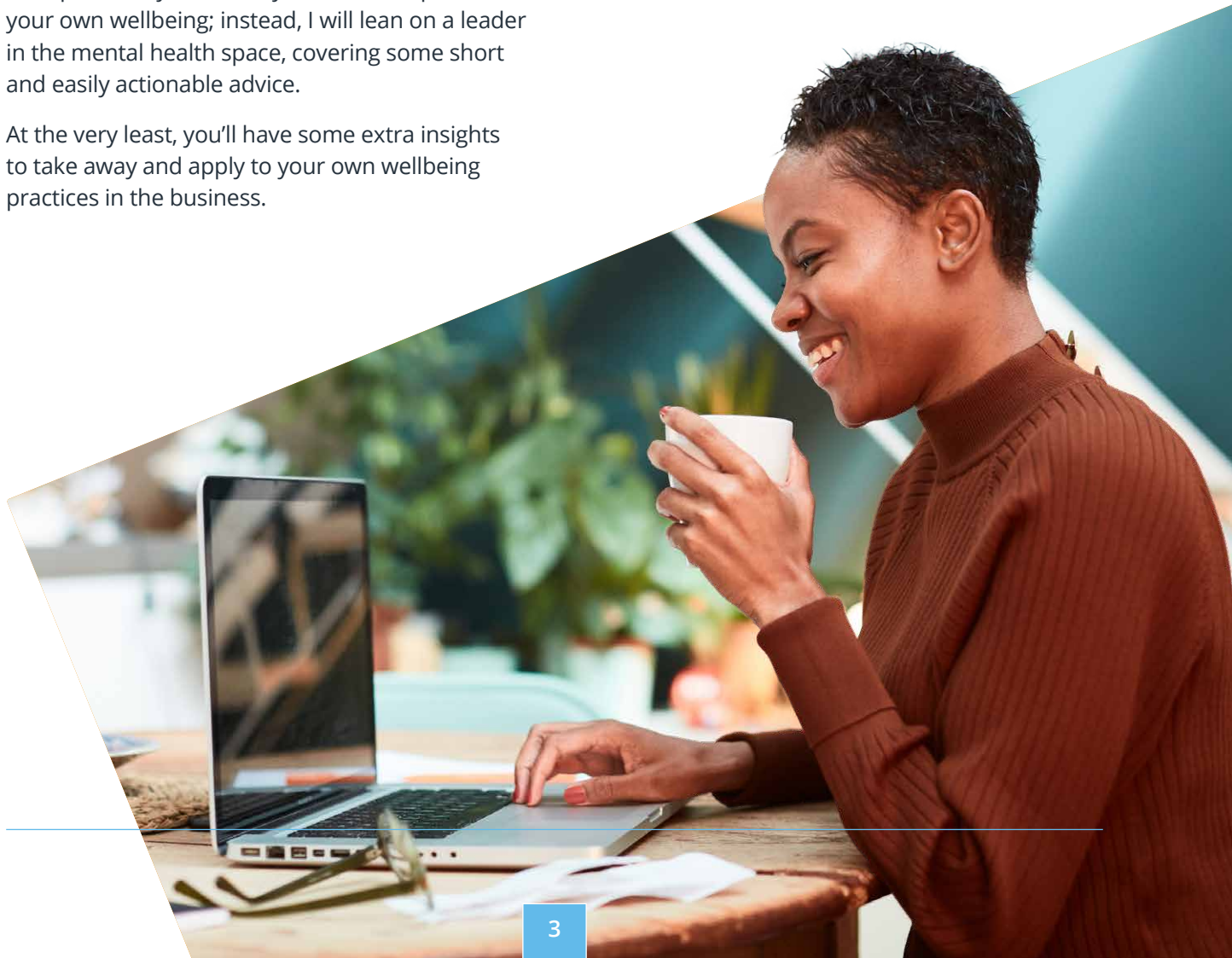
However, like with any profession, you can often lose sight of key areas, especially when you yourself are struggling with pressures and workload.

