



**Robert—
—Walters**

Employee Benefits Guide

UK & Ireland

3rd Edition

Global Talent Solutions



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About the Employee Benefits Guide

Welcome to the 3rd edition of the Robert Walters Employee Benefits Guide

Designed to complement the Robert Walters Salary Survey, this guide expands the benchmarking conversation beyond salary. It provides insight into the employee benefits professionals receive, the benefits they value most, and the role benefits play in creating a competitive employee offering.

For a comprehensive overview of basic salaries and contract rates, exclusive of benefits/bonuses, access a copy of our latest Salary Survey: [UK](#) | [Ireland](#)

Methodology

To investigate the current state of employee benefits, Robert Walters conducted an anonymous survey in 2026 of over 3,100 professionals in the UK and Ireland.

Professionals were asked about the employee benefits they receive (or are eligible to receive) from their current employer, the benefits they consider most valuable across different categories, and opinion questions relating to benefits.

Unattributed quotes presented throughout the guide are taken from anonymous responses to open-ended survey questions.

Get in touch

If you would like to find out more about benefits trends in your industry, get in touch with one of our specialist recruitment consultants today. Contact details for your local Robert Walters office can be [found at the back of this guide](#).

How to use the guide

Key findings pages

The key findings presented in the guide are organised around five core themes that reflect factors professionals consider when assessing the value of their employee benefits package:



Financial security and overall compensation
How benefits support long-term financial security and contribute to an employee’s total reward.



Flexibility, autonomy and work-life balance
How working arrangements, flexibility and time away from work support balance between professional and personal responsibilities.



Health, wellbeing and insurance
How benefits support employees’ physical, mental and financial protection.



Managing life outside of work
How family, parental and caring benefits support employees through different responsibilities and life events.



Personalisation and relevance
How well benefits reflect employees’ individual circumstances, lifestyles and priorities.

Benefits received

To explore the exact benefits respondents received (or were eligible to receive), readers can navigate to relevant benefits received tables throughout the key findings section. The benefits received tables provide a detailed breakdown of the percentage of overall respondents who received (or were eligible to receive) specific benefits. Organised by benefit type, the tables are split by company size (Small-Medium sized (1-250 employees), and Large-Enterprise sized (251+ employees), provide the overall percentage of respondents who received each benefit, which is then segmented by seniority level.

Recommendations

The final section of the guide translates the survey findings into practical recommendations for employers. These recommendations highlight opportunities to strengthen attraction, retention, employee satisfaction and the overall effectiveness of employee benefits strategies.



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Insurance

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Supporting work-life balance through flexibility and time away from work

Supporting employee health and wellbeing

Supporting employees beyond work through family and caring benefits

Bespoke salary and benefits reporting

Contact us



Introduction



Daniel Harris
Managing Director
UK & Ireland

Robert Walters

“Certain workplace benefits are almost universally valued, such as hybrid working, bonuses, and pension contributions. Others become more important during specific life stages, like parental or carers’ leave. The exact benefits professionals prioritise vary and shift, but they symbolise an essential element of overall employment packages. The opportunity for employers is to understand these motivations and leverage their offerings to recruit, develop, and retain the talent they need.

That importance is reflected in our findings, with 85% of professionals now agreeing that benefits play an important role in their loyalty to an employer. This year’s research has also uncovered a significant shift towards professionals prioritising benefits that help them build financial security. Employer pension contributions emerged as the most highly valued benefit, while professionals now rank long-term financial security (65%) almost as highly as work-life balance (67%).

However, offering the right benefits is only half the equation. The other half is solved through promoting clear communication, reliability, and accessibility within packages. In fact, some of the biggest issues identified by professionals stem from inconsistency or a lack of clarity. Only 55% of professionals agree that their company’s flexible working policy is applied consistently, while 51% of those who received no bonus reported finding the bonus criteria unclear.

When it comes to benefits, relevance matters more than volume. Employees don’t necessarily want countless options to choose from. They want benefits that reflect their priorities, are easy to access, and provide both value in their daily lives and for their long-term financial wellbeing.”

Top 3 reasons to focus on your benefits offering

- 1 Ensure benefits remain relevant and competitive
- 2 Improve employee experience across all career stages
- 3 Drive better workforce attraction, retention and engagement

Key findings

The following key findings pinpoint:

- How core benefits are valued
- The state of employee benefits packages

This chapter also details the key findings across the following themes, including what influences satisfaction, and overall impact on employees:

- Financial security and overall compensation
- Flexibility, autonomy and work-life balance
- Health, wellbeing and insurance
- Managing life outside of work
- Personalisation and relevance

How core benefits are valued

Respondents were asked to rank core employee benefits by level of importance

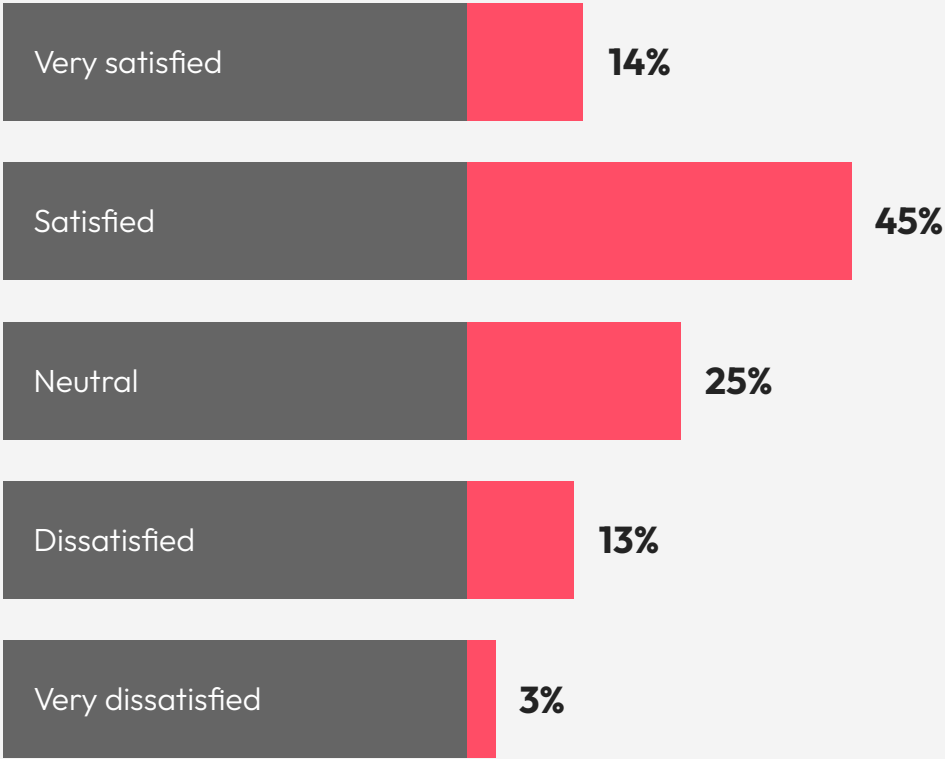
	Highly important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not important at all
Employer pension contribution	72%	19%	5%	2%	2%
Hybrid/flexible working	71%	16%	6%	3%	4%
Annual leave allowance	65%	24%	8%	2%	2%
Health cover/insurance	56%	25%	12%	4%	4%
Bonus scheme	55%	27%	9%	3%	5%
Wellbeing & lifestyle perks	24%	28%	28%	10%	9%
Family benefits (e.g. maternity/child-care)	26%	18%	20%	10%	27%



The state of employee benefits packages

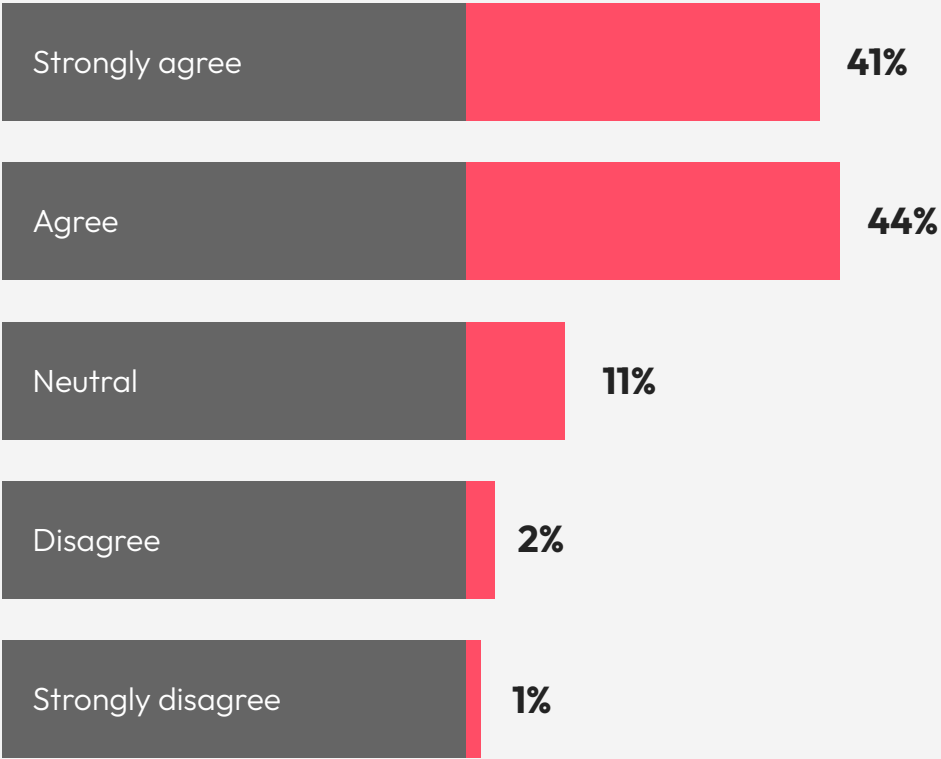
Satisfaction with overall benefits package

Are professionals satisfied with their current benefits package?



The impact of benefits on loyalty

“Benefits are an extremely important factor in my loyalty to a company”

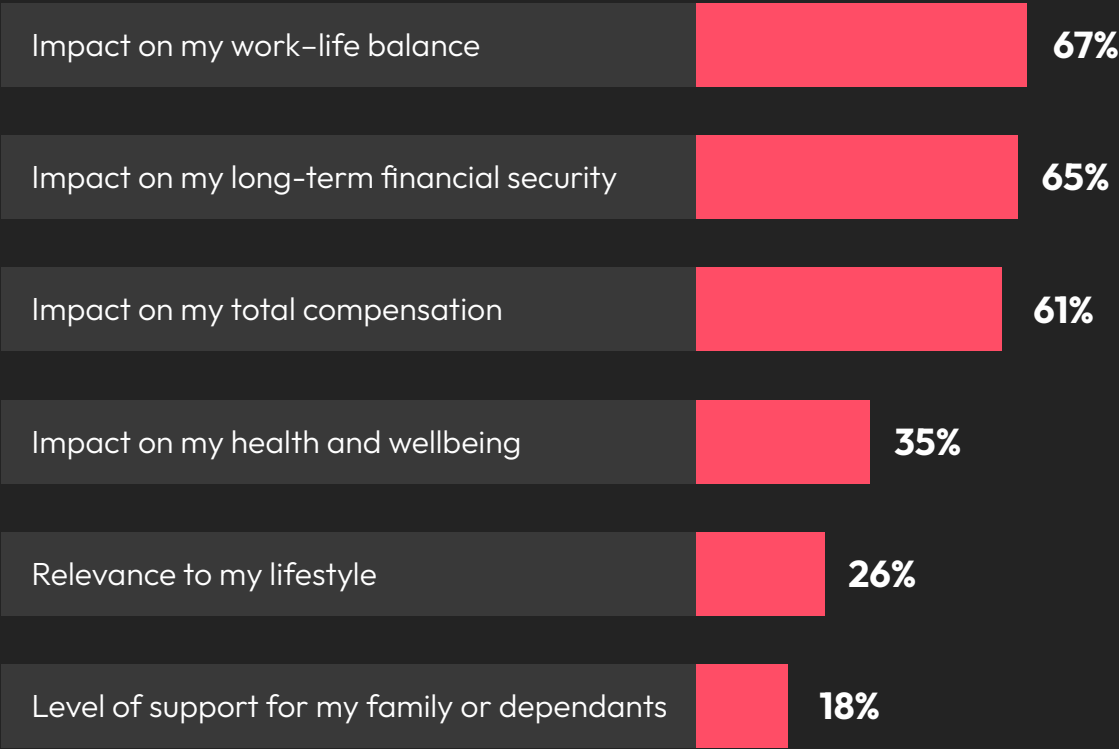


What factors do professionals consider when evaluating their benefits package?

When asked which factors professionals consider most important with their benefits package, the majority chose these 3 factors:



Key considerations cited



Financial security and overall compensation

The following section covers key findings for these employee benefits:

- Employer pension schemes and contributions
- Wealth-building benefits
- Income protection benefits
- Bonus schemes

See a breakdown of the benefits received across these categories (split by seniority and company size) and recommendations for supporting financial wellbeing and security through benefits.

Explore benefits received.

See recommendations.



Financial security and total compensation were a top priority – long-term financial security and total compensation ranked among the most important factors professionals consider when evaluating benefits packages.



Pensions were the most highly rated benefit – employer pension contributions were the most consistently rated highly important.



Financial benefits were closely associated with loyalty to an employer – both pension contributions and bonus schemes had a significant impact on retention and employer loyalty.



Higher employer pension contributions and access to additional wealth-building benefits improves satisfaction – benefits satisfaction rose as pension contribution amount rose, and having access to at least one other wealth-building benefit also improved satisfaction.



Transparency and clarity mattered alongside bonus amount – satisfaction with bonuses was linked to how clear, reliable, and predictable bonus schemes were, just as much as the amount paid.

