

ECONOMIC BULLETIN OCTOBER 2026

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES

POWERED BY

VM Wealth Management Limited

Stay Informed | Stay Ahead

INFLATION

Annual (Point-to-Point)

7.9% (Aug 2026)

▲ +1.2 pp from Jun 2026 (6.7%)

Core Inflation

5.2% (Aug 2026)

▲ +0.2 pp from Jun 2026 (5.0%)

POLICY RATE

Bank of Jamaica

6.0% (effective Sep 29, 2026)

▲ +0.5 pp from Aug 2026 (5.5%)

The BOJ expects inflation to remain above the 4–6% target range until mid-2027.

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

Real GDP Growth

–2.8% (June 2026 quarter) ▼

Full-year 2026 (projected)

1.0% – 3.0% (likely near lower end) —

OIL PRICES

Average (Sept 2026)

US$95 per barrel ▲ (vs. prior period)

Tracking closer to the BOJ's severe scenario, intensifying imported inflation risks.

INFLATION TREND

Annual inflation and core inflation (%)



BUSINESS EXPECTATIONS

Expected inflation in 12 months



Rising expectations can fuel wage demands, pricing decisions and broader price increases.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

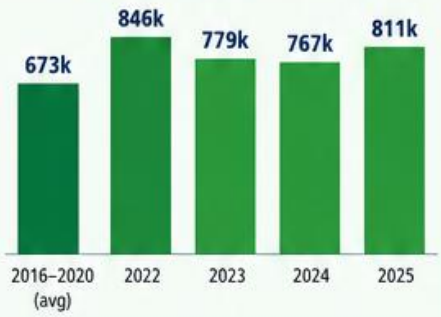
Sectoral contribution to recent contraction (Mar 2026 – Jun 2026)

- Agriculture ▼
- Mining ▼
- Accommodation ▼

September quarter (projected):
–1.0% to -3.0%

AGRICULTURE snapshot

Total agricultural output (metric tonnes)



Q2 2026 output decline
~17% ▼ (drought and heat)

Key crop price (some markets)

Pumpkin **J$250 – J$300** per pound

Drought declared in St Elizabeth, St James, St Ann, St Mary and Montego Bay (Manchester and St Catherine affected).

LABOUR MARKET & WELL-BEING

- Higher risk of absenteeism, presenteeism, errors and turnover.
- Depression and anxiety cost **~12 billion** working days lost annually and almost **US$1 trillion** in foregone productivity (global estimate).
- Digital technology and hybrid work are increasing constant availability and work-life pressures.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Contain second-round inflationary pressures.
- Protect productive investment.
- Address supply-side constraints (food, energy, logistics).
- Build a more resilient, inclusive and competitive economy.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Inflation remains above target and risks are tilted higher.
- Monetary policy is focused on price stability, with a cautious stance on growth.
- Workplace well-being is essential for productivity and competitiveness.
- A balanced approach is needed: price stability, support for productive investment and stronger supply-side performance

How to Become a PSOJ Member

CONNECT | ADVOCATE | CREATE OPPORTUNITY

STEP 1

Access the application form

Click the link below to open the PSOJ Membership Application Form.

https://www.psoj.org/memberships/business/

STEP 2

Complete the application

Fill in all required fields on the form. Please make sure your information is accurate and complete to avoid delays in processing.

STEP 3

Upload your supporting documents

Attach the following:

- Your Business Registration Certificate
- A reference letter from your bank.

STEP 4

No bank reference letter? No problem.

If you don't have a reference letter from your bank, you can choose one of the two other forms of reference on the application. Just complete the reference section of the form, and our team will take it from there.

STEP 5

Submit your application

Once everything is completed, submit your application for review.

STEP 6

Await approval and your invoice

Our team will review your application. Once you're approved, you'll receive confirmation of your membership along with an invoice for payment.

STEP 7

Pay your annual subscription and start enjoying your benefits

Pay your annual membership subscription fee, and you're all set. Welcome to the PSOJ! You can now begin enjoying the full benefits of membership.

Welcome to the PSOJ!

