Employee Wellbeing Research 2018

How employers, CEOs and government are driving new agendas

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Introduction

Facing the future: building healthy and resilient workforces equipped for change

As employers turn to wellbeing strategies to build happy and robust workforces there’s a growing realisation that good leadership is what will drive their success.

Employee wellbeing is becoming the solid underpinning that will allow workforces to withstand the huge revolution in working practices we are beginning to experience.

From technological advances, the gig economy and unpredictable economic challenges, to the ageing of the population and the need for reskilling every few years, all businesses are undergoing a transformation of one sort or another.

Anyone thinking through the future of work can see that ordinary human beings will be hit hard – emotionally and potentially physically – if those of us in a position to assist with the transformation, not least employers, do nothing to smooth the transition.

This research already shows that almost three quarters of employers are concerned about the impact of high pressure working environments on wellbeing, while six in 10 boards say that mental wellbeing of staff is their top concern.

In interviewing five business leaders and CEOs for this report, we can hear the genuine concern each has for the wellbeing of their staff although they were upfront about how this care improves business results. They clearly see wellbeing as being tied to talent recruitment and retention, employee engagement and productivity. The way they view wellbeing is very broad – it’s about giving staff autonomy over how they work and where they work, it’s giving them flexibility to live lives outside of work so as to be energised when they are at work. It is about realising the value of the huge wealth of experience that can be tapped when people are able to reach their full potential. Healthy, happy workers lead to healthy, wealthy, happy organisations.

To support these overarching business ambitions, businesses need policies: whether they are about working practices and line management, training and development or offering benefits and insurances that support health and wellbeing.

After reviewing more than 80 entries in the Employee Wellbeing Awards 2018, it was evident that where someone at board level truly champions wellbeing the strategy is vastly more powerful for staff. This good leadership is important because we are living in a society where we do not know if automation or artificial intelligence will remove our jobs or our businesses in the near future; we’re trying to come to terms with new threats such as cybercrime and ‘always on’ technology; we’re increasingly sedentary; and the gulf between the haves and the have nots grows ever wider. So a focus on resilience and wellbeing is a vital strategy at a societal level to help populations adjust. Employers are key to delivering this.

REBA has been delighted to get input to the questions we have asked in our 2018 survey, not only from our sponsor, Punter Southall Health & Protection, but also the Work and Health Unit within the Department for Work and Pensions.

We at REBA want to support our members and employers more broadly, as well as government, to push the wellbeing agenda. We hope this research report goes someway to achieving this aim.

Debi O’Donovan
Partner | Reward & Employee Benefits Association (REBA)
debi.odonovan@reba.global
The authors

This report was devised by Debi O’Donovan and Phil Hayne of REBA in association with Punter Southall Health & Protection.

The research was conducted and written by Graham Brown, edited by Rima Evans and designed by SallyannDesign.

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Employers of choice: wellbeing strategies help organisations stand out from the crowd

Provision of wellbeing services is critical for employee engagement and creating a positive working culture. But any plan needs to be relevant and targeted if it is to achieve results for employee health goals – and business goals.

This is the third year that Punter Southall Health & Protection has supported this important research into employee wellbeing in the UK.

What is clear to see is that for organisations of all sizes wellbeing is now firmly on the corporate agenda.

As employers we find ourselves facing enormous challenges. We have an ageing population; the NHS is being squeezed from all angles; we are working longer than ever before and businesses must find new ways to recruit and retain talent.

Set against this backdrop, leading organisations are seeking to differentiate themselves as employers of choice. Increasingly, wellbeing is becoming a critical part of building employee engagement and creating the right culture needed to give them an edge.

More than ever before, employees are looking to their employers to help them access the services they need to stay fit and healthy and able to stay in work. Whether that involves flexible working, on-site gyms, quick access to healthcare services or mental health support, building the right programme for your workforce is key.

And as research shows that healthy staff are likely to be happier and therefore more productive, it’s a compelling business argument too.

Tackling mental health

It is positive to see that mental health is now a primary concern for employers. In previous years, few people talked openly about mental health. But recent campaigns such as Time to Change and the support from high profile advocates such as the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have resulted in a shift in attitudes. There seems to be a growing openness and willingness in the workplace to talk about a subject that for so long has been highly stigmatised.

But more can and must be done by employers to help employees with a mental illness. First, in terms of providing access to support services such as counselling, mental health first aiders and employee assistance programmes.

And second, in terms of offering line manager training so this crucial group of people is equipped to support and manage employees with a mental health condition in the first place.

Building a relevant strategy for your people

In order for your wellbeing strategy to be effective, it’s essential that you take the time to fully understand the dynamics and make up of your workforce. Unless you can identify the specific health and wellbeing challenges they face – high levels of stress, poor sleep, money worries, lack of exercise or mental health concerns, for example – you won’t be able to create a strategy that can be targeted effectively and that ultimately helps to improve wellbeing in your workplace.

The first step is to conduct a full review of all the data available within your organisation to pinpoint areas that need attention. Once you have that fuller picture, you can use this information to build a tailored programme with quantifiable objectives.

When it comes to wellbeing, there’s always going to be a discussion around cost. However rather than asking, “Can we afford to implement a strategy to look after employee wellbeing?” the real question should be, can you afford not to?

John Dean
Chief Commercial Officer | Punter Southall Health & Protection
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How much is being spent?
Where employers have a wellbeing plan in place, median spend per employee is £26-£50

How popular are they?
Nearly half of organisations have a wellbeing strategy
Of those without a current strategy, half plan to introduce one in 2018

What services are being offered?
Employee Assistance Programmes continue to be the most popular wellbeing initiative provided by 93% of organisations

Key concerns for wellbeing
72.8% of respondents said a high pressure work environment is the biggest threat to staff wellbeing
However, boardrooms say their biggest priority is mental health with 59.7% saying this is their top wellbeing concern

Ongoing challenges
26.8% of respondents still do not measure the impact of actions on health and wellbeing

How is mental health being addressed?
Wellbeing strategies increasingly tackle mental health – 84.1% of plans address mental health in 2018, compared to 78.9% in 2016
But only 15.8% of organisations have a defined mental health strategy in place
The contributors

Louise Aston
Wellbeing Director
Business in the Community

Andy Briggs
CEO, UK Insurance
Aviva

Sheila Champion-Smeeth
EMEAR Total Rewards Consultant
Cisco

Inigo Churchill
Strategy, Governance and Finance Professional
Money Advice Service

Evan Davidge
Total Reward and Wellbeing Consultant
The Wellbeing Leader

Dr Shaun Davis
Global Director of Safety, Health, Wellbeing and Sustainability
Royal Mail Group

Scot Gardner
Chief Executive
Cisco UK and Ireland

Poppy Jaman OBE
CEO
Mental Health First Aid England

Tabitha Jay
Director
Work and Health Unit and Office for Disability Issues
The contributors

Yulia O’Mahony
Head of Wellbeing
John Lewis Partnership

Frank O’Neill
CEO, UK and Ireland
Swiss Re

Peter Simpson
CEO
Anglian Water

Rachel Suff
Senior Policy Adviser
CIPD

Dr Christian van Stolk
Vice President and Lead on Employment
and Social Policy research
RAND Europe

Joe Thompson
Managing Director
Virgin Holidays
Executive summary

**Sweetening effect:** wellbeing plans still highly valued by employers

Organisations are continuing to recognise that a strategic and properly measured wellbeing programme can make a powerful impact – especially when supported by the top team. As a result, their growth looks set to rocket in the short to medium term. Boardrooms have flagged mental health as a key concern and will be an important strand of wellbeing strategies to monitor.

**Nearly half of respondents have wellbeing strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>data</th>
<th>Almost half of respondents have a defined wellbeing strategy in place.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Have a defined wellbeing strategy</strong>  <strong>45.2%</strong></td>
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| insight | This figure has not changed since our 2017 survey but it represents an increase on 2016 – when less than a third (29.8%) of respondents reported having a strategy dedicated to employee wellbeing. |

**Of those without a strategy, half plan to introduce one in 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>data</th>
<th>Nearly half of respondents without a strategy are planning to introduce one in the next 12 months. And more than a third plan to implement a wellbeing strategy at some point in the next few years.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Plan to introduce a strategy in 2018</strong>  <strong>48.9%</strong>  <strong>Plan to introduce a strategy in next few years</strong>  <strong>35%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| insight | Results indicate a tremendous growth in wellbeing programmes being rolled out at UK organisations with 83.9% of those currently without a strategy planning to introduce one either within the next 12 months or over the next three years. |
Engagement and culture are key drivers of wellbeing strategies

**data**

Well over a quarter of respondents tell us their wellbeing strategies are primarily driven by a desire to increase employee engagement. A further quarter implemented their strategies to improve their organisational culture, while just over one in 10 introduced their strategies to improve their employee value proposition.

| Use wellbeing to increase employee engagement | 29.7% |
| Use wellbeing to improve organisational culture | 23.4% |
| Use wellbeing to improve employee value proposition | 12.6% |

**insight**

Wellbeing strategies are one of the key tactics employers can use to improve employee engagement and culture. Senior leaders, in particular, are increasingly embracing wellbeing for this reason.

High pressure working environments are biggest threat to wellbeing

**data**

Nearly three quarters of our respondents are worried that a high pressure environment is having a negative impact on the wellbeing of their staff. More than half are concerned about their employees’ physical inactivity and the effects this might have on their health, while just over a third are apprehensive about managing the wellbeing of an ageing workforce.

| Concerned about high pressure environment | 72.8% |
| Concerned about employees’ physical inactivity | 54.9% |
| Concerned about managing ageing workforce | 35.8% |

**insight**

As much as employers try to care for staff by offering wellbeing programmes, the vast majority of our respondents are nevertheless very concerned about the impact of working practices that undermine health.

Most boards support wellbeing agendas but few actively drive it

**data**

Two thirds of our respondents say their board supports their wellbeing agenda and almost one in 10 say the board actively drives it. By contrast, just one in 20 of our respondents say that their board has little or no interest in employee wellbeing.

| Board supports wellbeing agenda | 67.6% |
| Board actively drives wellbeing agenda | 7.7% |

**insight**

The majority of boards of directors understand that wellbeing strategies are good for employees in theory. However, there is still reluctance by many to make wellbeing part of a business strategy. The organisations that see most business benefits from wellbeing do have a board director (or more than one) actively driving it.
Boards are more concerned about mental wellbeing than any other form of wellbeing

Mental health is a clear priority for our respondents’ boards with almost three in five telling us this is the area of employee wellbeing their board is most concerned about. One in five (19.5%) are prioritising physical wellbeing and one in 10 (10.9%) are primarily concerned about long-term physical health conditions.

A third provide wellbeing training for line managers

Just over a third of respondents provide training for line managers to help them support and promote employee wellbeing. And just a third (34.3%) of this group make this training mandatory for line managers to complete.

Government policies and support not quite hitting the mark

Few respondents make use of government initiatives aimed at managing and/or promoting the health and wellbeing of employees. Even the most popular service, Access to Work, is only used by just over a third of organisations. Less than a quarter (22.5%) use the Fit for Work service.

There is a tremendous focus from government on mental wellbeing and on encouraging the disabled and long-term sick back into work (or preventing them falling out of the workplace). Some initiatives are now being reviewed to either improve, remove or refocus them. However, to date, most employers are not aware of what is available.
Minority of organisations ask their supply or distribution chains to commit to employee wellbeing

Just over one in 20 respondents require organisations in their supply or distribution chains to commit to any employee wellbeing standards before signing a contract with them. One in five (19.4%) respondents are planning to introduce this requirement in the near future – but a full three quarters (74.5%) of respondents have no plans to introduce any kind of wellbeing clause to their supplier contracts.

Government is keen to persuade large organisations to insist that supply or distribution chain partners sign a clause to commit to employee wellbeing. In this way, medium or smaller employers will find themselves needing to focus on wellbeing in order to win contracts from larger players.

Most respondents are confident about employing disabled people and those with long-term health problems

Well over a third (39.1%) of respondents say they are “quite confident” when it comes to recruiting people with disabilities and long-term physical or mental health problems, in terms of having the resources and policies in place. An even higher percentage (42.3%) feel “very confident”. And more than one in 20 (6.4%) respondents tell us they “seek to proactively recruit” people with disabilities and long-term health conditions.

However, one in six (16.3%) respondents in the private sector say they are “not very confident” or “not at all confident” they have the policies or resources in place to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions. A third (34.9%) of respondents admit they are concerned they do not have the skills or knowledge needed to deal with certain situations that may arise with these employees. And a similar percentage (29.7%) report that they have concerns about the resources required to make reasonable adjustments for these employees.

Those with wellbeing strategies spend twice as much per employee

Median spending per employee at organisations with a wellbeing strategy is between £26 and £50 a year, compared to £1 to £25 for those without a strategy.

Clearly, employers with a strategy in place are going to spend more on wellbeing than those without. The real significance of this spend is calculating the return per pound spent. Where wellbeing is a true business strategy the return is multiples of what is invested.
Wellbeing spend is still on the up

Spending on wellbeing continued to rise in 2017, with more than half of respondents with a wellbeing strategy – together with over a third of those without – reporting an increased outlay on wellbeing initiatives during the past 12 months.

- **Saw increase in spending (with a strategy)**: 51.6%
- **Saw increase in spending (without a strategy)**: 36.1%

Wellbeing spending looks likely to rise still further in 2018. Spending looks set to increase more at organisations without a strategy (58.7%) than at those with one in place (38.7%), which probably links back to the fact that so many without a strategy are planning to implement one.

Few are able to measure the effectiveness of wellbeing

Fewer than one in five respondents attempt to measure the return on investment of their wellbeing initiatives. More than a quarter (26.8%) make no attempt at all to measure the impact of their actions on health and wellbeing.

- **Measure the return on investment of their wellbeing initiatives**: 17%

Measuring the impact of wellbeing programmes is proving elusive for many. But well over half (57.1%) of respondents rely on employee feedback to measure the effectiveness of their health and wellbeing initiatives, with just over half using employee absence rates (52.2%) and employee engagement levels (52.2%) as a gauge.

Reporting wellbeing metrics is still a challenge

Where metrics are reported, they tend to be relayed to senior leadership (or their equivalent), to HR or to the board. Nearly one in five respondents make these metrics known to employees but very few report on employee wellbeing either in the annual report or directly to shareholders.

- **Report on employee wellbeing to senior leaders**: 48%
- **Report on employee wellbeing to HR**: 39%
- **Report on employee wellbeing to the board**: 32.3%
- **Report on employee wellbeing to employees**: 18.4%
- **Report on employee wellbeing in annual report**: 6.3%
- **Report on employee wellbeing to shareholders**: 1.3%

Health and wellbeing metrics have to tread a fine line: they mustn’t expose confidential information yet still aim to nail down data that indicates what has caused a change in culture or engagement. Lots of work is being carried out by employers, consultants, providers and medical or fitness technology providers in this space to improve measurement, collate more robust data and work out which information matters and which is irrelevant.
Internal employer data is not fit for measuring effectiveness

More than half of respondents cite the limited data available internally as the main barrier to measuring the effectiveness of their health and wellbeing initiatives. A third (34.1%) criticise the data that is available for being incomplete or of poor quality. And a quarter (24.5%) report that their evaluation efforts are hampered by a lack of data analytics expertise.

