

What Employees Want

Workplace Wellbeing Trends 2025

A Guide for HR Leaders and Employers Wanting to Get Workplace Wellbeing Right in 2025 Based on Data from 1,000+ UK Employees



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A Letter from Sammy Rubin

Workplace wellbeing isn't just a priority—it's the foundation of a thriving business. The insights in this report highlight the fact that when organisations invest in their people in the right way, they create cultures where both individuals and businesses can flourish.

At YuLife, our mission has always been to inspire people to live their best lives every single day. We have never seen wellbeing as an add-on; instead it's at the core of everything we do. We engage individuals to take action towards their own physical, mental, financial and social wellbeing, which in turn benefits the businesses they work for.

*As we navigate an ever-changing world with evolving employee expectations and a growing absenteeism crisis **this report aims to equip HR leaders with the insights and tools to drive meaningful change.** Now is our chance to redefine what it means to take care of our teams, bridging the gaps left by traditional healthcare systems and building workplaces where people feel valued, supported, and empowered. And this isn't just about what's ahead—it's about what we can do right now.*

I hope this report serves as a roadmap for all those ready to embrace the power of employee wellbeing and transform the way we work and live.

Onwards and upwards!

Sammy Rubin CEO & Co-founder, YuLife



Embracing Workplace Wellbeing in 2025

As we move into 2025, HR leaders and employers are dealing with several evolving challenges in workplace wellbeing.

According to the Darzi report, at the beginning of 2024, 2.8 million individuals in the UK were economically inactive due to long-term sickness, with most of the rise due to mental health conditions. Absenteeism costs the UK economy approximately £45 billion each year, and this number is rising.

Based on a comprehensive YouGov survey commissioned by YuLife in December 2024, this report provides essential insights into employees' needs and desires. It also offers insights and guidance from advisors and HR leaders on the range of issues the research highlighted on tackling the complexities of workplace wellbeing in 2025.

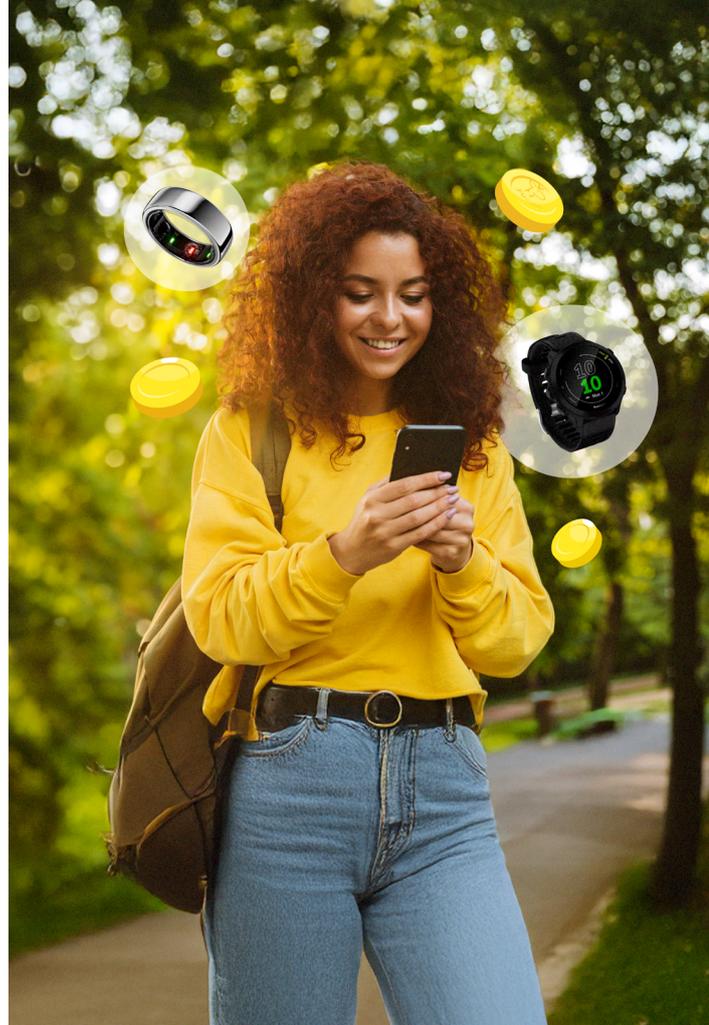


2.8 million

individuals in the UK were economically inactive due to long-term sickness

YouGov

**All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1046 employees. Fieldwork was undertaken between 12th - 17th December 2024. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of British business size and region.*



Current State of Workplace Wellbeing

Despite significant progress over the past decade, our survey reveals that wellbeing at work remains a work in progress. As of December 2024, just over half of women (54%) and 9% more men (63%) rated their wellbeing at work as “good.”