STRONGER BUSINESSES | A BRIGHTER JAMAICA

PSOJ 2026

MEDIUM MEMBER ENTITLEMENTS

CATEGORY	ENTITLEMENTS	MEDIUM STANDARD	MEDIUM PREMIUM
Advocacy	Legislative Contributions / Reviews		
	Lobbying / Petitioning Relevant Authorities on Policy Reforms		
Networking Events	Executive Members Mingles		
	Internal And External Partnership Events		
Executive Business Forums	Partnership Forum/ Initiatives		
	Annual Economic Forum		
	President's Forums	2 Invites Per Year	3 Invites Per Year
	Committee Forums		
Promotions of Business	Email Blasts Amongst the PSOJ Network	4 Per Year	6 Per Year
	Member Spotlight		
	Social Media Highlight		1 Per Year
	E-blast	1 Per Year	1 Per Year
	Economic Bulletin Advertisements		1/2 Page Ad Per Year
Mentorship	Hall OF Fame Master Class Series/ Business Titans Series		
	Lunch And Learn		
	Mentor/ Mentee match making		
Access to Business Training	Corporate Governance Toolkit		
	Business Training Session as Available		
Access to Information	E-Bulletins With Updates On Key Events eg Trade missions		
	Economic Bulletin (Periodically)		
	Information to Support Business Development		
Use Of Membership Seal & Badge	Membership Badge & Seal (Renewed Annually)		
Administrative Support	Rental of Boardroom		
Opportunity to Represent PSOJ on Key Committees or Boards	Opportunity To Sit on any Standing Committees		
	External Appointments To Sit on Public Sector Boards		
	Speaking Opportunities		
Business MatchMaking Services	Trade Missions		
Investment Facillitation	Access To Grant Opportunities (As They Arise)		
	Access To Loan Opportunities (As They Arise)		

Members are encouraged to explore Sponsorship & Advertising Opportunities, for even further brand exposure & visibility!

Executive Director's Message

Competitiveness in an Era of Constraint and Opportunity

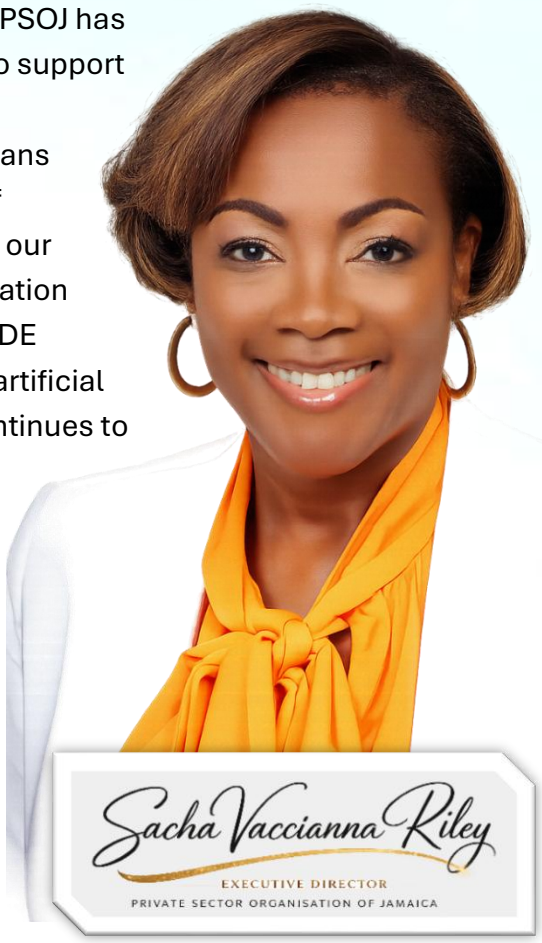
One recurring theme in this month's Economic Bulletin and in many private-sector conversations is that competitiveness is increasingly shaped by factors beyond traditional measures of economic performance.

While inflation remains an important consideration for businesses and households alike, business leaders are grappling with a broader set of questions. How do we improve productivity? How do we build more resilient organisations? How do we equip our people with the skills needed for a rapidly evolving economy? And how do we position our businesses to take advantage of the opportunities presented by technological change while managing emerging risks?

