

**brain  
in hand**

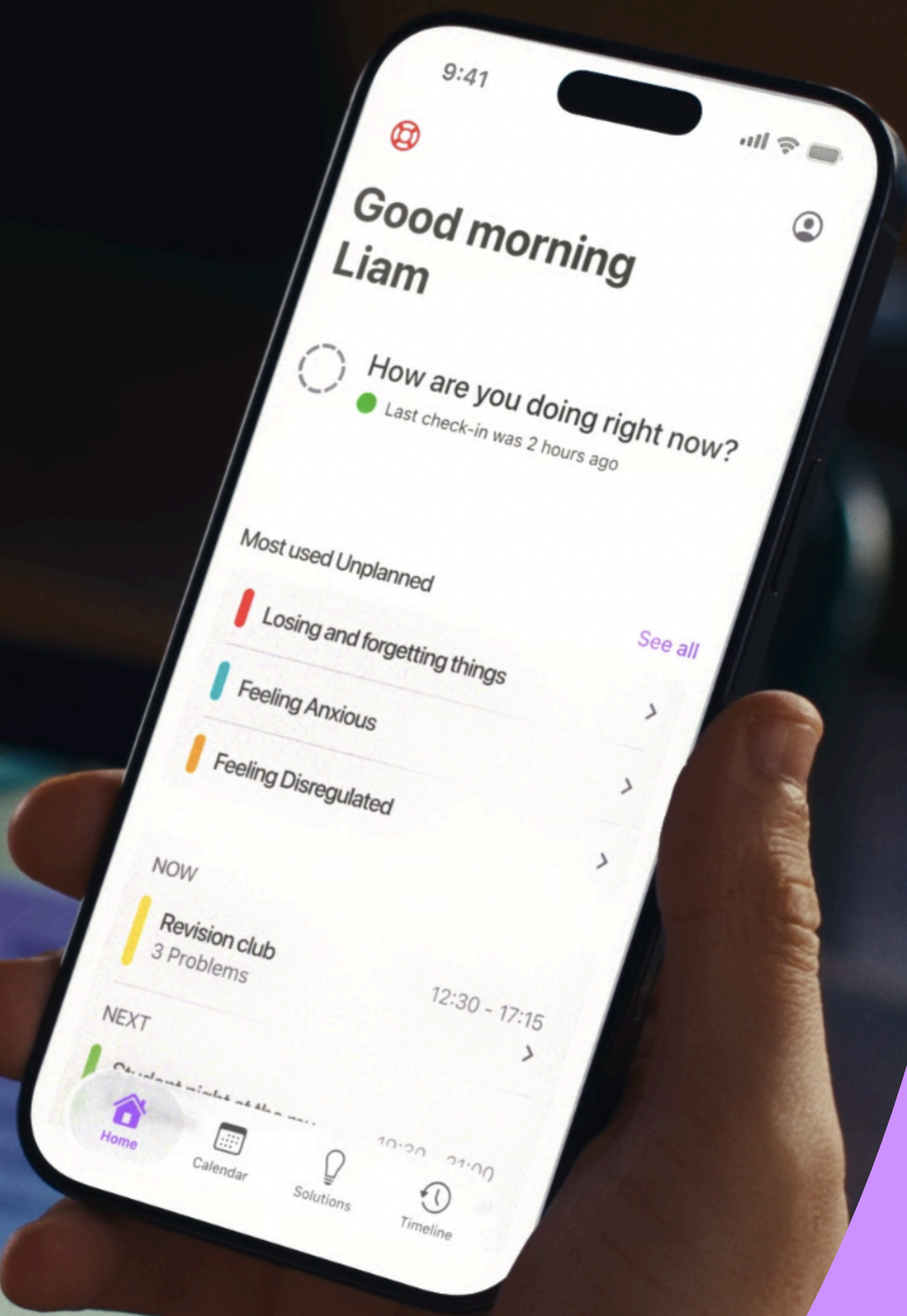


# Supporting neurodivergent employees at work with Brain in Hand

May 2026

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# Introduction

## Headlines

Brain in Hand helps employers unlock substantial savings per neurodivergent employee through improved wellbeing and work outcomes – £3,100 a year on average, or as high as £9,800 for those experiencing health absences when first accessing Brain in Hand.

