

# MAD WORLD

## LEADERS SUMMIT 2026

*Workplace Culture, Employee Health & Wellbeing*

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November, Convene, 155 Bishopsgate, London

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### PREVIEW PROGRAMME – SUBJECT TO CHANGE

*This framework outlines the core themes, timings, and session formats for the MAD World Leaders Summit. Specific session titles, final timings, and speakers are subject to confirmation as the programme is finalised.*

### REGISTRATION, BREAKFAST & NETWORKING EXHIBITION · 08:00 to 09:00

#### 08:00 **Networking Breakfast and Exhibition**

Doors open for registration, a hosted networking breakfast and the exhibition. The exhibition hall is open from the start of the day. Sponsors and exhibitors are available for conversation from 08:00, with a dedicated 1-to-1 meeting schedule running throughout the morning for delegates who have pre-booked time.

09:00 *Delegates move to main auditorium*

### MORNING PLENARY · One Track · 09:00 to 10:30

#### 09:00 **OPENING ADDRESS**

#### **Welcome to MAD World 2026**

The chair welcomes delegates, sets the tone for the day and names what the room has in common: a shared belief that work can and should be better for the people doing it. A brief provocation to frame the day ahead, not a summary of what is coming but a challenge about what each person here is prepared to do differently by the time they leave.

09:10

**KEYNOTE**

## **What Are We Actually Dealing With?**

A data-driven, visually compelling picture of the landscape in 2026: financial pressure on organisations and individuals, AI accelerating faster than most workplaces can absorb, a generation entering work with expectations that existing cultures are not built to meet, and leadership norms that still reward overwork as commitment. Draws on the latest research, workforce data and real statistics to ground the day in evidence before the conversations begin. Delegates receive key data takeouts. The session closes with a five-minute open Q&A.

09:30

**IN CONVERSATION WITH**

## **The Neuroscience of Performance: Why Wellbeing is the Strategy, Not the Support Act**

A deep, unhurried conversation exploring what the science of human performance actually says, not the simplified version that circulates in leadership training. How stress, recovery and psychological safety interact at a neurological level. Why organisations that treat health and wellbeing as a separate workstream are building on unstable foundations. What it genuinely takes to create conditions for sustained high performance without burning people out. The interviewer holds the conversation at depth, pushing beyond comfortable narratives to surface the tensions leaders actually face in practice.

10:00

**FIRESIDE CONVERSATION**

## **The AI Question: What Is It Doing to Us?**

Beyond the productivity debate lies a harder conversation: what is constant connectivity, algorithmic pressure and AI-mediated work actually doing to human cognition, identity and mental health? This fireside brings together an expert in digital health and wellbeing and a senior people leader for an honest exchange. Not a pitch for solutions, but a genuine grappling with the problem. The conversation covers hybrid fatigue, notification culture, the erosion of cognitive recovery time, and what digital wellbeing genuinely requires from employers as distinct from individual discipline.

**Petra Velzeboer**, Author, Digital Wellbeing

10:30

*Morning Break · 40 Minutes · Exhibition Hall Open · 1-to-1 Sponsor Meetings Active*

# PRE-LUNCH · TWO CONCURRENT TRACKS · 11:10 to 12:20

## TRACK A · STRATEGY & LEADERSHIP

## TRACK B · PRACTICE & CULTURE

11:10

### PANEL DISCUSSION

#### **Making the Case: How Do You Get Leadership to Actually Care?**

The most consistently cited frustration from wellbeing and HR professionals is the gap between evidence and action at board level. This panel opens with two short data-led case studies from practitioners who have built the business case successfully, then broadens into a frank discussion about what actually works. What data convinced decision-makers? What language landed? What failed completely? Panellists bring a CFO perspective, a wellbeing lead with measurable outcomes to share, and someone prepared to present the data from an initiative that did not deliver.

Speakers:

**Susan Gee**, Head of Occupational Health & Wellbeing, Yorkshire Water Services

### PANEL DISCUSSION

#### **Good Mental Health as a Performance Strategy: Reframing the Whole Conversation**

The workplace wellbeing conversation is dominated by crisis, deficit and damage limitation. This panel argues for a different starting point: that good mental health is not the absence of illness but an active state that drives better performance, stronger relationships, more creative thinking and more resilient organisations. What does it look like to build for positive mental health rather than simply treating poor mental health? How do leaders normalise talking about mental health and wellbeing in the same breath as results and culture? And what happens to the data when organisations make that shift?