It can often be beneficial to recap the basics and recentre your approach.

But I personally won't tell you how to improve your own wellbeing; instead, I will lean on a leader in the mental health space, covering some short and easily actionable advice.

At the very least, you'll have some extra insights to take away and apply to your own wellbeing practices in the business.

Although, ideally, I'd love for you to be able to implement something mentioned in this guide today and start making an immediate impact to your day-to-day.



Mind:

Five steps to better wellbeing

Mind is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales.

They **recently published** five steps to fostering positive wellbeing for those in busy and stressful environment.



1 Focus on connections

Within the article, Mind emphasises the importance of connection with other people and the role that plays in reaffirming each other's value.

Mind states that being 'social' and 'connecting' means different things to different people.

For example, someone may prefer quieter one-on-one situations whereas others could prefer being in a large group.

This also extends to how people connect, with some people appreciating a simple message while others prefer in-person interaction.

Action: Take a moment to consider your preferred method of connection, and use that to inform your next steps when reaching out to colleagues and friends.

The article advises the following methods to cultivate a connection in the workplace today:

- Speaking with someone new (if you are comfortable doing so)
- Chat with a colleague and ask them how their weekend was or how their week is going
- Set aside time in your day to check in with someone and ask how they are doing
- Share a lunch break with a colleague or grab a brew and catch up (in-person or virtually!)

The above offers a checklist, that while simple, if implemented regularly can spark meaningful relationships and bring an added sense of camaraderie to the workplace.

2 Seek activity

Physical activity can play a huge role in maintaining both mental and physical health.

Research has found that it improves sleep quality, elevates mood and reduces feelings of stress and anxiety.

However, it's not necessarily about hitting the gym every day or striving to run marathons - there are

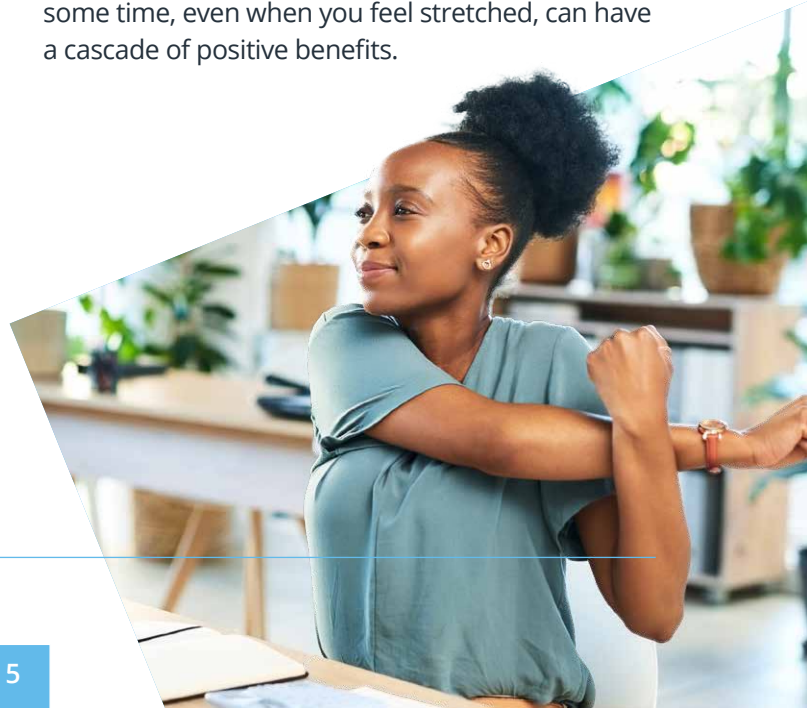


a number of ways to incorporate more activity into your routine.

Mind offers the following suggestions on how to integrate physical activity into your everyday life:

- Choose the stairs over the lift
- Indulge in a lunchtime stroll
- If based on site and feasible, consider walking to work. If you work remotely, make some time before your working day to take a short stroll
- Plan a sporting activity at work (perhaps sign up for a race, using it as an opportunity to also raise money for charity)
- Do some stretching exercises throughout your day
- If working in an office, walk to a colleague's desk for discussion instead of communicating via call or email
- Start an after-work company sports team
- Look to offer physical wellbeing perks as part of your employee benefits

It can be hard to prioritise physical activity when facing immense demands at work, but committing some time, even when you feel stretched, can have a cascade of positive benefits.



