



WHITEPAPER

Clocking on and checking out

Why your employees may not be working at optimal levels and what you can do about it



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Present – but not accounted for

Your employee simply isn't there. In the physical or virtual workplace, presenteeism is more subtle. It's when an employee physically turns up to work or logs on, but is not working at full productivity.

But according to Dr David Batman, Occupational Health Consultant and member of the Virgin Pulse Science Advisory Board, the causes can be varied and may not be physical at all.



About **Dr. David Batman**



Dr David Batman has been a registered medical practitioner in the UK for over 40 years. He started work as a General Practitioner and has always recognised the importance of patient lifestyle affecting health risks. However, after trying to get his patients to adopt health lifestyles he noticed that the vast majority wanted a quick solution via either prescription or operation. He also became very aware of the relationship between work and health which is not a major part of a doctor's training and decided to move to a medical speciality.

He has advised other major businesses including Marks and Spencer, Manchester Airports Authority, P&O Ferries. Dr. Batman was the chief medical officer for Global Corporate Challenge for 10 years and is now part of the Virgin Pulse Science Advisory Board.

Are your employees actually working?

Absenteeism has been on the radar for businesses for a long time. Everyone can see that if your employee isn't at work, it's costing you money

Conservative estimates the annual cost of absenteeism to businesses is in the billions. But when Virgin Pulse analysed the data they gathered from almost 2,000 participants in 17 countries, it clearly showed that absenteeism levels were less than 10% of total presenteeism levels.

On average, employees in the sample group took about four sick days off each year but when they reported on how many days they lost while on the job, that number shot up to a staggering 57.5 days per year per employee

That's almost 12 full working weeks or one quarter of the entire year - that employees admit they really aren't performing at their best.

4 DAYS

Lost to **absenteeism** per employee each year

That's almost three working months.²

57.5 DAYS

Lost to **presenteeism** per employee each year

Total cost USA, Australia and UK



Presenteeism

USD \$250 BILLION



Absenteeism

USD \$2,500 BILLION

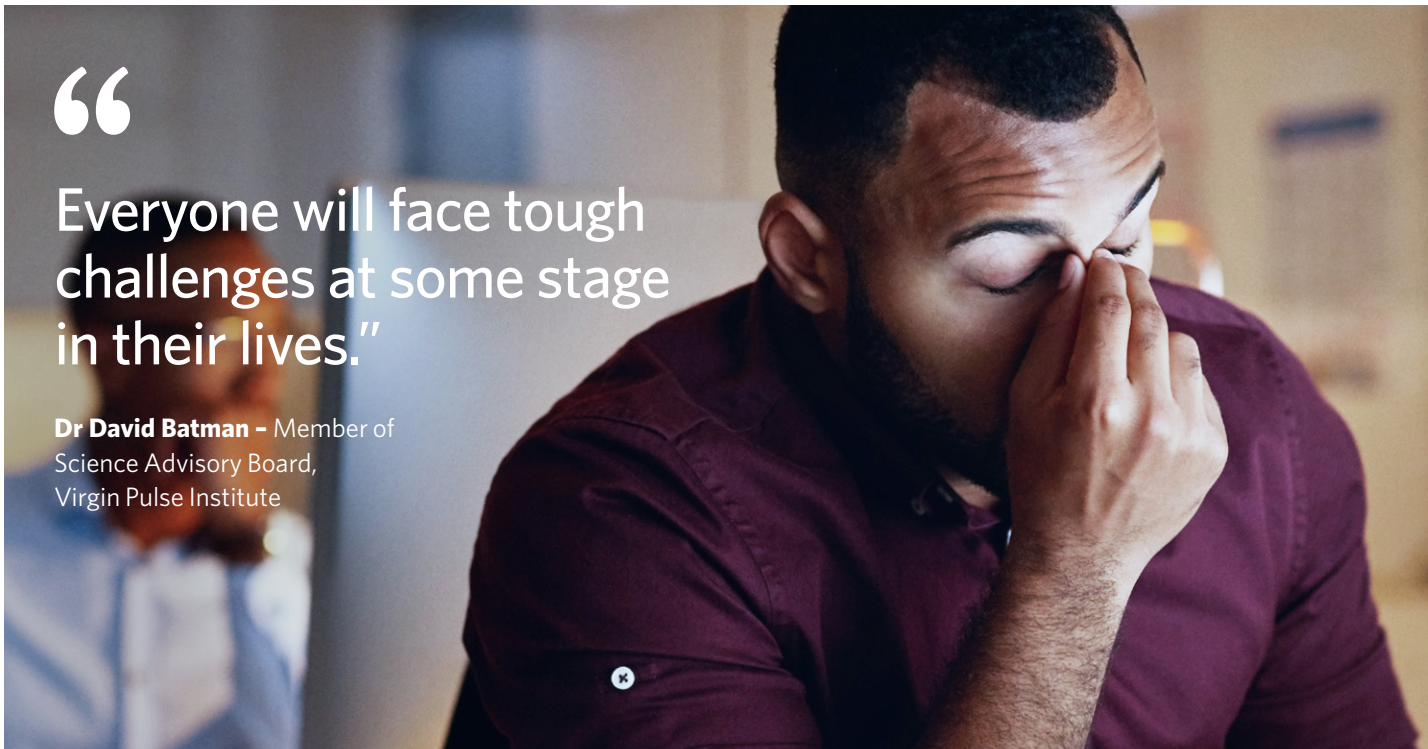
2. Virgin Pulse Global Challenge data. Based on the responses of 1,872 participants who took our scientifically validated survey, benchmarked against the World Health Organization 'Health and Workplace Performance' Questionnaire (WHO-HPQ). 2015.