Limited internal data barrier to measuring effectiveness 54.8%

Insight: Too many disparate bits of data, sometimes badly recorded (think absence data) from a multitude of platforms, and in different formats from multiple providers, makes using such data a huge challenge. This is slowly changing as internal HR and wellbeing technology platforms improve.

Steady increase in proportion of respondents addressing mental wellbeing

The percentage of respondents addressing mental health within their overall wellbeing strategy has seen a steady growth over the past three years, growing from 78.9% in 2016, to 82% in 2017 and 84.1% in this year’s survey.

Addressing mental wellbeing in 2016 78.9%
Addressing mental wellbeing in 2017 82%
Addressing mental wellbeing in 2018 84.1%

Insight: The stigma and taboos around mental wellbeing are falling away in many workplaces. In some cases senior leaders speak openly about their own mental health challenges, either within their organisations or publicly, which makes others more confident about asking for help. A huge push from government will increase this awareness.

One in six have a defined mental health strategy in place

Just one in six respondents have a defined mental health strategy in place although over a third (36.5%) say they are planning to introduce such a strategy in the next 12 months. A further quarter (26.1%) plan to have a strategy in place by 2020.

Have a defined mental health strategy in place 15.8%

Insight: We expect a huge increase in the number of employers going from addressing mental wellbeing to actually having a defined strategy in place.
One in 10 report on mental health to the board

One in 10 respondents report on mental health to the board. Almost a third have plans to introduce mental health reporting in the near future but this leaves well over half of all respondents (59.4%) with no plans to implement any form of mental health reporting at their organisations.

**Report on mental health to the board**

- 10.3%

**Plan to start reporting on mental health to the board**

- 30.4%

**insight**

As we have seen, boards are more interested in mental health than any other aspect of wellbeing. This is no doubt a spur for HR, reward and wellbeing teams to focus on reporting in this area. Hopefully, what gets measured will get done!

Employees’ mental health supported by HR policies

Well over three quarters (83.1%) of our respondents believe they treat discrimination on mental health grounds on equal terms to discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, age or sexual orientation. A similarly high percentage (78.3%) is confident that their HR policies and procedures support their employees’ mental health.

**Confident that HR policies and procedures support employee mental health**

- 78.3%

**insight**

Having the right policies and procedures in place is a good first step but unless they are part of the culture they will not be acted upon. Converting policy written in handbooks or on the intranet into living behaviours by employees and senior managers remains a huge challenge.

Employee assistance programmes (EAP) most favoured wellbeing initiative

The EAP continues to be the most popular wellbeing initiative, offered by more than nine in 10 respondents, followed by an occupational sick pay scheme, which is operated by more than four in every five (82.9%) respondents.

**EAP is most popular wellbeing initiative**

- 93%

**insight**

Prompted by a fear of being sued by employees suffering stress has perhaps led to the EAP being a popular benefit. It is usually offered for free alongside other insurances and although it is often underused, it has great potential if actively promoted and cleverly tailored to a workforce.
PMI and income protection most popular employer-paid benefits

data
Over two thirds of respondents provide employer-paid private medical insurance for at least some of their employees. And more than half of respondents pay for income protection cover for at least some employees. By contrast, employer-paid critical illness insurance is offered by less than one in five (18.8%) respondents.

- Buy PMI for at least some employers: 68.6%
- Buy income protection for at least some employees: 55.8%

insight
Medical and risk insurances are rarely offered to all staff in an organisation and there is still a hierarchy in what they receive and the value linked to that insurance. Despite the challenges faced by the NHS, it is still seen as a hugely valuable service able to meet the needs of the vast majority.

Dental insurance and cash plans most popular staff-bought benefits

data
Where they are offered, dental insurance and healthcare cash plans tend to be made available as part of voluntary benefits schemes, rather than being directly funded by the employer.

- Offer dental insurance via workplace: 31.8%
- Offer healthcare cash plans via workplace: 28.9%

insight
These benefits are on the cheaper end of the scale but are highly valued by staff wanting to complement NHS services at little cost. Employers usually strike corporate deals with providers allowing staff to buy these at lower costs than on the high street.

Health insurances are not well integrated into wellbeing strategies

data
A third of respondents say their health insurance products and their overall wellbeing plan are not at all integrated while half say they are only partly integrated. Just one in six believes their insurance offering fully integrates with their overall approach to employee wellbeing.

- Insurance products are integrated with wellbeing strategy: 15.3%
- Insurance products are partly integrated with wellbeing strategy: 52.5%
- Insurance products are not integrated with wellbeing strategy: 32.2%

insight
It is an ongoing complaint that insurances are simply renegotiated with little conversation on how they fit as part of a wellbeing programme. Providers sometimes appear ahead of the game on broader wellbeing strategies than the brokers, advisers and intermediaries selling these wares. As more employers push back and demand more, this will change.
The working environment is getting healthier

While more than one in 10 respondents introduced on-site relaxation or recreation areas in the last 12 months, a further one in 10 (11.3%) are planning to introduce them in the near future. Almost a fifth of respondents have implemented new workstation designs, such as standing desks, in the last year. A further one in 10 (12.9%) plan to make changes in this area at some point in the near future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduced on-site relaxation or recreation areas in last year</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented new workstation designs in last year</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
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Insight: While some workplace areas have catered for the health-conscious for a long time (think bike racks and showers), others are growing in popularity as employers look to engage broader work populations in healthier practices such as relaxation or posture.

Employers still rely on traditional methods to communicate their wellbeing programmes

Our respondents continue to communicate about employee wellbeing using mainly traditional media such as email (83.2%), the general intranet (81.2%) and posters and leaflets (76.6%). Only two in every five (39.1%) have a dedicated wellbeing website or portal and a similar percentage (36%) use wellbeing ‘champions’ to reach employees.

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<th>Data</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Use email to communicate wellbeing</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
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Insight: Communication methods have changed very little over the years. While everyone believes that face-to-face is best, the cost in terms of money and time means it is often sacrificed for cheaper digital communications. These can do well provided a strategy is carefully worked out to get messages across over a period of time.

Newer methods of communication are still a niche

One in 10 respondents use smartphone or tablet apps to communicate with employees, one in 20 (6.1%) use audio or video (such as YouTube or podcasts) and just 2% use mobile text messaging.

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<th>Data</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use apps to communicate wellbeing</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
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</table>

Insight: Communications linked to mobile phones are still surprisingly low given that almost all staff have such a device. The barrier, of course, is that the phone is a personal device and employers are wary of crossing boundaries. That said, it is believed younger staff may be more open (or expect even) to receiving work-related communication on their phone.
CEO Interview:
Peter Simpson of Anglian Water

Centre stage: wellbeing integral to business plans

Peter Simpson, Chief Executive Officer of Anglian Water explains how and why the board puts the wellbeing agenda at the centre of strategy.

As a CEO what is your primary reason for addressing employee wellbeing at your organisation?
There are two aspects to addressing employee wellbeing at Anglian Water. One is that most of our employees are with us for a long time, most of their working lives. So there is a moral imperative to look after them. From a business point of view, it is pretty clear cut to me: we get fitter, happier, healthier employees who are more productive, deliver a better service, and who can make better decisions in terms of risk. It is a sensible area for any business to focus on.

How committed is your board to the issue of employee wellbeing?
We’ve picked up wellbeing as a strategic boardroom issue for many years. We use the Workwell model developed by Business in the Community (BITC), which requires wellbeing to be treated as a strategic boardroom issue. So it sits at the centre of our plans and is often referenced in our annual report and accounts. It is integral to everything we talk about.

Do you report on employee wellbeing to shareholders?
We report at different levels. Within the business we track a whole series of metrics that are picked up through the BITC Workwell model. We also use BITC’s Workwell benchmark questionnaire to gauge how we are making progress. Additionally, our annual report and accounts reports on issues such as absence and includes a narrative that describes activities such as mental health wellbeing campaigns or financial wellbeing campaigns and why we run them.
What are the business or workforce challenges that keep wellbeing a main focus at your organisation?

Ours is a regulated utility operating in an increasingly volatile and complex environment. Becoming more efficient is a key aim for us because ultimately that is what keeps customers’ bills down.

We also have to continuously improve our service amid competition from the likes of Amazon or Google, and technology is changing the nature of our jobs.

We are very open with employees about the fact that the changing environment is very much the norm now. And we are working with leaders and managers to help them recognise the critical role they have in helping teams cope with these ever changing conditions.

For example, we placed 1000 leaders on a programme focused on improving the resilience of the business by improving the resilience of employees. So we are teaching them about how to cope with change. That encompasses a whole series of interventions from opening their minds to new ideas, encouraging healthier practices such as more exercise, or taking time out. We work with Loughborough University and consultancy Lane4 on this.

Sports psychology has been incredibly helpful in equipping our leaders to take people through a really difficult period of change.

Do you require organisations in your supply or distribution chains to commit to any employee wellbeing standards before signing contracts with them?

We have what we call alliances. We work very closely with our big Tier One partners, the likes of Skanska, Barhale, Balfour Beatty and Kier Group. All the chief executives sit on a group that meets quarterly and agrees certain targets, one of which is around the employee wellbeing agenda. We have programmes in place across these organisations that address areas such as being happy, healthy and safe.

But it’s not just these big Tier One partners we are working with on wellbeing, it’s also Tier Two and Tier Three partners.

We hold seminars with SMEs to bring them along the journey. We prefer that approach to just prescribing everything in a contract, which can just encourage box ticking. We believe there is a strong business case and want MDs of smaller companies to come on board with it. Frankly, most do.

Does your board report on mental health at your organisation?

We haven’t included information on mental wellbeing in our annual report as yet but we do track it. It’s possible we will this year.

Do you feel the government supports employers to improve employee health and wellbeing?

I am reluctant to always point things back to government. I’m much more inclined to ask, what can we do as businesses to address a particular issue? But what works well is when government itself aligns with business. BITC has carried out a lot of work with Public Health England to produce joint toolkits in areas such as mental health. They have just launched one on sleep (see also column on page 72), and there are more coming out on alcohol, drugs and tobacco. These are important because messages are aligned between business and health experts and information isn’t conflicting. I think collaboration is really key.

Peter Simpson is the winner of the REBA Visionary Award for Employee Wellbeing. The award goes to a business leader who has significantly contributed to employee wellbeing, who leads a cultural of wellbeing in their own business and heavily influences positive change across the wider business community.
CEO Interview: Andy Briggs of Aviva

Virtuous circle: wellbeing as a business driver

Andy Briggs, Chief Executive Officer, UK Insurance at Aviva discusses how wellbeing can be used in a commercially savvy way. He strongly supports flexibility in working practices and looking after employee carers.

As a CEO what is your primary reason for addressing employee wellbeing at your organisation?

A good business is one that has the best people highly motivated to do a fantastic job for customers. Do that in a way that is commercially savvy for shareholders and you create a virtuous circle. When your business is profitable and growing you can invest more in your people capability and, in turn, deliver more for your customers, and so on.

Employee wellbeing is the right thing to do. It’s right to make Aviva a great place for employees to work and to help people to be happy and healthy. From a business perspective, we are convinced that a happy and healthy workforce will serve customers better, enabling us to generate better returns to shareholders and so creating that virtuous circle.

How committed is your board to the issue of employee wellbeing?

I sit on both the UK board and main board of Aviva and both are wholeheartedly committed to wellbeing.

It isn’t the case that the board is pushing management or vice versa, we are equally aligned.

There are three areas in particular, which despite carrying a hard financial cost, are policies the board strongly supports.

First, is our carer policy. We give people significant time off and entitlement when they have carer responsibilities. I always found carer policies out of sync with parental leave policies, despite both ultimately being about looking after another very dependent human being. It can be a major cause of stress and a reason why people leave the workplace.

Second is parental leave. We now give both men and women up to 26 weeks paid leave on arrival of a child. We would like to see other employers follow suit so couples can choose whether one or both parents should take on caring responsibilities in those early days.

Third, we are committed to being a Living Wage employer.
Do you report on employee wellbeing to shareholders?
We included a section on employee wellbeing in our annual report last year and we will do that again this year. To date, we haven’t reported specific figures so the information is more qualitative than quantitative. We are committed to quantitative reporting but at this stage, in the case of wellbeing, we are still working through what would be the most helpful way to cover that. We are publicly committed to the Time to Change employer pledge to break the stigma around mental health.

What are the business or workforce challenges that keep wellbeing a main focus at your organisation?
Whatever circumstances your business is in, whether it is going through a growth phase or involved in an M&A or looking at cutting jobs, employee wellbeing is fundamental and critical. However, one of the things I worry about is technology. I sometimes give my team a hard time if I see lots of emails being sent over the weekend. This is because the weekend is time to recharge the batteries to be fit and ready to go for the week ahead. Having said that, it’s also about being flexible. I have two young boys who sometimes have school cricket or rugby matches. I don’t get to attend those very often but if I do then it will suit me to be able to work for an hour or so on the weekend to catch up. So we try and retain that flexibility.

“It’s right to make Aviva a great place for employees to work and to help people to be happy and healthy”

Do you require organisations in your supply or distribution chains to commit to any employee wellbeing standards before signing contracts with them?
We work with a number of partners and work hard to make sure they are the right partners. As part of that we have quite a broad range of business ethics and standards that we would expect of them and that are reflective of our own values. We have got very robust processes in place to ensure that follows through and happens in practice.

Does your board report on mental health at your organisation?
We report on mental wellbeing but in a qualitative way. We are keen to explore how we can make that more quantitative in due course. We were recognised as a best practice employer in the government report, *Thriving at work: The Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers*, which sets out a number of mental health core standards. But we also seek to go beyond that: increased transparency and accountability in our external reporting is a key area of focus for us.

Do you feel the government supports employers to improve employee health and wellbeing?
The government has really upped its game over the last year and the commissioning of *Thriving at work* is a good example of that. The road map that the government’s Work and Health Unit produced with the strategy to halve the disability employment gap is also very strong. There are a lot of encouraging signs. However, there is such a wide range of employers to cater for. Employers such as Aviva can drive this and find their own way almost irrespective of government support. Others will always be harder to convince that wellbeing is a good idea. But there is a large number in the middle that agree this is a worthwhile agenda but are uncertain how to set about implementing it. To support those employers I suggest there should be a one-stop-shop where mid-sized businesses, in particular, can turn to for best practice guidance and support. Also what about creating a champion for workplace wellbeing? I am the government’s business champion for older workers and I wonder if there is merit in taking a similar approach for wellbeing as well.
CEO Interview: Scot Gardner of Cisco

Keeping up with the pace of change: wellbeing builds agility

Scot Gardner, Chief Executive at Cisco UK & Ireland describes how a ‘one-size-fits-one’ approach helps to get the best out of employees.