3 Take notice of your own feelings

Self-awareness is an invaluable tool.

Mind suggests that taking notice of how you are feeling throughout the day can be incredibly useful for identifying triggers of stress and anxiety.

Research also suggests that appreciating 'the now' can contribute to an overall more optimistic perspective on life.

The article from Mind suggests the following ideas for taking some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you:

- **Add some greenery to your office with a plant**
- **Schedule time for de-cluttering your workspace**
- **Practice some breathing exercises and mindfulness**

Small steps can make a massive difference for your team.

4 Learning and development

Learning and development (L&D) is often linked with better job satisfaction.

There are a number of L&D areas you can prioritise that will support your daily demands, whether it's upskilling on certain aspects of your role, keeping up to date with the industry or participating in a time management and prioritisation course.

Mind suggests that general learning throughout the day can be incredibly beneficial for wellbeing – when people witness their knowledge growing and their skills improving, it often leads to increased confidence.

Creating objectives can help give a sense of command over one's life.

At IRIS, we use the **Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) model**, which outlines what needs achieving (Objectives) and provides a measurable outcome which informs how close you are to achievement (Key Results).

5 Prioritise giving back

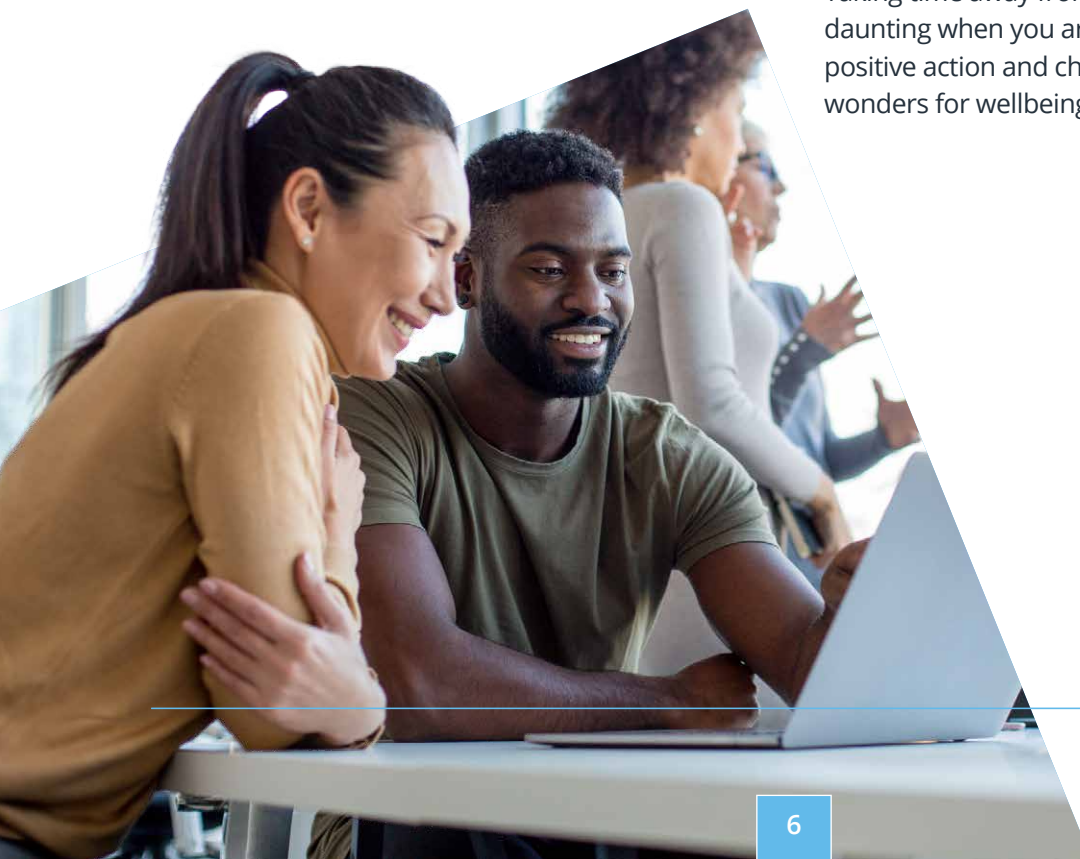
Mind highlights that numerous studies have found a strong correlation between engaging in social activities and community involvement, and self-reported happiness levels.