Life's tough – plan for it

“

Everyone will face tough challenges at some stage in their lives.”

Dr David Batman - Member of Science Advisory Board, Virgin Pulse Institute



Psychological challenges are so widespread that workplaces should view them as inevitable and plan accordingly.

With over 40 years of clinical experience, Dr Batman is a registered Consultant Specialist in Occupational Health with particular expertise in psychological health at work.

“It’s a fact that life is uncertain and psychological challenges are going to affect everybody at some stage. Each day, 17% of the workforce will be affected by some form of psychological problem and one in four people will suffer from a major diagnosable mental health disorder in their lifetime but that doesn’t mean everyone else is off the hook,” Dr Batman said.

“Some of us will lose a loved one or suffer the breakdown of a relationship. We may experience a financial disaster or be bullied at work. We may be victims of crime, have a car accident, contract a serious illness or break a leg while skiing.

“A resilient business is built on resilient people.”

Dr Batman

“Life happens and it can be really tough. These are all things that can affect our focus and performance at work and they can happen to anyone.”

And with the onset of the pandemic, more people are struggling through tough challenges. Dr Batman says workplaces cannot avoid the inevitability of managing staff in crisis. You can’t plan your business around a team of robots that never experience any human challenges – that’s just unrealistic.

“Far better to create a supportive culture and build a resilient team that can effectively deal with the inevitable struggles of being human.”

Signs your team is struggling

Dr Batman's expertise includes helping employees at all levels of a business who are stressed, distracted and struggling to perform at work.

He says presenteeism is easy to spot if you know the signs. "I preach a simple message – pay attention if you notice something has changed," he said.



What are the red flags?



Poor sleep

People may have difficulty falling asleep and staying asleep.



Fatigued and low concentration



Easily distracted



Decreased engagement

Uninterested in what they're doing and unconcerned about outcomes.



Their performance may deteriorate

They may:

- Begin coming in late and leaving early.
- Have more accidents and altercations with colleagues.
- Begin falling asleep at work.
- Become unproductive.

2. Virgin Pulse Global Challenge data. Based on the responses of 1,872 participants who took our scientifically validated survey, benchmarked against the World Health Organization 'Health and Workplace Performance' Questionnaire (WHO-HPQ). 2015.

Tackle the cause, not the symptoms

The key metrics

In the Virgin Pulse's study, three key metrics correlated well with presenteeism – sleep, stress and happiness.² The study showed that improvements in sleep, stress and happiness for participants who completed the Virgin Pulse programme were associated with decreases in presenteeism. This indicates that if you can encourage your employees to form positive lifestyle habits, this pays dividends by reducing presenteeism levels.



Addressing presenteeism directly is difficult because it's often a symptom of other issues going on in an employee's life, according to Dr Batman. "This is much more complex because there can be more than one issue contributing at a time," said Dr Batman.

"Many of these topics are incredibly personal and not things that employees will naturally want to talk to people at work about. This means employers are often the last to know when there's a problem and may only find out when the person has hit crisis point."