As a CEO what is your primary reason for addressing employee wellbeing at your organisation?
People are at the core of Cisco. Our technology changes the world but our edge doesn’t come from technology; it comes from our people. Research shows that companies with a strong culture of health and wellbeing see high motivation levels, creativity, greater focus on customers and stronger teams.

How committed is your board to the issue of employee wellbeing?
Every quarter, we hold a UK Health Trustee meeting to look at what we offer our employees: everything from our BUPA healthcare plan to free health assessments, from our employee assistance programme to our Cisco Pavelka Wellbeing Programme (which I explain more about a bit later). The trustees ensure that we consider the wellbeing of our employees in a holistic way and that we are effectively communicating with them and with representatives at each site.

Do you report on employee wellbeing to shareholders?
Not at present.

What are the business or workforce challenges that keep wellbeing a main focus at your organisation?
The world is moving fast. In five years, 40% of market leaders in any industry will be displaced because of the pace of change. Disruption demands business model innovation, better customer experiences, continuous innovation and business agility. We fundamentally believe that unless you focus on ensuring your people are at their best, the adaptability of your business will suffer.

We are clear on who we are as a company and we constantly listen to our people to foster an environment that will help build the best individuals, the best teams and the best leaders. People are unique with different strengths so Cisco doesn’t follow a one-size-fits-all approach, rather a ‘one-size-fits-one’ approach.
This means that we have to be more thoughtful about what our employees need as their career journey changes. They may have just graduated from university, become a new parent or be caring for older parents, for example. We offer different things that help our employees be the best they can be throughout their entire career journey. A great example of this is the Cisco Pavelka programme, one of many initiatives that we offer to support employee growth and development.

It’s the result of a partnership with Jessie Pavelka, an internationally recognised health and wellbeing expert who has helped hundreds of people transform their lives by making small and sustainable changes.

**Do you require organisations in your supply or distribution chains to commit to any employee wellbeing standards before signing contracts with them?**

Not at present.

“We offer different things that help our employees be the best they can be throughout their entire career journey”

**Does your board report on mental health at your organisation?**

We have a very strong focus on peer support at Cisco with 50 trained mental health first aiders in the UK who are available for employees to talk to in confidence about any issues in relation to mental health.

We capture anonymised data on mental health issues from our private health providers and employee assistance programme to help ensure we are providing the necessary support. We do not, however, report that information externally.

**Do you feel the government supports employers to improve employee health and wellbeing?**

We believe that it is important for employees to be able to benefit from advantageous tax structures provided by government in the preventative health and wellbeing space. Some examples are gym membership and health checks. It help reduces pressure on healthcare systems now and in the long term.

We do capitalise on a number of initiatives provided by the government but there is always more that can be done. The ultimate goal is achieving a balance between what businesses are incentivised to do, and what employees can access to help them become resilient, innovative, creative and energised in everything they do at work and at home.

In our view, what would work best is partnership working between employers and policy makers to achieve the best outcomes for individuals, the economy and society as a whole.

**Cisco is the winner of The REBA Pinnacle Award for Employee Wellbeing 2018.** The winner demonstrated consistent excellence in leadership, strategy and results across several of the Employee Wellbeing Award categories. Its global holistic strategy showed a passion and commitment to the culture of wellbeing, which permeated the entire organisation. It was able to demonstrate a strong impact on creating happier, more productive and focused employees.
CEO Interview: Frank O’Neill of Swiss Re

Own the way you work: flexibility and responsibility lead to wellbeing

Frank O’Neill, CEO UK and Ireland at Swiss Re explains how giving employees ownership over when and where they work attracts and retains talent, while engendering wellbeing.

As a CEO what is your primary reason for addressing employee wellbeing at your organisation?

Overall, we wanted to improve workplace performance. That translates into financial performance, productivity, quality of output, and ultimately better employee engagement. Part of the benefit is also that employees are healthier, engaged and more vibrant so it’s a win-win on both sides.

We know there is improved engagement because we have an annual employee engagement survey that tells us that. Trying to separate out the aspects of business performance that may be attributable to our focus on employee wellbeing is very hard, if not impossible to do. It is difficult to draw a clear line of sight between investment in employee wellness and the performance of the organisation.

Still, we can look at the overall performance of the organisation and the units I am responsible for, and things are heading in the right direction. We hope that some of that has to do with our focus on employee wellness. Certainly, from a cultural and engagement perspective we can see an improvement on the ground and hope this will translate into some of the more quantitative assessments that we undertake.

How committed is your board to the issue of employee wellbeing?

We are a local subsidiary of a global organisation so we have an executive board here in the UK. I’d say all board members are increasingly committed to the issue of employee wellbeing. We certainly discuss KPIs such as turnover, absence, employer relations issues and long term sickness. We track those numbers and if they can be measured against some of the action on wellbeing we are taking to draw a potential line of sight between the two that’s even better.

Ultimately, it’s the business drivers that receive the most focus from the board – sometimes to the detriment of the wellness agenda. So we could focus more attention on it. Our HR director is very engaged in the topic and is its champion on the board.
Do you report on employee wellbeing to shareholders?

We don’t mention wellbeing in our group annual report. But our company motto is: “We make the world more resilient”. Resilience is a big part of what we do and it’s a topic very relevant to our employees. If we don’t have a resilient workforce, then our claim to try and create global resilience is a bit empty.

“I’d say all board members are increasingly committed to the issue of employee wellbeing”

What are the business or workforce challenges that keep wellbeing a main focus at your organisation?

The bigger challenge, and related to wellbeing, is around talent: identifying it, acquiring it and retaining it.

We have an initiative called “Own the way you work”. It’s a policy and philosophy that recognises the need for greater flexibility in the workplace, particularly for employees seeking greater worklife balance or who have childcare or elderly care commitments.

It is a guideline that says to every employee, they own the way they work and it’s up to them to figure out how best they want to arrange things. The requirements we have of them are not about contracted hours but actual output – we trust them to manage workload in a way that best suits them.

So if they want to work from home two days a week, or work from 2am to 8am that’s fine.

It’s a policy very well received and very much used in the organisation. But we needed to see a real shift of culture to make it work.

It also needs to be led from the top and our group CEO is a great role model for this way of working. He keeps clear tabs on himself when it comes to the way he works. He lives near Zurich but he works at home a few days a week when he can. And when he is away on holiday he is not contactable. Everyone knows that.

Do you require organisations in your supply or distribution chains to commit to any employee wellbeing standards before signing contracts with them?

We do not ask supply chain or distribution partners to sign a commitment to wellbeing for their own employees.

Does your board report on mental health at your organisation?

The board doesn’t report on mental health. We track long-term sickness, which is one measure of mental health, albeit not a very accurate one.

Do you feel the government supports employers to improve employee health and wellbeing?

There is a need to look at the complexity of the wellbeing and work agenda. There is so much to do in that space that I’d say no, government is not doing enough. At the same time, I don’t have any suggestions on what more it could do. Although, government and employers working collaboratively to achieve healthier workplaces would be a great goal.
**MD interview:**
Joe Thompson of Virgin Holidays

**Front and centre:** wellbeing not just an HR issue, it’s a whole business issue

Joe Thompson, Managing Director at Virgin Holidays says they deliberately chose a functional leader to be its wellbeing champion – to reinforce the message it is an absolute business priority.

**As leadership team wellbeing champion for Virgin Holidays and Virgin Atlantic what is your primary reason for addressing employee wellbeing?**
We want our people to realise their full potential and that means having a good balance between work life and real life. We know that if our people are leading a happy and fulfilled life outside of work they are more likely to bring the best version of themselves to work, and that results in great service and in a more motivated and engaged workforce. We believe that is good for our business as well as making good sense on a more human level.

**How committed is your board to the issue of employee wellbeing?**
Our people agenda is at the forefront of our business objectives. Within our people agenda, our commitment to employee wellbeing is front and centre.

In some ways, the obvious choice would have been to have our senior vice president of people in the role of wellbeing champion.

But we felt it would communicate a better message to see one of the business leaders, one of the leaders of the functional areas, take that championing responsibility.

We wanted to send the message that this is a whole business initiative and priority, and not just something that was coming from the people team.

We have regular time with the wellbeing team looking at any upcoming initiatives and making sure that we, as a leadership team, are going to drive uptake of those initiatives.
Do you report on employee wellbeing to shareholders?

We are a private company so we do not produce an annual report in quite the same way as a publicly listed business would for shareholders. But in materials that we prepare for our board, we do include data and updates on our people agenda and how we are performing on wellbeing.

At this point in our journey we are a little bit more focused on what I think of as outcome metrics related to employee wellbeing, long-term sickness, for example.

We need to evolve our data to link it back to our programme of activity in the wellbeing space, making sure that we are tracking some of the earlier stages of that. That way it is much more about picking up on early signs and preventative action with less focus on the back end of the process in terms of outcomes.

What are the business or workforce challenges that keep wellbeing a main focus at your organisation?

We operate in a fast-paced, challenging and demanding industry.

In our Virgin Holidays business we have challenges that vary by work group and demographics. So, for example, we have a large number of people in our retail stores and who are much younger and have a very set of different worklife priorities compared to our older pilot workforce.

Additionally, we have a number of people working remotely from the centre and a large number of people, such as cabin crew, who fly with a different group of people every time they work. That creates challenges in terms of their line management and reporting structure.

We also face the challenges of shift work, and of large numbers of our work population having to travel long distances in the course of their working lives, being away from home, and travelling between different time zones.

Our toolkit has to reflect all this – we have to ensure we are able to tailor a wellbeing offering to a very diverse group of people.

Historically, we have been active in the wellbeing space but it was quite spread out across the business.

One change that has been very helpful has been to pull a number of facets of our wellbeing offer together under a slightly expanded role, and give those responsibilities to our Head of Reward.

So now occupational health, benefits and a new wellbeing specialist consultant sit together in one team. Consolidating all of that has really helped us think more coherently about how we are addressing the wellbeing challenge.

Do you require organisations in your supply or distribution chains to commit to any employee wellbeing standards before signing contracts with them?

We ask our suppliers to sign up to a responsible supplier policy. That includes seeking a commitment to work in line with our sustainability agenda. We work with suppliers on a global basis so there are some variations in terms of commitment to employee wellbeing in different parts of the world. But we work on a continuing improvement basis to ensure that our suppliers are behaving in a responsible manner towards their employees. And that includes emerging legislation on modern slavery.

Do you feel the government supports employers to improve employee health and wellbeing?

We think the government could do more to support business. We are taking on increased responsibility to address employee health, looking at prevention, for example, to address adverse outcomes such as long-term sickness and absence from work that are both detrimental to business and costly to the country. I think there is work to do to make sure the overall public framework is aligned to that.

Virgin Atlantic won the Employee Wellbeing Award 2018 for Benefit Strategies

The judges selected this winner for the clarity of its objectives across the three pillars of physical, mental and financial wellbeing. Also, for how it underwent a comprehensive strategic change to merge occupational health and benefits.
Section 1: Strategies

Hive of activity: wellbeing programmes continue to flourish

Interest in the health and wellbeing agenda at work is as strong as ever, spurred on by the organisational benefits it brings and recent focus from government.

Wellbeing strategies are maintaining their pace and momentum

Nearly half – 45.2% – of our 250 respondents have a defined wellbeing strategy in place. This figure has not changed since our 2017 survey but it represents an increase on our 2016 research when less than a third (29.8%) of respondents reported having a strategy dedicated to employee wellbeing. This figure masks some significant sectoral variation, however. Strategies are more common in the public sector, where almost two thirds (65.1%) of respondents report having a wellbeing strategy. By contrast, a third (34.3%) of not-for-profit organisations have a strategy and two in every five (41.9%) private sector companies have a defined approach to employee wellbeing.

Figure 1.1: Does your organisation have a defined wellbeing strategy? (by industry sector) (N=250)

Not-for-profit sector 34.3%

Private sector 41.9%

Public sector 65.1%

Health and wellbeing in the workplace has received a great deal of publicity over the past 12 months. In July 2017, for example, Matthew Taylor published *Good Work*, an independent review of modern working practices in which he outlined a seven-step strategy for creating fair and decent work for all. In step six, Taylor says: “For the benefit of firms, workers and the public interest we need to develop a more proactive approach to workplace health”. And in October 2017, the government published *Thriving at work*, an independent report by Lord Stevenson and Paul Farmer into mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, which made a raft of recommendations for improving employee health in UK organisations.

So it appears as if change may be on the horizon with more employers than ever before about to embrace wellbeing in the workplace.
More wellbeing strategies in the pipeline

While the percentage of respondents with a wellbeing strategy, particularly in the private and not-for-profit sectors, is relatively low, almost half of those without a strategy are planning to introduce one in the next 12 months. And more than a third plan to implement a wellbeing strategy at some point in the next few years. Less than 1% of respondents say they have no interest in introducing a wellbeing strategy at all.

Figure 1.2: Are you likely to implement a wellbeing strategy at any point? (N=137)

While the public sector has taken the lead when it comes to introducing wellbeing strategies it seems as if organisations across all sectors are beginning to catch up. It is very encouraging to see well over three quarters of our respondents planning to implement a wellbeing strategy within the next few years. Hopefully, having a wellbeing strategy will soon become the norm for most UK organisations.

Working under high pressure conditions is top concern for employee health

Employers’ number one cause for concern over employee health and wellbeing is having to work in a high pressure environment: nearly three quarters of our respondents are worried that this is having a damaging effect on the wellbeing of their staff. More than half are concerned about their employees’ physical inactivity and the effects this might have on their health, while just over a third are apprehensive about managing the wellbeing of an ageing workforce.
**Figure 1.3:** What are the main business or workforce issues that are causing you concern with regards to employee health and wellbeing? (N=246)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High pressure working environment</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical inactivity (e.g. deskbound employees)</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ageing workforce</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understaffing</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff with caring responsibilities</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High staff turnover</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change due to restructure or merger and acquisition</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift working</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in strategic direction of the business</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor sleep hygiene among employees</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived lack of job security</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change due to automation and/or digitisation</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business expansions</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job cuts</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having employees working under high pressure was clearly the biggest concern for our respondents in this year’s survey. In their detailed responses, it was clear that these pressures are coming from both inside and outside the organisation but our respondents are working hard to try and combat them using a range of different tools and resources.