Evidence suggests that showing kindness and offering assistance to others can boost our own sense of satisfaction.

Can you extend a helping hand to someone today? Here are a few suggestions from Mind:

- **Make a brew for a colleague**
- **Lend someone a helping hand**
- **Introduce yourself to a new starter**
- **Start a workplace volunteering program**

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Long-term changes

I know how it looks.

The software vendor is obviously recommending technology as a solution.

Classic.

Wait, hear me out.

A lot of the immense stress HR professionals are feeling at the moment comes from their workload and pressure from the business.

I'd love for there to be a simple fix to this, but the bottom line is that you can't make these demands disappear, you can only improve how you handle them.

To do that, you need better processes, which can most easily be facilitated through modern software.

Now, I'm not going to preach about all the amazing features IRIS has to offer (although there are plenty).

Instead, I will highlight three ways modern HR software can make a tangible difference.

Take this information and use it to assess how you currently use your own software, or if this information prompts you to consider searching for a better solution, use these points as a feature wish list when searching.



Accuracy: Connected systems

There is a fundamental need for HR to work better with other functional areas, such as Payroll and Finance.

Disconnected systems, endless data entry and constant firefighting leave HR professionals overworked, frustrated and stretched too thin.

Instead of focusing on employees and strategic initiatives, professionals are drowning in administrative burdens, leading to stress, inefficiencies and, ultimately, burnout.

By integrating your HR software with other crucial systems, like payroll, recruitment and finance, you can create a seamless and secure data flow to achieve more than they do in isolation.

Connected systems reduce duplication and eliminate the need for manual data entry as the changes in your HR software automatically cascade to your other systems.





Minimising human error

Perhaps the most common cause of **human error in HR is the use** of outdated, disconnected software or, in some cases, a complete lack of software in the first place.

Manually moving across information and keying in data can easily result in inaccurate data entry and errors.

With payroll, as an example, inaccurate data entry can lead to wages being incorrectly determined; miscalculations can occur during complex calculations and errors in timesheets can confuse the entire process.

Disconnected systems waste time, risk mistakes when re-typing data and pose security/GDPR issues if you start moving information about in spreadsheets and emails.

How does software integration work?

An API, or Application Programming Interface, is a set of rules and protocols that allows different applications to communicate with each other.

Software integration uses APIs to connect your various systems so they can work together and share information.

Think of an API as a digital bridge that enables systems to exchange information and creates a single source of truth across your tech stack.

For example, APIs allow a payroll system to access employee attendance data from an HR platform, eliminating the need for manual input.



Use cases for HR software integration

HR software can integrate with a wide array of your core systems, offering some amazing benefits and time savings!

Integrating with finance systems

Integrating your HR software and finance system ensures consistency, synchronising data such as labour costs and budgets to help provide detailed insights into organisational spending.

This integration streamlines financial reporting, improves budget planning and ensures financial decisions are based on accurate workforce data.

Integrating with payroll systems

By integrating HR and payroll software, you reduce the need for duplication and manual intervention, lifting the drudgery of these types of repetitive tasks and freeing up time for higher-value activities.

If maternity is registered in the HR software, it becomes maternity pay in payroll.

If an employee is entitled to overtime pay, they can add hours in the HR software, which goes to approval to the line manager, the HR system then calculates the rate of pay and is then pushed into the payroll platform to be processed.