In 2025, the two most requested areas of support from employers are:

- » Flexible working conditions—highly valued by 46% of women
- » Paid wellness days

Wellbeing as a Retention Tool

Wellbeing is increasingly recognised as vital for workplace retention. Our data identifies a strong correlation between employee retention and wellbeing: 71% of respondents who rated their wellbeing as “good” said they would not be looking for a new job in 2025, compared to only 30% of those with poor wellbeing. This underscores the direct impact of effective wellbeing strategies on employee retention.

71%

of respondents who rated their wellbeing as “good” are not looking for a new job



Economic Uncertainty and Wellbeing Concerns

The backdrop of 2025 is one of significant economic uncertainty and geopolitical volatility. There is no clear resolution to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis in sight. This uncertainty is a major concern for employees in 2025, and they are particularly worried about how it will affect their pay and benefits.

Top 3 reasons to seek new employment in 2025:

- » Subpar compensation or pay (40%)
- » Economic uncertainty (23%)
- » Job security (20%)



Hear from the experts:

“There is a lot of uncertainty in the political and economic worlds right now. Companies have to be better at communicating that people are psychologically safe.”



Debra Clark

Head of Wellbeing, Towergate Employee Benefits

“As companies increasingly seek to measure employee wellbeing, the YuLife YuScore offers a dynamic, real-time assessment of workforce health, enabling data-driven decisions to enhance support and engagement.”



Katie Howarth

Head of People, YuLife

Employees across all genders and company sizes rate flexible working options and paid wellness days as their most desired form of support.

YouLife x YouGov survey

Preferences for Flexibility and Mental Health Support

The demand for flexible working arrangements and mental health support has intensified. Despite some companies like Amazon and Dell reversing their remote work policies in 2024, employees across all genders and company sizes rate flexible working options and paid wellness days as their most desired form of support. The question remains whether employers will pursue on-site working strategies or prioritise flexible working.

Mental Health Provision in the Workplace

Post-COVID, many HR teams and employers significantly increased their focus on mental health provision in the workplace. Yet in our YouGov survey, 25% of employees who reported poor wellbeing requested better mental health support at work such as free counselling and Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) in 2025. Mental health provision is not just a 'nice to have' but it is essential for maintaining a healthy workforce and preventing long-term absenteeism.

Generational Differences in Wellbeing Needs

The survey reveals generational differences in workplace happiness and priorities. **The oldest and youngest employees—the under-35s and over-55s—report being the happiest at work.** The youngest employees need connection the most, with 18% prioritising social connections, compared to 7% of those over 45. Additionally, 59% of those under 35 cite financial wellness as a priority for 2025, compared to 44% of respondents aged 55 and older.

Employees who rate financial wellness as a priority for 2025:

59% Under 35



44% Over 55



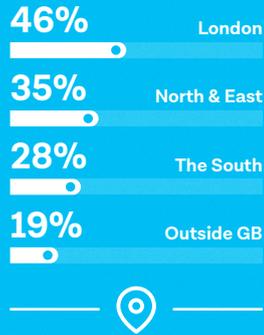
Employer Recommendations Tied to Wellbeing Initiatives

Only 17% of respondents indicated they would be 'very likely' to recommend their employer based on its wellbeing initiatives. Regional differences were stark, with London respondents the most likely to recommend their employer (57%). **London-based employees also expressed the highest level of satisfaction with their employers' efforts to bridge the wellbeing gap left by healthcare systems**, with 46% of respondents saying their employer performed 'well' in this area. This contrasts with 35% in the North and East, 28% in the South, and 18% outside Great Britain.