*“Pharmacy funding has been cut but prescription numbers are on the rise as the population ages so the entire industry is facing challenges over high pressure working environments. To try and address this we have an employee assistance programme, which we heavily promote through a variety of channels including at induction and via internal communications. We are also looking to invest in resilience training and we have started to share wellbeing articles and other resources through our internal communications channels.”*

Engagement Manager, pharmacy sector

*“We operate an airport with strict targets dictated by our many airline partners, which creates high pressure. We also feel the pressure of increased terror alerts and the associated impact on our security processes. To try and alleviate pressure we work hard to manage scheduling effectively, with regards to working hours and roles during any given shift. We also offer an EAP and we work hard to train our line managers to identify signs of stress or anxiety and to respond accordingly.”*

Reward Manager, aviation sector

*“We participate in The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For survey and our results this year revealed an increase in work pressure. We have also seen an increased number of stress cases. To help deal with pressure we have run a dedicated workshop for all our managers on how to manage and alleviate stress in their teams, and we run a calendar of regular wellbeing events throughout the year to provide tools that employees can use when they are feeling under pressure.”*

Claire Parker, Head of Diversity and Inclusion, T-Systems
Boosting engagement is a key motive for implementing wellbeing programmes

Well over a quarter of respondents tell us their wellbeing strategies are primarily driven by a desire to increase employee engagement. A further quarter implemented their strategies to improve their organisational culture, while just over one in 10 introduced strategies to improve their employee value proposition. By contrast, fewer than one in 20 implemented a wellbeing strategy with the primary aim of reducing either short-term or long-term sickness absence.

Figure 1.4: What is the number one driver of your wellbeing strategy? (N=111)

Employers continue to think of their wellbeing initiatives in terms of more than just looking after their employees’ physical or mental health: offering schemes is now seen as a core and expected element of the modern workplace. Employers realise that, while relatively few employees will need to take advantage of the acute or long-term health care services they provide, making sure they offer a broad range of wellbeing initiatives shows their employees that they care, which should create a positive culture that keeps everyone engaged and more productive.
Practitioner view: mental health, organisational culture and the role of the line manager

Line management plays an important part in creating a positive mental health culture at work.

If we are to destigmatise mental health and create a culture of disclosure and openness, line managers need to be conversationally competent in mental health.

Employee wellbeing should include consideration of both physical and mental elements. This ‘parity of esteem’ is an essential way of normalising mental health conversations in the workplace and showing the important link between physical and mental health.

But, why bother? Well, in simple terms, it makes good moral, ethical and business sense. Improving employee wellbeing can potentially increase job satisfaction and productivity, prevent burnout, and give workers an overall better quality of life.

In order to achieve this the organisation should make mental health resources available to all employees and create an environment and culture where mental health is discussed openly and without fear of stigma or reprisal.

Signposting for employees to internal resources such as an employee assistance programme, or offering support and training for managers are just some of the things organisations can do.

Training managers is particularly important. It can give them the skills needed to help empathise with mental health issues and, alongside the use of stress risk assessment tools, allow them to provide the support needed for struggling employees.

Listening is key

At the same time it’s vital that managers listen to employees’ problems and help them find assistance without giving advice beyond the limits of their expertise; managers being aware of their own limitations and knowing when to signpost to professional help is key.

Also, training line managers isn’t just about helping others. It can help managers themselves too, particularly in identifying their own areas of concern and developing coping strategies.

There’s been a lot of positive work done around mental health in organisations in recent years. However there’s still more to do.

CEOs, senior leaders, government, trade unions and charities can build on what has already been achieved by encouraging and fostering a culture where mental health is openly discussed.

Good examples of this include the Time to Change employer pledge, a way for organisations to demonstrate their commitment to changing the way we all think and act about mental health in the workplace; and the Heads Together campaign that saw the young royals leading by example by openly discussing their own problems with mental health and demonstrating empathy and good listening skills to encourage others to speak out too.

Other measures can be put in place at business level to encourage or drive activity, such as including wellbeing messages on internal communications to raise its profile, including a wellbeing measure in employee opinion surveys, and including wellbeing in performance, development and annual review conversations.

Organisations, line management and frontline employees all have a role to play in improving mental health in the workplace.

By working collaboratively and to the same end we will make improvements far quicker and ensure they are sustainable for generations to come.

Dr Shaun Davis, Global Director of Safety, Health, Wellbeing and Sustainability, Royal Mail Group
Strategies address a gamut of issues – but there’s a strong focus on physical and mental health

The vast majority of employee wellbeing strategies address physical activity, health and safety in the workplace and mental health. Nearly three quarters address worklife balance. Just over half include financial wellness within their strategy although this area is destined for the biggest growth in 2018, with nearly a third of respondents planning to add financial wellness to their overall strategy in the next 12 months.

The areas covered by the lowest percentages of respondents are support for carers, drug abuse and sleep. Interestingly, the number of employers offering support for carers and addressing sleep concerns is set to grow substantially in 2018 (by 25% and 22% respectively).

Figure 1.5: What areas of wellbeing do you currently address within your wellbeing strategy, and which do you plan to add in the future? (N=113)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Currently included</th>
<th>Plan to add in 2018</th>
<th>Plan to add at some point</th>
<th>No plans to include</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety in the workplace</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worklife balance</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition/healthy eating</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial wellness</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol use</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug abuse</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for carers</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is no surprise to see physical activity and health and safety at the top of this list. We have already seen that employers are very concerned about physical inactivity among their employees and offering free or discounted gym memberships, organising walking or running groups and implementing fitness challenges are all relatively easy ways for them to encourage staff to get active. Employers also have various legal obligations to meet regarding the health and safety of their employees.

It is, however, encouraging to see such a large percentage of respondents addressing mental health – this reflects the high degree of concern they have about the work pressure their employees face.

The percentage of employers addressing financial wellness has increased from 47% in 2017 to 52% this year and it looks set for further growth over the next 12 months.

Employers are increasingly realising that employees’ money concerns can lead to stress and anxiety that can affect their health and work performance, and that this is an area in which they can offer support by arranging access to financial advice, for example.

Sleep is another area that is set for growth as employers recognise the impact that good sleep and rest can have on health.

One of our respondents shared their organisation’s plans for sleep education:

“We view sleep as a key strand to positive wellbeing and our staff achieving optimal performance. Currently we offer in-house training raising awareness of the impact sleep has on our mind and body. This covers the physiological and psychological changes that occur when we sleep, the negatives associated with poor sleep and strategies to improve our sleep habits and routines. We’re currently developing an e-learning module of this training so staff can access support through their preferred learning methods.

Our staff can also get one-to-one support from our Health and Wellbeing team, which works with individuals using sleep diaries to monitor sleep patterns and by creating individualised positive sleep strategies.”

Paul Dockerty, Senior Health and Wellbeing Officer, Cafcass

Employers have also recognised the need to improve the support they offer for carers. The Family Resources Survey from the Department for Work and Pensions shows that in 2015/16, 4.9 million people in the UK were informal carers of some kind, with a third of adult informal carers in full-time employment. Such responsibilities can clearly place a strain on individuals’ worklife balance so it is encouraging to see almost a third of respondents providing support for carers and a further quarter planning to introduce this support in the next 12 months.

**BIG SHIFT**

**Growth expected for financial wellbeing programmes**

Once again we expect to see a major growth in the number of financial wellbeing programmes being rolled out at UK organisations.

Our 2017 survey showed that 47% of employers offered one. This has grown to 52% this year, with a further 31% saying they plan to introduce one in 2018. If that were to happen, then we could see a 76.6% growth in financial wellbeing programmes over 2018.
Expert view: financial wellbeing can have just as powerful an effect on the business as any initiative aimed at boosting physical and mental health

Physical and mental health initiatives have dominated the workplace wellbeing agenda for some time, with employer after employer making the case that better health is not just good for staff but for the wider business and productivity levels too.

However, there is an additional piece to the wellbeing puzzle: financial wellbeing.

If ignored this can just as powerfully have an impact on the bottom line – but in a negative way. Financial capability, or the lack of it, can have a profound effect on a person’s overall wellbeing.

A growing body of evidence shows that anxiety about finances leads to poorer mental, physical and social wellbeing, and that this affects attendance and performance at work.

If an employee is in financial difficulty there is a high chance that they will struggle to focus on their work, make mistakes, or miss their targets. When your workforce suffers, your businesses can also suffer.

The CIPD’s 2017 survey, Financial well-being: the employee view, revealed that one in five workers reported they lost sleep over financial worries; 8% had spent time during the working day dealing with money problems; and one in four admitted that money worries affected their ability to do their job.

Yet most employers are slow to talk about financial matters with employees.

“Money is seen as a measure of success. To say to somebody, ‘I’m having trouble with money’ is to admit, not just to them but to yourself, that you’re unsuccessful.”

School leaver, male, Manchester

Every employer, regardless of size, could potentially play a role in destigmatising issues about money and debt, reducing employee stress and improving productivity. Recent research by the Money Advice Service (MAS) shows just how much value this could bring, with savings to the health service of up to £145m in reduced costs associated with depression and anxiety, and £67 million to £137 million in productivity gains.

Research also shows that both employers and employees agree that if workers knew where to go for help and guidance, they would have better control over their money and would seek help when they needed it.

The recently published Independent Review of the Funding of Debt Advice in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, focussed on the role employers can play in helping people to access debt advice, recommending that:

- Employer organisations such as the CBI should bring the availability of free debt advice to the attention of their members.
- Large employers should be encouraged to consider the benefits of providing debt advice within employee assistance programmes.
- Smaller employers without a dedicated employee assistance programme should signpost employees to the MAS Debt Advice Locator tool.

If, as an organisation, you are looking for a place to start the journey to improving the financial capability of your employees, the Money Advice Service offers free guidance and information through the Financial Capability website at www.fincap.org.uk.

There is also signposting to debt advice providers for organisations and individuals at www.moneyadvice service.org.uk and a dedicated resource for employers at www.moneyadvice service.org.uk/en/employer-best-practices

Inigo Churchill, Strategy, Governance and Finance Professional at the Money Advice Service
Section 2: Leadership

**Joined up approach:** garnering support for wellbeing at all levels

To be successful, employee health and wellbeing initiatives need support from across the organisation. Board level backing appears to be high but line managers need more of a helping hand if they are to help turn policy into action.

**Wellbeing strategies benefit from top team support**

Support for employee health and wellbeing at board level is high among our respondents with two thirds supporting the wellbeing agenda and almost one in 10 actively driving the agenda across the organisation. By contrast, just one in 20 of our respondents say their board has little or no interest in the wellbeing agenda.

**Figure 2.1:** How committed is your board to the issue of employee wellbeing? (N=247)

![Survey Results]

It is encouraging to see directors and senior managers at our respondents’ organisations getting firmly behind the employee wellbeing agenda. This kind of top level support is vital for achieving the levels of spend and access to resources required to make any health and wellbeing strategy a success.

It’s also critical for helping to drive a culture change: leaders role modelling behaviours, not being afraid to participate in wellbeing activities or having the courage to be open about their own personal health challenges can have a potent effect on engagement levels.

Our respondents provided some detailed examples of how the board supports their health and wellbeing work, including securing funding and encouraging managers to give their team members time off to attend wellbeing events:

“The board is fully committed: it sponsors, funds and drives our wellbeing agenda from the top and all policies and initiatives are signed off by a dedicated and appointed wellbeing committee. We also have a heavily sponsored Mental Health Week, and we have changed how we promote our benefits scheme to align with the themes of ‘Health, Wealth and Inner Self’, covering physical, emotional, financial and social wellbeing.”

People Experience Manager, technology sector
“The board is very supportive of wellbeing and many members take part in the wellbeing events we run. For example, we have had a team from the board in all of our pedometer challenges. One board member also writes a blog during the challenge in which he is very open about his personal life and some of the challenges he has faced. This makes him relatable to all employees. Other members of the board have shown their support by sharing some of their own wellbeing challenges with colleagues, which helps to remove any stigmas around the issue of poor health.”

Zoe Brunswick, HR Director, RSK Group

“The senior management team actively encourages employees to attend wellbeing initiatives and engage in new activities, it also encourages managers to release staff from their duties so they can attend wellbeing events. It offers all employees free health checks and supports the recruitment of our ‘Go Healthy’ wellbeing champions.”

Una Carson, Employee Support Officer, Translink

Board members recognise importance of mental health

Mental health is a clear priority for the boards at our respondents with almost three in five telling us this is the area of employee wellbeing their top team is most concerned about. One in five are prioritising physical wellbeing and one in 10 are primarily concerned about long-term physical health conditions.

Figure 2.2: Which area of employee wellbeing is your board most concerned about? (N=222)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common mental health conditions (e.g. stress, anxiety, depression)</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General physical wellbeing</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term physical health conditions (e.g. MSK conditions, cancer, HIV, arthritis, diabetes)</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial wellbeing</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The importance of mental health in the workplace has garnered a lot of attention in the last 12 months, particularly with the publication of the Stevenson/Farmer review in October 2017 – and it appears that company directors and senior managers are taking notice. This is most welcome given that concern for employees’ mental wellbeing has languished behind concern for their physical health.

We examine our respondents’ approaches to mental health and whether boards are currently reporting on mental health issues in their organisations in Section 3: Government policies (page 43).
Strategies are introduced by boards because of real concern for employee health, say respondents

More than a third of our respondents feel their board’s reasons for addressing employee health are borne out of a genuine concern for their wellbeing, while a further third believe the board is supporting a wellbeing agenda to help build a positive organisational culture. Just one in 10 respondents feel the board is focusing on employee wellbeing to increase productivity.

Figure 2.3: What is the board’s primary reason for addressing employee wellbeing? (N=220)

It is encouraging to see so many of our respondents report that their boards are genuinely engaged in the wellbeing agenda as a means of improving employee health and engagement and not just as a way of boosting the bottom line. While it would be wrong to attribute too much weight to this, taken at face value it suggests that any wellbeing initiatives they support should be of real, direct benefit to employees.

Only a third of organisations train their line managers so they can promote health and wellbeing

Just over a third (35%) of respondents provide training for line managers to help them support and promote employee wellbeing. And just a third (34.3%) of this group make this training mandatory for line managers to complete.

Unsurprisingly, training for line managers is much more common at organisations with a wellbeing strategy – more than half of respondents with a strategy report having some form of wellbeing-focused training for line managers. It is also more common in the public sector, with three in five (60%) respondents offering line manager training. This is compared to just over a third (37.9%) at not-for-profit organisations and less than a third (28.2%) at private sector employers.
It is well documented that buy-in from line managers on any people management initiative or policy, including health and wellbeing, is key. As the CIPD 2016 report, *Growing the health and well-being agenda: from first steps to full potential*, highlights: “Line managers are pivotal in shaping employees’ experience of work and bringing people management policies to life.”

As such, it is they that can enhance employee wellbeing by driving the culture change required to shift behaviours – but not without the right tools. Unless they are adequately trained, the CIPD warns, line managers will lack the confidence, willingness and skills to promote health and wellbeing in the workplace, and any programme’s potential could be wasted.

It is surprising then that relatively few of our respondents provide training for managers to help them support wellbeing.