If an employee submits any expenses with receipts via the self-service app, it then goes to approval with the line manager and automatically flows into the payroll software.

Integrating Learning Management Systems (LMS)

Connecting learning management systems to your HR platform enables you to easily track training progress, certifications and performance metrics in real-time.

This integration ensures mandatory training is completed without gaps and also enables you to proactively identify skill gaps + automatically enrol new hires into essential training modules.

Integrating with recruitment systems (ATS)

Integrating an applicant tracking system (ATS) with your HR software can streamline the hiring process by centralising candidate profiles and automating data entry into employee records once onboarding begins.

The integration also provides valuable recruitment metrics, such as time-to-hire and cost-per-hire, enabling data-driven decision-making.





Productivity: Automation and self-service

A recent **Gartner study** which looks at upcoming HR trends highlighted that in 2025, a major hurdle HR leaders will need to overcome is truly capitalising on the improved business performance and value HR technology transformation can deliver.

The study found that 55% of HR professionals say current HR technology solutions do not cover their current and future needs.

Additionally, the study found that 69% of employees reported at least one barrier to using HR tech in the last 12 months.

It was stated that end-users are struggling to navigate a disjointed landscape of technology, causing many to underutilise the key features.

A perfectly reasonable challenge – I ask you to think about how many apps you interact with on a day-to-day basis.

I suspect the answer is quite a lot.

This research highlights that both HR professionals and employees need to make better use of technology.

Making the most of automation

Free yourself up and reclaim your working day.

Automation within modern HR software takes care of repetitive, time-consuming tasks so you can focus on more strategic work and better support the business.

Automation can support a wide array of processes in HR, but a few notable areas, include:

- 1 Recruiting:** Automation can help with job ad posting, tracking responses, CV screenings, pre-employment assessments, candidate sorting and sending email responses.
- 2 Employee onboarding:** Automating the onboarding process ensures a smooth and hassle-free start for new hires, automatically handling a lot of the essential but repetitive tasks like generating contracts and sending documentation.
- 3 Offboarding:** Automated offboarding safeguards your business by ensuring all steps are taken, such as electronic document uploads, scheduling exit interviews, updating personal information, final paycheck preparations and more.
- 4 Annual leave:** Automation can minimise the burden of managing annual leave, automatically sending employee holiday requests to managers for sign-off.
- 5 Employee performance:** Automation can automatically send requests and collect feedback in one place, as well as send reminders to complete these performance reviews.



Empowering staff with employee self-service

Another time-saving string to your bow is employee self-service.

Using the power of the cloud, mobile apps and web portals, employees can manage a wide array of basic tasks themselves, without having to involve managers or HR, including:

- 1 Document management:** Self-service portals enable employees to access crucial HR and payroll documents, such as contracts, payslips, P60s, handbooks, etc.
- 2 Centralised records:** With self-service you can collect all the information you need from your employees, such as emergency contacts, home address and accessibility needs, to name a few, requesting them to input it via the portal.

- 3 Absence Management:** Your employees can check their leave balances and request time off from any device.
- 4 Learning and development:** Employees can enrol in training sessions and track completed courses, promoting continuous growth while making it easy to manage personal development plans.



Informed decision-making: Reporting and dashboards

Is sickness absence increasing? What is the fiscal impact of bonuses this year? Which department has the most churn? For HR professionals, the questions can feel never-ending.

Good HR data can unlock rich insights into employee engagement and satisfaction.

However, many HR professionals are struggling to keep up with managing their staff data alongside their day-to-day people management – not to mention all the requests coming in from other teams!

Gartner surveyed 217 HR leaders and found prioritisation is becoming harder and harder for those individuals and their teams.

The Gartner survey also revealed that 55% of HR professionals are getting more requests on a wider variety of topics.



Why is HR reporting such a challenge?

If there's one thing those in HR can attest to, it's that pulling employee data together can be a complex and time-consuming challenge.

As well as standardised legislative reporting requirements, it is also incredibly common for HR to receive requests such as board reports, executive team reports, finance reports, team reports, departmental reports and more.