Financial Pressures on Employers

Raising national insurance payments has added costs to businesses at a time when other costs are rising. In particular, the cost of private healthcare, which 23% of respondents said they would like their employer to offer in 2025. **Addressing employee wellbeing can have a knock-on effect on the cost of healthcare claims by preventing ill-health in the first place.**

Employers performing 'well' in bridging the wellbeing gap left by healthcare systems by region:



Conclusion: Insights for a Forward-Thinking Workplace

As we navigate the complexities and opportunities of 2025, this report aims to provide HR leaders and employers with actionable insights to enhance workplace wellbeing. We hope it will serve as a valuable resource in your efforts to foster a supportive and adaptable work environment.



Hear from the experts:

"We have found that, particularly where we have beefed up mental health support, people access it and use it."



Alys Martin

People Director, what3words, Eave, Zappar

"We're at a time now where we've got five generations in the workplace at the same time. You have to consider digital overwhelm. Not everyone wants more apps. Digital wellbeing is a major focus as we head into 2025."



Leanne Mullen

Culture & Engagement Manager, Bruntwood

Prioritising Responsiveness and Support

The majority of employees say their wellbeing at work is “good,” but there is plenty of room for improvement, especially for women and those aged between 35 and 55 years old.

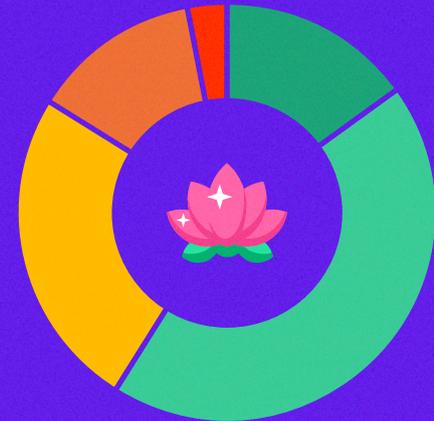
Wellbeing needs are always shifting, and it’s important for HR to keep up with what employees want and need. For example, when in-person events become less popular, it’s time for a change in focus. Instead, some companies have addressed the need for more personalised support by creating

specialised support groups around particular interest groups. However, in the same way that attractive employee benefits can help with retention, **employee benefits that are not needed, sometimes called “anti-perks,” can actually drive people away.** Up to 4.6% of under-35s would consider changing jobs in 2025 due to “employee benefits that don’t meet their needs.” Most HR leaders will recognise that acknowledging the diverse range of employee needs – and responding to them thoughtfully – is essential in 2025

“We have a wombs-at-work Slack channel where women can talk about anything from menstruation to menopause in a safe space.”

Katie Howarth Head of People, YuLife

Overall wellbeing at work:





Who is happiest at work?

Good wellbeing:

54%

Women 😊



63%

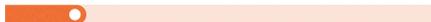
Men 😊



Poor wellbeing:

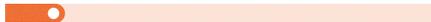
19%

Women 😞

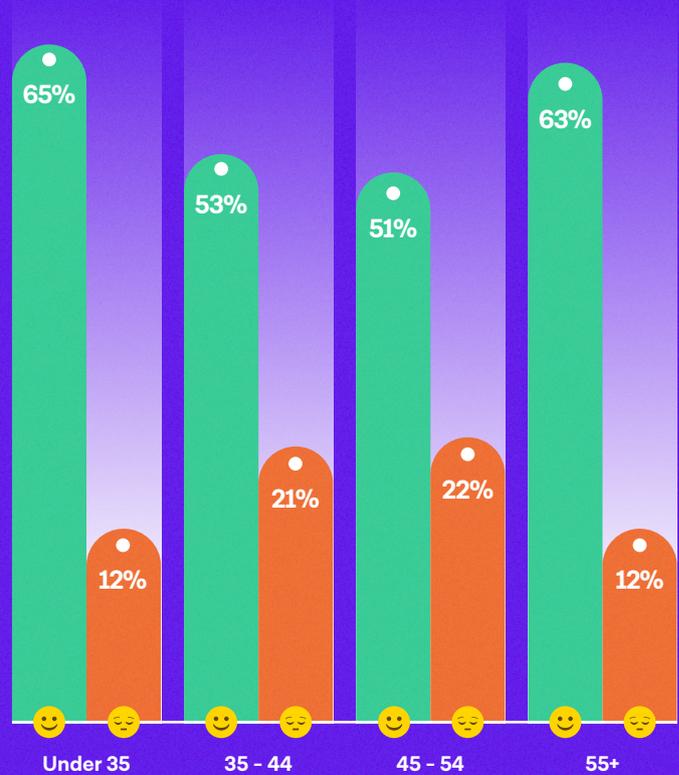


14%

Men 😞



Younger and older employees are happier:



The Gap Between NHS and Company Health Provision

The beleaguered NHS has been in the news a lot recently, and despite plans to improve it, most experts agree it will take a long time to see significant change. In the interim, there is an opportunity for businesses to step up the provision of physical and mental health support and insurance.