"Presenteeism isn't the virus; it's the sniffle or the cough. If you want to cure it, you need to go after the cause."

Dr Batman



What contributes to presenteeism?

Personal issues

eg. Family, debt, relationships, substance abuse.

Business issues

eg. Job design, work relationships, trust and uncertainty.

Physical health decline

eg. Chronic ill health, major illness diagnosis.

Psychological health issues

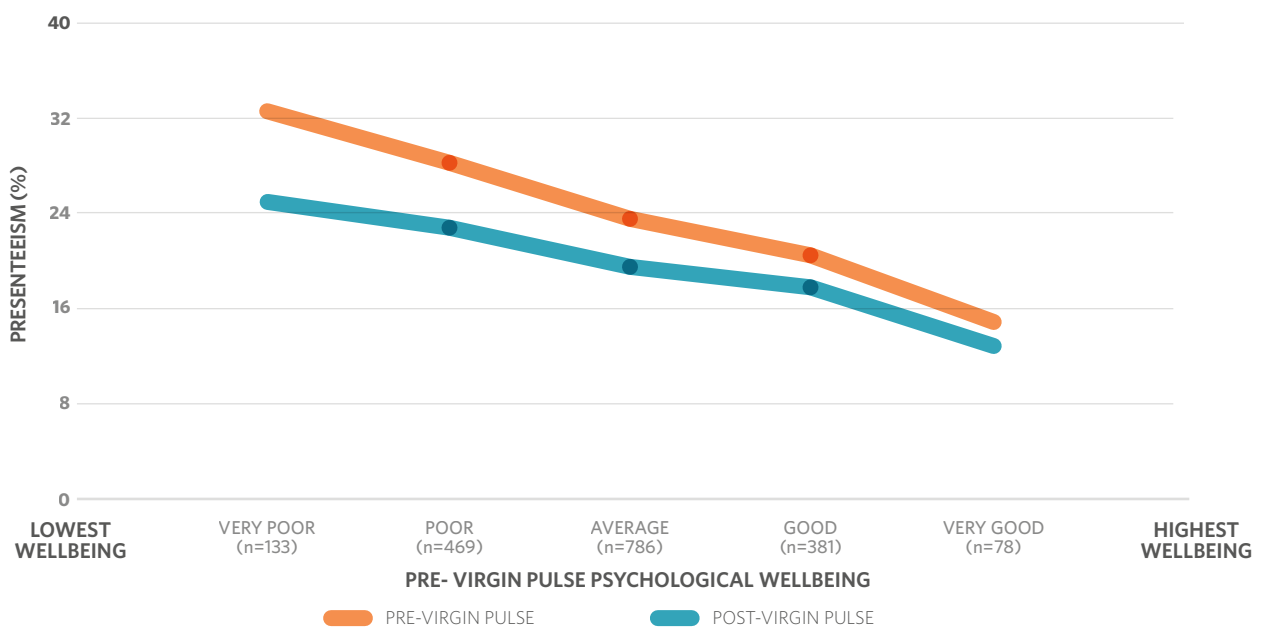
The biggest problem affecting an increasing number of people, and still growing.

² Virgin Pulse Global Challenge data. Based on the responses of 1,872 participants who took our scientifically validated survey, benchmarked against the World Health Organization 'Health and Workplace Performance' Questionnaire (WHO-HPQ). 2015.

Shifting the needle on key metrics

This graph shows the overall wellbeing of Virgin Pulse participants (a composite of sleep, stress and happiness responses). As wellbeing increases, presenteeism decreases.

Better psychological wellbeing equals lower presenteeism



One of the great things about presenteeism is how quickly you can bring about dramatic positive change. Studies show there is no quick fix for absenteeism; it needs long term solutions but presenteeism responds well to short term action that tackles those underlying issues of sleep, stress and happiness in creative ways. The critical element is balance – a simple, scientific equation not nearly as difficult to manage as people think.

It's how you exercise, eat, drink, whether or not you smoke, how well-rested you are and whether you find time for yourself, family and colleagues. Virgin Pulse has taken these principles and simplified them so they can be delivered easily in a workplace setting and the beauty of it is how simple and engaging it is – people almost can't believe it.

After participating in Virgin Pulse, businesses were able to shift the needle on those key metrics of sleep, stress and happiness and get their workforce productive and performing.