Some of this work is dull and repetitive, while other requests can take HR professionals by surprise, and take much longer to pull together.

For many, reporting can be a hugely manual task; pulling reports manually can take days, ensuring you have all the information from different sources and manipulating the data into a usable format.

Making the most of people data with modern HR software

It's mind-boggling how much reporting HR professionals have to do! For a people-centric profession, there is a lot of focus on managing numbers and data.

However, reporting doesn't have to be a burden.

With the right tools, your reporting and people data can empower you to make an even greater difference.

Unlock meaningful insights

What are your business and HR goals? Do you have the necessary data?

For example, a common HR metric is employee attrition - how quickly are people leaving and why?

Understandably, talent retention is a hot topic as it is expensive to hire new people and even more expensive to train them.

Additionally, a high number of leavers could indicate wider problems in the business which need solving.

If this was an issue you were looking to tackle, some key metrics you might want to track include:

- Are we losing people in critical roles that are hard to replace?
- Are people leaving after a particular length of service?
- What are the main reasons people give for leaving?
- How often are employees absent?
- Are your salaries competitive within your industry and location?

Answering these types of questions is crucial for informing your HR strategy.

However, if data is dispersed, or you're not tracking the necessary metrics, these burning questions will remain unanswered and your HR strategy will suffer.

How modern HR software helps



To get good data, you need the correct interface for collecting key information.

For example, having a dedicated leavers screen collects key information such as leaving reasons and can feature questionnaires.

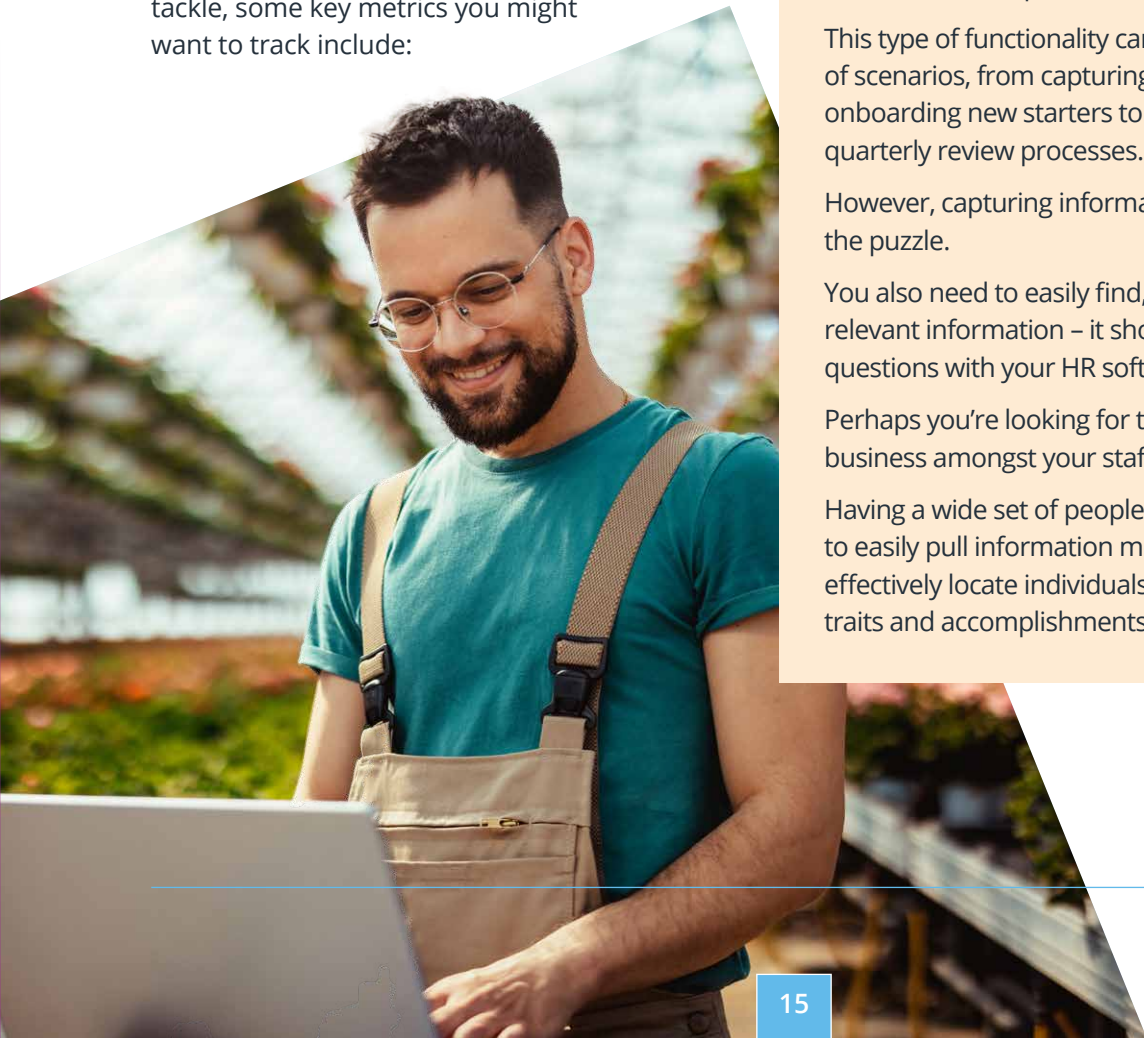
This type of functionality can apply to a range of scenarios, from capturing information when onboarding new starters to comprehensive quarterly review processes.