Overall, only 35% of employees think their employer is effectively bridging the wellbeing gap left by healthcare systems, and only 10% think their employer is doing this 'very well'. London-based employees expressed the highest level of satisfaction with their employers' efforts to bridge the wellbeing gap left by healthcare systems. This indicates that cosmopolitan hubs like London may place greater emphasis on employee benefits and wellbeing resources.

"Nobody else is going to step in and tackle this challenge on behalf of employers. That traditional public

healthcare safety net that kept the workforce healthy for the benefit of UK employers has gone; it's not coming back in the near-term, so employers have to step into that healthcare gap now." Brett Hill, Head of Health & Protection, Broadstone

More robust health insurance or physical wellness programmes are also the third most requested wellbeing support mechanisms (after flexible working and paid wellness days) that employees would most like their employer to offer in 2025.

"We know there is a health and wellbeing gap between what the NHS can provide and what employers can offer. By providing health insurance, access to a digital GP, mental health support, and tech that builds healthy habits, employers can go a long way towards supporting the physical and mental health of employees while taking the pressure off the NHS." Katie Howarth, Head of People, YuLife

 How well employers are bridging the wellbeing gap left by healthcare systems:

35% Good



35% Neutral



19% Poor



11% No Wellbeing Gap





Top 3 most requested, wellbeing support mechanisms:

44% Increased flexibility in working arrangements



42% Paid wellness days or sabbaticals



23% More robust health insurance or physical wellness programmes



Regional variation in how well employees think employers are bridging the wellbeing gap left by healthcare systems:

Key:

- 10 - 20%
- 21 - 30%
- 31 - 40%
- 41 - 50%

46% London



39% Scotland



36% Midlands



35% East



35% The North



28% The South



20% Wales



Top Wellbeing Priorities for 2025:

We spoke to HR leaders about their top wellbeing priorities for 2025. While there are many important focus areas, the ones we've selected consistently ranked highly.

1 **Neurodiversity**

2 **Burnout**

3 **Financial Wellness**

“ ”

Building a neuro-inclusive workplace requires not just accommodations but a cultural shift, where differences are viewed as strengths.

Wall Street Journal

#1 Neurodiversity

A major priority for HR teams and employers in 2025 is **accommodating neurodiversity in the workplace. 15-20% of the global population is estimated to be neurodiverse, which includes conditions such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, and dyspraxia.**

Yet only 22% of autistic people in the UK are employed, compared to a disabled average of 53% and an “abled” average of 83% (ONS, 2019). Many neurodiverse people are either unable to enter the workforce or struggle to be productive in a “neurotypical” environment.

Advancements in Workplace Inclusivity

UK employers are increasingly recognising the benefits and the competitive advantage that can be gained by hiring neurodivergent workers. As a result, workplace norms are shifting to include more flexible work arrangements and individual adjustments.

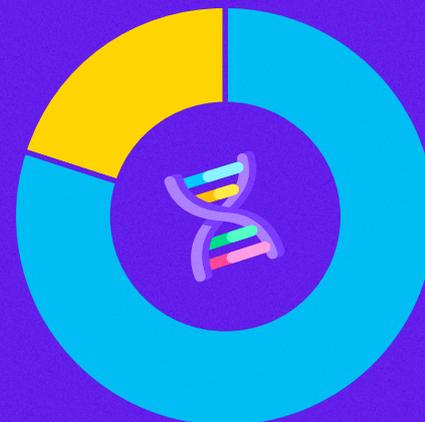
Key progress includes:

-  **Flexible Work Options:** Providing adaptable schedules and remote work opportunities to accommodate individual needs.
-  **Sensory-Friendly Spaces:** Creating Quiet Zones and offering tools like noise-cancelling headphones to support those with sensory sensitivities.
-  **Clear Communication Practices:** Using straightforward language and supplementing verbal discussions with written instructions.
-  **Assistive Technology:** Supplying tools like text-to-speech software and task management apps to support diverse working styles.