In an independent evaluation of 278 autistic and ADHD employees (196 at 6-month follow up):

### Key outcomes

-  **Half of participants** improved wellbeing; **67%** reduced stress
-  Productivity improved for **over half of participants**
-  Of those with some absence at baseline, **over two thirds reduced it**
-  The employees costing organisations most – those with low productivity, high absence, and high leave intention - were most likely to benefit

## The business problem

UK employers lose £30 billion [1] each year due to reduced productivity, sickness absence, and staff turnover - much of which is driven by stress, fatigue, and poor mental health [2].

Autistic and ADHD employees are more likely to experience these challenges: without appropriate support, this can impact wellbeing, performance, and retention [2]. With the right support, however, neurodivergent employees can thrive and bring a competitive advantage to an organisation [3].

Brain in Hand (BiH) is a personalised support service combining digital tools with coaching to help individuals manage work and everyday challenges. This report presents key findings from an independent six-month evaluation of 279 employed autistic and ADHD people, examining changes in wellbeing, work experiences, and workplace outcomes - and what this means for employers.

## About the study



Independent evaluation of Brain in Hand (BiH) conducted by the Behavioural Insights Team<sup>1</sup>



Survey data and participant insights were collected at baseline, 3 months, and 6 months

### The study at a glance



**278** participants at baseline



**196** participants by 6 months



**3** key timepoints: baseline, 3 months, 6 months

## About the participants

### Representative sample

✓ Participants were screened to ensure a representative sample

### Diverse organisations

✓ Participants were drawn from a diverse range of organisations, with strong representation from public and mission-driven sectors (NHS 32%, charity/not-for-profit 18%), alongside professional services (17%) and education (12%). Other sectors were each represented at smaller levels (<10%).

### Income profile

✓ The sample primarily reflects mid-income employees, with over 80% earning between £20,000 and £60,000.

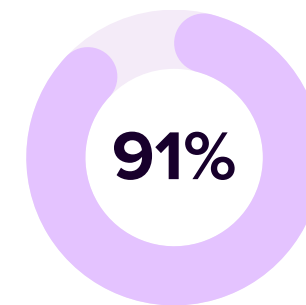
### Organisation size

✓ The sample also includes organisations of varying size, with over a third from very large employers (>5,000 employees), alongside representation from small (<50 employees) and mid-sized organisations.

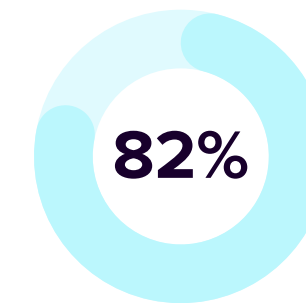
<sup>1</sup>This report includes findings from the Behavioural Insights report, and further findings analysed by the Brain in Hand research team.

## The challenge facing employers and how we measured it

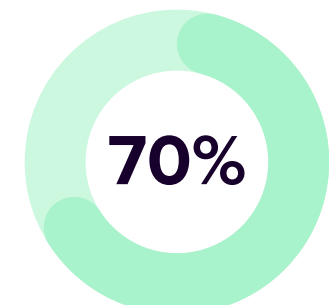
Participants entered the study with substantial challenges across wellbeing, functioning, and work outcomes.



reported low or very low wellbeing



reported moderate or severe impact day to day



reported moderate to severe anxiety

## Overview

Baseline picture	How we captured it
<b>91%</b> reported <b>low or very low wellbeing</b>	Overall mental wellbeing ( <a href="#">WHO5</a> ) [4]
<b>99%</b> reported <b>moderate to high stress</b>	Levels of pressure and stress ( <a href="#">PSS</a> ) [5]
<b>Almost all participants</b> reported <b>significant mental fatigue</b>	Mental exhaustion and burnout risk ( <a href="#">MFS</a> ) [6]
<b>70%</b> reported <b>moderate to severe anxiety</b>	Symptoms of anxiety ( <a href="#">GAD7</a> ) [7]
<b>82%</b> reported <b>moderate or severe impact day to day</b>	Day-to-day functioning ( <a href="#">WHODAS</a> ) [8]
Many reported <b>low confident and low energy</b> at work	Work experiences of confidence and feeling energised
Participants rated their <b>work performance below their peers</b>	Self-rated work performance ( <a href="#">HPQ</a> ) [9]
<b>Absence</b> was <b>concentrated in a smaller high-impact group</b>	Health-related work absence ( <a href="#">HPQ</a> ) [9]
<b>Over one third</b> were <b>considering leaving</b>	Likelihood of leaving their job in the next 12 months



## What Brain in Hand changes

### Wellbeing and functionality: the opportunity

Employers receive an average return of £4.70 for every £1 [10] invested in workplace mental health and wellbeing initiatives.