However, capturing information is only one part of the puzzle.

You also need to easily find, display and share the relevant information – it should be simple to answer questions with your HR software.

Perhaps you're looking for the future leaders of your business amongst your staff.

Having a wide set of people data and being able to easily pull information means you can effectively locate individuals with specific skills, traits and accomplishments.





Simplifying data consolidation

Collating and displaying data is often regarded as one of the biggest HR challenges.

HR is often asked questions regarding topics such as:

- **Basic headcount**
- **The number of starters and leavers**
- **Updates on salary spend vs budget**
- **Departmental growth**
- **Diversity, equity & inclusion (DE&I)**
- **Employee turnover**
- **And more**

While information requests for these topics can arise frequently, pulling together the necessary data can be tricky and time-consuming when information is fragmented and stored in different systems or spreadsheets.

What's worse is when you painstakingly pull all the data together, and the requestee comes back asking to see it in a different format or for significant changes to be made!

How modern HR software helps



HR software provides a centralised location for all your people data, meaning you no longer have to store vital information in spreadsheets or across different locations.

Additionally, software integration means your HR software can connect, share and collate data from other key systems.

Now, where it gets exciting is that good HR software enables you to create handy dashboards in the system, providing a centralised, real-time location for all the common data areas which you'll need throughout your day-to-day.

These dashboards can be customised to contain any data points you need, such as cost of sickness, days lost, headcount status, etc.

As well as the dashboards, good HR software enables you to quickly build reports within the system, which can also be scheduled, saving you from pulling the same data set again and again.