**Training courses mainly cover practical areas of managing wellbeing**

Where training is provided for line managers, the majority covers practical aspects of managing employee wellbeing such as how to have difficult conversations, stress and resilience and absence management. By contrast, less than half of courses aim to help line managers create a disability-inclusive workplace.

**Figure 2.4:** Do you provide training for line managers to help them support and promote employee wellbeing and create good places to work? (N=206)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 17.9% |

It is surprising then that relatively few of our respondents provide training for managers to help them support wellbeing.

**Figure 2.5:** What does your line manager training cover? (N=70)

- **Employees’ wellbeing benefits (eg. insurance products)**
  - 52.9%

- **Creating a disability-inclusive workplace**
  - 44.1%

- **Mental health awareness**
  - 67.1%

- **Employees’ wellbeing initiatives (eg. on-site medical support)**
  - 62.3%

- **Absence management**
  - 75.4%

- **Stress and resilience**
  - 79.7%

- **Helping employees return more quickly after sickness absence**
  - 74.3%

- **How to have difficult conversations**
  - 82.9%
It is to be expected that most respondents’ training courses focus on teaching line managers the practical skills they require to help manage employee wellbeing, such as how to discuss health issues in a discreet and sensitive manner and how to help absent employees get back to work.

But it is surprising to see only two thirds of respondents teaching their managers how to be aware of mental health issues. We would expect this number to increase given the extensive work being done around mental health by respondents and the government. It might also be useful for more respondents to extend their line manager training to include coverage of the wellbeing benefits and initiatives that are provided for employees, so that line managers can promote these to their team members and raise awareness of everything that is on offer.

Some of our respondents do offer very comprehensive line manager training, however.

“We run an internal workshop called Managing Employee Wellbeing for Performance, as part of our management development programme. Our HR team developed the course after receiving training from the mental health charity, Mind. It covers:

- understanding wellbeing
- is work good for health?
- what is mental health?
- the mental health continuum model
- how the changing world of work affects employee stress and mental health.

It also covers the manager’s role in supporting employee wellbeing with an emphasis on encouraging managers to:

- be aware – have an understanding of mental health and the ways managers can support employees to stay mentally healthy at work
- be flexible and make adjustments – just as managers would make adjustments for an employee with a physical disability
- listen and point employees to available resources – including the signs of ill-health to look out for that might suggest an employee is struggling, as well as how to talk about mental health with employees.”

Bethany Caley, HR Administrator, Fourfront Group
Expert view: why leadership is the differentiator between a programme that is fair and a programme that is exceptional

Browsing Amazon recently, I noticed there are 57,136 books with the word “leadership” in the title, but only 337 books with “wellbeing leadership”. That is not to say that the latter is by definition a separate and distinct discipline. Wellbeing, in one form or another, has always been integral to leadership practices. Moreover, as the practice of leadership has evolved so has the understanding of it. We now apply modern concepts of neuroscience, evolutionary biology and behavioural economics to the study of leadership.

This is never more relevant than in today’s climate where leaders are being driven towards a still largely untapped gold mine: organisational wellbeing.

Indeed, global research by Gallup has shown a more rigorous focus on organisational and employee wellbeing delivers emotional, financial and competitive advantage. This is evident from the inaugural Employee Wellbeing Awards, launched by REBA in 2018, where the majority of entries demonstrated impressive business outcomes as a result of their wellbeing initiatives.

What proved to be a clear differentiator between the good and exceptional entries is where leadership is firmly in the driving seat. The most striking examples are where leaders have shown they are no less immune to the vicissitudes of life by displaying humility and self-awareness to champion a wellbeing cause, following personal and often life-changing experiences.

There are many different types of leadership roles, ranging from CEOs to senior managers and line managers, to an individual leading on a particular project. It even applies to volunteer wellbeing ambassadors. Every leadership role should drive wellbeing

All these types of leaders have different responsibilities when it comes to wellbeing. Therefore, leadership needs to be distributive in order to develop a culture that fosters wellbeing.

Ultimately, boards need to buy-in to the activity if it is to be coordinated and supported enough to achieve the best outcomes. They have the power to make far reaching changes, and to allocate the resources to make them happen.

As mentioned above, the individual behaviour of senior management will also have a significant impact on the culture of the organisation. All leaders should demonstrate the behaviours they are advocating; you can’t expect employees to take part in initiatives and change behaviours if the people above them aren’t doing so.

Arguably, the most significant leader relationship is between employee and line manager. The line manager role includes creating the optimum environment for the performance of their team members.

Bearing in mind that line managers are generally regarded as the ‘squeezed middle’ and are therefore the most vulnerable to personal wellbeing issues, they require adequate support, resources and training to cultivate a positive work environment.

The Employee Wellbeing Awards’ entries certainly demonstrate this in an impressive way. Leadership and employee wellbeing should be interwoven in order that they can feed through to individual and organisational outcomes. And wellbeing has to be a key strand of any leadership development programme.

It may not be an easy goal but it is attainable for any organisation with the vision and mindset.

Evan Davidge, Total Reward and Wellbeing Consultant, The Wellbeing Leader
Section 3: Government policies

Closing the gap: putting government policy into action

Government reforms to push the wellbeing at work agenda particularly around mental health, disabled workers and those with long-term health conditions were published in 2017. However, there’s a gap between the vision set in the government report, *Improving Lives: The Future of Work, Health and Disability* and what’s happening on the ground. This isn’t helped by a relatively poor awareness of government services created to support health in the workplace.

Few employers report on how they are improving workplace mental health – despite the government being keen to encourage it

Just one in 10 of our respondents’ boards report on mental health. Almost a third have plans to introduce mental health reporting in the near future but this leaves well over half of all respondents with no plans to implement any form of mental health reporting at their organisations.

The headline figures mask some sectoral differences. Mental health reporting is more prevalent in the public sector, for example, with over a quarter of respondents having some form of reporting in place compared to just over one in 10 respondents in the not-for-profit sector and just one in 20 private sector respondents. Moreover, two thirds of private sector respondents have no plans to introduce mental health reporting at their organisation.

Figure 3.1: Does your board report on mental health at your organisation? (N=224)
Mental ill-health has long suffered from a stigma that has not been associated with physical ill-health. Employers have a huge role to play in addressing this problem. Simply by being more open and transparent in reporting about mental health in their organisations, employers could help to overcome the culture of shame and secrecy that has developed around mental health issues.

It appears there is currently little appetite among employers for voluntary reporting on mental health. The Stevenson/Farmer review recommends that the government should consider implementing legislation to encourage employers to report on workplace mental health on their website or other channels. It also welcomes workplace mental health indicators that could be used to rate employers on their performance in this area. In response, the government has said it will work with partners, including employers, to establish a framework for voluntary reporting on mental health and disability for large employers in a bid to drive the cultural changes needed.

The Stevenson/Farmer review also suggests that the public sector has “a huge opportunity to lead the way” on mental health and it appears that, at least among our sample, public sector organisations are doing just that when it comes to mental health reporting.

### Organisations reluctant to implement wellbeing clauses in supplier contracts

Just over one in 20 of respondents require organisations in their supply or distribution chains to commit to a set of employee wellbeing standards before signing a contract with them. One in five respondents are planning to introduce this requirement in the near future but a full three quarters of respondents have no plans to introduce any kind of wellbeing clause to their supplier contracts.

There is some sectoral variation here, however. Around one in seven (13.5%) public sector respondents currently use these type of arrangements, almost triple the percentage in the private sector (4.8%) and four times as many as in the not-for-profit sector (3.1%).
The idea of requiring suppliers and other partners to sign up to standards on employee wellbeing is still in its infancy but it has the potential to make a big impact and we are starting to see it gather steam in the public sector. This is likely to build still further as the Stevenson/Farmer review recommends that public sector bodies should encourage their suppliers to follow the mental health core standards set out in the report (to see these in full see page 61) – and the government agrees. The Crown Commercial Service, the body responsible for leading procurement policy on behalf of the UK government, will signpost the standards as part of a wider procurement policy note, to make departments aware of the important role the government’s suppliers can have on improving the mental health and wellbeing of staff employed on public sector contracts. This sort of approach by the public sector is to be welcomed and will hopefully, in time, persuade or prompt private sector employers to follow suit.

Many employers feel prepared when it comes to recruiting workers with disabilities or long-term health problems

Our respondents are generally confident they have the policies and resources in place when it comes to recruiting people with disabilities and long-term physical or mental health problems. Over a third state they are “quite confident” in this regard and an even higher percentage reported they were “very confident”. More than one in 20 respondents tell us they “seek to proactively recruit” people with disabilities and long-term health conditions. While these overall figures are encouraging, they disguise a relative lack of confidence among private sector employers. Less than half (39.2%) of private sector organisations reported feeling “very confident” here compared to more than two thirds of not-for-profit (69.7%) and public sector (66.7%) employers.
Figure 3.4a: How would you describe your organisation’s approach to recruiting people with disabilities and long-term physical or mental health conditions? (N=220)

- We are very confident we have the policies and resources in place to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions if they apply (42.3%)
- We are quite confident we have the policies and resources in place to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions if they apply (39.1%)
- We are not very confident we have the policies or resources in place to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions (11.4%)
- We proactively recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions (6.4%)
- We are not at all confident we have the policies or resources in place to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions (0.9%)

Figure 3.4b: How would you describe your organisation’s approach to recruiting people with disabilities and long-term physical or mental health conditions? (By industry sector) (N=220)

- Private sector
  - We proactively recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions (2.7%)
  - We are very confident we have the policies and resources in place to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions if they apply (36.5%)
  - 51.3%
  - We are not very confident we have the policies or resources in place to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions (11.4%)
- Public sector
  - We proactively recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions (15.4%)
  - We are very confident we have the policies and resources in place to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions if they apply (44.6%)
  - 30.8%
  - We are quite confident we have the policies and resources in place to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions if they apply (24.2%)
- Not-for-profit sector
  - We proactively recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions (12.1%)
  - We are very confident we have the policies and resources in place to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions if they apply (30.8%)
  - 24.2%
  - We are quite confident we have the policies and resources in place to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions if they apply (44.6%)
  - 11.4%
  - We are not very confident we have the policies or resources in place to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions (14.9%)
  - 2.6%
  - We are not at all confident we have the policies or resources in place to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions (0.9%)
  - 0%
While it is encouraging to see such a high level of confidence among our respondents there is clearly room for improvement in the private sector.

The government appears to be fully aware of the need to give more assistance to employers. In its 2017 report, *Improving Lives: The Future of Work, Health and Disability*, it commits to giving employers, “the support and confidence to recruit and retain disabled people and people with long-term health conditions, and create healthy workplaces where people can thrive”. It plans to do this by:

- improving advice and support for employers of all sizes
- ensuring the civil service is a leading employer
- increasing transparency
- reforming statutory sick pay
- ensuring the right incentives and expectations are in place for employers.

**Where employers have concerns they are mainly around having the skills and resources to support this group of workers**

In the main, our respondents have no concerns when it comes to employing people with disabilities and long-term physical or mental health conditions. However, a third admit they are concerned they do not have the skills or knowledge needed to deal with certain situations that may arise with these employees. A similar percentage (29.7%) report they have concerns about the resources required to make reasonable adjustments for such workers.

*Figure 3.5: What are your main concerns with employing people with disabilities and long-term physical or mental health conditions? (N=212)*
The top three concerns of our respondents can all be solved through better education, which is readily available. The government has published a raft of advice and resources on employing people with disabilities including the guidance, *Employing disabled people and people with health conditions*. Acas also offers practical guidance, "Disability discrimination: key points for the workplace." Additionally, the Business Disability Forum provides access to free and confidential advice for members.

**Awareness of government initiatives and support available falls short**

Use of government initiatives aimed at managing and/or promoting the health and wellbeing of employees is relatively low among our sample. Even the most popular service, Access to Work, is used by just over a third of organisations and less than a quarter use the Fit for Work service. Perhaps unsurprisingly, awareness of these government wellbeing services, programmes and publications is higher in the public sector than either the private or not-for-profit sectors.

**Figure 3.6a**: Are you aware of the following government initiatives and do you use them? (N=211)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Aware but do not use</th>
<th>Not aware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to Work</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit for Work Service</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Confident</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Choice (now closed, replaced by new Work and Health Programme)</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuller Working Lives</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.reba.global
It appears that the government has not done a great job of making employers – particularly in the private sector – aware of either the wellbeing support services it offers or its recommendations for how organisations can best manage and support the health of their employees.

It is telling that nearly half of our respondents are aware of the Fit for Work scheme but choose not to use it despite it being free. The lack of take-up has led the government to announce that it is scrapping the occupational health assessments part of the scheme in early 2018, although the advice helpline will remain available.
Government initiatives and support

**Fit for Work**
Provides free, expert advice to employers, employees and GPs looking for help with issues around health and work. It offers a telephone advice line, online chat and resources on its website. Referrals to its occupational health assessments service will end on 31 March 2018 in England and Wales, and on 31 May 2018 in Scotland.

[fitforwork.org](http://fitforwork.org)

**Access to Work**
Offers grants to help pay for specialist equipment, adaptations or support worker services that disabled people might need to work effectively, or to get to and from their workplace. It applies only to help required not covered under the reasonable adjustments an employer is required to make to help a disabled employee perform their job.

[www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)

**Disability Confident**
A voluntary scheme that aims to help employers address the barriers to attracting, recruiting and retaining people with disabilities.

[disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk](http://disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk)

**Work and Health Programme**
An employment support programme for those with health conditions and disabilities. It was launched last year in North West England and Wales and will be rolled out across England in 2018, replacing the Work Choice programme.

[www.gov.uk/work-health-programme](http://www.gov.uk/work-health-programme)

**Fuller Working Lives**
*Fuller Working Lives: A Partnership Approach* was published by the government in February 2017 to encourage businesses to retain, retrain and recruit older workers. It sets out the business benefits of doing so and makes recommendations for action.

Expert view: how government is underpinning its commitment to transform the work prospects of those with long-term health conditions

Government welcomes the opportunity to hear feedback from employers and the business community on information and advice, mental health, and disability employment, and wants to thank REBA for allowing us the chance to do that this year.

Last year, we published *Thriving at work: The Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers* that highlighted the importance of addressing mental health at work, and also *Improving Lives: The Future of Work, Health and Disability*, which sets out the government’s commitment to see a million more disabled people in work over the next decade. This report accepted the recommendations from the Stevenson/Farmer review and sets out the action we will take across three settings – welfare, the workplace and the health system – to transform employment prospects for disabled people and people with long-term health conditions.

**Partnership working**

Government wants to work in partnership with employers of all sizes to help them to draw fully on the talents of disabled people, and experience the rich business opportunities of creating healthy and inclusive workplaces where all can thrive and progress.

As this report demonstrates, many employers already have a strong track record in this area and we want to learn from their success and support others to do more.