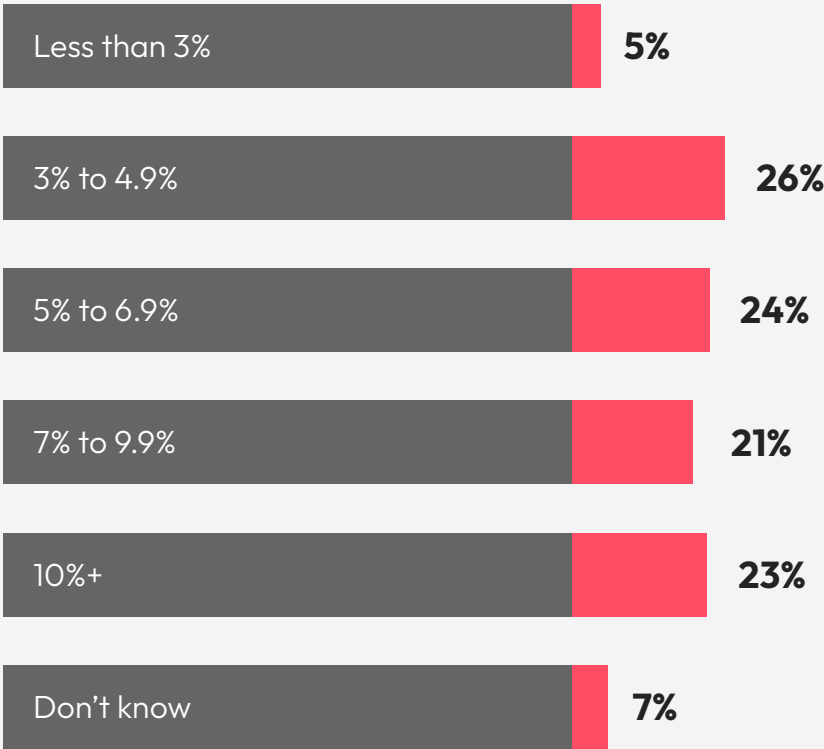


Financial security and overall compensation

Pensions, wealth-building and income protection benefits

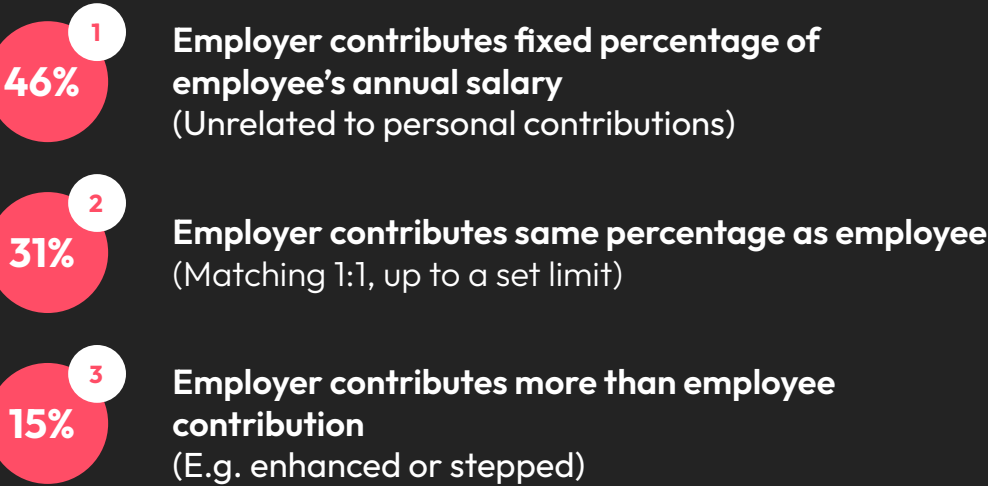
Access to employer pension contributions

Pension contributions
As % of annual salary (contributed by employer)



Employer pension contribution structures

Most common pension contribution arrangements



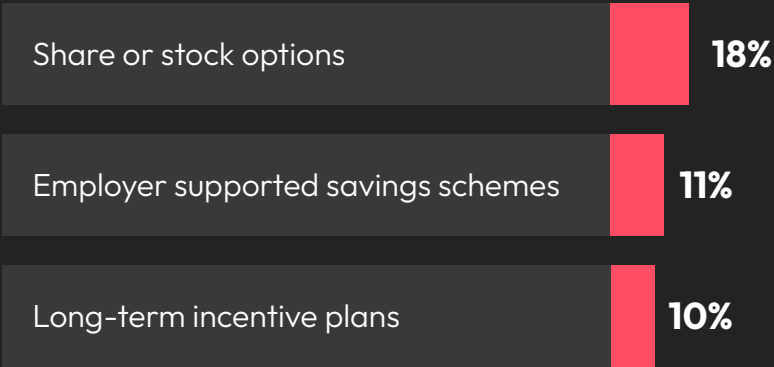
Age group variation

50 - 59 year olds

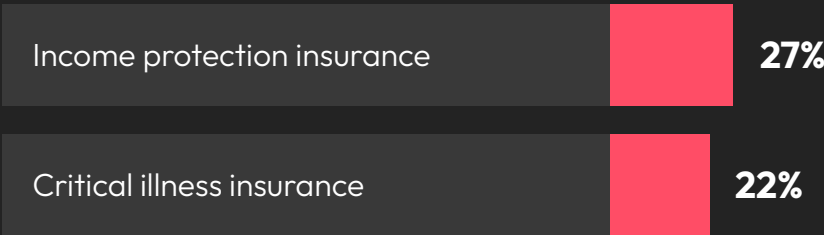
8x more likely to receive employer pension contributions above 10% as those aged 18-28 (22.7% vs 2.7%).

Access to wealth-building and income protection benefits

Top wealth-building benefits received

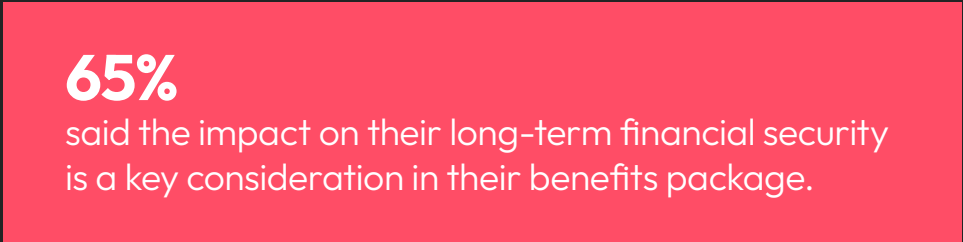


Income protection benefits



Financial security and overall compensation

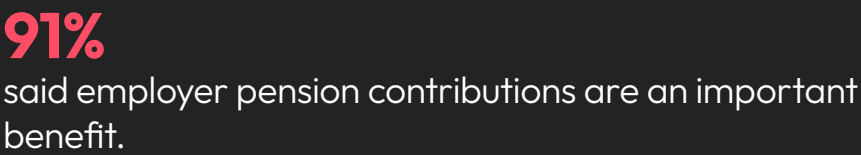
Pensions, wealth-building and income protection benefits



Importance of employer pension schemes

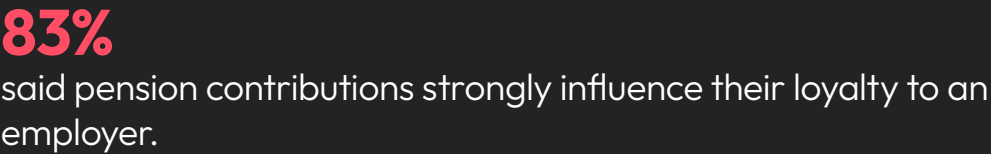


Average importance rating of employer pension contributions

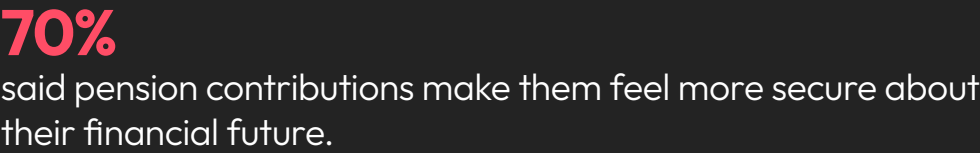


Impact of employer pension contributions and wealth-building benefits

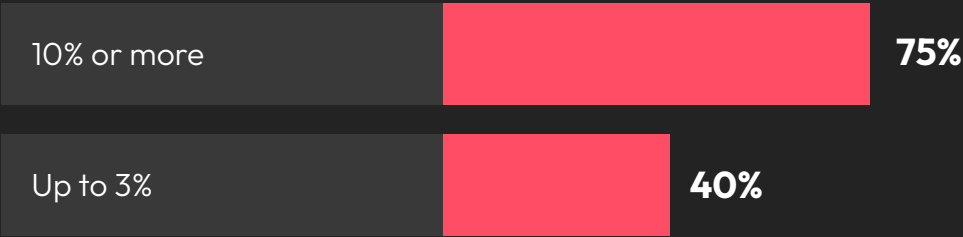
Loyalty



Security



% satisfied with their overall benefits package by employer pension contribution received
Contribution by employer as % of annual salary



Do employer pension schemes make employees feel financially secure?

Employer pension contribution amount	% who felt financially secure from their pension
Up to 3%	44%
3.1-5.9%	67%
6-7.9%	75%
8-9.9%	83%
10% or more	93%



Age group variation

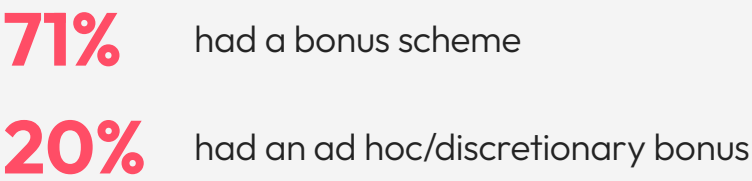
40 – 59 year olds

age group most likely to agree that pension is tied to their loyalty to an employer (86%).

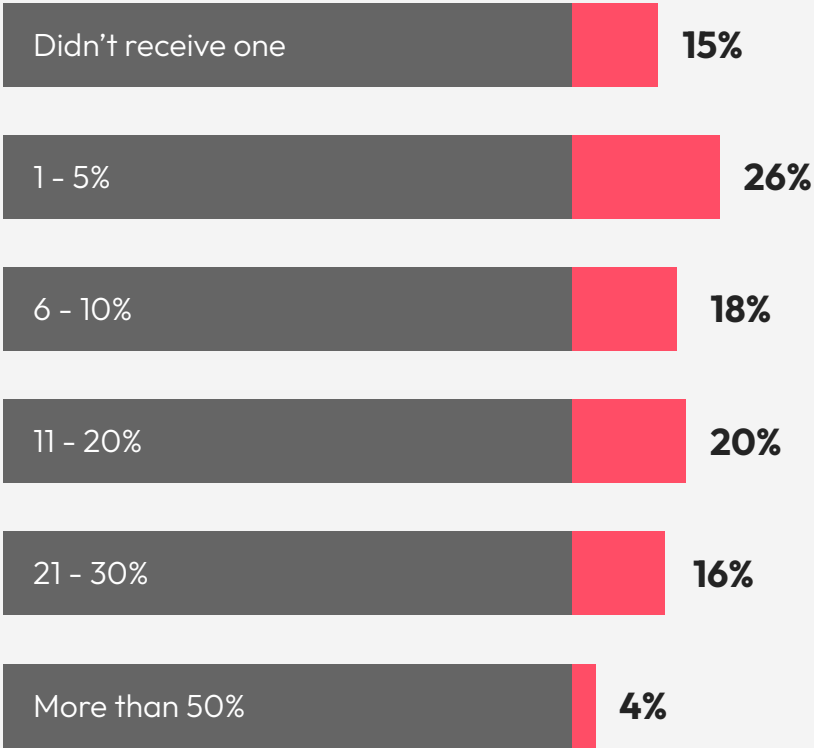
Financial security and overall compensation

Bonuses

Access to bonuses

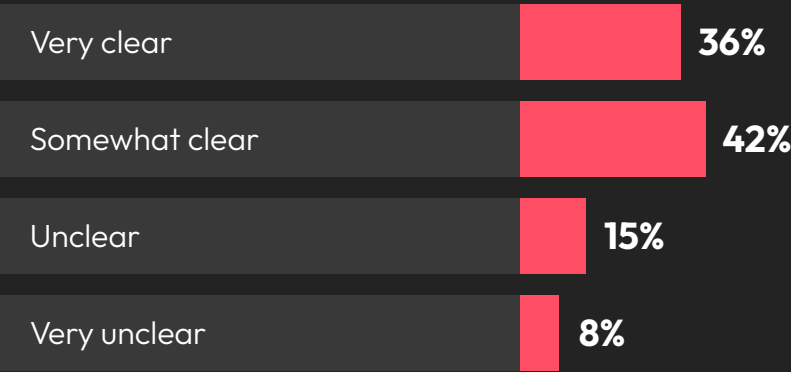


Size of bonus received in the last year
As % of annual salary (only those eligible for bonus)

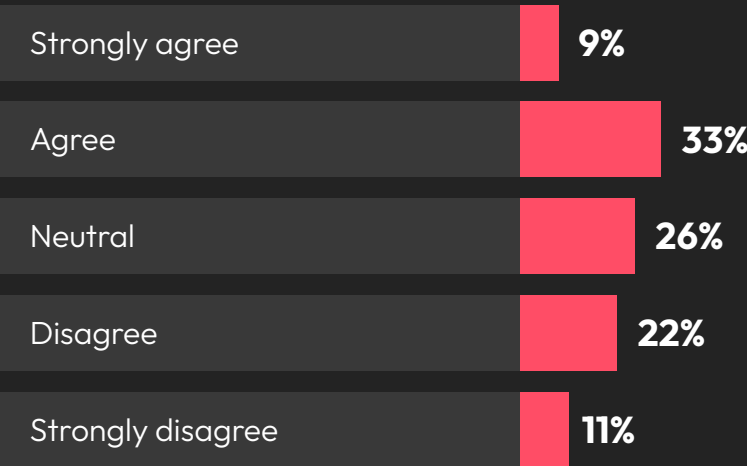


Bonus transparency

Clarity
Are bonus criteria clear enough?



Predictability
“My bonus is a predictable and reliable part of my overall compensation package”



Bonus perceptions

Bonus satisfaction

Only 50% were happy with the bonus they received in the past year.



Year-on-year changes

35% increase in number of respondents who were happy with the bonus they received, (between the 2025 and 2026 survey).

1/4 said bonus criteria was either unclear or very unclear (23%).

Financial security and overall compensation

Bonuses

61%

said the impact on their total compensation is a key consideration in their benefits package.

Importance of bonus schemes



Average importance rating of bonus schemes

82%

said bonus schemes are an important benefit.

What influences bonus satisfaction?

Clarity

59%

of those who were very satisfied with their bonus said their scheme was very clear, compared to 19% who were unsatisfied.

Predictability & reliability

72%

of those who were very satisfied with their bonus said their bonus was a predictable & reliable part of their package, compared to 19% who were unsatisfied.

Impact of bonus schemes

Loyalty

71%

said competitive bonus schemes strongly influences loyalty to their employer.

Overall benefits satisfaction

4x

more likely to be dissatisfied with overall benefits package, if they were unhappy with the bonus they received in the past year (31% vs. 7%).



Age group variation

40 - 49 year olds

age group most likely to rank bonuses as 10/10 importance.

Flexibility, autonomy and work-life balance

The following section covers key findings across these areas:

- Hybrid working
- Flexible working benefits
- Commuting habits & office attendance
- Travel/transport benefits
- Annual leave
- Paid leave

See a breakdown of the benefits received across these categories (split by seniority and company size) and recommendations for supporting work-life balance through flexibility and time away from work.

[Explore benefits received.](#)

[See recommendations.](#)



Hybrid working remained the norm – 3 days per week in the office was the most common expectation, while professionals expected in 4 days a week reported the highest dissatisfaction with their hybrid & flexible working arrangement.