According to the Wall Street Journal, “Building a neuro-inclusive workplace requires not just accommodations but a cultural shift, where differences are viewed as strengths.” This shift has already begun, with increased training available for managers and more employees feeling comfortable disclosing their conditions.



Percentage of the population that is neurodiverse:



80%

Neurotypical

20%

Neurodiverse

Remaining Challenges

Despite these strides, significant gaps remain:



Disclosure Hesitancy: Approximately 65% of neurodiverse employees fear discrimination if they disclose their condition, according to research from the University of London, Birkbeck.



Recruitment Barriers: Traditional CV-based applications and interviews fail to assess the unique skills of neurodiverse candidates, often excluding them from opportunities.



Managerial Knowledge: While awareness has improved, many managers lack the training to provide effective support.



Average employment levels (ONS 2019)

83%

“Able”



53%

Disabled



22%

Autism



Hear from the experts:

“As a business, we should be acting on the things that are making it a struggle for employees to be in work.”



Debra Clark

Head of Wellbeing, Towergate Employee Benefits

“I think neurodiversity will become an increasingly important topic in the workplace over the course of next year and beyond.

It’s at the forefront of most discussions our advisers are having, and mental health provision often lacks the qualifications needed to address this issue. The providers are going to have to provide more help for that.”



Darren Perkins

Managing Director, Premier Choice Healthcare Ltd

“ ”

Burnout is a real fear. We are still seeing a backlash from the pandemic with burnout.

Debra Clark

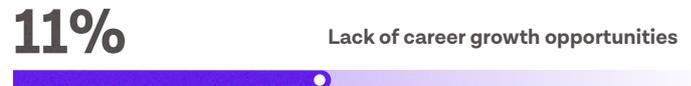
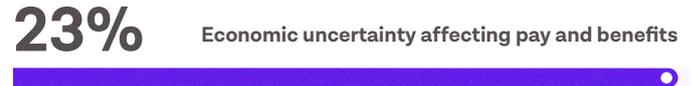
Head of Wellbeing, Towergate Employee Benefits

#2 Burnout

Burnout, characterised by chronic workplace stress leading to physical and emotional exhaustion, remains a significant concern in the UK. In 2024, this became a pressing concern as economic pressures and workplace restructuring forced employees to ‘do more with less.’

Confronting the issue of stress related to economic uncertainty will be fundamental to tackling burnout in 2025. In YuLife’s YouGov survey, employees ranked the causes of stress – such as economic uncertainty and job security – as their top concerns for 2025, above burnout itself. So, it is going to be up to the HR teams and managers to recognise the signs and provide training and self-assessment tools.

! Top wellbeing concerns for 2025:



Insights on Resilience

With no signs of the contributing factors to burnout going away, it remains an important focus for HR leaders in 2025. Resilience, however, is a teachable skill and crucial for navigating workplace challenges:



Set Boundaries: Managing workloads, setting boundaries and shortening meetings are becoming more important than ever. *“It’s possible to avoid burnout well before it happens. Go for your walk. Say no to stuff. Prioritise not doing stuff as much as you would prioritise doing stuff. Say no, I’m not free to do that on the weekend – free time does not equal availability.”* Alys Martin, People Director, what3words, Eave, Zappor



Start Early: Resilience techniques like stress management and breathing exercises can be taught to students and new graduates before they enter the workplace. According to Debra Clark, Head of Wellbeing, Towergate Employee Benefits, *“It’s better to prepare them early than label them as difficult when they struggle.”*



Generational Learning: Collaboration between generations is key but each has its vulnerabilities when it comes to burnout: *“The older generation’s strong work ethic is valuable, but they also need to learn that ploughing through isn’t the only way forward.”* Debra Clark, Head of Wellbeing, Towergate Employee Benefits



Pacing yourself is also critical: *“The push is exciting, but it can also be exhausting. It’s a marathon, not a sprint—yet even marathons can be draining.”* Alys Martin, People Director, what3words, Eave, Zappor



Hear from the experts:

“We need to go from raising awareness to action. We’ve done a lot in terms of webinars and documents about what it is and how to spot the signs. It’s going to take a bold move from companies to think about what they can do.”



Debra Clark

Head of Wellbeing, Towergate Employee Benefits

“In 2023, we launched a stress risk self-assessment. Previously, our response had been reactive when a colleague presented with stress; but we wanted a more proactive approach.”