Our action will focus on:

- improving advice and support for employers of all sizes, in particular SMEs
- increasing transparency through voluntary reporting on mental health, wellbeing and disability for large employers
- reforming statutory sick pay
- reviewing what the right incentives and expectations for employers are
- ensuring the civil service is a leading employer and implements the Stevenson/Farmer recommendations.

The government provides a range of support to employers to help them recruit and retain disabled people and people with health conditions including the Disability Confident campaign and the Access to Work scheme, which has a specific Mental Health Support Service. We will continue to raise awareness of this support and develop Access to Work and Disability Confident to meet the needs of employers.

**Movement for change**

Disability Confident, which already has 5,500 signatories, intends to create a movement for change – encouraging employers to think differently about disability and helping to build the confidence and skills they need to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled workers.

Improving mental health support in the workplace is a key focus across government, and for our stakeholders. The Stevenson/Farmer review recommended core mental health standards for all employers to adopt to support their employees, as well as enhanced mental health standards for large employers and the public sector. We encourage all employers to take up these mental health standards and to consider what they can do to support the mental health and wellbeing of their workforce.

**Tabitha Jay**, Director, Work and Health Unit and Office for Disability Issues
Section 4: **Budgets and spending**

**Fit investment:** trends in employers’ annual wellbeing spend

Spending on wellbeing was up in 2017 and it is forecast to rise again in 2018 yet it still remains relatively low. Could tax incentives for employers help boost spending in this area?

**Spend on wellbeing is higher at organisations with a strategy in place**

Organisations with a wellbeing strategy tend to shell out more on wellbeing initiatives than those without. Median spend per employee at respondents with a strategy is between £26 and £50 a year, compared to £1 to £25 at those without. Moreover, over a quarter of organisations with no strategy in place spend nothing on employee wellbeing. By contrast, nearly a quarter (23.9%) of respondents with a strategy spend more than £100 per employee per year to look after their wellbeing.

**Figure 4.1:** How much does your organisation spend annually on wellbeing initiatives in the UK, per employee (respondents with a wellbeing strategy versus respondents without a wellbeing strategy) (N=190)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Nil</th>
<th>£1-£25</th>
<th>£26-£50</th>
<th>£51-£75</th>
<th>£76-£100</th>
<th>£101-£150</th>
<th>£151-£200</th>
<th>£201-£250</th>
<th>£251-£300</th>
<th>£301+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No strategy</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While spending on wellbeing continues to rise, it remains relatively low compared to other benefits, particularly at organisations without any wellbeing strategy in place.

One major problem with trying to get employers to increase spending is that it is the NHS, and not employers, who tend to pick up the bill when employees become sick.

This issue has been recognised by Norman Lamb MP, former health minister, who has been instrumental in developing plans to trial a new workplace “wellbeing premium” in the West Midlands, central to which is a commitment to offer discounted business rates for employers that implement specific wellbeing initiatives. The aim of the trial would be to test whether offering such a financial incentive would help reduce sickness absence, improve productivity and prevent people leaving work due to ill-health – and if successful, Lamb hopes the scheme could be rolled out more widely. The group behind the scheme, the West Midlands Combined Authority Mental Health Commission, estimates the rates discount pilot would cost between £2m and £3m in lost local tax revenue over two years but it has not yet secured government funding.

### Spending on wellbeing likely to increase further during 2018, particularly in organisations with no programme in place

Funding on wellbeing continued to rise in 2017 with more than half of respondents with a wellbeing strategy (51.6%) – together with over a third (36.1%) of those without – reporting an increased outlay on wellbeing initiatives over the past 12 months.

And wellbeing spending looks set to rise still further in 2018. Although this time spending looks set to increase more at organisations without a strategy (58.7%) than at those with (38.7%). Overall, fewer than one in 30 organisations are planning to cut wellbeing spending over the next 12 months.

Wellbeing spending looks set to increase further in 2018, albeit from a fairly low benchmark. It is interesting to note that spending looks set to increase more at organisations without a wellbeing strategy. This may be necessary to bring spending up to a more reasonable level, given these respondents’ lower median spending levels in 2017. The low number of respondents reporting spending cuts in 2017 and 2018 is also encouraging considering the pressure on payroll and associated costs in many industries. It appears that health and wellbeing might generally be being ring-fenced from any wider cost cutting. Although with the severe budget pressures they are currently under, not all public sector organisations may have this luxury.
Expert view: tackling the growing phenomenon of ‘presenteeism’

There is growing evidence among our CIPD membership, as well as from various research studies, that a culture of presenteeism is on the increase in UK workplaces. This means more people coming into work when they are unwell which is not a sign of a healthy workplace. For several years we have asked respondents taking part in our annual Absence Management survey, conducted in partnership with Simplyhealth, whether they had observed an increase in employees showing up for work when sick.

The number of organisations agreeing they have has remained constant at around three in 10. According to our most recent 2016 survey, three quarters report they have observed presenteeism.

The findings show that the rising trend of presenteeism over the past decade cannot merely be attributed to the job insecurity that has been a consequence of economic recession and job losses. Our research also shows that the wider organisational climate has a significant effect on people’s behaviour in relation to presenteeism.

A higher proportion of people coming to work when ill is associated with a culture of long working hours while, by contrast, organisations that focus more on employee wellbeing are less likely to report increases in presenteeism.

Presenteeism more damaging than absenteeism

The latest thinking is that presenteeism can potentially be more harmful than sickness absence both for individuals and organisations. At an economic level, the Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers, Thriving at work, cites analysis that captures the costs to employers of both presenteeism and absenteeism due to mental ill-health. The cost of presenteeism is more than double that of absenteeism – between £17bn and £26bn compared with £8bn, respectively. The report acknowledges that there’s some uncertainty about the costs of presenteeism. This is a difficult area to identify and measure but there is no doubt about the potentially damaging impact of it.

For example, our Absence Management 2016 report finds that: “More than half of those organisations that had noticed an increase in presenteeism report an increase in stress-related absence compared with less than a third of those who hadn’t.” They were also twice as likely to report an increase in mental health problems.

It’s clear that if there is a culture of presenteeism and people feel they need to come to work when ill this can affect their mental wellbeing, or make their condition worse. It could also affect performance, which could lead to wider organisational problems such as prolonged sickness absence, costly errors, lost business, lower morale and reduced productivity.

For all these reasons, and the fact that employers need to be fostering a positive working environment that encourages good wellbeing, presenteeism needs to be identified and challenged. It is encouraging that nearly half (48%) of organisations in our survey have taken steps to discourage this unhealthy behaviour, a considerable increase on previous years.

Others can follow suit by:
- encouraging leaders and managers to role model the right behaviour and not work when unwell
- providing appropriate training and guidance for line managers/supervisors on how to deal with it
- fostering a climate based more on outputs than inputs.

The root causes of presenteeism also need to be addressed, for example, unrealistic workloads, or managers unwittingly fostering a long-hours culture.

It’s only by understanding the factors causing a presenteeism culture that an organisation can successfully tackle the day-to-day behaviours underlying this phenomenon.

Rachel Suff, Senior Policy Adviser, CIPD
Section 5: Measuring effectiveness

Hard facts: evaluating the success of wellbeing strategies

Few employers seek to gather hard data on the effectiveness of their wellbeing initiatives, hampered, they say, by a lack of quality information. Where metrics are in place they tend to be reported to senior teams rather than employees.

Employee feedback, absence rates and engagement levels most popular tools for measuring effectiveness

Well over half of our respondents rely on employee feedback to measure the effectiveness of their health and wellbeing initiatives, with just under half using employee absence rates and employee engagement levels as a gauge. Fewer than one in five (17%) attempt to measure the return on investment of their wellbeing initiatives, while more than a quarter make no attempt at all to measure the impact of their actions on health and wellbeing.

Figure 5.1: How do you measure the effectiveness of your health and wellbeing initiatives? (N=224)

We have seen that the majority of employers do not currently make a significant financial investment in the health of their employees and this might explain why so few make the effort to try and calculate the return on this investment. However, with many employers expecting their wellbeing spend to increase year-on-year, measuring the effectiveness of initiatives may move up the agenda.

With the cited lack of good quality data on health and wellbeing, it makes sense that most employers rely on more indirect measures such as asking employees how useful they find wellbeing initiatives or by inferring their success by looking at sickness absence levels. Neither of these methods is totally satisfactory, of course, but they at least allow employers to get an impression of whether what they are doing is working or not. Sensitivity and confidentiality of employee health data is also something that employers need to be aware of as they review their data sources. This should be taken into account when using data or in the design of any reporting.
Health and safety by far most common wellbeing initiative to be measured

Unsurprisingly, given the relatively low percentage of respondents who attempt to measure the effectiveness of their overall wellbeing initiatives, few try to measure the impact of individual elements of their wellbeing agendas. The exception is health and safety in the workplace where four in every five (80.6%) respondents have metrics in place to measure success. More than a third (38.1%) attempt to measure the success of their efforts to improve employees’ worklife balance, and a similar percentage (35.6%) aim to monitor the impact of their support for employees’ mental health.

Figure 5.2: Do you measure the success of your initiatives in any of the following areas? (N=87)
- Yes – we have metrics in this area
- No – but we are developing metrics
- No – but we plan to develop metrics
- No – and we have no plans to develop metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Plan to develop</th>
<th>Not interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety in the workplace</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worklife balance</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug abuse</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for carers</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol use</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial wellness</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition/healthy eating</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employers have a legal duty to ensure the health and safety of their employees and to report on accidents in the workplace so it is understandable that most respondents have measures of health and safety in place. More surprising is the fact that over a third of respondents seek to measure the impact of their wellbeing policies on worklife balance, which despite being a hugely important aspect of the employer-employee relationship could prove difficult to quantify. Presumably this is done through employee surveys that ask employees to rate or provide qualitative feedback on their worklife balance.

Mental wellbeing is now a key focus of many wellbeing strategies and over a third of employers are attempting to measure the success of their initiatives around mental health. It is encouraging to see so many organisations striving to collate hard evidence of employees’ levels of mental health.

**Wellbeing metrics are most commonly reported to senior leadership, HR or the board**

Where metrics are reported, they tend to be relayed to senior leadership or their equivalent, to HR or to the board. Nearly one in five (18.4%) respondents make these metrics known to employees but very few report on employee wellbeing either in the annual report, or directly to shareholders. Almost a third of our respondents do not report on employee wellbeing in any way.

**Figure 5.3: Where do you report your employee wellbeing metrics? (N=223)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric Reported</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To the senior leadership team or equivalent</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To HR</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the board</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To shareholders</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the annual report</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We do not report any wellbeing metrics</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We have already seen that relatively few employers attempt to measure the effectiveness of their wellbeing interventions and even fewer report their levels of employee wellbeing, especially to the public. This is disappointing, as the overall levels of employee wellbeing across the UK are likely to benefit from employers being open and honest about the health of their workforces.

Several professional bodies are trying to encourage greater transparency on wellness from employers by developing their own wellbeing ‘indexes’, against which organisations can benchmark their own performance.

Investors in People, for example, has developed a benchmarking tool designed to give employers a clearer idea of how they are performing when it comes to employee wellbeing. It has also introduced the Investors in People Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award, to recognise organisations that have developed a culture of health improvement.
Top barriers to measuring health and wellbeing schemes

So, what lies behind the relative paucity of wellbeing reporting? The biggest problem appears to be a lack of internal data, with more than half of respondents citing this as the main barrier to measuring the effectiveness of their health and wellbeing initiatives. A third also criticised the data that is available for being incomplete or of poor quality. And a quarter reported that their evaluation efforts were hampered by a lack of data analytics expertise.

Figure 5.4: What are the main barriers to measuring the effectiveness of your health and wellbeing initiatives? (N=208)

As we have seen above, few respondents collect hard data on health and wellbeing instead preferring to rely on ‘soft’ data such as employee feedback, which could make it difficult to publish accurate and reliable statistics in this area. Many of our respondents also cited a lack of time as a key reason for why they had not been able to evaluate the impact of their health and wellbeing interventions.
Expert view: the disconnect between employer offerings and employee participation

Many employers, particularly in the UK, are actively looking at ways to improve the health and wellbeing offer in their workplaces. Organisations understand that investing in health and wellbeing may have a range of positive business outcomes, such as reducing absenteeism and presenteeism (being at work but not being fully productive), and improving the long-term health of staff potentially leading to better business results.

However, some key challenges remain.

Data from Britain’s Healthiest Workplace (BHW), an initiative developed by VitalityHealth and which has surveyed, along with RAND Europe and the University of Cambridge, close to 400 employers and 90,000 employees across the UK over the last four years, has revealed some interesting trends.

There has been a significant divergence between what employers believe is happening in the workplace and what their employees perceive to be happening in the workplace.

Most employers surveyed offer a range of health and wellbeing initiatives – less than 5% of organisations do nothing at all in this area.

However, access to these initiatives can be an issue while staff awareness of these interventions is low.

Using 2017 BHW data, only 43% of employees surveyed have access to health and wellbeing initiatives in the workplace. Where such initiatives exist, only 18% of employees reported being aware of them.

In addition, of the 18% aware of initiatives only 31% participate. So, participation and engagement with these initiatives appears to be low.

Involvement in health and wellbeing interventions lowers health risks

Low participation matters on a number of levels. First and foremost, it’s discouraging to hear that when businesses reach out to staff there’s little response.

However, more importantly, we know that participation in health and wellbeing interventions has inherent benefits.

It results in lower health risks from, for example, smoking and obesity, work by the RAND Corporation in the US shows.

Using BHW data in the UK, those participating year-on-year in health and wellbeing interventions report a significant improvement in cardiovascular health, lower levels of perceived bullying and an increase in their physical activity compared to those that don’t participate.

So, what drives participation in a workplace characterised by complex interactions?

Workplaces that train line managers in health and wellbeing report higher participation in interventions. So do employers that report on the health and wellbeing of staff both internally and externally.

Therefore indications are that making health and wellbeing a business priority, reporting on it, discussing it at board level and empowering managers are what can drive culture change in the workplace.

Ultimately, increasing employee participation in workplace health and wellbeing requires organisations to set strategies that address the main health risks, engage effectively with staff, and have buy-in and support from those at the top.

Dr Christian van Stolk, Vice President and Lead on Employment and Social Policy research, RAND Europe
Section 6: **Mental health**

**Head space: supporting employees’ mental wellbeing**

Mental health in the workplace has been in the spotlight in recent months with government pledging to tackle the issue. However, it’s also been climbing the business agenda with many respondents planning to launch dedicated mental health strategies in the short to medium term.

**Mental health is being addressed by more employers**

The percentage of respondents addressing mental health within their overall wellbeing strategy has seen a steady growth over the past three years, growing from 78.9% in 2016, to 82% in 2017 and 84.1% in this year’s survey. Dedicated mental health strategies are quite rare, however. Just one in six respondents report having a defined mental health strategy in place – although over a third say they are planning to introduce such a strategy in the next 12 months and a further quarter plan to have a strategy in place by 2020.