Flexibility was a key retention lever – with the majority of professionals either actively looking for a new role or becoming more open to opportunities if their flexibility was reduced or office attendance requirements increased.



Female respondents placed greater value on hybrid & flexible working benefits and annual leave – female respondents rated these benefits as more important than male respondents and were more likely to consider leaving if flexibility was reduced.



Disconnect between commuting pressures and benefits offered – commuting costs continued to rise, yet few employers provided direct commuting support – despite it being a key motivator for increased office attendance.



Annual leave continued to be highly valued, but many face challenges taking it – workload, resourcing pressures, and concerns about falling behind were commonly cited barriers to taking annual leave.



Flexibility, autonomy and work-life balance

Hybrid and flexible working benefits

Hybrid working arrangements

3 days a week

The most common office attendance expectation among full-time professionals.

15%
had no flexible working benefits.



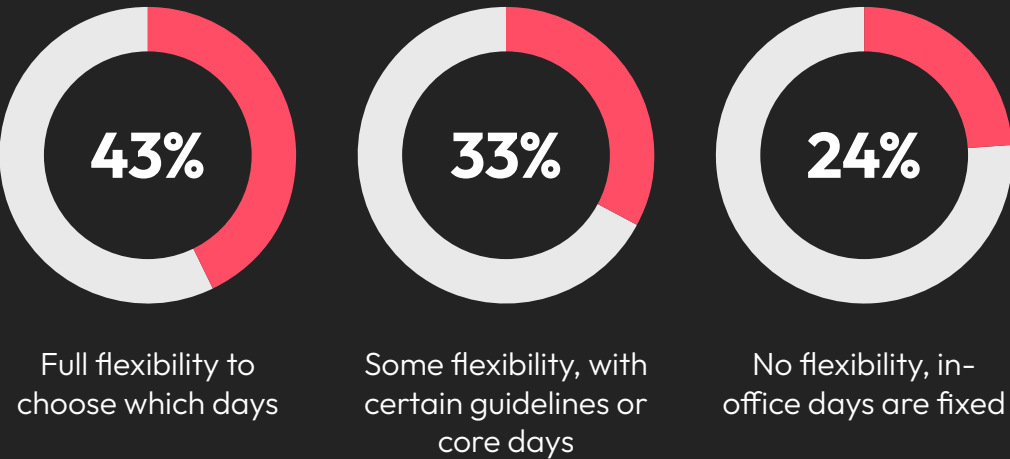
Year-on-year changes

24%

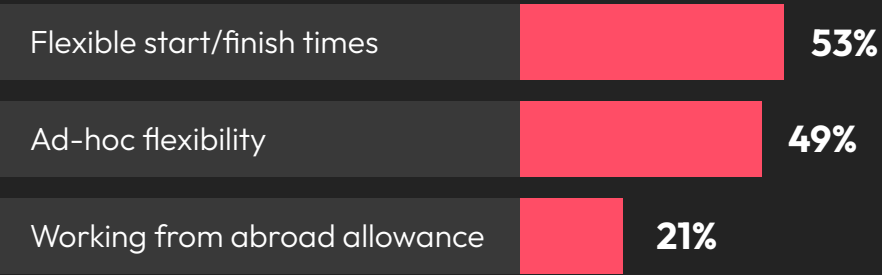
said the number of days they were expected in the office increased in the past year.

Access to flexibility

How much flexibility do professionals have to choose their in-office days?

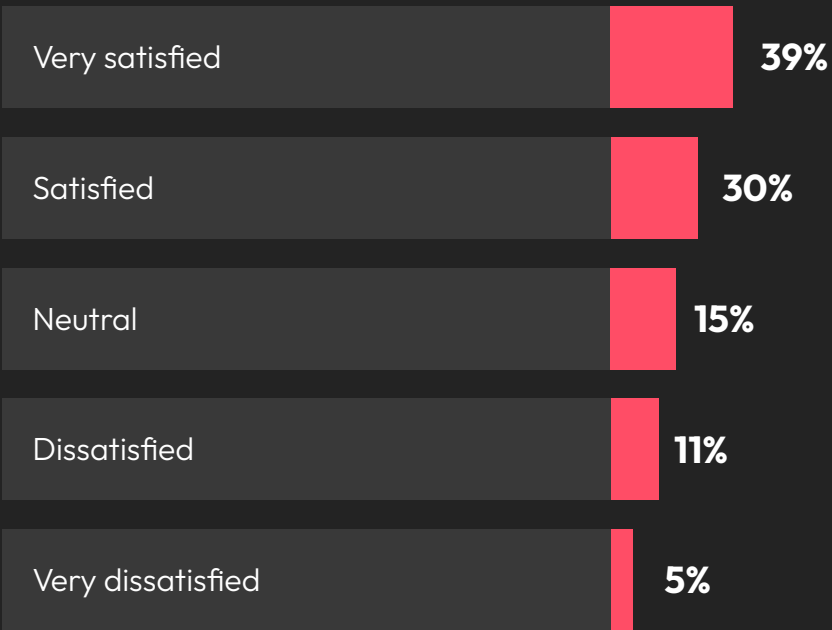


Top flexible working benefits received



Hybrid and flexible working experience

Satisfaction with current hybrid & flexible working arrangement

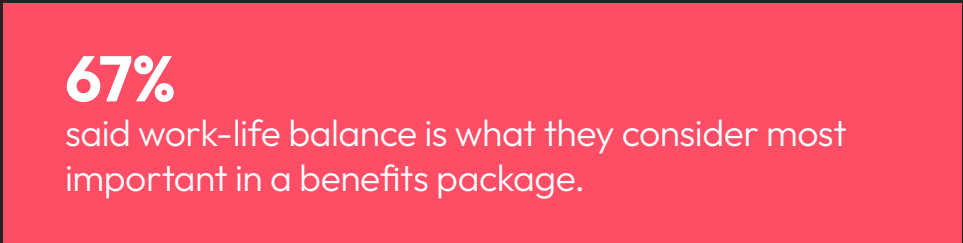


Consistency and fairness of application

Only 55% agreed that hybrid & flexible working policies were applied consistently and fairly in their workplace.

Flexibility, autonomy and work-life balance

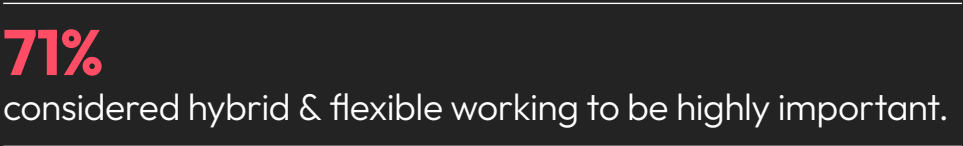
Hybrid and flexible working benefits



Importance of hybrid and flexible working benefits

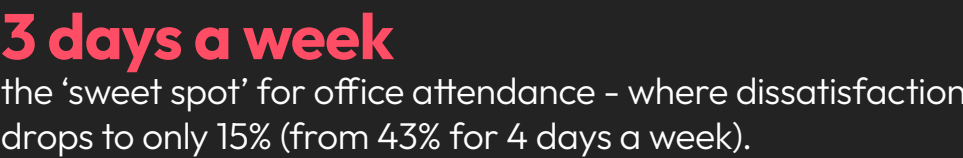


Average importance rating of hybrid & flexible working

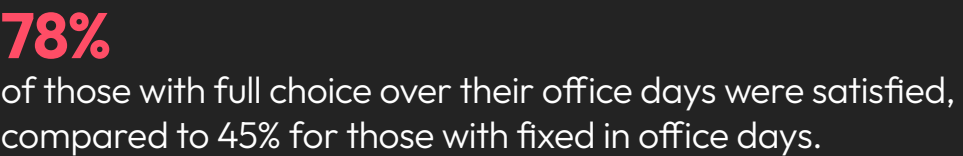


What influences satisfaction with hybrid and flexible working arrangements?

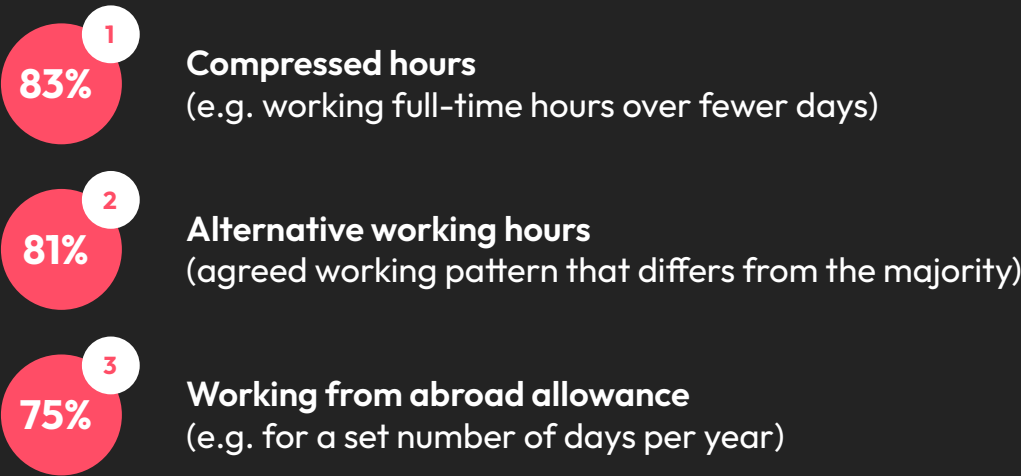
Number of days expected in the office



Choice on which days to go in

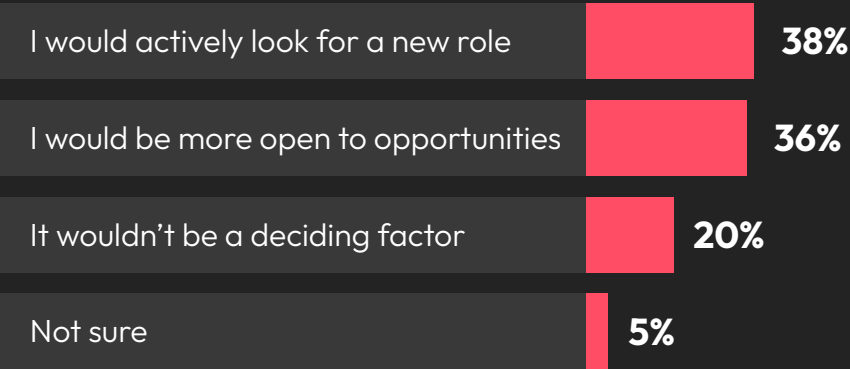


Access to flexible working benefits Flexible working benefits linked to highest satisfaction

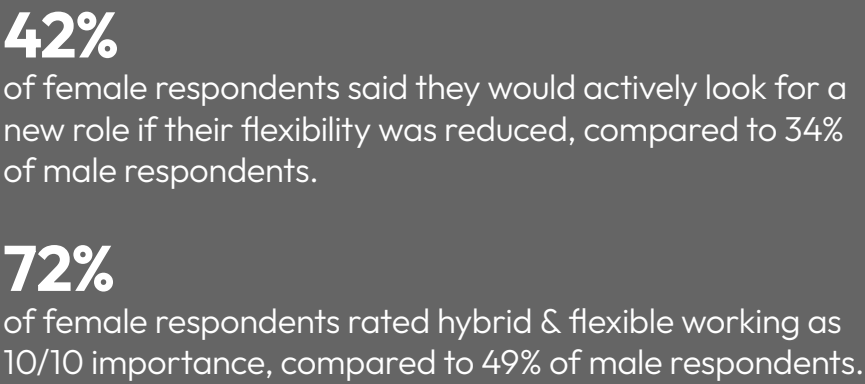


Impact of hybrid and flexible working benefits

How would reducing flexibility/increasing in-office attendance impact retention?



Gender variation



Flexibility, autonomy and work-life balance

Hybrid and flexible working benefits

Expectations and satisfaction by number of days expected in the office*

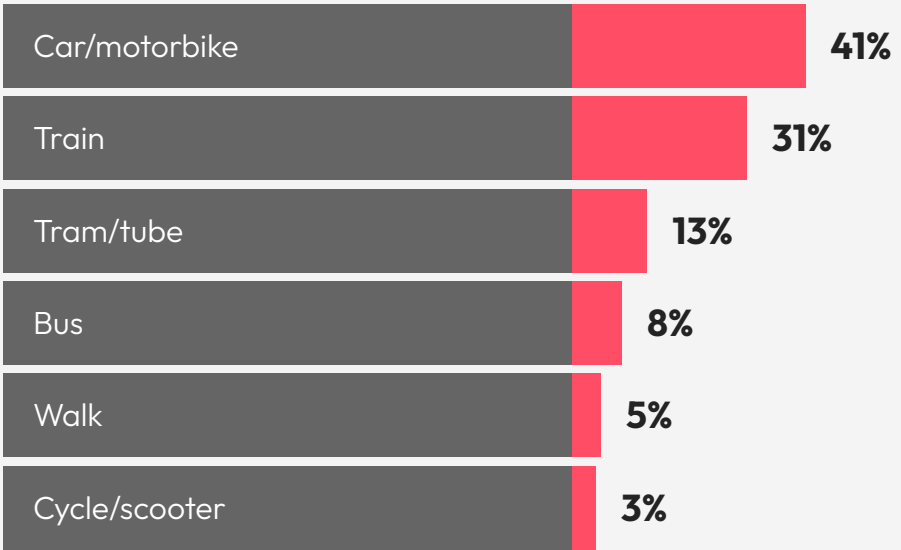
		Satisfaction with current hybrid & flexible working arrangement	
Days expected in the office	% who are expected to attend*	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
5 days a week	12%	35%	39%
4 days a week	11%	35%	43%
3 days a week	36%	66%	15%
2 days a week	25%	85%	6%
1 day a week	10%	88%	4%
Fortnightly	1%	89%	4%
Monthly	3%	94%	4%
Quarterly	1%	94%	6%

*Full-time permanent employees only.