Speakers:

**Lauren Lunniss**, Health & Wellbeing Manager, BNP Paribas

**Nimisha Overton**, Former EMEA DEI Lead, Canon

11:50

### IN CONVERSATION WITH

#### **I Got It Wrong: What It Actually Takes to Change a Culture**

Opens with a 10-minute structured case study: specific initiatives, specific data, specific outcomes both positive and negative. The senior executive then stays on stage for an extended conversation that

### FIRESIDE CONVERSATION

#### **Benefits Design and Financial Wellbeing: What Employers Can Actually Do**

Opens with a 10-minute data-led overview: the statistics on financial stress and mental health, what benefits packages currently look like versus what employees say they need, and what the evidence shows about

goes deeper into the decisions behind the data. Not a polished retrospective but a genuine account of what systemic change costs, what breaks along the way, and what the numbers do and do not capture. Delegates receive key data and learning takeouts

which interventions work. The fireside then examines what meaningful benefits design looks like in practice: moving beyond generic EAP signposting, connecting financial, physical and mental health support, and what personalised provision actually requires. Delegates leave with a practical framework for auditing their own benefits offer.

**12:20** Lunch · 1 hour · Exhibition Hall · 1-to-1 Sponsor Meetings Active

**POST-LUNCH · TWO CONCURRENT TRACKS** · 13:20 to 14:35

**TRACK A · STRATEGY & LEADERSHIP**

**TRACK B · PRACTICE & CULTURE**

**13:20**

**PANEL DISCUSSION**

**From Risk Assessment to Real Change: Psychosocial Hazards in Practice**

The regulatory landscape around psychosocial risk is shifting, but most organisations are still treating it as a compliance exercise rather than a genuine lever for culture change. This panel brings together practitioners who have moved beyond tick-box risk assessments to systemic approaches. What does a meaningful psychosocial hazard framework look like from end to end? How do you win management buy-in when the evidence feels abstract? What do measurable outcomes actually look like, and what do you do when the results are disappointing? Contributors bring perspectives from organisations at different stages of the journey.

**PANEL DISCUSSION**

**Men's Mental Health: Why Generic Wellbeing Fails Half the Workforce**

Men remain significantly harder to reach through conventional wellbeing programmes and the gap is widening. This panel is a direct, unvarnished conversation about why that is, what approaches have broken through, and what the workplace can realistically do. Contributors address the cultural and social dynamics that make men reluctant to engage, what peer-led and community-based approaches look like in practice, and the difficult question of how to create safe spaces before a crisis point rather than after.

Speakers:

**Jamie Broadley**, Head of Health & Wellbeing, Serco Group plc

**14:00**

**FIRESIDE CONVERSATION**

**FIRESIDE CONVERSATION**

## The Whole Person: Connecting Financial, Physical and Mental Health

Opens with a 10-minute data-led presentation: the evidence on how financial stress, physical health and mental health interact, what the research says about which interventions break the cycle, and what it costs organisations to keep treating these as separate workstreams. The fireside then explores what joining the dots actually looks like inside a real organisation: the decisions that had to be made, what the data showed before and after, and what remains genuinely hard.

## Inclusion, DEI and the Geopolitical Moment: Holding the Line When the Ground Is Shifting

Opens with a 10-minute case study presenting real data: what happened to psychological safety scores, engagement, and mental health indicators in an organisation that navigated DEI pressure publicly. The fireside then broadens the conversation to examine what employers face more widely: the direct connections between inclusion commitments, psychological safety and employee mental health, how different communities are experiencing the current climate, and what leadership on inclusion looks like when the external environment feels hostile.

**Simon Blake** OBE, CEO, Stonewall

14:35 Afternoon Break · 40 Minutes · Exhibition Hall Open · 1-to-1 Sponsor Meetings Active

## WORKSHOP ROUND ONE · CHOOSE ONE OF THREE

15:15 to 16:10

	WORKSHOP A	WORKSHOP B	ROUNDTABLE C
15:15	<p><b>WORKSHOP</b></p> <p><b>WORKSHOP A1</b></p> <p><b>Burnout: Spotting It, Stopping It, and Building Systems That Do Not Create It</b></p> <p>This workshop moves away from individual resilience</p>	<p><b>WORKSHOP</b></p> <p><b>WORKSHOP B1</b></p> <p><b>Early Careers and the Next Generation: What They Actually Need</b></p> <p>Organisations are finding that early-career talent has different expectations, communication</p>	<p><b>ROUNDTABLE</b></p> <p><b>ROUNDTABLE C1</b></p> <p><b>Beyond the Office: Building Wellbeing for Shift Workers, Night Workers and Field Teams</b></p> <p>Standard wellbeing programmes are built around</p>