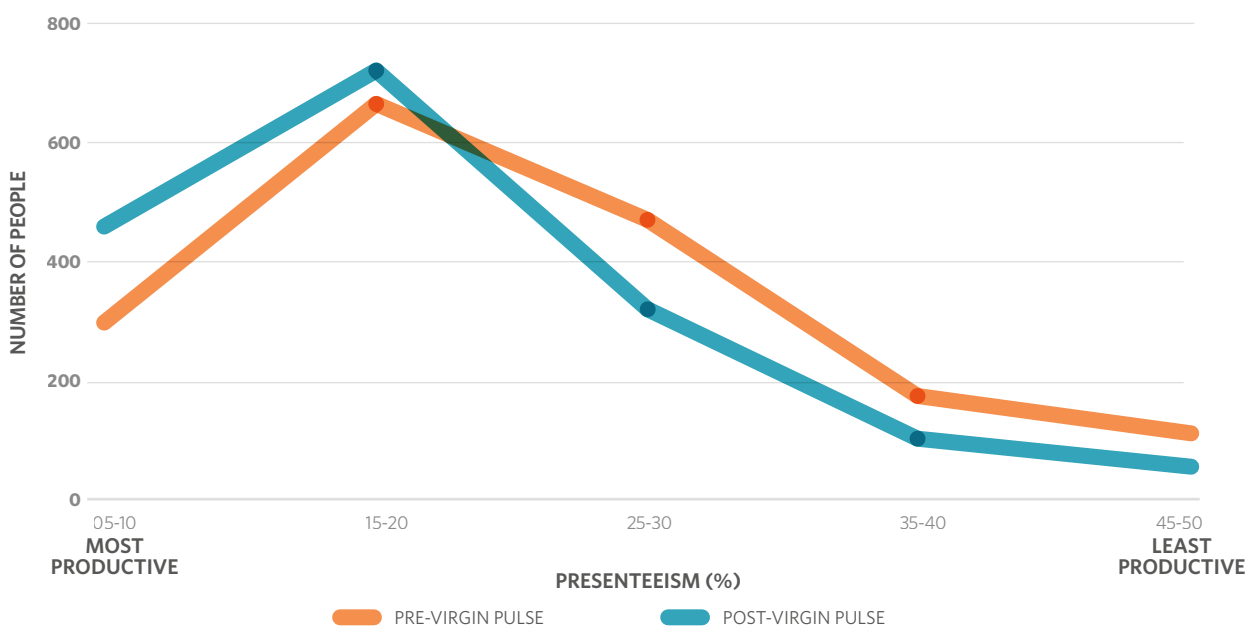
Balance is about how you manage your life – at work and at home – and it's just a series of simple steps

2. Virgin Pulse Global Challenge data.

How will your business benefit?

This graph shows that following Virgin Pulse, the employees shifted into a state of lower presenteeism. This means that more participants reported being more productive at work after completing Virgin Pulse programme than they were before.

More employees are more productive post-Virgin Pulse



The Virgin Pulse programme clearly shows that by investing in your people, you can make measureable improvements in productivity and reduce the phenomenon of lost time in your business.

Employees who participated in the Virgin Pulse programme reported substantial improvements in sleep, stress levels and overall happiness levels at the end of the programme.²

These changes were associated with improvements in their productivity. Those who participated in the Virgin Pulse programme were not only generally happier and more relaxed, they were also markedly more productive than they had been before. A substantial reduction in presenteeism was also detected. In simple terms, this means employees were spending more of the time they were at work actually working – and enjoying it more.

² Virgin Pulse Global Challenge data. Based on the responses of 1,872 participants who took our scientifically validated survey, benchmarked against the World Health Organization 'Health and Workplace Performance' Questionnaire (WHO-HPQ). 2015.

How can I transform my workforce?

Become part of the revolution

It's time to change the conversation, according to Dr Batman. "We need to stop talking about how many sick days people are taking and focus our energy on what they're doing when they're actually at work," he said.

We need to create a culture where our employees feel empowered to make smart choices that help them maintain balance in their lives and become more productive. Having happier, healthier, less stressed

employees is not only a great human outcome, it'll provide direct benefits to the business as well. The impact is immediate and powerful. When you change the conversation; you change the game.



Ready to transform your workforce?
Talk to an expert at Virgin Pulse to get started.

Learn more at virginpulse.com Find us on [facebook](#) | [twitter](#) | [linkedin](#)

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