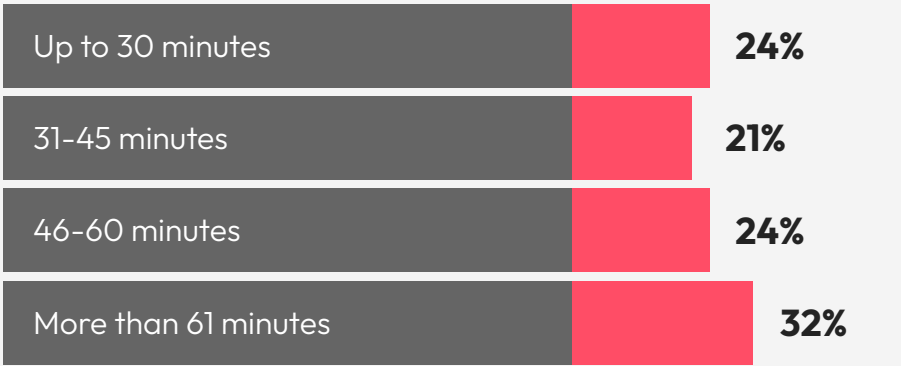
Flexibility, autonomy and work-life balance

Commuting habits and office attendance

Typical commuting methods

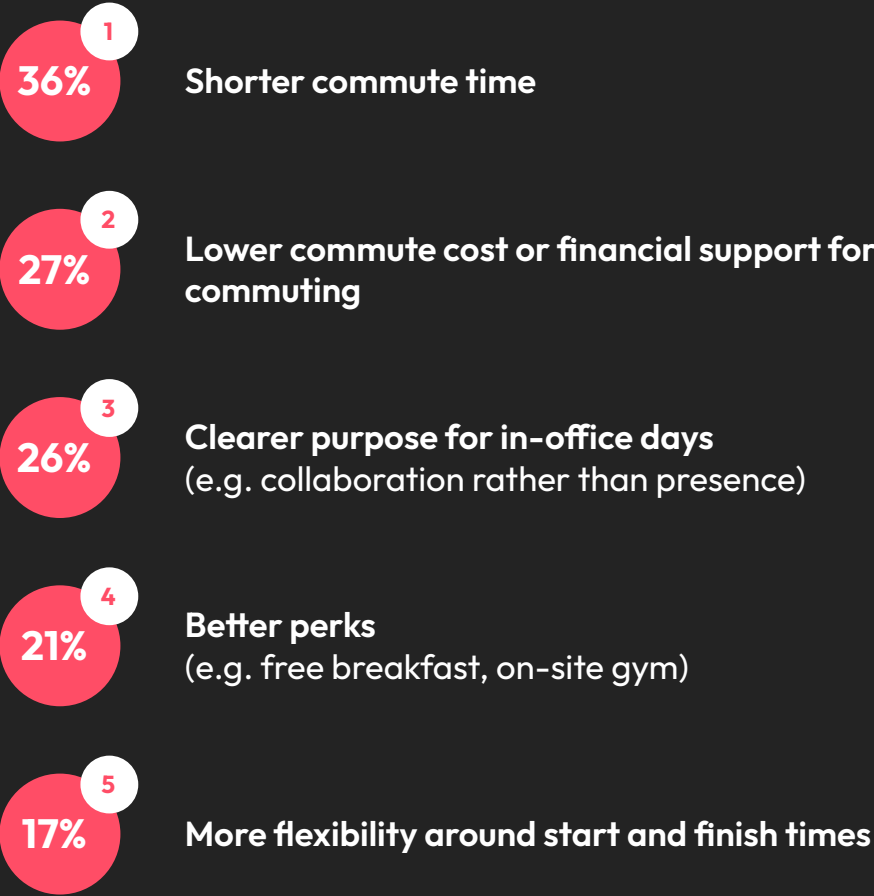


Typical commute times (one way)



Encouraging office attendance

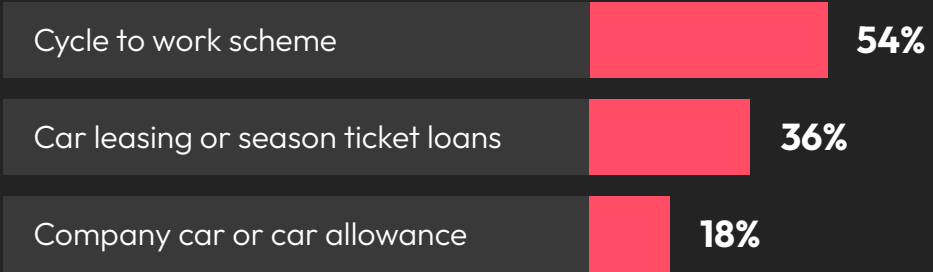
Most cited factors that would increase office attendance



19% said nothing would increase their office attendance.

Access to travel and transport benefits

Top travel & transport benefits received



29% had no access to travel or transport benefits.

Only 6% had access to commuting cost support/subsidies.



Year-on-year changes

47%

said their commuting costs increased in the past year.

Flexibility, autonomy and work-life balance

Annual leave and other paid leave

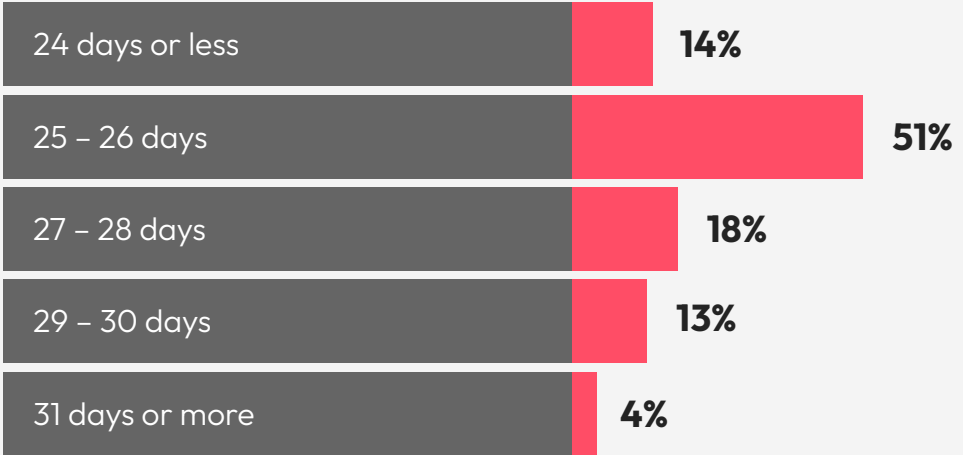
Access to annual leave

25 days

The most common annual leave allowance among full-time professionals.

Annual leave allowance

Full time employees with set allowance, excluding bank holidays



2%

had unlimited annual leave allowance.

Annual leave taken

By those with a set allowance

90%
of allowance taken on average.

By those with unlimited leave allowance

25.8 days
taken on average.

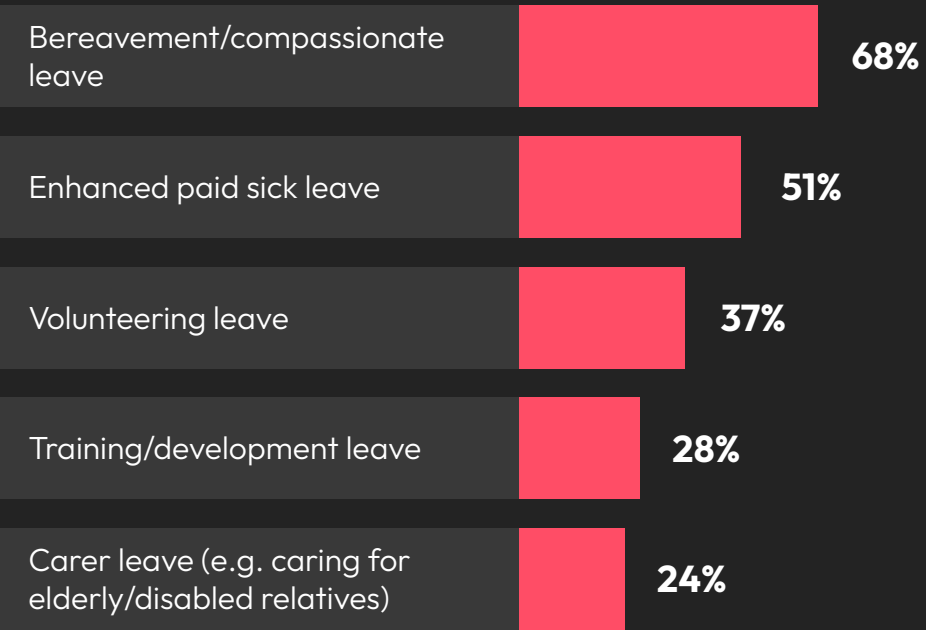
Ability to take annual leave

Only 53%
said they faced no issues taking annual leave.

5%
said they didn't take their full allowance out of personal preference.

Access to other types of paid leave

Top other types of paid leave received



Flexibility, autonomy and work-life balance

Annual leave and other paid leave

Importance of annual leave

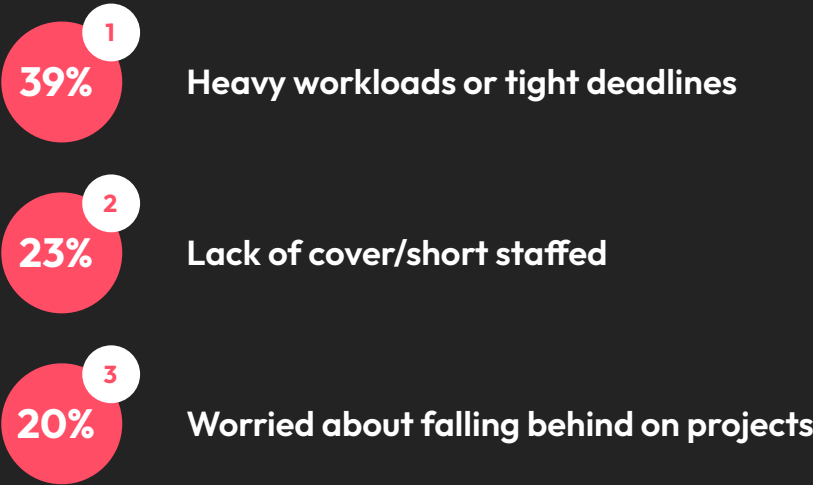


Average importance rating of annual leave



Barriers to taking annual leave

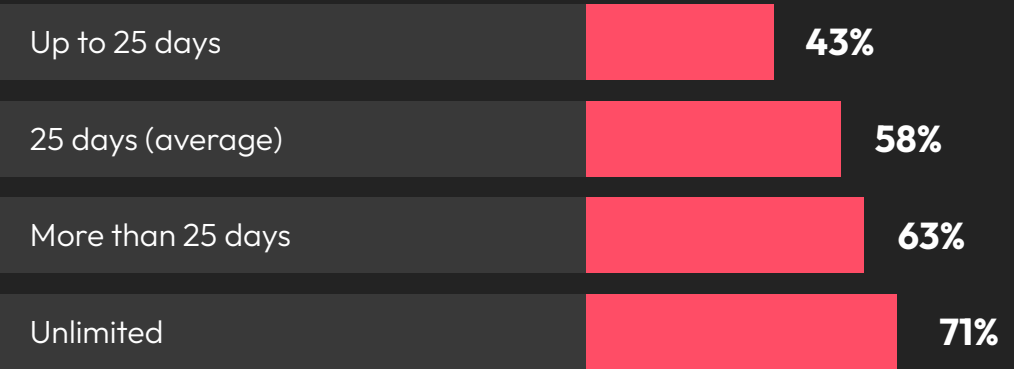
Most cited barriers to taking annual leave



Impact of annual leave and other paid leave

Overall benefits satisfaction

Satisfaction with overall benefits by annual leave allowance received



Paid leave types associated with the highest benefits satisfaction



Health, wellbeing and insurance

The following section covers key findings for these employee benefits:

- Health insurance/cover
- Preventative & everyday health benefits
- Lifestyle & physical wellbeing benefits
- Mental health & emotional wellbeing benefits
- Insurance

See a breakdown of the benefits received across these categories (split by seniority and company size) and recommendations for supporting employee health and wellbeing through benefits.

Explore benefits received.

See recommendations.



Health insurance and healthcare cover ranked among the most valued workplace benefits – featuring alongside other core benefits which made important components of a competitive package.



Health and wellbeing were key factors when professionals evaluated their overall packages, many employees considered the impact on their health and wellbeing when assessing overall benefits value.



Health and wellbeing benefits have a clear link to employee loyalty, with a substantial proportion of employees saying these benefits influenced whether they stayed with an employer.

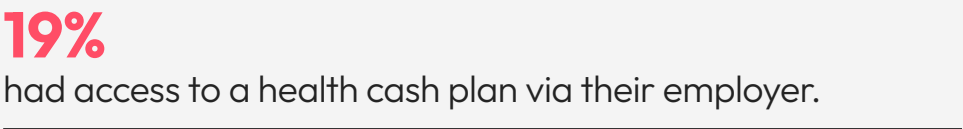


Professionals with access to health-related benefits reported higher levels of benefits satisfaction, particularly where employers provided broader healthcare and insurance support.



Health, wellbeing and insurance

Access to health insurance/cover



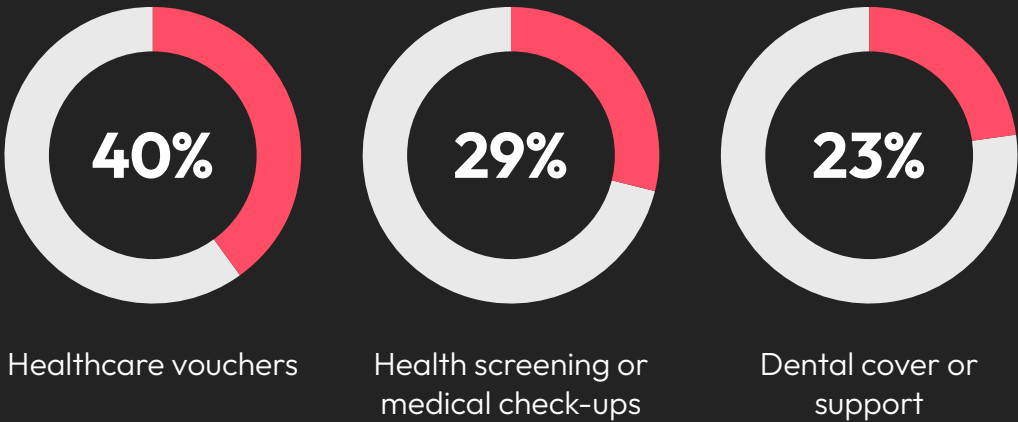


Gender variation

16%
of male respondents were not sure which mental health or emotional wellbeing benefits they could access, compared to 10% of female respondents.