However: only 55% of UK employees [11] feel their organisation genuinely prioritises wellbeing

### Wellbeing and functioning: Brain in Hand impact



Reported moderate to large **reductions in stress**



Reported **reductions in mental fatigue**



Reported meaningful wellbeing improvements, with over one third clinically significant.

### 38% Improved functioning

Clinically meaningful improvements were reported in the ability to **manage day-to-day work and life**.

### 42% Reduced anxiety

Clinically meaningful improvements in **anxiety** were reported by many participants.

**All improvements were statistically significant:** statistical tests showed that this change was robust and not down to chance.



### Engagement insight

Average **wellbeing improvements** were almost **twice as large** for participants who **engaged consistently with the app** (active in at least 75% of weeks).

## Work experiences: the challenge

Confidence and energy are key to work performance – but neurodivergent people are more likely to report challenges [12] in these areas.

### Work experiences: Brain in Hand impact

**1.5x**

#### Increased confidence

Participants were 1.5 times more likely to feel confident at work regularly

**2x**

#### Increased energy

Participants were twice as likely to feel energised at work regularly

*Improvements showed statistically significant improvements*



#### Workplace insight

Improvements in **energy** were strongly **associated with** larger **gains in work performance**.


## Work outcomes: the cost

UK employers lose £30 billion [1] each year due primarily to reduced productivity, as well as sickness absence and staff turnover.

### Workplace outcomes: Brain in Hand impact

**51%** Improved work performance

More than half of the participants reported a meaningful **improvements in work performance**

 Employees who improved their wellbeing saw performance gains over three times larger than those who did not.

### Workplace outcomes: Brain in Hand impact (continued)

**71%** Reduced absence

Those with baseline absence reduced it meaningfully, 60% cut it out altogether



Employees with very high absence ( $\geq 40\%$ ) reduced absence by  $\sim 90$  hours over a month period, on average.

**45%** Turnover risk

45% of those at high risk of leaving were no longer high risk at 6 months



#### Engagement insight

**86% (25/29) of users whose health-related absence meaningfully reduced engaged consistently with Brain in Hand coaching (at least 3 coaching sessions).**

## Caveats

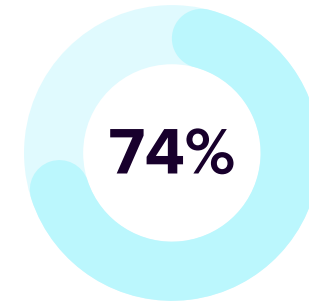
- Although there were substantial reductions in absence and leave intention for high-risk baseline groups, these groups were relatively small
- Change in overall average levels for these outcomes was minimal across timepoints.
- When considering absolute absenteeism (which includes non-health-related hours like annual leave), the proportion reducing or cutting out absence is lower



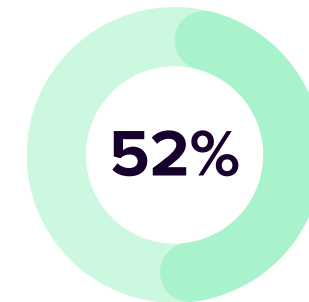
## Engagement with Brain in Hand

# Engagement with Brain in Hand and what it facilitated

At 6 months:



74% of participants had at least 3 coaching sessions



52% were active in the app in at least half of study weeks

These levels of engagement are high compared to typical digital health tools

Participants discussed how engagement facilitated outcomes:

“

*“I feel like I have made really **positive strides forwards in my confidence...***

*I've been able to challenge my negative limiting self beliefs and be able to question some of the underpinning motivations and behavioural drivers that are causing me to act in certain way for example not starting something...*