**Figure 6.1:** Percentage of respondents addressing mental health within their wellbeing strategy, 2016–2018 (N=113)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6.2:** Do you have a defined mental health strategy in place? (N=222)

- No, and we have no immediate plans to implement one: 21.6%
- No, but we plan to implement one in the next 3 years: 26.1%
- No, but we plan to implement one in the next 12 months: 36.5%
- Yes: 15.8%
It is encouraging to see so many organisations addressing mental health within their overall approach to wellbeing and a sizeable portion of respondents planning to introduce a dedicated mental health strategy in the next 12 months. Some of this may have been prompted by the government’s recent focus on mental health in the workplace and, in particular, the Stevenson/Farmer review, which put the cost of poor mental health to employers at between £33 billion and £42 billion a year. The report found that 300,000 people with a long-term mental health problem lose their jobs each year and around 15% of people at work have symptoms of an existing mental health condition. Such figures make clear the urgent need for employers to address this issue.

**Action on mental health – what can employers do?**

The Stevenson/Farmer review puts forward a set of six mental health core standards described as, “a framework for a set of actions all organisations in the country are capable of implementing quickly”.

It recommends that employers can and should:

- produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan
- develop mental health awareness among employees
- encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling
- provide employees with good working conditions and ensure they have a healthy work-life balance and opportunities for development
- promote effective people management through line managers and supervisors
- routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing.

The report also outlines a set of more advanced standards for employers “who can and should do more to lead the way” – defined as all public sector employers and private sector employers with more than 500 employees. The authors recommend that these employers should:

- increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting
- demonstrate accountability
- improve the disclosure process
- ensure provision of tailored in-house mental health support and signposting to clinical help.

Majority of organisations have either equipped line managers with mental health training or plan to do so

Around a third of respondents provide mental health training for line managers, with a similar percentage planning to introduce this training in the next 12 months. Just one in six (14.9%) respondents say they have no plans to introduce this sort of training.

Figure 6.3: Do you provide mental health training for line managers? (N=222)

- No, and we have no immediate plans to implement this: 14.9%
- No, but we plan to implement this in the next 3 years: 15.8%
- No, but we plan to implement this in the next 12 months: 35.1%
- Yes: 34.2%

Mental health training for line managers was another key recommendation to come out of the Stevenson/Farmer review. It says: “Professional bodies with responsibility for training or accrediting professional qualifications should include workplace mental health in their training programmes and assessments”.

Acas has issued guidance called Promoting positive mental health in the workplace with an emphasis on the importance of training managers to deal with mental ill-health. The guidance suggests that managers should be trained to:

- become more emotionally intelligent and improve their self-awareness and social-awareness
- spot the signs of mental ill-health
- understand the common types of mental ill-health and the differences between them
- understand the types of support and possible adjustments that may help a team member experiencing mental ill-health
- refer or signpost staff to local services or external support.

Some of our respondents provided details on their mental health awareness training for managers. For example:

“We are currently training all our managers, via a mental health first aid course, on how to manage difficult situations and how to get employees to feel comfortable enough to approach their managers with any mental health issues they may have.”

Julie Cubley, Employee Relations Manager, HCA
“We provide training for managers using presentations from our EAP provider. They focus on ways to recognise stress and mental illness in their team members and how to be supportive to any individuals who may be experiencing difficulties. The training also covers where managers themselves can go to get any help they might need to help manage the situation.”

Paul Johnstone, Global Pensions & EMEA Benefits Manager, Orange Business Services

“We have organised mental health first aid half-day workshops for managers. It covered an introduction to issues surrounding mental health and why mental health affects business. It also upskilled managers in:

- identifying the discrimination surrounding mental health problems
- defining mental health and some mental health problems
- relating to people’s experience
- looking after their own mental health.”

Paul Dockerty, Senior Health and Wellbeing Officer, Cafcass

**BIG SHIFT**

**Huge growth expected in mental health strategies**

Although just 15.8% of employers have a defined mental health strategy in place, a further 36.5% plan to introduce one in 2018. If this were to happen, that would be a 231% increase in 2018. With a further 26.1% saying they’ll introduce a strategy over the next three years we could potentially see 78.4% of employers offering them by the early 2020s.

Predicted growth in defined mental wellbeing strategies in 2018

![](231%)

**Organisations confident their HR policies support good mental health at work**

Our respondents have a generally positive opinion of how they approach mental health, with well over three quarters stating that they treat discrimination on mental health grounds on equal terms to discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, age or sexual orientation. A similarly high percentage are confident that their HR policies and procedures support their employees’ mental health.

Three in five (59.3%) respondents believe that their employees and managers feel able to raise mental health problems and seek support without risk of ridicule or stigma. A similar number (56.6%) include mental health in their diversity and inclusion strategy.
Figure 6.4: Thinking about the culture of your workplace and mental health, do you agree with the following statements? (N=221)

- **83.1%** We treat discrimination on mental health grounds on equal terms to discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, age or sexual orientation
- **78.3%** Our HR policies and procedures support our employees' mental health
- **59.3%** Our employees and managers feel able to raise mental health problems and seek support without risk of ridicule or stigma
- **83.1%** Our employees and managers feel able to raise mental health problems and seek support without risk of ridicule or stigma
- **47.5%** We have targets and KPIs for mental health and wellbeing
- **40.6%** We provide training on mental health awareness for our employees
- **10.5%** We provide training on mental health awareness for our employees

These figures underline the work that still has to be done to put mental health on an equal footing with physical health. While it is encouraging that so many respondents feel they are supporting their employees' mental health, two in five still believe their employees do not feel they can seek help for mental ill-health from their employer without the risk of ridicule.

There are some examples of good practice among our respondents.

“Through our internal communications channels we are encouraging employees to talk through their issues. We realise that people's talking and listening needs apply as much to mental issues as physical issues, and to financial and emotional issues too. We recognise that our wellbeing programme needs to be holistic and cover all aspects of human dynamics and interactions.”

Peter Robotham, Head of Group Pensions and Wellbeing, HSBC

“We provide on-site mental health seminars every quarter on various topics. We also have an EAP in place and employees can self refer with mental health concerns through our private medical insurance cover. We have also trained a number of employees in different departments to be able to offer mental health support to colleagues, as an alternative to HR.”

Reward and Benefits Manager, legal sector

“We have an intranet site with materials and resources to help employees identify mental health issues and learn how to assist people in their orbit who may be affected. We are making considerable inroads into removing stigma and helping people to talk about their issues.”

Benefits and Reward Manager, legal sector

It is telling that so few employers have targets around mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. Again, this could come down to the lack of reliable data in this area.
Expert view: board members have a major opportunity to turn wellbeing insight into action – and realise a substantial return on investment

The resounding message of this year’s Employee Wellbeing Research report is that more workplaces are becoming healthier. Half have a defined wellbeing strategy and of those who don’t, half intend to introduce one in the near future.

Confidence that policies support mental health is high, stigma is being broken down, and the majority of workplaces have support such as employee assistance programmes in place – all developments to be celebrated.

While this signals a continuation of recent positive trends we have seen in workplace culture, it’s also clear that barriers to creating mentally healthy workplaces persist in some key areas.

Although wellbeing is a priority at board level, for example, this survey tells us that initiatives are scarcely driven from the top. An effective ‘whole organisation’ approach for the long-term is always best achieved when wellbeing strategies are led by board members.

For many organisations, we also see a reluctance to include wellbeing as part of a business strategy, despite the evidence highlighting the financial impact of poor employee wellbeing.

This suggests a misconception still exists that investment in wellbeing will negatively impact the bottom line. But as we already know, and as this research shows, there is a substantial return on investment for those who do factor in wellbeing.

Sharing what works and what doesn’t is invaluable

Measurement is another significant barrier. As many in the industry work to research and improve processes and systems to support informative data collection on employee health and wellbeing, we must remain steadfast in our commitment. There is a balance to be struck between continuing to innovate in our strategies and interventions, and improving the ways we assess their effectiveness.

At the same time, as we progress, those leading the way have an important role to play in sharing knowledge of what works and what doesn’t.

As was evident in judging the 2018 Employee Wellbeing Awards, there is a huge range of approaches to workplace wellbeing across different sectors, varying from those oriented around health and safety, to some based on diversity and inclusion and others focusing more on talent development and performance. At the core of every well-crafted strategy, though, is a robust preventative approach, and appropriate workplace support.

Communicating best practice will, as ever, be essential to support those organisations yet to develop and implement a well-defined wellbeing strategy. For us all to progress and share the best practice possible, the challenge now is for more senior leaders to take forward the insights from this research and translate them into action. It’s a huge opportunity for everyone at board level.

Poppy Jaman OBE, CEO, Mental Health First Aid England
Section 7: **Initiatives and insurances**

**Healthy choices: what wellbeing plans offer**

Employers continue to offer a huge range of health and wellbeing initiatives for employees from counselling and mindfulness sessions to on-site doctors, nurses and dentists. Technology-related services such as apps or virtual GP services are also on the up.

**EAPs continue to be almost universally provided by employers**

The employee assistance programme (EAP) continues to be the most popular wellbeing initiative, offered by well over nine in 10 respondents, followed by occupational sick pay schemes, which are operated by more than four in every five respondents. Three quarters of respondents offer discounted or free gym membership to their employees and almost two-thirds provide health screenings to staff. On-site mental health nurses and doctors are the least popular options among our sample although they are still provided by a relatively high 6.6% and 9.6% of respondents, respectively. Almost one in 10 respondents offer some form of sleep training and education, while around one in eight provide on-site mental health support in some form, such as cognitive behavioural therapy or psychiatric care. Looking at long-term trends, EAPs, health screenings, dedicated health and wellbeing websites and financial education or guidance have all steadily increased in popularity over the past three years. There has also been steady growth in the number of respondents offering technologically advanced options such as health and wellbeing apps for smartphones (21.6%) and access to virtual GPs (21.1%). Meanwhile, the percentage of respondents offering stop smoking programmes has fallen in each of the past three years, from almost a third (29.8%) in 2016 to around one in five (21.2%) this year.

**At a glance: wellbeing services being offered by organisations in 2018**

- **93%** Employee assistance programme or counselling
- **82.9%** Occupational sick pay scheme
- **75%** Discounted or free gym membership
- **64%** Health screenings
- **45.2%** Resilience or mental wellbeing workshops
- **43%** Organised walking, running or cycling sessions
### Figure 7.1: Which of the following wellbeing programmes and initiatives do you currently offer (2018, 2017 and 2016) (N=200)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme/Initiative</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee assistance programme or counselling</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational sick pay scheme*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discounted or free gym membership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health screenings</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>77.6%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience or mental wellbeing workshops*</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised walking, running or cycling sessions+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free fruit</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated health and wellbeing website</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaccinations – on-site</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site fitness classes (eg yoga, pilates)</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaccinations – vouchers</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness challenges</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial education or guidance</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing fairs</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessions on mindfulness for employees+</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutritional advice</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is no surprise to see EAPs continue to be the most common wellbeing initiative among our sample. They are relatively cheap and simple to provide (often with little to no involvement for the employer at all) and the wide range of services they offer are generally valued by employees.

What is more interesting is the growth in the number of organisations providing on-site healthcare professionals such as physiotherapists, nurses, dentists and even doctors. While such arrangements are generally not cheap they are highly valued by employees and they also offer employers a whole host of benefits, such as ensuring staff do not need to take time off work to get seen by a healthcare professional, making it easy for employees to get their medical needs addressed so they are less likely to become ill, and building their reputation as an employer that cares about the welfare of its workforce.

Technology is also clearly having a big impact in the area of employee health and wellbeing. The number of respondents offering a health and wellbeing app for smartphones has almost tripled in the last three years while twice as many respondents are now offering access to a virtual GP. Both of these trends speak to the fact that such technology is now cheaper and easier to develop than ever before and that providing easy access to services is crucial for getting employees to actually use them.
Two thirds of organisations offer employer-paid private medical insurance

Private medical insurance is the most common health and wellbeing insurance product offered by our respondents, with over two thirds (68.6%) providing employer-paid cover to at least some of their employees. Meanwhile, more than half (55.8%) of respondents pay for income protection cover for at least some employees. By contrast, employer-paid critical illness insurance is offered by less than one in five (18.8%) respondents. Where they are offered, dental insurance and healthcare cash plans tend to be made available as part of a flexible benefits scheme rather than being directly funded by the employer.

Figure 7.2: Do you provide any of the following health and wellbeing insurance products? (N=226)

**Employer-paid for ALL employees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insurance Product</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private medical insurance</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental insurance</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income protection cover</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare cash plans</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optical cover</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical illness insurance</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employer-paid for SOME employees**  
Available through flex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insurance Product</th>
<th>Employer-paid (%)</th>
<th>Available through flex (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private medical insurance</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental insurance</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income protection cover</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare cash plans</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optical cover</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical illness insurance</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Available through voluntary benefits (ie. employee-paid)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insurance Product</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private medical insurance</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental insurance</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income protection cover</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare cash plans</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optical cover</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical illness insurance</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Private medical insurance and income protection insurance are core components of many employee benefits packages so it is not surprising to see so many of our respondents providing employer-paid coverage to their employees. Meanwhile, offering products such as dental insurance and healthcare cash plans through a flex scheme is a great way to ensure employees have access to wellbeing support at no additional cost to the employer.
Insurers offer a variety of wellbeing products that many organisations don’t take advantage of

Insurance providers often supply additional wellbeing-related services along with their main insurance products. For example, nine in every ten (89.7%) of our respondents receive an employee assistance programme from their insurer and nearly two thirds (59.8%) of respondents actively promote the EAP service to their employees.

More than three quarters (78.2%) of respondents also receive access to an online health portal or website from their provider and almost two thirds (64.6%) of respondents make use of this service.

By contrast, less than half of our respondents receive health apps for smartphones (44.6%), critical illness support (39.3%), virtual GPs (38.2%) or wearable technologies (17.1%) from their insurers – and very few organisations make use of these services even where they are provided. For example, almost one in five (17.4%) respondents have access to a smartphone health app from their insurer and do not use it, while more than one in 10 (11.9%) opt not to make use of their insurer’s virtual GP service.

**Figure 7.3:** Does your insurer provide any of the following services – and do you use them? (N=204)

*It is not provided by our supplier*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Respondents Using (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee assistance programme</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online health portals and websites</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health apps for smartphones</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical illness support</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual GPs</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearable technologies (eg. fitness trackers)</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*It is provided by our supplier but we don’t use it*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Respondents Not Using (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee assistance programme</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online health portals and websites</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health apps for smartphones</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical illness support</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual GPs</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearable technologies (eg. fitness trackers)</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*It is provided by our supplier and we use it*  
*It is provided by our supplier and we actively promote it*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Respondents Using (%)</th>
<th>Respondents Promoting (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee assistance programme</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online health portals and websites</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health apps for smartphones</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical illness support</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual GPs</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearable technologies (eg. fitness trackers)</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We have already seen that the EAP is the wellbeing initiative offered by the highest number of our respondents and it appears that most of these are provided by respondents’ insurance providers. Dedicated health websites or portals are also very popular among our respondents and, again, this might be due to the fact that they are provided by insurers as part of a wider suite of products.