Access to health, lifestyle and physical wellbeing benefits

Top preventative & everyday health benefits



Top lifestyle & physical wellbeing benefits



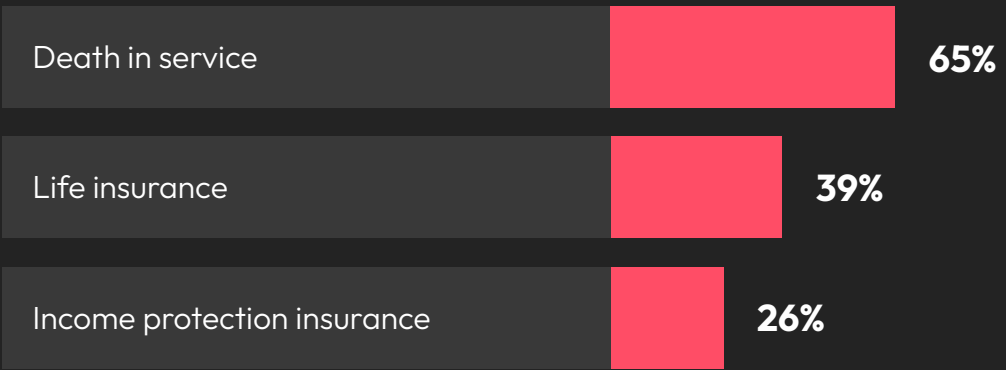
Access to mental health and emotional wellbeing benefits

Top mental health & emotional wellbeing benefits



Access to insurance benefits

Top insurance benefits received



Health, wellbeing and insurance

Importance of health, wellbeing and insurance benefits



Average importance rating of health cover/insurance

81% considered health cover/insurance to be an important benefit.

Wellbeing & lifestyle



Average importance rating of health cover/insurance

44% said lifestyle & wellbeing perks were highly important.

Impact of health, wellbeing and insurance benefits

Loyalty

46% agreed that health and wellbeing benefits are an extremely important factor in whether they stay loyal to an employer.



Gender variation

30% of female respondents considered wellbeing & lifestyle perks to be very important compared to 18% of male respondents.

Overall benefits satisfaction

Health, lifestyle & wellbeing benefits linked to highest satisfaction with overall benefits



Managing life outside of work

The following section covers key findings for these employee benefits:

- Parental leave
- Parental support benefits
- Family/household support benefits
- Caring leave/support

See a breakdown of the benefits received across these categories (split by seniority and company size) and recommendations for supporting employees beyond work through family and caring benefits.

Explore benefits received.

See recommendations.



The value of family benefits varies across the workforce – family-focused benefits rank among the most polarising benefit categories, with importance changing considerably by gender, age and personal circumstances.



Enhanced parental support had a substantial impact on employee experience – family-focused benefits consistently outperformed statutory-only provisions when it comes to benefit perception and satisfaction.



Family and household support benefits remained relatively uncommon – many organisations still focused on core leave entitlements, with fewer offering broader forms of practical support.



Benefits that support caring responsibilities have a strong influence on how some employees viewed their overall package – benefits with lower overall uptake had a significant impact on the people who needed them most.



Flexibility and family support were closely linked – professionals who placed a high value on family-related benefits were also more likely to prioritise hybrid & flexible working arrangements.



Managing life outside of work

Parental leave, family, and household support benefits

Access to parental leave

Maternity/paternity leave

	Statutory	Enhanced	Don't know
Maternity leave	28%	49%	23%
Paternity leave	35%	36%	29%
Adoption leave	24%	28%	48%

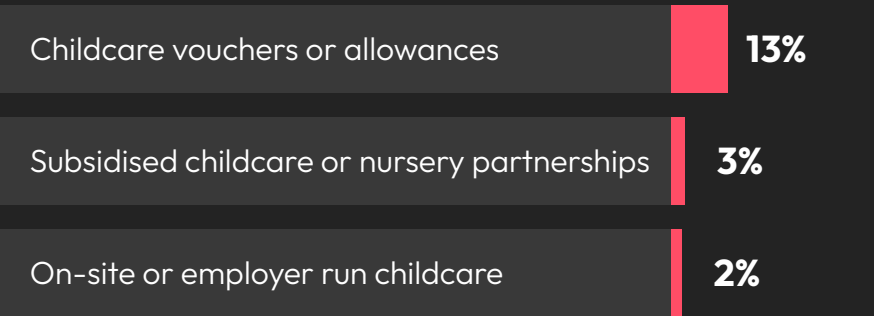
Shared parental leave (UK only)

	Statutory	Enhanced	Don't know
Shared parental leave	27%	24%	49%

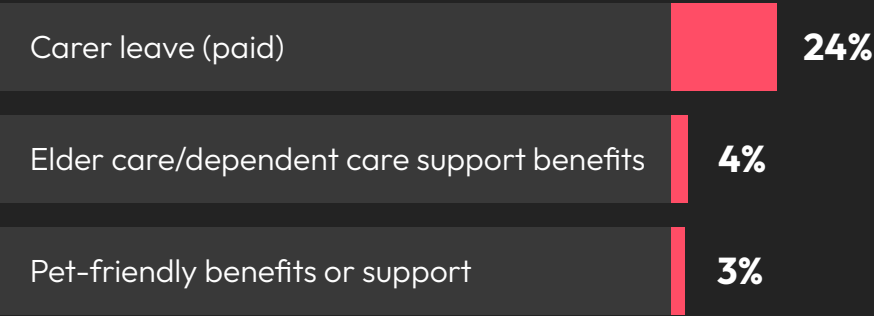
25% of respondents in the Republic of Ireland said their employer offered shared parental leave (or equivalent policy).

Access to other family and household support benefits

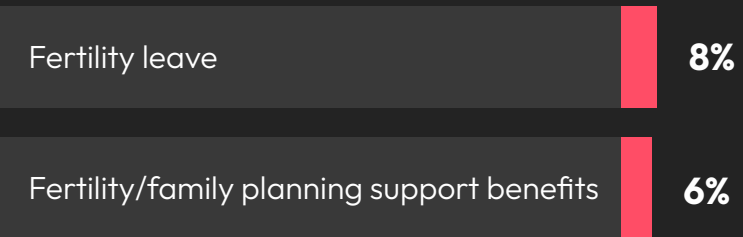
Top parental support benefits



Top other caring support benefits



Top family planning benefits



78% of professionals had no additional family & household support benefits.



Gender variation

30% of female respondents knew they had access to carer leave, compared to 19% of males.

Managing life outside of work

Parental leave, family, and household support benefits

Importance of family benefits



Average importance rating of family benefits

26%
considered family benefits highly important



Gender & age variation

33%
of female respondents considered family benefits highly important, compared to 19% of male respondents.

29-39 year olds
age group who ranked family benefits the highest importance.

Impact of parental leave, family, and household benefits

Overall benefits satisfaction

Satisfaction with overall benefits by level of parental leave offered

% who were satisfied	Statutory only	Enhanced	Don't know
Maternity	49%	69%	51%
Paternity	51%	73%	53%
Adoption leave	50%	73%	57%

Family benefits, hybrid and flexible working

83% who considered family benefits highly important also considered hybrid & flexible working highly important.

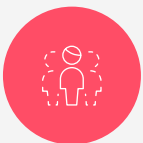
Family & household support benefits linked to highest satisfaction with overall benefits



Personalisation and
relevance



Benefits personalisation is still limited – while some employers offered more options to tailor packages, most professionals still described their benefits package as largely fixed rather than tailored to individual needs.



Choice helped employees connect with their benefits – benefits packages that provided greater flexibility were more likely to be viewed as relevant and meaningful by employees.

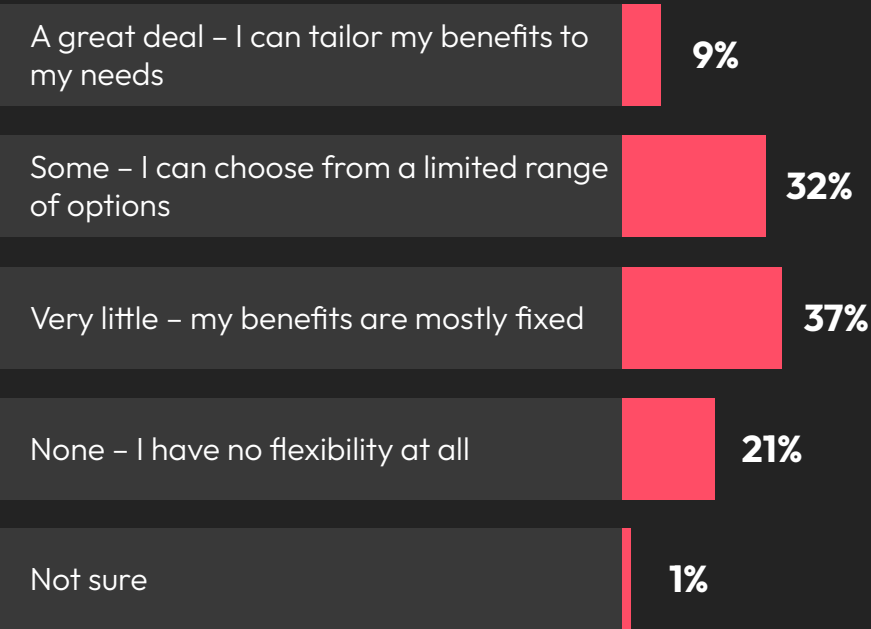


Perceived relevance was a major driver of satisfaction – professionals were significantly more positive about their benefits package when they felt it reflected what mattered most to them personally.

Personalisation

How much can professionals personalise their benefits package?

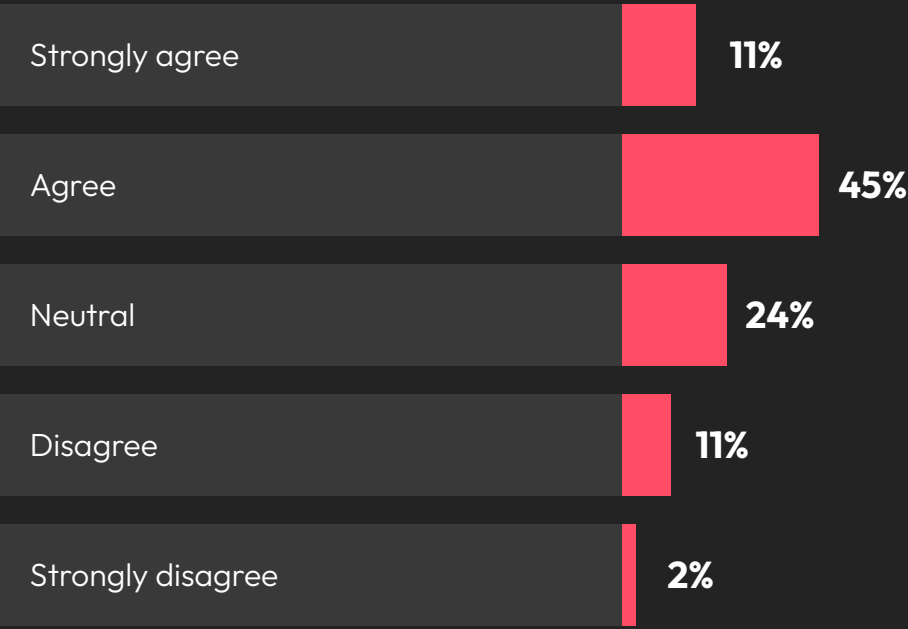
Level of personalisation available



Personal relevance

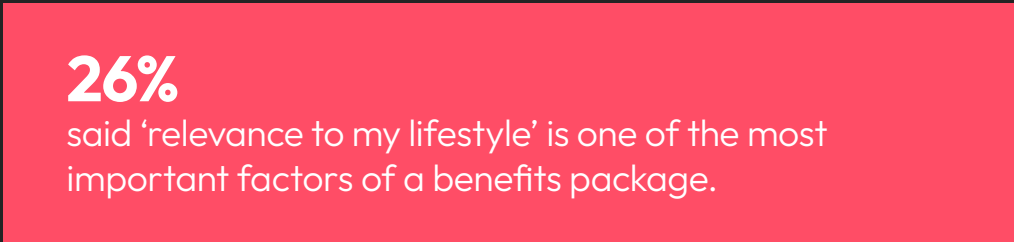
Are benefits packages reflecting personal priorities?

“My benefits package reflects what matters to me personally”



Personalisation and relevance

Importance of personalised benefits packages



Impact of having a benefits package that reflects personal priorities

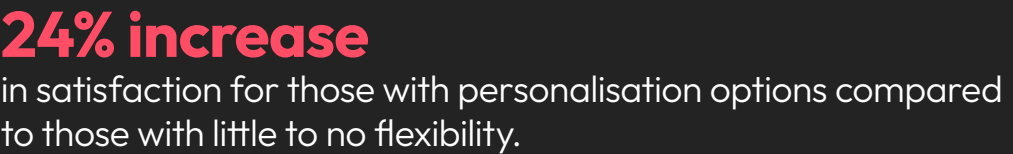
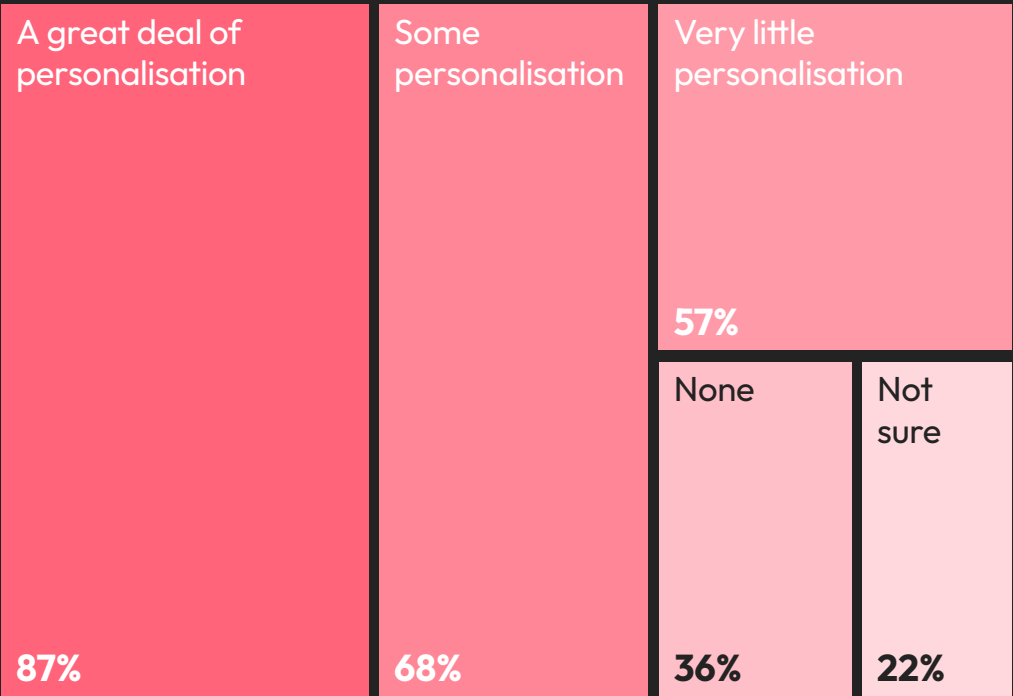
Overall benefits satisfaction