These are not separate conversations. They are increasingly interconnected. For example, Jamaica's ongoing water challenges remind us that issues once viewed primarily as environmental concerns now sit squarely within economic competitiveness. Water security affects productivity, investment decisions, operating costs and business continuity. As a country, we will need continued collaboration between government, the private sector, and civil society to build the resilience needed to support sustainable growth in the years ahead. The private sector has an important role to play in that discussion.

At the same time, conversations surrounding workplace mental health continue to evolve in important ways. Increasingly, employers are recognising that employee well-being is not merely a social issue. It is a business issue. Organisations that foster healthier, more supportive, and more productive workplaces are often better positioned to innovate, retain talent, and compete effectively in challenging environments. Human capital, ultimately, remains our greatest competitive advantage.

That is why the PSOJ has been pleased to support initiatives that prepare Jamaicans for the future of work, including our recent collaboration with iamtheCODE Caribbean. As artificial intelligence continues to reshape industries and redefine the skills required for success, efforts to equip women and girls with digital and technology



VM GROUP | Transform your Everyday.
vmbs.com

capabilities are more important than ever. I encourage members to explore the opportunities currently available through the programme and to support participation from within their organisations while applications remain open. The businesses that thrive tomorrow will be those that invest in talent today.

The question of resilience extends equally to our MSME community. I am particularly pleased that the PSOJ, working alongside the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce and the Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters Association, has supported eighteen businesses affected by Hurricane Melissa through the MSME Resilience Grant Programme. These grants represent more than financial assistance. They represent an investment in business continuity, recovery and long-term sustainability. I also encourage members to review the recently announced MSME grant opportunities made available through MIIC and to take advantage of these important resources where applicable.

Similarly, I encourage members to participate in the HEART NSTA LEAP Internship Programme. Developing Jamaica's future workforce requires meaningful partnerships between business and education, and programmes such as these help to ensure that young people are exposed to the skills, experiences and opportunities necessary to contribute meaningfully to our economy.

As we look ahead, these issues will continue to feature prominently in the PSOJ's work. Indeed, they will form part of a broader conversation we are pleased to facilitate through a new executive engagement being hosted in partnership with McKinsey & Company on December 2. The session will explore what it takes for organisations to translate growth opportunities into tangible results through stronger execution, productivity improvements, digital transformation and AI-enabled competitiveness. Rather than focusing on technology for its own sake, the discussion will examine how business leaders can leverage innovation, operational transformation and emerging technologies to create measurable value and sustainable growth. It promises to be a highly relevant discussion for executives and leadership teams navigating an increasingly complex and rapidly changing environment.

As many organisations begin their strategic planning processes for 2027, I encourage leaders to view competitiveness through a broader lens. The future will belong not simply to those who invest in technology, nor solely to those who manage costs effectively, but to those who successfully combine resilience, innovation, talent development and execution. Those are the foundations upon which sustainable growth will be built, and they will be critical to Jamaica's continued progress in the years ahead.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATION OF JAMAICA PSOJ

VM GROUP | Transform your Everyday.

vmbs.com

JAMAICA'S ECONOMY

CHALLENGES TODAY. OPPORTUNITIES TOMORROW.

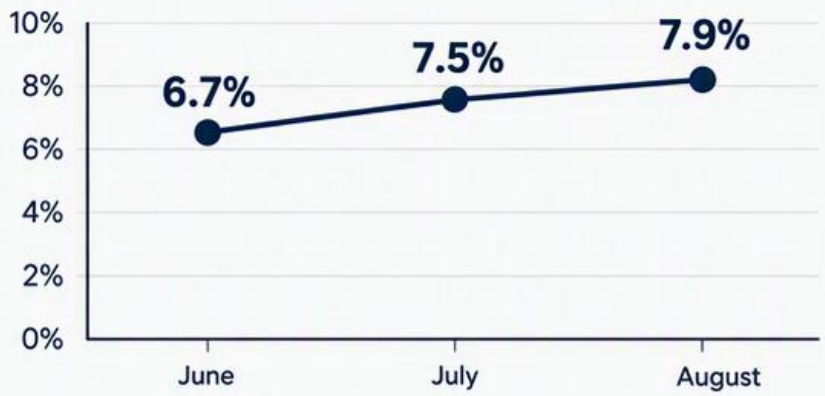
INFLATION ON THE RISE

Higher global prices, weather shocks and domestic pressures are pushing costs higher — affecting businesses, households and the broader economy.