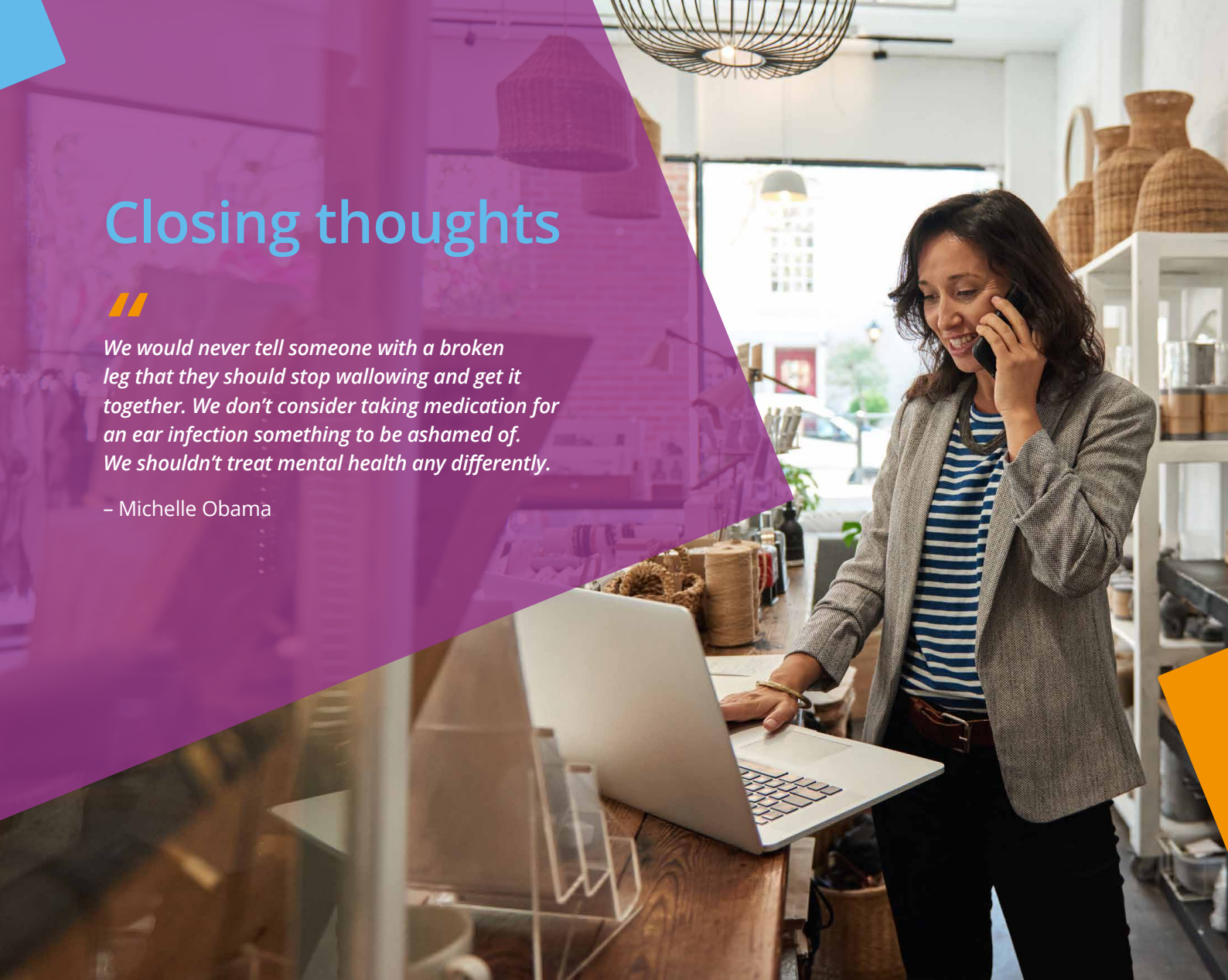
A bonus is that the data you're using is in real-time – should something change in the system, it's automatically reflected in your reporting without the need for manual intervention.

Closing thoughts



We would never tell someone with a broken leg that they should stop wallowing and get it together. We don't consider taking medication for an ear infection something to be ashamed of. We shouldn't treat mental health any differently.

– Michelle Obama



There's no silver bullet to wellbeing.

Every individual has their own challenges to deal with.

Hopefully, this guide has offered some food for thought on how to ease some of your HR burdens.

Whether that's taking a short-term action to see an immediate benefit, or looking at the bigger picture and assessing your processes.

Remember, if nothing changes, nothing changes.

If you don't take steps to improve how you work, then the unmanageable workload and demands will persist.

The important thing is to take the first step, big or small.





IRIS: people-focused solutions

Whether you have one employee or ten thousand, we have tools to help you provide the best experience for your people and the best outcomes for your business.

At IRIS, we put people at the centre of our feature-rich HR solutions, offering a variety of systems and services, so no matter the needs or budget of your business, you'll find tools to empower your processes.

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