Impact of personalised benefits packages

Overall benefits satisfaction

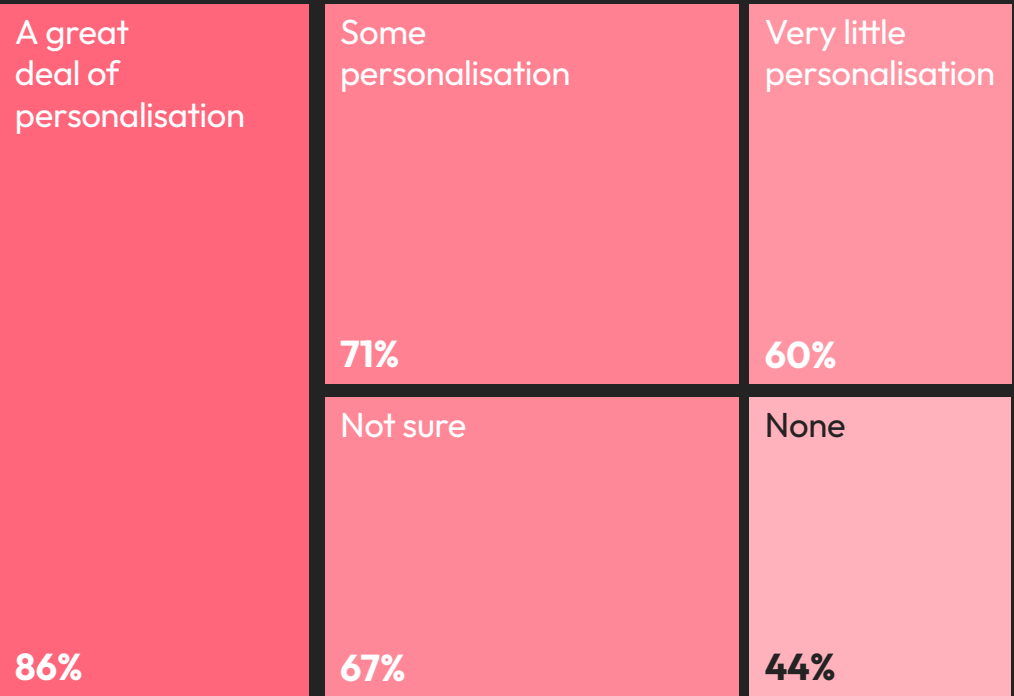
% satisfied with overall benefits package by level of personalisation offered



Impact of having the ability to personalise benefits packages

Personal relevance

% who thought their benefits reflected personal priorities by level of personalisation offered



Employee benefits received

The following section provides a detailed breakdown of the employee benefits received, or were eligible to received, by professionals surveyed across the UK and Ireland.

For each benefit, the tables show:

- the overall percentage of respondents who received, or were eligible to receive, the benefit; and
- the percentage receiving the benefit segmented by seniority level.

Results are presented separately for respondents working in:

- Small and medium-sized organisations (SMEs) (1-250 employees)
- Large and enterprise organisations (251+ employees)

Note

Results are based on respondents across the UK and Ireland, unless otherwise specified where significant statutory differences apply.

Financial security and overall compensation

The following section covers the percentage of respondents who received (or were eligible to receive) benefits across these categories:

- Wealth-building benefits
- Employer pension contributions
- Cash benefits
- Bonus amounts received
- Insurance & financial protection
- Allowances and contributions

Wealth-building benefits received (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Pension (company contribution)	94%	99%	93%	96%	92%	94%	88%
Equity options	6%	27%	9%	3%	3%	3%	4%
Share or stock options	11%	18%	16%	5%	12%	12%	0%
Deferred or equity-linked incentives	3%	9%	7%	2%	0%	2%	0%
Employer-supported savings schemes	4%	7%	4%	3%	3%	6%	0%
Long-term incentive plans	8%	16%	14%	4%	1%	7%	8%

“Salary sacrifice schemes (pension, car lease etc.) are strongly favoured to mitigate higher-rate tax.”

Wealth-building benefits received (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Pension (company contribution)	95%	96%	96%	95%	95%	97%	89%
Equity options	8%	21%	10%	6%	8%	6%	2%
Share or stock options	21%	23%	22%	19%	23%	21%	14%
Deferred or equity-linked incentives	5%	19%	10%	4%	4%	2%	5%
Employer-supported savings schemes	14%	9%	15%	14%	15%	13%	11%
Long-term incentive plans	11%	43%	19%	10%	5%	5%	5%

Employer pension contribution received in past year - as % of annual salary (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Up to 1.9%	5%	2%	5%	4%	4%	7%	6%
2-2.9%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	6%
3-3.9%	23%	11%	18%	25%	30%	26%	39%
4-4.9%	9%	10%	6%	10%	10%	13%	0%
5-5.9%	20%	30%	18%	19%	18%	24%	22%
6-6.9%	7%	5%	8%	7%	4%	7%	6%
7-7.9%	4%	2%	7%	5%	3%	1%	0%
8-8.9%	7%	5%	9%	8%	4%	4%	6%
9-9.9%	5%	3%	7%	4%	3%	5%	17%
Over 10%	17%	30%	21%	14%	19%	9%	0%

Only those who received an employer pension contribution.
Minimum company pension contribution differs based on factors such as worker eligibility, pension scheme, and national legislation.

Employer pension contribution received in past year - as % of annual salary (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Up to 1.9%	2%	0%	1%	1%	2%	3%	7%
2-2.9%	2%	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%	4%
3-3.9%	14%	9%	10%	13%	15%	18%	16%
4-4.9%	8%	1%	8%	7%	11%	10%	12%
5-5.9%	16%	20%	13%	17%	15%	17%	21%
6-6.9%	8%	9%	7%	8%	6%	9%	9%
7-7.9%	7%	4%	9%	8%	6%	5%	0%
8-8.9%	9%	9%	8%	9%	11%	9%	5%
9-9.9%	7%	11%	7%	9%	7%	5%	2%
Over 10%	25%	34%	33%	25%	23%	19%	16%

Only those who received an employer pension contribution.
Minimum company pension contribution differs based on factors such as worker eligibility, pension scheme, and national legislation.

Cash benefits received (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Bonus (annual/quarterly bonus)	64%	69%	69%	66%	57%	62%	46%
Ad hoc / discretionary bonus	22%	25%	24%	21%	20%	19%	19%
Referral incentive	18%	18%	14%	19%	24%	18%	15%
Commission	3%	6%	3%	2%	2%	3%	0%
Overtime	6%	0%	2%	6%	9%	12%	15%

“Companies should do a survey on employees to understand which benefits they value the most and dedicate more resources to those benefits.”

Cash benefits received (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Bonus (annual/quarterly bonus)	75%	87%	82%	74%	74%	70%	59%
Ad hoc / discretionary bonus	20%	25%	24%	18%	17%	18%	19%
Referral incentive	30%	19%	29%	32%	34%	27%	22%
Commission	2%	4%	2%	1%	2%	3%	5%
Overtime	6%	4%	1%	4%	6%	12%	25%

Bonus received in past year - as % of annual salary (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
0%	33%	33%	23%	36%	35%	36%	45%
1-3%	16%	6%	11%	13%	21%	26%	32%
4-6%	9%	5%	5%	11%	8%	13%	5%
7-10%	14%	11%	11%	18%	15%	11%	9%
11-20%	12%	8%	19%	11%	14%	7%	9%
21-30%	9%	21%	16%	7%	3%	5%	0%
31-49%	3%	0%	7%	2%	1%	1%	0%
50%+	5%	16%	7%	3%	3%	1%	0%

Only those who were eligible for some kind of bonus scheme.

Bonus received in past year - as % of annual salary (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
0%	26%	14%	16%	25%	25%	36%	53%
1-3%	12%	0%	6%	12%	14%	18%	25%
4-6%	10%	3%	2%	12%	12%	14%	5%
7-10%	15%	9%	8%	15%	22%	18%	12%
11-20%	19%	16%	25%	23%	18%	8%	5%
21-30%	9%	16%	23%	8%	6%	4%	0%
31-49%	5%	17%	13%	3%	2%	1%	0%
50%+	3%	26%	6%	2%	2%	1%	0%

Only those who were eligible for some kind of bonus scheme.

Insurance and financial protection benefits received (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Life insurance	28%	37%	31%	25%	27%	27%	18%
Death in service	55%	75%	63%	51%	55%	49%	32%
Income protection	19%	30%	19%	20%	18%	15%	5%
Critical illness insurance	13%	22%	16%	11%	16%	7%	9%
Travel insurance	14%	30%	18%	11%	16%	6%	5%

See health insurance.

Insurance and financial protection benefits received (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Life insurance	44%	56%	53%	38%	49%	42%	35%
Death in service	70%	78%	79%	71%	65%	63%	61%
Income protection	29%	33%	35%	27%	32%	24%	25%
Critical illness insurance	24%	33%	32%	21%	25%	23%	11%
Travel insurance	16%	33%	26%	14%	14%	13%	5%

See health insurance.

Allowances and contributions received (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Cost-of-living payments or allowances	2%	5%	2%	2%	3%	3%	0%
Remote-working or home-office allowances	12%	14%	12%	10%	16%	14%	0%
Utilities or broadband contributions	4%	6%	6%	4%	3%	3%	0%
Professional training allowance (related to role)	29%	35%	27%	32%	30%	25%	9%
Personal development allowance	14%	17%	14%	16%	13%	10%	5%

Allowances and contributions received (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Cost-of-living payments or allowances	2%	6%	3%	3%	1%	2%	0%
Remote-working or home-office allowances	12%	14%	11%	10%	15%	12%	12%
Utilities or broadband contributions	3%	10%	3%	2%	5%	2%	2%
Professional training allowance (related to role)	28%	32%	30%	27%	29%	28%	22%
Personal development allowance	11%	13%	15%	9%	9%	11%	7%

Flexibility, autonomy and work-life balance

The following section covers the percentage of respondents who received (or were eligible to receive) benefits across these categories:

- Days expected in the office
- Flexible working benefits
- Transport & travel benefits
- Annual leave allowance
- Paid leave

Days expected in the office (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Never (I work remotely)	9%	13%	12%	8%	7%	5%	0%
1 day a week	9%	17%	11%	3%	14%	9%	0%
2 days a week	19%	13%	19%	19%	18%	24%	25%
3 days a week	29%	33%	25%	33%	24%	27%	30%
4 days a week	12%	14%	14%	15%	8%	9%	5%
5 days a week	18%	8%	19%	18%	18%	19%	35%
Fortnightly	1%	2%	0%	1%	4%	1%	0%
Monthly	2%	0%	0%	1%	7%	4%	5%
Quarterly	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%

Full-time permanent employees only.

“The only benefit that might make an employee stay is true flexibility over office attendance.”

Days expected in the office (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Never (I work remotely)	11%	7%	8%	11%	15%	11%	2%
1 day a week	8%	4%	8%	9%	10%	7%	9%
2 days a week	24%	16%	24%	25%	24%	24%	29%
3 days a week	34%	37%	41%	33%	31%	33%	29%
4 days a week	9%	16%	7%	10%	8%	11%	10%
5 days a week	8%	12%	8%	7%	5%	10%	17%
Fortnightly	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Monthly	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%
Quarterly	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%

Full-time permanent employees only.

Flexible working benefits received (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Flexible start/finish times (day-to-day, often around core hours)	52%	60%	54%	49%	58%	49%	35%
Alternative working hours (agreed working pattern that differs from the majority)	16%	16%	19%	16%	16%	14%	10%
Compressed hours (working longer hours over fewer working days)	8%	11%	7%	7%	8%	7%	10%
Time off in lieu (TOIL)	23%	24%	23%	27%	22%	14%	15%
Working from abroad allowance (e.g. for a set number of days per year)	21%	24%	22%	23%	21%	19%	15%
Ad-hoc flexibility not formally agreed (e.g. at manager discretion)	46%	56%	52%	50%	39%	38%	20%

“Flexible working and unlimited annual leave are the main reasons I stay with my employer.”

Flexible working benefits received (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Flexible start/finish times (day-to-day, often around core hours)	53%	55%	59%	56%	54%	44%	35%
Alternative working hours (agreed working pattern that differs from the majority)	18%	22%	19%	19%	17%	16%	18%
Compressed hours (working longer hours over fewer working days)	10%	13%	8%	12%	10%	10%	5%
Time off in lieu (TOIL)	17%	10%	18%	19%	18%	14%	16%
Working from abroad allowance (e.g. for a set number of days per year)	21%	22%	25%	21%	22%	18%	9%
Ad-hoc flexibility not formally agreed (e.g. at manager discretion)	49%	55%	58%	51%	48%	40%	27%

Transport/travel benefits received (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Company car	5%	6%	11%	4%	3%	2%	0%
Car allowance	7%	8%	12%	8%	3%	3%	0%
Electric vehicle (EV) or car-leasing scheme	12%	17%	23%	9%	7%	9%	9%
Cycle to work scheme	44%	48%	42%	45%	46%	41%	41%
Season ticket loans (salary sacrifice / repayable)	19%	22%	19%	19%	18%	17%	18%
Commuting cost support/subsidies (actual employer contribution)	5%	2%	6%	5%	3%	6%	5%

“Work-life balance and flexibility are the most important factors and yet most neglected.”

Transport/travel benefits received (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Company car	6%	13%	8%	6%	6%	2%	2%
Car allowance	19%	35%	35%	22%	12%	5%	2%
Electric vehicle (EV) or car-leasing scheme	18%	13%	17%	21%	20%	16%	8%
Cycle to work scheme	59%	58%	54%	63%	61%	53%	57%
Season ticket loans (salary sacrifice / repayable)	30%	31%	31%	31%	29%	31%	22%
Commuting cost support/subsidies (actual employer contribution)	6%	10%	5%	6%	7%	6%	3%

Annual leave allowance (SME)

Full-time employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
20 days or less	6%	0%	9%	4%	10%	4%	18%
21-22 days	7%	3%	4%	6%	8%	13%	18%
23-24 days	8%	9%	4%	8%	6%	18%	0%
25-26 days	44%	22%	47%	50%	47%	33%	53%
27-28 days	14%	17%	7%	17%	13%	14%	6%
29-30 days	14%	38%	18%	10%	5%	12%	6%
31-32 days	1%	0%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%
33-34 days	1%	3%	0%	1%	4%	0%	0%
35-36 days	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%
37 or more days	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Unlimited	3%	5%	4%	1%	5%	3%	0%

Full-time permanent employees only.

“We have a flexi-accrual scheme which is my most appreciated benefit and provides up to 13 additional days leave per year.”

Annual leave allowance (Large-Enterprise)

Full-time employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
20 days or less	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	3%	6%
21-22 days	4%	0%	2%	3%	3%	6%	17%
23-24 days	5%	4%	6%	4%	7%	6%	9%
25-26 days	52%	39%	48%	51%	61%	54%	47%
27-28 days	19%	29%	21%	20%	15%	17%	13%
29-30 days	12%	20%	19%	13%	7%	8%	4%
31-32 days	2%	4%	0%	3%	0%	2%	0%
33-34 days	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
35-36 days	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%
37 or more days	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	2%
Unlimited	1%	0%	1%	1%	3%	1%	0%

Full-time permanent employees only.