*I can say safely, that **if I had not been part of this study and had the opportunity to access Brain in Hand & the coaching support, I wouldn't have been able to stay in my job.***

“

*“I have felt more **productive at work** because I am more able to prioritise my time and pre-emptively book in rests or time to decompress and also ensure that I'm not overdoing things.*

*This means **I've not had any work absences for the past 3 months.** This is mostly due to the coaching sessions.”*

# Possible cost savings with Brain in Hand

## Across the whole sample



When combining improvements in work performance with reductions in health-related absence, Brain in Hand is estimated to generate **£2,400–£3,100 per employee per year in cost savings, on average.**<sup>2</sup>

When considering only those with baseline health absence (a ‘high risk’ group):



Estimated savings increase to **£7,900–£9,800 per employee per year.**<sup>3</sup>

## How savings happen:

### User savings insight: Michelle

Michelle works in education as a professor, on a salary of £80,000+. They engaged with the app consistently and had 6 coaching sessions across the study period. Over 6 months, **their productivity doubled from 30% to 60%**, and they **reduced their health absence from 75% to just 18%** (a reduction of 90 hours of absence across a month). **This equates to an annual saving of £37,000 - £41,000.**

The user discussed how they had “*felt more in control and empowered to ask for what I need, which has reduced the anxiety*”, while better “*cop[ing] with work stress*”. This had further wide-reaching effects for the user: “*I have felt more able to advocate for myself, and as a result have been able to seek specific mental health support and start down a treatment process for disordered eating*”.

### User savings insight: Andrew

Andrew works in the charity sector, with a salary between £20,000 - £39,999. They engaged consistently with the app and had 8 coaching sessions over the study period. By 6 months, **their work productivity had increased from 30% to 80%**, and their **health absence reduced from 38% to 11%** (a reduction of 40 hours of absence across a month). **This equates to an annual cost saving of £16,000-£21,000.**

Andrew discussed how “*the coaching I've had had helped me to develop self-compassion, self-understanding around how my brain works and developing systems that work for me and applying them inside and outside of the app*”. This, they explained, meant they had “*felt more productive at work because I am more able to prioritise my time and pre-emptively book in rests or time to decompress and also ensure that I'm not overdoing things. This means I've not had [many] work absences for the past 3 months*.”

# Employer implications

Most employers we speak to **genuinely want to do right** by their neurodivergent employees. The challenge we hear is that they often don't know where to start, what support they need, nor who the trusted partners are in the market that can help them be more neuroinclusive.

## The evidence matters because it's so rare

Research that is independent, longitudinal, and grounded in nearly 300 real employees moves the conversation beyond anecdote.

Neurodivergent employees in this study arrived with substantial challenges: near-universal stress, high anxiety, and performance well below their own expectations. Six months later, **the majority had meaningfully improved across almost every measure.**

## For employers, a few things stand out:

- ✓ The employees generating the highest absence costs showed the greatest gains, which means the business case and the human case point in the same direction.
- ✓ Retention risk, often invisible until it's too late, was substantially reduced in the highest-risk group.
- ✓ Productivity and absence shifts translated into £2,400–£9,800 per employee annually in recoverable costs; figures that belong in business financial strategy, not just health and wellbeing planning.



### Key insight

Reasonable adjustments remain important. But they're a floor, not a ceiling. What this research suggests is that **neurodivergent employees thrive with consistent, personalised, coached support**, and that **when employers provide it, everyone benefits.**

## Find out what Brain in Hand could do for your workforce

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<sup>2</sup>Estimates combine changes in self-rated work performance with reductions in health-related absence over a four-week period, translated into additional working hours and valued using annual salary data.

<sup>3</sup> This subgroup represents a smaller proportion of employees (n=37) and only reflects potential impact among those with baseline levels of health absence.



## Links and References

**To cite this report:** Scott, M and Guyatt, H (2026). Supporting neurodivergent employees at work with Brain in Hand. Brain in Hand Ltd. May 2026

**To read the independent Behavioural Insights report on overall changes for some of the reported variables, see here:** <https://www.bi.team/publications/evaluating-the-impact-of-brain-in-hand-on-employee-wellbeing-and-performance/>

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