INFLATION RATE

(Point-to-Point, 2026)



BUSINESS EXPECTATIONS

(Next 12 Months)

7% → **8%**

Previous expectation — Current expectation

> *"Rising inflation expectations are a serious warning signal and a red flag for the economy."*
>
> — Bank of Jamaica

KEY DRIVERS

HIGHER PETROLEUM PRICES

Transport costs have increased, contributing significantly to inflation.

MORE EXPENSIVE FOOD

Drought and adverse weather have pushed agricultural food prices higher.

GLOBAL PRESSURES

International commodity prices are about **10%** higher this year, with oil averaging around US$95 per barrel in September.

SECOND-ROUND EFFECTS

Initial price shocks risk spreading across the economy, keeping inflation higher for longer.

PRICE STABILITY BUILDS A STRONGER JAMAICA.

Lower and more stable inflation supports business investment, protects household purchasing power and creates the conditions for more inclusive and resilient growth.

Jamaica's Economy at a Difficult Inflection Point: Managing Inflation While Protecting the Recovery

Jamaica's economy has entered a demanding phase in which renewed inflation, post-hurricane reconstruction, drought conditions and geopolitical uncertainty are converging. The immediate policy challenge is to prevent temporary supply shocks from becoming embedded in prices and expectations, while avoiding an excessive weakening of investment and economic activity. Discussions between the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica and the Bank of Jamaica indicate that the economy retains important buffers, but the balance of risks has shifted decisively towards higher inflation and weaker-than-anticipated growth.

Annual point-to-point inflation accelerated from 6.7 per cent in June 2026 to 7.5 per cent in July and 7.9 per cent in August. The increase was driven principally by higher transport costs, reflecting rising petroleum prices, and more expensive agricultural food following prolonged heat and drought. Core inflation, which better reflects underlying price pressures, rose from 5.0 per cent in June to 5.2 per cent in July and remained at that level in August. These movements suggest that inflation is no longer confined entirely to a narrow group of imported or weather-sensitive items.

Business expectations provide an additional warning. Private-sector respondents reportedly expect inflation over the coming 12 months to move from approximately 7 per cent towards 8 per cent. This matters because expectations can affect wage negotiations, pricing decisions and inventory behaviour. Once businesses and households begin to anticipate persistently higher inflation, price increases can spread beyond the commodities initially affected by global energy, food or weather shocks. These second-round effects represent a greater medium-term danger than the initial supply shock itself.

Against this background, the Bank of Jamaica increased its policy rate to 6 per cent, effective September 29, 2026. The decision reflects the central bank's assessment that decisive action is needed to contain second-round inflationary pressures and improve the probability of inflation returning to its 4 to 6 per cent target range. The bank expects inflation to remain above the upper end of that range until around mid-2027. Oil prices averaged about US$95 per barrel in September and were tracking closer to the bank's severe scenario, intensifying concerns about imported inflation and the duration of the price shock.

There is an unavoidable trade-off. Higher interest rates can moderate inflation

THE PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATION OF JAMAICA PSOJ
VM GROUP | Transform your Everyday.
vmbs.com

expectations and domestic demand, but they also raise financing costs for businesses and households. This is particularly consequential during reconstruction, when firms require working capital to restore facilities, replace equipment and rebuild inventories. The central policy question is therefore not whether price stability matters, but how monetary restraint can be combined with more targeted measures that protect productive investment and address the supply-side weaknesses driving food, energy and logistics costs.