Paid leave (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Health & wellbeing support							
Enhanced paid sick leave (above the statutory minimum)	50%	53%	53%	52%	48%	38%	53%
Menopause leave	2%	2%	4%	2%	3%	1%	0%
Menstruation leave	1%	0%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Family & caring leave							
Bereavement/compassionate leave	67%	74%	69%	70%	65%	51%	58%
Carer leave (e.g. for caring for elderly/disabled relatives)	20%	28%	21%	22%	14%	14%	11%
Fertility leave	5%	7%	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%
Development & lifestyle							
Training/development leave	29%	40%	28%	31%	29%	23%	21%
Volunteering leave	23%	26%	22%	24%	24%	23%	21%
Lifestyle & extended time off							
Birthday leave	19%	12%	21%	21%	11%	22%	21%
Sabbatical leave	7%	5%	7%	8%	9%	6%	5%

See parental leave.

Paid leave (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Health & wellbeing support							
Enhanced paid sick leave (above the statutory minimum)	52%	63%	54%	54%	47%	48%	42%
Menopause leave	4%	3%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%
Menstruation leave	1%	3%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%
Family & caring leave							
Bereavement/compassionate leave	69%	77%	75%	69%	64%	65%	58%
Carer leave (e.g. for caring for elderly/disabled relatives)	26%	27%	29%	25%	27%	26%	12%
Fertility leave	7%	11%	7%	6%	7%	5%	6%
Development & lifestyle							
Training/development leave	28%	36%	32%	27%	28%	24%	26%
Volunteering leave	42%	39%	42%	44%	46%	39%	24%
Lifestyle & extended time off							
Birthday leave	12%	20%	11%	13%	10%	10%	6%
Sabbatical leave	14%	13%	17%	13%	12%	15%	14%

See parental leave.

Health, wellbeing and insurance

The following section covers the percentage of respondents who received (or were eligible to receive) benefits across these categories:

- Healthcare cover/insurance
- Preventative and everyday health benefits
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing benefits
- Lifestyle and physical wellbeing benefits

Healthcare cover/insurance (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Private medical insurance (employer-paid) (e.g. cover for private treatment, diagnostics or hospital care)	42%	30%	51%	41%	45%	39%	41%
Private medical insurance – including family/partner (employer-paid) (e.g. cover for private treatment, diagnostics or hospital care)	24%	37%	29%	20%	25%	20%	18%
Opt-in private medical insurance – employee pays some or all of the cost (e.g. via salary sacrifice or employee contribution)	11%	10%	7%	11%	15%	10%	14%
Health cash plan (e.g. cashback or contributions towards dental, optical or physio costs)	18%	15%	12%	20%	22%	18%	18%

“Health insurance is always asked for by candidates we interview. It is very expensive and very important to everyone. It can be a deciding factor.”

Healthcare cover/insurance (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Private medical insurance (employer-paid) (e.g. cover for private treatment, diagnostics or hospital care)	50%	47%	50%	51%	52%	48%	44%
Private medical insurance – including family/partner (employer-paid) (e.g. cover for private treatment, diagnostics or hospital care)	35%	53%	49%	32%	35%	27%	14%
Opt-in private medical insurance – employee pays some or all of the cost (e.g. via salary sacrifice or employee contribution)	21%	21%	21%	21%	23%	20%	23%
Health cash plan (e.g. cashback or contributions towards dental, optical or physio costs)	20%	13%	11%	22%	19%	24%	26%

“Private medical insurance should be available to all or none. It is unfair for only certain members of staff to be eligible.”

Preventative and everyday health benefits (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Healthcare vouchers (e.g. eye tests, flu jabs)	31%	36%	32%	33%	29%	30%	14%
Health screenings or medical check-ups	18%	22%	17%	18%	18%	17%	14%
Dental cover or support (e.g. check-ups, treatment contribution plans)	21%	22%	22%	19%	23%	21%	23%
In-house physio, masseuse or personal trainer	5%	7%	6%	5%	7%	2%	0%

“GP and PHI related benefits are becoming more important as NHS services are getting harder to access.”

Preventative and everyday health benefits (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Healthcare vouchers (e.g. eye tests, flu jabs)	44%	44%	41%	47%	41%	47%	42%
Health screenings or medical check-ups	34%	46%	39%	33%	34%	32%	19%
Dental cover or support (e.g. check-ups, treatment contribution plans)	24%	32%	22%	23%	23%	29%	25%
In-house physio, masseuse or personal trainer	8%	6%	5%	8%	8%	11%	11%

Mental health and emotional wellbeing benefits (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)	53%	62%	55%	57%	50%	44%	41%
Counselling or therapy sessions (separate to EAP)	13%	23%	12%	13%	11%	10%	9%
Mental health coaching or helplines (separate to EAP)	20%	20%	23%	19%	22%	20%	14%

“Work-life balance and mental health support deserve much more attention.”

Mental health and emotional wellbeing benefits (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)	71%	71%	74%	74%	68%	67%	61%
Counselling or therapy sessions (separate to EAP)	21%	31%	22%	18%	22%	24%	16%
Mental health coaching or helplines (separate to EAP)	32%	29%	27%	31%	35%	36%	32%

Lifestyle and physical wellbeing benefits (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Discounted gym membership or fitness classes	18%	15%	19%	17%	18%	22%	5%
Wellbeing or health allowance (e.g. wellbeing wallet/spend)	8%	7%	7%	9%	7%	10%	0%
On-site / free gym	10%	8%	12%	12%	6%	6%	9%
Subsidised fitness or wellbeing activities (e.g. massage, yoga)	4%	3%	4%	4%	7%	0%	5%
Wellness or fitness subscriptions / app access	6%	5%	7%	9%	4%	4%	5%

Lifestyle and physical wellbeing benefits (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Discounted gym membership or fitness classes	38%	31%	38%	37%	37%	44%	37%
Wellbeing or health allowance (e.g. wellbeing wallet/spend)	13%	15%	14%	11%	14%	14%	16%
On-site / free gym	18%	21%	16%	15%	17%	23%	23%
Subsidised fitness or wellbeing activities (e.g. massage, yoga)	8%	10%	7%	9%	9%	8%	7%
Wellness or fitness subscriptions / app access	12%	8%	11%	14%	15%	11%	4%

Managing life outside of work

The following section covers the percentage of respondents who received (or were eligible to receive) benefits across these categories:

- Parental leave
- Parental support benefits
- Family planning benefits
- Benefits for other caring responsibilities

Parental leave - UK (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Maternity leave							
Maternity leave - statutory only	39%	34%	36%	46%	30%	42%	29%
Maternity leave - enhanced	42%	63%	46%	41%	48%	27%	14%
I don't know	19%	3%	18%	14%	23%	31%	57%
Paternity leave							
Paternity leave - statutory only	42%	41%	39%	48%	32%	51%	29%
Paternity leave - enhanced	33%	53%	42%	48%	32%	51%	29%
I don't know	25%	6%	19%	21%	35%	37%	57%
Adoption leave							
Adoption leave - statutory only	34%	30%	37%	41%	18%	34%	13%
Adoption leave - enhanced	26%	43%	33%	26%	21%	11%	13%
I don't know	41%	27%	30%	33%	61%	55%	73%
Shared parental leave							
Shared parental leave - statutory only	38%	29%	45%	43%	23%	31%	33%
Shared parental leave - enhanced	23%	45%	27%	22%	22%	11%	0%
I don't know	40%	26%	28%	35%	55%	58%	67%

Parental leave - UK (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Maternity leave							
Maternity leave - statutory only	24%	24%	25%	24%	23%	25%	10%
Maternity leave - enhanced	51%	63%	56%	54%	47%	44%	35%
I don't know	25%	12%	19%	22%	29%	31%	55%
Paternity leave							
Paternity leave - statutory only	29%	32%	31%	32%	25%	30%	15%
Paternity leave - enhanced	38%	54%	46%	40%	36%	30%	23%
I don't know	32%	15%	23%	27%	40%	40%	63%
Adoption leave							
Adoption leave - statutory only	18%	28%	22%	18%	15%	16%	8%
Adoption leave - enhanced	30%	45%	36%	33%	22%	25%	18%
I don't know	53%	28%	42%	49%	63%	59%	75%
Shared parental leave							
Shared parental leave - statutory only	22%	31%	27%	23%	18%	21%	8%
Shared parental leave - enhanced	25%	44%	32%	25%	21%	21%	15%
I don't know	53%	26%	41%	52%	61%	58%	78%

Parental leave - Ireland (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Maternity leave							
Maternity leave - statutory only	33%	23%	35%	36%	29%	33%	50%
Maternity leave - enhanced	51%	58%	61%	50%	50%	42%	33%
I don't know	16%	19%	3%	14%	21%	24%	17%
Paternity leave							
Paternity leave - statutory only	45%	44%	57%	46%	41%	44%	20%
Paternity leave - enhanced	35%	41%	33%	35%	38%	28%	40%
I don't know	20%	15%	10%	19%	22%	28%	40%
Adoption leave							
Adoption leave - statutory only	36%	26%	41%	41%	41%	24%	33%
Adoption leave - enhanced	28%	35%	28%	32%	25%	17%	33%
I don't know	36%	39%	31%	28%	34%	59%	33%
Shared parental leave							
Shared parental leave - any	26%	37%	23%	28%	31%	15%	0%
I don't know	47%	33%	55%	42%	40%	67%	50%

Parental leave - Ireland (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Maternity leave							
Maternity leave - statutory only	27%	31%	27%	25%	23%	30%	50%
Maternity leave - enhanced	51%	59%	55%	54%	45%	46%	43%
I don't know	22%	10%	19%	21%	32%	24%	7%
Paternity leave							
Paternity leave - statutory only	36%	32%	32%	38%	35%	34%	54%
Paternity leave - enhanced	36%	46%	40%	37%	30%	37%	8%
I don't know	29%	21%	28%	26%	34%	30%	38%
Adoption leave							
Adoption leave - statutory only	22%	25%	23%	21%	18%	22%	36%
Adoption leave - enhanced	28%	29%	30%	27%	27%	32%	0%
I don't know	51%	46%	47%	52%	55%	46%	64%
Shared parental leave							
Shared parental leave - any	25%	28%	28%	27%	27%	28%	20%
I don't know	53%	38%	57%	50%	59%	51%	73%

Household support benefits (SME)

Employees working in an SME (1-250 employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Parental							
On-site or employer run childcare	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Subsidised childcare or nursery partnerships	2%	4%	1%	3%	1%	0%	0%
Childcare vouchers or allowances	10%	14%	11%	10%	8%	7%	5%
Family planning							
Fertility leave	5%	7%	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%
Fertility/family planning support	2%	5%	3%	2%	2%	0%	5%
Other caring responsibilities							
Carer leave (e.g. for caring for elderly/disabled relatives)	20%	28%	21%	22%	14%	14%	11%
Elder care/dependent care support benefits	2%	7%	2%	3%	1%	0%	0%
Pet friendly benefits or support (e.g. pet insurance discounts, pet bereavement leave, office-pet policies)	3%	7%	5%	3%	2%	1%	5%

“Any benefit related to childcare would play a massive role in my loyalty.”

Household support benefits (Large-Enterprise)

Employees working in a Large-Enterprise (251+ employees)

	Overall	CXO/executive	Director	Manager	Non-manager (Senior)	Non-manager (Mid-level)	Non-manager (Entry-level/Junior)
Parental							
On-site or employer run childcare	2%	0%	1%	1%	3%	3%	6%
Subsidised childcare or nursery partnerships	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%	6%	8%
Childcare vouchers or allowances	15%	13%	20%	14%	12%	15%	15%
Family planning							
Fertility leave	7%	11%	7%	6%	7%	5%	6%
Fertility/family planning support	7%	10%	7%	5%	10%	7%	8%
Other caring responsibilities							
Carer leave (e.g. for caring for elderly/disabled relatives)	26%	27%	29%	25%	27%	26%	12%
Elder care/dependent care support benefits	5%	1%	5%	4%	5%	6%	4%
Pet friendly benefits or support (e.g. pet insurance discounts, pet bereavement leave, office-pet policies)	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	0%

“It is far more important that employers listen when people want flexible hours due to health issues, caring for elderly parents or childcare.”

Recommendations

The findings throughout this guide show that an effective benefits strategy is not defined only by the number of benefits offered. Value also depends on whether provision reflects the issues that matter to employees, is communicated clearly and can be used in practice.

The following recommendations are structured around the four themes explored in the guide:

1

Supporting financial wellbeing and security

2

Supporting work-life balance through flexibility and time away from work

3

Supporting employee health and wellbeing

4

Supporting employees beyond work through family and caring benefits



Supporting financial wellbeing and security through benefits

Financial wellbeing is one of the clearest priorities for professionals when evaluating an employer's benefits package.

Long-term financial security and total compensation ranked among the three most important considerations, while employer pension contributions were ranked highest-valued benefit overall. Pension and bonus provision were also strongly associated with loyalty and overall benefits satisfaction.

However, financial value alone does not determine how employees perceive a benefit. The findings show that contribution levels, clarity, predictability, communication and access to wider financial support all matter. To strengthen attraction and retention, employers should develop a financial benefits proposition that supports employees now while helping them build greater long-term security.

Key recommendations

- Support long-term security, not just immediate reward
- Improve understanding of pensions across career stages
- Improve transparency around bonuses and financial rewards
- Broaden financial wellbeing beyond pensions and bonuses

Key takeaway

A strong financial benefits proposition combines competitive provision with clarity and practical support. Employers that help employees understand the value of pensions, trust how financial rewards are determined and build greater financial resilience can strengthen both attraction and retention.

Supporting financial wellbeing and security through benefits

Key recommendations

Support long-term security, not just immediate reward

Employer pension contributions received an average importance rating of 8.9 out of 10, and 91% considered them an important benefit. Respondents receiving contributions of 10% or more reported considerably higher benefits satisfaction than those receiving up to 3%. Higher contribution levels were also associated with a stronger sense of financial security.

Pensions therefore have value beyond retirement provision. They can influence how employees evaluate an employer's overall investment in their future.

Recommendations

- Review employer pension contributions against relevant sector and talent-market benchmarks.
- Assess whether contribution structures provide a clear incentive for employees to save more.
- Consider whether increased or stepped employer contributions could support retention at important career milestones.
- Position pension provision as a visible part of the employee value proposition, rather than communicating it only during enrolment.
- Use straightforward examples and forecasting tools to demonstrate how employer contributions can affect longer-term outcomes.

Improve understanding of pensions across career stages

The findings show substantial differences in the employer pension contributions received by different age groups. Respondents aged 50–59 were more than eight times as likely to receive contributions above 10% as those aged 18–28.

This does not necessarily mean that younger employees value pensions less, and could be down to seniority-determined pension contributions. Regardless, employers should consider whether early-career employees fully understand their provision and the value of beginning to save sooner.

