**Speaker Summaries:**

*Mustafa Hassan, Project Officer from* [*Lancashire BME Network (LBN)*](http://lancashirebmenetwork.org.uk/)

We were very pleased to welcome Mustafa, who discussed some of the issues that Lancashire BME Network have encountered over the last year, and how they have addressed these to make sure workplace wellbeing is at the fore of their working culture.

* Working from home (WFH) has exposed unexpected challenges
* Organisations have had to be adaptive to organisational, individual and community needs
* Increased need for one-to-one meetings within mini-teams, as a once-a-week staff meeting has not sufficed
* Blurred lines between home and offices has been a problem
* Phased return back to the office has caused feeling of anxiety for some
* Management have enhanced open-door policies
* Dedicated wellbeing services- LBN have adopted a holistic approach to tackling issues in the community and in the workforce

[*Maisie Hulbert*](https://twitter.com/maisiehulbert?lang=en)*, Policy Officer from* [*ACEVO*](https://www.acevo.org.uk/)

ACEVO worked in collaboration with Mental Health First Aid England to produce a report titled [“Workforce Well-being in Charities”;](https://www.acevo.org.uk/reports/workforce-wellbeing-in-charities/) Maisie gave an overview of the report’s findings:

* Surveys have found that those working in the VCF sector have reported poor mental health due to various pressures.
* Charity leaders are overworked and often do many extra unpaid hours a week.
* Bullying in the workplace can lead to toxic workplace cultures and should be central concern for organisations.
* Many workers have a passion for the cause of the sector and so many challenging issues feel personal, often bringing anxieties to the role
* Leaders: there is a pressure to be authentic, lead a good culture and model good behaviour & so many leaders need support themselves
* Blurring of personal and professional boundaries has been very difficult for people
* There has quite rightly been a rise and change in conversations around structural racism in charities, and so leaders are having to make space in their work lives for big external issues as well as internal.

**Break-out room summaries:**

This is an overview of some of the issues highlighted in the breakout rooms and what organisations have done to combat issues of workplace well-being

*Issues:*

* WFH has suited some more than others
* Many have missed the connection within the office, for example having casual conversations with colleagues
* Some organisations have had to furlough staff but projects have still been running, so employees have had double the work
* Need to retain a social element as this was lost rapidly in the sudden change to WFH
* Hybrid working will be challenging, navigating organisationally how to manage some people from home and some from the office.

*Positive practices:*

* ‘Re-energise’ afternoons once a month where colleagues take the time off work to do something to “re-energise” themselves for example going for a walk, resting etc and share what they do with colleagues- it can be anything they want to manage their well-being
* Phased return to work for those who liked working from home
* Flexibility to working is key and a need to be as inclusive as possible
* Regular staff surveys to find out things such as what equipment staff needed to make transition easier, how they were feeling/coping as gauging wellbeing over zoom is very difficult
* Social time online e.g. quizzes, “bake-offs”, drinks on a Friday
* Mental Health First Aid courses proved very useful
* Important to be considerate of home lives: do employees have young children? Do they have broadband?
* Light-touch surveys with capacity to follow up on those struggling
* Social WhatsApp groups sets up to chat about non-work-related topics
* Trustees taking on role as an acting wellbeing lead for organisation, as sort of a middle ground between management and trustee

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