The growth picture reinforces this concern. The economy contracted by 4.1 per cent in the March 2026 quarter and by a further 2.8 per cent in the June quarter. The principal declines occurred in agriculture, mining and accommodation, partly reflecting the lingering effects of Hurricane Melissa. For the September quarter, the economy was projected to contract by between 1 and 3 per cent as restoration continued. Full-year growth was nevertheless expected to fall within a range of 1 to 3 per cent, although probably near the lower end.

The central policy question is therefore not whether price stability matters, but how monetary restraint can be combined with more targeted measures that protect productive investment and address the supply-side weaknesses driving food, energy and logistics costs.

Agriculture illustrates the interaction between climate risk, inflation and productive capacity. The sector's longer-term performance has been encouraging: national output averaged about 673,000 metric tonnes annually between 2016 and 2020, before reaching 846,000 tonnes in 2022, 779,000 tonnes in 2023, 767,000 tonnes in 2024 and 811,000 tonnes in 2025 despite Hurricane Melissa. However, agricultural output reportedly declined by approximately 17 per cent in the second quarter of 2026 as drought and heat interrupted the post-hurricane recovery.

The drought affected melons, pumpkins, leafy vegetables and several other crops, with pumpkin prices reportedly reaching between J$250 and J$300 per pound in some markets. By the end of June, drought conditions had been declared in St Elizabeth, St James, St Ann and St Mary, while Manchester and St Catherine were close to similar conditions. Water trucking provided some relief, but producers described it as inadequate relative to farmers' needs. Even areas served by the National Irrigation Commission did not necessarily receive continuous water, restricting production and increasing farmers' dependence on storage and trucking.

Nonetheless, some areas showed resilience. Irish potato production recorded one of its strongest seasons,

THE PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATION OF JAMAICA PSOJ
VM GROUP | Transform your Everyday.
vmbs.com

while banana and plantain supplies had largely recovered by August and September. Poultry production declined by 12 per cent year over year in the first quarter but rebounded by 5 per cent in the second quarter. Production was broadly flat in the third quarter, while annual output was expected to approach 140 million kilograms. Pork production recovered more slowly because of reduced hotel demand, processing disruptions and producer caution, while egg supplies had returned to a broadly balanced position.

Cost pressures remain substantial. Global agricultural commodity prices were estimated to be approximately 10 per cent higher than at the start of the year and had, at points, risen by almost 20 per cent. Corn prices illustrated the volatility, moving from roughly US$4.60 to US$5.30 before falling to approximately US$4.80. Feed producers expected prices to remain relatively stable over the following three months because of forward purchasing arrangements, but acknowledged that conditions beyond that period would be heavily dependent on commodity markets, oil prices and geopolitical developments.

Agriculture illustrates the interaction between climate risk, inflation and productive capacity.

Tourism is also recovering unevenly. Only slightly more than 70 per cent of hotel-room capacity had returned, while some major properties had postponed reopening until 2027. Airport arrivals in August fell by 16.3 per cent year over year, from approximately 307,000 in August 2025 to a preliminary 265,663. Year-to-date arrivals stood at approximately 1.90 million passengers, 19.4 per cent below the corresponding period of 2025.

Winter airlift offers a potential source of improvement. Approximately 1.3 million airline seats had been committed, equivalent to 92.4 per cent of pre-hurricane 2025 capacity. The United States accounted for roughly 900,000 seats, while Canadian capacity recorded the strongest expansion. The industry targeted restoring about 85 per cent of available room capacity by the end of December. However, higher aviation fuel costs, the loss of low-cost capacity, and weak US consumer confidence kept fares elevated and encouraged later booking behaviour.

The external accounts will reflect these pressures. The current account is projected to move from a surplus of 0.6 per cent of GDP in fiscal year 2025/26 to a deficit of between 2.5 and 3.5 per cent in 2026/27. This deterioration is expected to arise from reconstruction-related imports, higher oil, fertiliser and freight costs, and weaker tourism receipts. Remittances should provide a partial cushion, while international reserves

THE PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATION OF JAMAICA PSOJ
VM GROUP | Transform your Everyday.
vmbs.com

remain a major source of stability. Reserves reached approximately US$7.2 billion in September, about US$1 billion above the level recorded a year earlier and more than 160 per cent of the benchmark considered adequate for Jamaica.