Recommendations

- Introduce pensions clearly during onboarding rather than relying solely on scheme documentation.
- Provide regular pension education at appropriate points throughout an employee's career.
- Explain pension contributions in pounds as well as percentages where possible.
- Signpost employees to impartial, government-backed guidance and forecasting tools.
- Tailor the framing of communications to relevant decisions, such as joining the workforce, changing contribution levels or preparing for retirement.



Supporting financial wellbeing and security through benefits

Key recommendations

Improve transparency around bonuses and financial rewards

Bonus satisfaction was associated not only with the amount paid, but also with whether employees understood the scheme and regarded the payment as predictable and reliable. Among those who were very satisfied with their bonus, 59% described their scheme as very clear and 72% agreed that their bonus was a predictable and reliable part of their compensation.

An otherwise competitive scheme can lose value where criteria are unclear or employees only learn how decisions were made at the end of the performance period.

Recommendations

- Clearly define bonus eligibility, measures, timescales and decision-making processes.
- Distinguish between guaranteed, performance-related and discretionary elements.
- Use measures that employees can understand and, where appropriate, influence.
- Provide progress updates during the performance cycle rather than communicating only at payout.
- Equip managers to explain reward structures consistently and respond to questions accurately.

Broaden financial wellbeing beyond pensions and bonuses

Respondents with access to at least one additional wealth-building benefit reported higher overall benefits satisfaction than those whose financial provision was limited to a pension. Financial wellbeing can encompass savings, financial protection, education and support with managing immediate financial pressures, alongside retirement planning.

Supporting financial wellbeing can benefit employers as well as employees. Employees who feel financially secure are more likely to feel confident about their future, while reduced financial stress can support engagement, retention and overall wellbeing. [The Money and Pensions Service](#) recommends that employers assess existing provision, provide appropriate products, use clear signposting and education, target key moments and regularly evaluate effectiveness.

Recommendations

- Review whether the package supports short, medium and long-term financial needs.
- Explore relevant wealth-building and financial-protection benefits, such as savings schemes, share plans or income protection insurance.
- Provide access to impartial financial education and guidance.
- Audit existing financial benefits before adding new provision, identifying areas that may be underused or poorly understood.
- Evaluate awareness and utilisation alongside employee feedback and overall cost.



Supporting work-life balance through flexibility and time away from work

Work-life balance was the factor most frequently selected by respondents when evaluating their benefits package.

Hybrid and flexible working and annual leave were also among the most highly valued benefits. The survey findings show that employees consider more than whether a policy exists – they also assess how much control it offers, whether it is applied fairly and whether they can use it without negative consequences.

Research from the [Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development](#) found that 61% of surveyed employers considered it important to advertise flexibility to attract staff and address skills or labour shortages.

Key recommendations

- Treat flexibility as an attraction and retention consideration
- Build autonomy and fairness into working arrangements
- Make office attendance purposeful
- Remove practical barriers to annual leave
- Design work for sustainable performance

Key takeaway

Effective work-life balance strategies combine autonomy, fair application, purposeful office attendance and genuine opportunities to disconnect. Flexibility attracts attention, but the day-to-day experience of using it is what will ultimately influence employee satisfaction and retention.

Supporting work-life balance through flexibility and time away from work

Key recommendations

Treat flexibility as an attraction and retention consideration

The survey found that 38% of respondents said they would actively look for a new role if their flexibility were reduced or their expected number of in-office days increased. A further 36% said they would be more open to other opportunities.

Changes to working arrangements may therefore affect more than short-term satisfaction. They can influence how employees evaluate whether an organisation remains right for them.

Recommendations

- Present available flexibility clearly and accurately in recruitment materials.
- Avoid creating expectations during recruitment that managers or teams cannot fulfil consistently.
- Assess the potential retention implications before changing established working arrangements.
- Explain the business rationale, evidence and intended outcomes behind policy changes.
- Monitor changes in engagement, recruitment, retention and absence following significant changes to flexible-working policies.

Build autonomy and fairness into working arrangements

Respondents with full choice over their in-office days reported considerably higher satisfaction with their hybrid and flexible working arrangement than those with fixed in-office days. Only 55% agreed that policies were applied consistently and fairly in their workplace.

Assessing your organisation's hybrid and flexible working policies should be done through both organisational and employee outcomes - including employee views, wellbeing, recruitment, turnover, absence and performance measures.

Recommendations

- Provide employees with reasonable autonomy over in-office patterns where roles allow.
- Define which decisions are organisation-wide and which can be made at team level.
- Review differences in access and application across departments, roles and locations.
- Ensure managers assess requests consistently against role and business requirements.
- Measure the effect of arrangements rather than relying on assumptions about visibility or productivity.



Supporting work-life balance through flexibility and time away from work

Key recommendations

Make office attendance purposeful

Respondents identified shorter journey times, lower commuting costs or financial support, and a clearer purpose for in-office days among the factors most likely to encourage greater attendance. At the same time, 47% said their commuting costs had increased in the previous year, while only 6% had access to direct commuting-cost support or subsidies.

The implication is not that every employer should subsidise every commute. It is that office-attendance decisions should consider the employee cost and the value employees receive in return.

Recommendations

- Define the activities for which face-to-face interaction creates clear value.
- Coordinate attendance so employees are not commuting primarily to complete individual work.
- Use office time for collaboration, learning, relationship-building and activities that benefit from shared presence.
- Review whether existing travel benefits respond to the commuting pressures employees actually face.
- Consider targeted options such as season-ticket loans, travel subsidies or greater flexibility around start and finish times where appropriate.

Remove practical barriers to annual leave

Annual leave received an average importance rating of 8.7 out of 10, yet only 53% of respondents said they experienced no difficulty taking it. Heavy workloads or tight deadlines, inadequate cover and concerns about falling behind were the most frequently cited barriers. Respondents reporting at least one barrier also used a lower proportion of their allowance on average than those who experienced no issues.

Higher allowances alone will not deliver their intended value if employees feel unable to use them.

Recommendations

- Monitor leave balances during the year and intervene before substantial allowances accumulate.
- Include leave planning in regular management conversations rather than leaving responsibility solely with employees.
- Identify teams where workload, staffing or dependency on particular individuals repeatedly prevents leave.
- Establish practical handover and cover arrangements.
- Encourage senior leaders and managers to model healthy use of annual leave.



Supporting work-life balance through flexibility and time away from work

Key recommendations

Design work for sustainable performance

Flexibility and annual leave do not operate separately from workload and workplace culture. The [World Health Organization](#) identifies excessive workloads, understaffing, inflexible hours and lack of control over job design as risks to mental health. It recommends organisational interventions to address workplace risks, supported by manager training and worker participation.

Recommendations

- Review whether workload expectations are compatible with leave and flexible-working policies.
- Monitor out-of-hours working and sustained workload pressure.
- Give managers clear responsibility for supporting recovery time and appropriate boundaries.
- Consult employees when evaluating how working arrangements operate in practice.
- Treat flexibility, workload and leave as connected elements of work design rather than separate policies.



Supporting employee health and wellbeing through benefits

Healthcare cover and insurance ranked among the most highly valued workplace benefits, while 46% of respondents agreed that health and wellbeing benefits were an extremely important factor in their loyalty to an employer.

Access to healthcare and insurance support was also associated with higher overall benefits satisfaction.

However, providing individual benefits cannot compensate for working conditions that negatively affect health. [WHO](#) guidance recommends a broader approach that prevents workplace risks, promotes mental health and supports employees experiencing health conditions.

Key recommendations

- Treat health and wellbeing as part of the core proposition
- Balance treatment with prevention and early intervention
- Improve awareness and confidence in accessing support
- Embed and evaluate wellbeing support

Key takeaway

Effective health and wellbeing strategies combine accessible benefits with healthy working practices. Employers should focus on prevention, clear access and evidence of effectiveness, ensuring that support is embedded into the employee experience rather than delivered as a collection of disconnected initiatives.

Supporting employee health and wellbeing through benefits

Key recommendations

Treat health and wellbeing as part of the core proposition

Eighty-one per cent of respondents considered healthcare cover and insurance important, while more than a third identified the impact on their health and wellbeing as one of the most important factors when evaluating a benefits package. Health support therefore has relevance to attraction and retention, as well as employee wellbeing.

Recommendations

- Present healthcare, insurance and wellbeing support clearly within recruitment and onboarding.
- Explain what each benefit covers, who is eligible and how it can be accessed.
- Evaluate health benefits against employee needs rather than treating them as peripheral perks.
- Review whether provision supports physical, mental and emotional health.
- Consider awareness, access and employee outcomes alongside cost when assessing effectiveness.

Balance treatment with prevention and early intervention

Respondents reported access to a range of preventative and everyday health benefits, including healthcare vouchers, screenings and dental support. These sit alongside treatment-focused provision such as private medical insurance and counselling. [WHO](#) recommends preventing psychosocial risks through organisational interventions, protecting and promoting mental health through training and literacy programmes, and supporting employees through appropriate workplace adjustments and return-to-work support.

Recommendations

- Review the balance between treatment, preventive support and early intervention.
- Promote relevant screening, check-up and everyday-health benefits.
- Identify workplace risks such as excessive workload or low job control rather than relying only on individual resilience initiatives.
- Provide managers with appropriate training and clear escalation routes.
- Ensure employees returning after ill health receive structured and proportionate support.



Supporting employee health and wellbeing through benefits

Key recommendations

Improve awareness and confidence in accessing support

The research indicates that some respondents were unsure which mental-health and emotional-wellbeing benefits they could access. This shows that availability and awareness are separate measures.

A benefit cannot deliver its intended value if information is difficult to find, employees do not understand the access route or they are uncertain about confidentiality.

Recommendations

- Measure employee awareness as well as benefit uptake.
- Create one clear and accessible source of information covering available support.
- Communicate benefits throughout the year instead of relying only on enrolment periods.
- Clearly explain confidentiality and access arrangements where relevant.
- Equip managers to signpost support without expecting them to diagnose or provide clinical advice.

Embed and evaluate wellbeing support

[WHO](#) identifies leadership, investment, worker participation, evidence and integration as enabling factors for sustainable improvements in workplace mental health.

This supports moving away from isolated wellbeing activities towards an approach that is connected to work design, management and organisational decision-making.

Recommendations

- Set clear objectives for health and wellbeing provision before assessing success.
- Use employee feedback, awareness, utilisation and relevant workforce indicators to review effectiveness.
- Examine whether support is reaching the employees and teams for whom it is intended.
- Connect benefits decisions with workload, absence, occupational health and management practices.
- Retain, improve or reconsider initiatives on the basis of evidence rather than visibility alone.



Supporting employees beyond work through family and caring benefits

Family and caring benefits occupy a distinctive position within the benefits landscape.

They were the most divided benefit category in the Robert Walters research and ranked below pensions, flexibility and annual leave in overall importance. However, lower collective importance does not make them irrelevant. Their value is concentrated among employees facing particular responsibilities or major life events, and several family and caring benefits were associated with high overall benefits satisfaction.

Employers should therefore avoid evaluating these benefits solely by workforce-wide popularity. The more relevant question is whether they provide effective support to employees when that support is needed.

Key recommendations

- Evaluate targeted benefits differently
- Review parental support beyond statutory provision
- Strengthen support for working carers
- Support employees through major life events

Key takeaway

Family and caring benefits may not be universally prioritised, but they can be among the most important benefits at particular moments in an employee's life. Employers should evaluate them according to the support they provide, not simply the proportion of the workforce using them. Stronger parental provision, practical support for carers and clear policies around major life events can help retain employees whose needs might otherwise remain overlooked.

Supporting employees beyond work through family and caring benefits

Key recommendations

Evaluate targeted benefits differently

Although only 26% of professionals considered family benefits highly important to them, their importance should not be underestimated.

Beyond parental leave policies, benefits such as caring leave or dependant support, or subsidised childcare, were associated with some of the highest satisfaction levels when offered. While these benefits may be relevant to a smaller proportion of the workforce, they can play an important role in retention, employee experience and workforce participation during key life events.

Recommendations

- Assess family and caring benefits by their relevance and outcomes, not uptake alone.
- Consider retention, return-to-work experience and employee feedback alongside utilisation.
- Avoid removing targeted support solely because it is used by a minority of employees.
- Review whether eligible employees know what support is available before interpreting low take-up.
- Distinguish between benefits designed for broad use and those intended for particular circumstances.



Supporting employees beyond work through family and caring benefits

Key recommendations

Review parental support beyond statutory provision

Respondents with access to enhanced maternity, paternity and adoption leave reported higher overall benefits satisfaction than those with statutory-only provision.

This highlights the positive role that enhanced parental support can play in shaping employees' perceptions of their overall benefits package.

Recommendations

- Benchmark parental provision against relevant talent competitors.
- Assess where enhancement would have the clearest value and operational feasibility.
- Communicate eligibility, pay, duration and return-to-work support clearly.
- Ensure managers understand the policy and apply it consistently.
- Review the employee experience before, during and after parental leave.



Supporting employees beyond work through family and caring benefits

Key recommendations

Strengthen support for working carers

More and more employees are balancing work with unpaid caring responsibilities, particularly eldercare. A recent Carers UK report estimated that 1 in 5 workers in the UK combine paid work with unpaid caring, an increase of 37% since 2019. Moreover, 59% reported that their caring responsibilities impacted their work, and growing numbers of carers are cutting back hours at work or leaving work altogether.

Despite access being linked to significantly higher overall benefits satisfaction, only 24% of respondents had access to paid carers leave, and less than 5% of respondents had elder care/dependent support benefits. These responsibilities are not always visible to employers, but their impact on work-life balance, career progression and workforce participation should not be underestimated.

Recommendations

- Review whether current provision extends beyond the applicable statutory minimum.
- Consider paid carer leave where organisationally feasible.
- Provide flexible options for planned and unexpected caring responsibilities.
- Document carer support clearly, including leave, flexibility and available services.
- Equip managers to respond consistently and sensitively when employees disclose caring responsibilities.
- Consider a carers' network or named internal point of contact where workforce need supports it.



Supporting employees beyond work through family and caring benefits

Key recommendations

Support employees through major life events

Childcare support, fertility and family-planning benefits may have relatively low overall availability or use, but can become highly significant at particular times. The survey found that 78% of respondents had no additional family or household support benefits.

The objective should not be to offer every possible benefit. It should be to identify where current provision leaves employees without meaningful support during events that could affect attendance, wellbeing or retention.

Recommendations

- Map existing support across parenthood, fertility, childcare, caring and bereavement.
- Identify gaps where employees currently depend on manager discretion.
- Explore practical support as well as leave, including signposting and return-to-work arrangements.
- Define policies clearly enough to support consistency while retaining appropriate flexibility.
- Gather focused feedback from employees who have used relevant policies rather than relying only on workforce-wide surveys.



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