Leanne Muffen

Culture & Engagement Manager, Bruntwood

#3 Financial Wellbeing

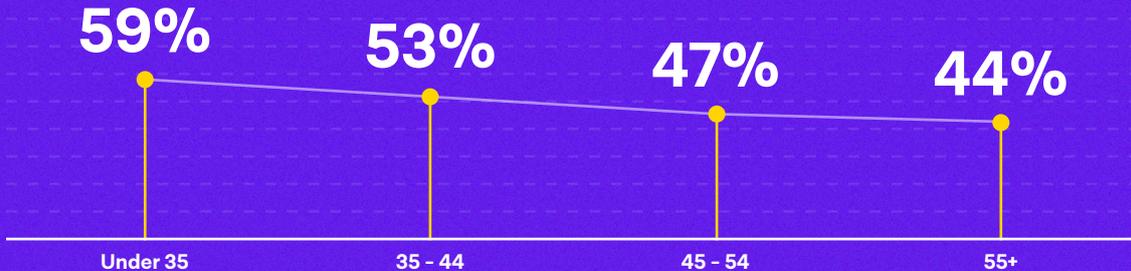
Economic uncertainty, including its impact on pay and benefits, was the top concern for employees (23%), followed by job security (20%) in YuLife's YouGov employee survey. 40% of employees state that subpar compensation or pay would be the top reason for them to seek new employment in 2025.

Although data shows that salaries seem to be keeping pace with inflation, the cost-of-living increase seems set to continue into 2025, with the

British Retail Consortium warning of food prices rising by an annual rate of 4.2% by the year's end.

According to our survey, employees are keen to take back control of their finances: after physical health (64%), financial wellness is the top personal priority for employees in 2025 (51%). In particular, 59% of employees under 35 say improving their financial wellbeing in 2025 is a priority.

 **Prioritising financial wellness by age:**



“ ”

**Financial
wellbeing is a
big thing for us
this year; it's a
big focus.**

Leanne Mullen

Culture & Engagement Manager, Bruntwood

Holistic wellbeing:

For some companies, financial wellbeing is rolled into other initiatives, as Leanne Mullen, Culture & Engagement Manager, Bruntwood explains:

“One of the reasons we partnered with YuLife was because it was so holistic. I think many businesses are box-ticking; they're doing EAP, private healthcare, some financial support – but it's not the full picture.

Everything we try to do is holistic. With YuLife, you can see where people are spending their money. For the majority, it's on supermarkets, Amazon and everyday household goods. It's a really good financial benefit, plus it addresses social, physical and mental wellbeing and encourages healthy habits. It really is an all-round great wellbeing benefit.”

Specific interest groups:

Other HR leaders are focusing on specific groups that have a particular challenge around financial wellbeing:

“We have a men's talk group that runs on a monthly basis. It's open to everybody, but the focus is on male-related wellbeing topics. They run sessions on things like mental health related to financial wellbeing for men because that can be a really big thing for men to open up about: financial concerns or need for financial support.

...We've also done some specific financial wellbeing sessions for our early careers group to help them understand things like budgeting or their first pay slip or pensions. We've found that they're really useful for those individuals and quite useful for other people as well.” HR leader, Technology Sector

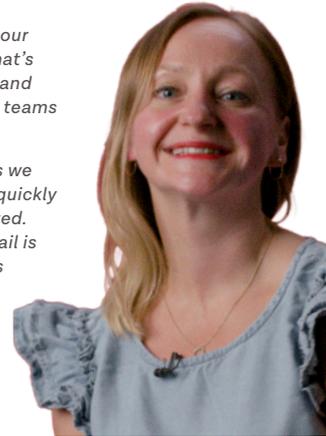
Good Wellbeing is Driven by Culture

HR leaders say:

"I think sometimes in companies, senior management says, 'These are our values and this is who we want to be', but it isn't who they are. I think that's when the connection doesn't come through because it's not authentic and people see through it. E.g. You think we're collaborative yet actually all teams work in silos, and there are cliques within the business.

Having a culture of authenticity is incredibly important. At what3words we had things like making new mistakes and ready, fire, aim i.e. do things quickly and we'll figure stuff out afterwards. And they were massively celebrated. People used the values in normal conversation e.g. what about this email is concise? It was part of our language. It was part of who we were. That's what keeps everyone together. A culture of support."