The exchange rate appreciated by 0.8 per cent year over year at the end of September. During the period, the Bank of Jamaica sold close to US$430 million to the market while making net purchases of approximately US$155 million. This reserve position gives Jamaica meaningful protection against external volatility, although exchange-rate stability creates a separate competitiveness challenge for exporters whose international competitors operate in depreciating currencies.

This challenge is visible in the business-process outsourcing sector. Employment had fallen to approximately 40,000 jobs, while local expenditure through payroll, utilities, rent and other operating costs was estimated at US$780 million. Industry representatives attributed the decline to Jamaica's relatively high costs, productivity constraints, reduced destination marketing and competition from lower-cost jurisdictions. The strategic response cannot be to compete indefinitely for high-volume, low-margin contracts. Jamaica must move towards more complex services supported by artificial intelligence, specialist capabilities and stronger international marketing. The sector's objective of contributing US$1 billion to the domestic economy may therefore be achievable without adding another 20,000 conventional call-centre positions.

The strategic response cannot be to compete indefinitely for high-volume, low-margin contracts. Jamaica must move towards more complex services supported by artificial intelligence, specialist capabilities and stronger international marketing.

The policy implications extend beyond interest rates. Jamaica needs accelerated investment in irrigation, water harvesting, protected agriculture, renewable energy and agricultural storage to reduce the inflationary effects of recurring climate shocks. Farmers also need financing instruments that address collateral constraints, including credit guarantees, crop insurance, and receivables-based lending. Tourism policy should prioritise restoring room capacity, competitive airlift, and group travel, while the outsourcing sector requires a coordinated shift toward higher-value exports.

Jamaica's economic buffers remain credible, particularly its reserves, access to international capital and institutional commitment to price stability. The successful placement of a US$1 billion

THE PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATION OF JAMAICA PSOJ

VM GROUP | Transform your Everyday.

vmbs.com

international bond also signals continuing confidence in the country's macroeconomic management and creditworthiness. Nevertheless, monetary policy cannot independently repair farms, restore hotel rooms, lower freight costs or resolve productivity constraints. The next phase of economic management must therefore combine inflation control with focused supply-side interventions. The objective should be to ensure that today's necessary stabilisation measures do not weaken the productive capacity on which tomorrow's recovery depends.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATION OF JAMAICA PSOJ

VM GROUP | Transform your Everyday.

vmbs.com

HEALTHY PEOPLE.
STRONGER BUSINESSES.

Mental Health Drives Productivity

When people are mentally well, they are more engaged, creative and productive — and businesses perform better.



12 BILLION

WORKING DAYS LOST EACH YEAR

The World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization estimate that depression and anxiety cost the global economy 12 billion working days annually and nearly US$1 trillion in lost productivity.

STRONGER WORKPLACES SEE:

- Higher productivity
- Greater employee engagement
- More innovation
- Lower turnover
- Stronger organizational resilience

INVEST IN PEOPLE.
BUILD A BRIGHTER TOMORROW.

MENTAL WELL-BEING IS GOOD BUSINESS.

PEOPLE FLOURISH. ORGANIZATIONS PROSPER.

The Economics of Well-Being: Why Mental Health Belongs on the Business Agenda

For decades, workplace wellness was largely treated as a personal responsibility. Employees were expected to eat well, exercise, manage stress and arrive each morning ready to perform. However, the twin conversations captured in October – the PSOJ's Master Class, themed "Wellness Advantage: Healthier People. Stronger Performance", and the webinar, themed "The Business of Mental Health" and targeted to C-Suite Executives - led to a more economically significant conclusion: although wellness has an individual dimension, workplace well-being is also shaped by how organisations design work, manage people and exercise leadership. Mental health, therefore, is not simply a personal or human-resources concern. It is a productivity, competitiveness and organisational-resilience issue.