<p>frameworks and into organisational design. Working in small groups, delegates map the conditions in their own organisations that generate burnout risk: workload, role clarity, autonomy, recognition, fairness, community. Using real examples brought by participants, the group develops a practical prevention framework that targets the system rather than the symptom. Output: a draft intervention map each delegate takes away. Facilitated small-group workshop. Chatham House rules.</p>	<p>norms and mental health challenges than previous cohorts, and that programmes designed for an earlier era are failing them. This workshop examines what sustainable high performance looks like for a generation entering work in an AI-accelerated world, what managers need to do differently, and how to build wellbeing into early careers programme design from the ground up. Includes perspectives on retention, post-programme engagement and the growing value of human skills alongside technical ones. Discussion and practical design workshop.</p> <p>Workshop lead: <b>Rosie Ellis</b>, Early Careers Lead – EMEA and APAC, Aon Services Corporation</p>	<p>office hours and desk-based work. This workshop is for practitioners trying to reach the rest of their workforce: shift workers, night workers, those in manufacturing or production environments, field-based and customer-facing staff, and employees working across time zones. In small groups, delegates map the specific barriers in their own organisations and develop targeted approaches that go beyond repurposing office-based content. Includes practical tools for reaching disconnected or hard-to-reach employee groups. Facilitated working session. Chatham House rules.</p>
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**WORKSHOP ROUND TWO · CHOOSE ONE OF THREE**  
*16:10 to 16:55*

<b>WORKSHOP A</b>	<b>WORKSHOP B</b>	<b>ROUNDTABLE C</b>
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<b>16:10</b>	<p><b>WORKSHOP</b></p> <p><b>WORKSHOP A2</b></p> <p><b>Benefits Design and the Employee Lifecycle: Making Health and Wellbeing the Default</b></p> <p>Wellbeing as a standalone programme is structurally weak. This session works through the full employment lifecycle: attraction, onboarding, development conversations, performance processes, transitions and</p>	<p><b>WORKSHOP</b></p> <p><b>WORKSHOP B2</b></p> <p><b>Getting Line Managers to Actually Role-Model Wellbeing</b></p> <p>Line managers are the most important variable in employee wellbeing and the most common point of failure. This workshop examines why training alone rarely changes manager behaviour, what accountability structures are needed, and how to build</p>	<p><b>ROUNDTABLE</b></p> <p><b>ROUNDTABLE C2</b></p> <p><b>Neurodiversity, Inclusion and the Wellbeing Environment</b></p> <p>How organisations design physical environments, communication norms and support structures has a disproportionate impact on neurodivergent employees, and often improves things for everyone else too. This workshop examines the direct connections between neurodiversity, psychological safety and mental health outcomes, with practical focus on how wellbeing infrastructure can either welcome or</p>
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exits, examining where wellbeing and benefits design can be embedded rather than bolted on. Particular focus on how benefits packages can be made genuinely responsive to different employee groups rather than homogenous, and how to identify the highest-leverage gaps between current provision and real employee need. Delegates leave with a prioritised action map. Facilitated working session. Templates provided.

genuine psychological safety in teams rather than performing it. Using real scenarios brought by participants, the group practises the conversations that matter and identifies the organisational conditions that make them possible. Scenario-based workshop. Chatham House rules.

exhaust people who process the world differently. Includes an environment audit tool and communication design frameworks delegates can take back and apply. Discussion and practical workshop.

16:55 *Room Reset · 10 Minutes · Chairs and partition to be moved before closing plenary*

## CLOSING PLENARY · 17:10 to 17:30

17:05 **ROUNDTABLE**

### **Three Things I Am Taking Back**

Before the day closes, delegates have structured time in facilitated table discussions to identify three concrete commitments they will take back to their organisations. Groups are deliberately mixed across sectors and roles via the event app, so the conversation benefits from different perspectives rather than echo chambers. Tables challenge each other's commitments and share relevant resources. At the end, one commitment from each table is submitted via the app and a selection is shared with the room by the chair. Accountability prompts are sent to delegates 30 days after the event.

17:25 **CLOSING ADDRESS**

### **From Conversation to Commitment**

The chair draws together the threads of the day, not as a summary but as a challenge. What has the room decided? What is the one thing that has to change? The closing address names the gap between knowing and doing, and asks directly what each person in the room will do differently in the next working week. High energy, personally challenging, deliberately direct..

17:30

**NETWORKING RECEPTION**

**Drinks Reception, Exhibition Hall and Peer Networking**

The formal programme ends. The exhibition hall reopens with provider stands, informal conversations and space to follow up on connections made during the day. A colour-coded badge system allows delegates to identify others by role. QR codes on badges enable instant connection without exchanging cards. A quiet, low-light room is available for those who need to step away from the noise.

Themed networking opportunities will be available

*Close of Day*