Alys Martin People Director, what3words, Eave, Zappara



"How we do wellbeing is more than breakfast and yoga classes, it's the way we work and the way we are. I always say I came here for the job, and stayed here for the culture. Culture is made up of three things: visible artefacts, shared values and basic assumptions. Examples of visible artefacts are that there's no dress code, there's a nice coffee machine, and the way our space is designed. Shared values and basic assumptions are how we treat each other, the language we use, and our tone of voice as a business.

The leadership team just sits in the office; no one has an office, and if you're a new-starter and you walk through the office, you won't be able to point out and say that's a director. So yes, we've got a really good culture, I think."

Leanne Mullen Culture & Engagement Manager, Bruntwood



How to Unlock Workplace Wellbeing

Katie Howarth Head of People, YuLife

The findings in this report highlight the immense opportunities to elevate workplace wellbeing in 2025. As organisations address economic uncertainty, evolving employee expectations, and the need for inclusivity, focusing on wellbeing remains crucial for success.

Key Employee Needs: Insights from YuLife's Research

YuLife's YouGov survey and our discussions with HR leaders and advisers have highlighted essential employee needs including flexible work schedules, financial wellness education, mental health support, and holistic solutions to bridge gaps left by healthcare systems. These insights emphasise the importance of creating initiatives that resonate deeply with employees and deliver lasting value.

YuLife's Three-Pillar Approach to Wellbeing

YuLife's wellbeing strategy in 2025 is centred around the three pillars Engage, Protect, and Prevent. The YuLife app also embodies this approach, offering gamified activities and rewards to inspire daily engagement in healthy activities while providing access to complementary apps and services. This ensures wellbeing becomes an active habit, providing protective and preventative benefits.





Sustaining Long-Term Engagement

As Brett Hill, Head of Health & Protection at Broadstone, noted in his conversation with us for this report:

“Engagement is key to the success of wellbeing initiatives. Many programmes fail because they generate short-term interest but don’t sustain behaviour change over time.”

Fostering Holistic Workplace Wellbeing

“YuLife’s initiatives, from equal parental leave and accommodating neurodiversity to tailored mental health resources and wellness coaching, reflect our commitment to employee wellbeing. By listening to employee needs, leveraging data, and fostering authentic connections, we fully embody the values we advocate for.

As we progress through 2025, YuLife remains dedicated to innovating and championing wellbeing, empowering every individual with the tools to live their best life every day.”

Katie Howarth, Head of People, YuLife

Featured Thought Leaders



Debra Clark

Head of Wellbeing, Towergate Employee Benefits

Debra is currently Head of wellbeing at Towergate Employee Benefit. With over 25 years in the employee benefits industry, Debra is a mental health first aider and an accredited menopause lifestyle coach. A passionate advocate for workplace wellbeing, she actively contributes to UK health and wellbeing forums and is recognised in industry publications.



Leanne Muffen

Culture & Engagement Manager, Bruntwood

Leanne has been at Bruntwood for 11 years and supports all things colleague experience, from their wellbeing and benefits, to their policies and working environment, and all other colleague touch-points in between. She is passionate about enabling colleagues to live their best lives, both inside and outside of work. She is a champion of D&I and psychological safety and believes that everybody should be their authentic self at work.



Alys Martin

People Director, what3words, Eave, Zappair

Alys is a senior HR executive with over 15 years of experience. Predominantly working within the start up and scale up space, she loves working with bright passionate people in purpose driven businesses solving interesting relevant problems. All of this is done with a healthy dose of pragmatism and a great sense of humour!



Darren Perkins

Managing Director, Premier Choice Healthcare Ltd

Darren's PMI career started in the mid-1990s at BCWA, where he undertook various claims and sales roles. He left the business in 2007 to join The Jelf Group and worked in their Sales team. In 2016, Darren joined Towergate as Client Relationship Director and had responsibility for the Southern-based Sales team. He joined Premier Choice to work with the team on the continued growth plans.



Brett Hill

Head of Health and Protection, Broadstone

Brett has 28 years of experience in the health and protection market, having held senior positions with insurers and intermediaries in sales, underwriting, product and proposition development, and leads Broadstone's growth in the UK health and protection market. He is passionate in his belief that employee health, wellbeing and protection are interconnected and must be at the heart of any truly engaging and effective employee benefit and risk management strategy.

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