This distinction matters because business performance ultimately depends on people. Employees implement strategies, deliver customer experiences, and drive innovation through their judgement, attention and creativity. When employees are mentally and physically well, they are more likely to remain engaged, collaborate effectively and exercise sound judgement. When they are exhausted, distressed or disengaged, organisations bear the cost through absenteeism, presenteeism, errors, missed deadlines, deteriorating customer service and higher employee turnover. The expert panel in the webinar event cite global estimates that depression and anxiety account for approximately 12 billion working days lost annually and almost US$1 trillion in foregone productivity, illustrating the scale of the economic burden.

Depression and anxiety account for approximately 12 billion working days lost annually and almost US$1 trillion in foregone productivity.

The most damaging costs, however, may be those that firms do not routinely measure. Absenteeism is visible because an employee is not at work. Presenteeism is less apparent: the employee is physically present but psychologically overwhelmed, distracted or unable to perform at normal capacity. Output may slow, errors may increase, and important decisions may be delayed. Colleagues then absorb additional work, increasing the risk that distress spreads across a team. In service-driven Caribbean economies, where sectors such as tourism, finance, healthcare, education, retail and public administration depend

VM GROUP | Transform your Everyday.
vmbs.com

heavily on human interaction, these effects can quickly reach customers and revenue.

The economic consequences extend beyond immediate productivity losses. Poor workplace well-being can lead to higher medical and insurance utilisation, overtime payments, temporary staffing expenses and recruitment and onboarding costs. The discussion noted that replacing senior or highly specialised employees can cost substantially more than their annual salary once recruitment, institutional knowledge, transitional disruption and lost productivity are taken into account. Weak well-being can also create succession risk, control failures and reputational exposure. In this sense, employee distress is not confined to a wellness ledger. It can become an operational, financial and governance risk.

The pressures facing today's workforce are not difficult to identify. Digital technology has blurred the boundary between work and personal life, while remote and hybrid working have normalised constant availability. Messages sent after hours may not be intended as urgent, but employees often interpret communication from senior leaders as requiring an immediate response. Long working hours, unclear roles, constant notifications, excessive workloads and inadequate recovery time can leave employees in a state of sustained pressure. The Master Class similarly described how modern work patterns have combined prolonged sitting, irregular meals, sleep disruption, and limited recovery time, creating a cycle that weakens both physical energy and mental performance.

Organisations should therefore resist the temptation to rely solely on resilience seminars, motivational talks or wellness days. These interventions may help, but they cannot compensate for structurally excessive workloads, unreasonable working hours, poor management, inequitable treatment, or a culture in which employees fear speaking honestly. The harder leadership question is not simply how employees can become more resilient, but what organisational conditions they are repeatedly asked to withstand. Some workplace problems require changes to the work itself, including how deadlines are established, how responsibilities are allocated, how leave is treated and how managers are held accountable.

Digital technology has blurred the boundary between work and personal life, while remote and hybrid working have normalised constant availability.

The individual still has an important role. The Master Class presented physical nutrition, movement and intentional pauses as foundations of sustained

VM GROUP | Transform your Everyday.
vmbs.com

executive performance. It encouraged busy professionals to build practical systems rather than rely on willpower: planning meals before hunger dictates the decision, incorporating short periods of movement into the workday, preparing healthier defaults, and pausing between meetings before carrying the pressure of one engagement into the next. The broader lesson is economically relevant. Healthy behaviour becomes more sustainable when it is built into routines and environments rather than treated as an occasional act of discipline.

Yet personal discipline cannot substitute for organisational responsibility. Employers influence whether employees can take breaks, take holiday, disconnect after hours, access appropriate support and disclose difficulties without jeopardising their careers. Leaders also shape whether they discourage or celebrate overwork. Recognising employees who are permanently available, work late continuously or are unwilling to take leave may inadvertently reward unhealthy behaviour. It may also conceal poor workforce planning, inadequate delegation or organisational dependence on a small number of individuals.

Recognising employees who are permanently available, consistently work late, or are unwilling to take leave may inadvertently reward unhealthy behaviour.

A credible workplace well-being strategy should operate at three levels. The first is prevention, through manageable workloads, clear roles, respectful leadership, employee participation, information and psychologically safe working conditions. The second is early identification, through trained managers, confidential screening, regular check-ins and clear referral pathways. The third is treatment and recovery, including employee-assistance programmes, professional care, reasonable workplace adjustments and structured return-to-work support. Concentrating resources only at the crisis stage is both more expensive and less effective than preventing avoidable deterioration.

Managers are central to this approach because they are often the first to notice changes in attendance, responsiveness, energy, concentration or behaviour. Their role is not to diagnose employees, but to observe changes, initiate a respectful conversation, listen without judgement and connect the employee with appropriate support. This requires training in emotional intelligence, psychological safety, referral procedures and confidentiality. It also requires restraint. Share personal information only on a need-to-know basis, and tell employees when escalation is necessary and who will receive the information. Without confidence in these safeguards,

THE PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATION OF JAMAICA PSOJ
VM GROUP | Transform your Everyday.
vmbs.com

employees may continue to conceal difficulties until performance deteriorates or a crisis occurs.

The most competitive workplaces will be those that understand that well-being and performance are not opposing priorities.

Well-being must also be measurable. Boards and executive teams routinely monitor revenue, costs, customer satisfaction, and operational risk; they should pay comparable attention to workload, overtime, unused holiday, sick leave, employee turnover, engagement, psychological safety, health-plan utilisation, and employee-assistance programme uptake. Examine data carefully rather than interpret it superficially. For example, low use of an assistance programme may indicate either a healthy workforce or a lack of trust, awareness or access. Similarly, high attendance may coexist with serious presenteeism. Measurement should therefore combine administrative data with confidential employee feedback and leadership-effectiveness assessments.

The business case is especially relevant for small and medium-sized enterprises, where one employee may perform several critical functions. Smaller firms may not be able to finance extensive wellness facilities or unlimited leave, but they can clarify priorities, cross-train employees, improve scheduling, establish communication boundaries, create peer-support mechanisms and contract confidential external assistance. Cross-training is particularly valuable because it supports employee recovery while reducing concentration risk and strengthening business continuity.

Ultimately, approach mental health as an investment in productive capacity. The objective is not to remove accountability or reduce performance standards. It is to create conditions in which employees can perform sustainably, rather than produce short-term results at the expense of long-term health, retention and organisational capability. The most competitive workplaces will be those that understand that well-being and performance are not opposing priorities. Well-being is part of the infrastructure on which performance depends.

The central message from both discussions is clear: businesses cannot build durable profitability on depleted people. Organisations should audit their workplace culture with the same seriousness as financial controls, identify the human risks embedded in their operating models, and assign clear leadership responsibility for addressing them. Mental health is already in the boardroom. The remaining question is whether companies will continue treating it as an afterthought or manage it as the material economic issue it has become.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATION OF JAMAICA PSOJ

VM GROUP | Transform your Everyday.

vmbs.com

Finally, working from home illustrates how workplace design can influence the economics of well-being. For Jamaican employees, remote or hybrid work can reduce commuting strain, increase autonomy, and provide greater flexibility to manage work and personal responsibilities, potentially supporting mental well-being, job satisfaction and retention.

Evidence, however, shows these benefits are neither automatic nor universal: isolation, household demands, connectivity problems, work-family conflict, and blurred boundaries can create new forms of stress, particularly when employees feel constantly available. The economic value therefore depends on how flexibility is designed and managed—with clear expectations, reasonable workloads, protected breaks, agreed communication hours and appropriate accountability. In this sense, remote work should not be viewed simply as an employee benefit, but as an organisational design choice that can support sustainable productivity when employee well-being and business performance are treated as mutually reinforcing objectives.

This aligns with the broader Economics of Well-Being argument that organisations must address the conditions under which people work, rather than placing responsibility for well-being solely on individuals.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATION OF JAMAICA PSOJ
VM GROUP | Transform your Everyday.
vmbs.com

@ThePSOJ

50TH ANNIVERSARY

PSOJ MEMBERS' CHRISTMAS *Mingle*

SAVE THE DATE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9TH, 2026

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

J. WRAY & NEPHEW, NEW KINGSTON

SPONSORED BY

J.WRAY&NEPHEW LIMITED

A CAMPARI GROUP COMPANY

WISYNCO GROUP