It is interesting to note the high number of respondents who receive products and services from their insurance suppliers such as smartphone apps, critical illness support, virtual GPs and fitness trackers but choose not to use them. However, we have seen a big growth in the percentage of respondents offering smartphone apps and virtual GP access over the past three years, so we may see an increase in the number of organisations opting to use these services from their insurers in the near future. Whether the market for fitness trackers ever takes off as it was once expected to remains to be seen.

**Insurance offerings not well integrated with overall wellbeing programme**

There is a significant lack of integration between the health insurance products our respondents offer and their overall wellbeing plan, with a third saying that the two are not at all integrated and half saying they are only partly integrated. Just one in six (15.3%) believe their insurance offering fully integrates with their overall approach to employee wellbeing.

**Figure 7.4** How well do you feel your insurance offering integrates with your wellbeing offering (ie. how well do they complement one another?)(N=202)

Despite the costs involved in providing products such as private medical insurance and income protection cover to staff, it appears that many employers are offering them almost as a matter of course, perhaps to maintain a competitive employee benefits package rather than considering how well they dovetail with the rest of their wellbeing agenda.

One problem might be that insurance products are often sourced and administered by the reward team while wider health and wellbeing initiatives are managed elsewhere, which makes it difficult to achieve a joined up approach.

With the emergence of virtual GP services and on-site doctors, nurses and physios, however, it makes sense for employers to explore how they can integrate their insurance offerings with their other health diagnostic and treatment offerings, both to save money and to provide a more useful comprehensive service for employees.
Expert view: it’s time for business to wake up to the importance of sleep

Sleep is fundamental to health – as important as food.
The findings of the inaugural Sainsbury’s Living Well Index, published in 2017 and based on a study of 8,250 adults across Great Britain, revealed sleep quality as the strongest indicator of living well.
In fact, a good night’s sleep is perceived as being more valuable than a 50% salary increase.
Yet it remains a neglected topic.
It is therefore in employers’ interests to promote the importance of sufficient high-quality sleep to their employees.
And to help employers do this, Business in the Community has published Sleep and recovery: a toolkit for employers, co-produced with Public Health England (PHE).
The interconnected suite promotes a ‘whole person, whole system’ approach to physical and mental health, and sleep is inextricably linked to both.
Content has been informed by an evidence review conducted by PHE and features expert opinion, employer case studies and freely available resources.
Although the evidence base is limited, it nevertheless revealed the scale of the issue and showed there is both a compelling business and social case for employers to address the issue of sleep with employees.
So why is sleep not discussed? Partly, because it crosses the boundary between work and our personal lives. Also perhaps because in our ‘always on’ culture it’s considered ‘cool’ to survive on a few hours’ sleep.

Lost sleep can cost businesses up to £30bn a year

Yet sleep deprivation carries risks for all employers: it can compromise safety and lead to potential fatalities, it can cause loss of cognitive function resulting in poor decision-making, and it can lead to general grumpiness that can damage customer service and relationships with colleagues.
Lost sleep also affects productivity, innovation and creativity. All this adds up to an eye-watering cost of £30bn a year.
Sleep deprivation can be the manifestation of an underlying mental or physical health issue. For example, Lloyds Bank CEO Antonio Horta-Osorio admitted it was anxiety about having to improve the bank’s performance that led to him suffering chronic fatigue shortly after joining the organisation in 2011. Horta-Osorio’s board supported him, helping him to access the appropriate help.
Sadly, that isn’t the case for all employees. Our Mental Health at Work 2017 report found that 15% of employees who disclosed mental health issues subsequently faced disciplinary action, demotion or dismissal.
So what can employers do to promote sufficient high-quality sleep to their employees? Our toolkit sets out a three-pronged approach:
1. Prevention: this includes good job design and promoting good sleep hygiene (creating the right conditions for a good night’s sleep).
2. Early intervention: including training for line managers on how to spot the signs of fatigue and on having difficult conversations.
3. Active rehabilitation: for example, reinforcing the need to take holiday entitlement.
As sleep emerges as a hot topic for employer, we need to fundamentally change our attitudes to it. It is not OK to expect employees to be available around the clock and think of sleep deprivation as an unavoidable occupational hazard.
We need strong leadership to encourage a culture change so employers place value on good quality sleep, good job design and on embedding good sleep hygiene into organisations.
This way we will enable employees to really thrive.

Louise Aston, Wellbeing Director, Business in the Community
- The toolkit is available at https://wellbeing.bitc.org.uk/all-resources/toolkits/sleep-and-recovery-toolkit
Section 8: **Working environment**

**A place to thrive**: how employers are creating workspaces that look after body and mind

Organisations are continually looking to up their game in how they address staff wellbeing. Having already looked at ways to promote physical health many respondents are now keen to design workspaces that encourage staff to take time out.

Many organisations already have facilities that encourage healthy behaviours in place – and are now exploring ways to promote relaxation

Most of our respondents have long since introduced changes to their working environments to encourage healthy behaviours. For example, almost nine in 10 have on-site bike racks (87.7%) and on-site showers (84.9%). Almost two thirds (63.4% and 63.2%, respectively) have had these amenities in place for more than three years. These facilities, together with on-site gyms, which nearly three quarters (71.3%) of respondents have no plans to introduce, appear to have reached saturation point.

Initiatives that have been introduced more recently include on-site relaxation or recreation areas and new workstation designs. More than one in 10 (13.2%) respondents introduced on-site relaxation or recreation areas in the last 12 months, for example, with a further 11.3% planning to introduce them in the near future. Meanwhile, almost one in five (18.9%) respondents have implemented new workstation designs, such as standing desks, in the last year. A further 12.9% plan to bring these in at some point in the near future.

**Figure 8.1**: Does your organisation offer new workstation designs (eg. standing desks)? (N=202)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning to introduce in near future</th>
<th>12.9%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduced in last 12 months</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In place for 1-3 years</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In place for 3+ years</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No plans to introduce</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employers have been exploring ways to make the working environment more conducive to healthy behaviours for many years and it appears that most have now addressed their needs in this regard. Certainly, there are few respondents left without on-site bike racks or showers while the majority have either installed an on-site gym or have no plans (or no space) to do so. There still appears to be some appetite among employers for introducing more spaces for employees to get away from their desks or workstations and relax while at work, however. This kind of approach to office design is exemplified by Google and its plans for new London headquarters, which will have a swimming pool, indoor sports pitch and a rooftop garden.

While few employers are able to go to this extreme most now see the value in creating spaces for employees to take a break from work and interact with their colleagues, and the benefits this can bring in terms of health and worklife balance.
Practitioner view: the importance of wellbeing in our highly connected world

There has never been a better time for employers to encourage people to focus on their health and wellbeing. In today’s dynamic, highly connected and digital environment there is a need to work differently – it’s no longer about worklife balance but worklife integration.

With the pace continuing to accelerate, it is hugely important to empower people to make healthy choices, and create communities that inspire and motivate each other to make small but sustainable changes to improve their personal and professional life.

Research shows that people are:

- Continuously connected to technology devices and attending meetings back-to-back with few breaks throughout the day.
- Working remotely from team leaders and teams, which contributes to a feeling of isolation.
- Working in teams with colleagues and customers in different time zones, which means working late into the evenings, affecting family time.
- Stationary for long periods of time and, as a result, suffering muscular issues.
- Dealing with a fast-paced and changing work environment that is increasing stress and anxiety.
- Showing signs of poor resilience due to lack of quality sleep and increased stress levels, which affects morale and engagement and leads to sick leave and presenteeism challenges.

At Cisco, we focus on a holistic and inclusive approach to wellbeing, recognising our different cultures and individual needs. A wellbeing movement should aim to support personal growth and foster a culture of high performance, as individuals and as teams.

Through our unique collaboration with wellbeing expert, Jessie Pavelka, we are helping employees and families embrace healthier lifestyles and equipping them with tools to sustain this lifestyle using our Cisco technologies.

Jessie’s philosophy focuses on ‘The four Elements of health’. These are food (eat), movement (sweat), mind power (think) and family (connect).

Cisco employees, their friends and family, have access to recipes, exercise videos, articles and forums in an online technology portal called the Pavelka House for Cisco.

They can have live and virtual sessions with Jessie himself or be part of an interactive online community to plan, track and connect with others to support individual or team wellbeing journeys.

Organisations have the opportunity to offer cost-effective but relevant products, services and solutions that excite people on their wellbeing journey so they can become resilient, innovative, creative and energised in everything they do at work, at home and at play.

Sheila Champion-Smeeth, EMEAR Total Rewards Consultant, Cisco
One in six plan to improve choices available in vending machines

Healthy food and drink options in the workplace are also well established. For example, more than two thirds (68%) of respondents have had fresh drinking water readily available for staff for more than three years, and more than half (51%) have been offering decaffeinated coffee and/or herbal tea options since at least 2015.

The one area that still appears to be in line for some growth is on-site vending machines where one in six (15.7%) respondents are planning to introduce healthier options for employees to purchase in the near future.

**Figure 8.2:** Does your organisation offer healthy options in on-site vending machines? (N=198)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning to introduce in near future</th>
<th>15.7%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduced in last 12 months</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In place for 1-3 years</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In place for 3+ years</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No plans to introduce</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with changes to the physical workspace, most respondents have now addressed the on-site food and drink options they provide for employees and how they can encourage them to make healthier choices. The options available in on-site vending machines appear to be the last area in need of widespread attention, with employers looking to replace snacks that are high in fat, salt or sugar with healthier alternatives.
Section 9: Communication

Spreading the word: how wellbeing plans are communicated

To raise awareness about their wellbeing plans respondents show a preference for using well-established methods such as email or posters. Some are using ‘wellness champions’ to promote a healthier culture while a handful look to other creative tools such as apps or videos.

Organisations use a variety of methods to communicate their programmes but email and intranet are still the most popular

Our respondents continue to communicate about employee wellbeing using mainly traditional media such as email, pages on the general intranet and posters and leaflets. Two in every five have a dedicated wellbeing website or portal and a similar proportion use wellbeing ‘champions’ to reach employees. Wellbeing champions at our respondents’ organisations have a wide range of responsibilities including promoting wellbeing events and offering one-to-one support for employees. For example:

“We are currently recruiting a team of ‘champions’ to support our wellbeing consultant. They will receive training and attend our three-hour mental health first aid training. Their role will be to promote a healthy working culture, support the launch of wellbeing activities throughout the year, signpost colleagues towards relevant services, help them commit to wellbeing, and gather feedback from employees to help shape our future plans and events.”

Anne-Marie Russell, Wellbeing Consultant, ACCA

More cutting edge communications technologies remain rare in this area, with just one in 10 respondents using smartphone or tablet apps to communicate with employees and one in 20 using audio or video (such as YouTube or podcasts).
Given the recent upsurge in the percentage of respondents offering health and wellbeing apps for smartphones – with one in five now providing one for employees – it is surprising to see so few using apps and text messages to communicate their wellbeing agenda and initiatives with employees. This may be down to a reluctance to communicate with employees using their private mobile phones, a practice that could be perceived as intrusive. However, it feels like a missed opportunity given the ubiquity of smartphones today.

It also feels like employers should be making better use of video and audio as these media are particularly suitable for wellbeing communications. Workout videos, recipe demonstrations and fitness tips can gather large audiences on video streaming sites so there is clearly scope for employers to reach out to their employees across these channels.
Practitioner view: why wellbeing is grabbing the attention of the CEO

In the C-suite wellbeing, culture and employee engagement are becoming increasingly popular topics.

This shouldn’t be surprising. If treated in a strategic way, all three can be very powerful in driving the bottom line.

Improving the bottom line usually involves cost reduction measures and efficiency drives. However, these can quickly exhaust themselves unless there is a sustained engagement of the workforce through genuine empowerment and a sense of purpose.

So it’s no wonder we are seeing the increasing popularity of works such as *The Good Jobs Strategy: How the Smartest Companies Invest in Employees to Lower Costs and Boost Profits* by Zeynep Ton.

Now this investment is also moving to wellbeing programmes, with many plans becoming more holistic and taking into account myriad aspects of what people may want in relation to their employer.

There are an increasing number of programmes that incorporate the pillars of financial, mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing – all of them very important in helping an individual to be the best they can be.

**Wellbeing no longer ‘owned’ by HR**

However, even the best programmes will not succeed if not supported by the company culture or line manager relationships. Which is why there is now greater integration of programmes into senior leadership thinking: wellbeing is moving from being traditionally ‘owned’ by HR to being treated as a priority at CEO level.

Culture always starts at the top, which is why senior-level attention and role modelling are so important. If it’s authentic, it translates into greater workforce engagement and good communication.

Areas such as culture and purpose are particularly important for engaging younger generations, a group that would like to see more communication and wellbeing-related tools and products delivered digitally. This creates an interesting dichotomy – we want something digital, yet we would like to assert our human side. So, the next step for us is to how to blend these two needs effectively.

In a bit of a full circle, we are returning to the simple fact that we are all humans and we value being part of a community. We want to matter, we want to feel part of something special and that the community will help us in a time of need.

This allows the individual to thrive.

*Yulia O’Mahony*, Head of Wellbeing, John Lewis Partnership
Section 10: *Private versus public*

**Sector split:** comparing wellbeing in private and public sector employers

A key trend uncovered by this research is the divide that has opened up between public and private employers in terms of the wellbeing agenda. The public sector is clearly leading the way when it comes to looking after the health and wellbeing of its employees.

**Public sector organisations surpass private sector when it comes to wellbeing**

Throughout this survey we have seen evidence that public sector employers are outperforming their private sector counterparts in almost every aspect of employee wellbeing. A cursory glance at some of the headline figures makes this clear:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private sector</th>
<th>Public sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We have a defined wellbeing strategy</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We require our suppliers and distribution chains to commit to standards on employee wellbeing</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We provide training for line managers to help them support employee wellbeing</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We report on the mental health of our employees</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are very confident or proactively seek to recruit people with disabilities and long-term health conditions</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some ways this is to be expected. The influential Stevenson/Farmer review was very clear in its recommendations that public sector organisations should be leading the way when it comes to employee wellbeing – and the government has been quick to commit itself to implementing its recommendations across the civil service.
Appendix 1: **About the survey**

The REBA Employee Wellbeing Survey 2018 was carried out online between November 2017 and January 2018. Responses were received from 250 wellbeing, HR and employee benefits specialists working at organisations of various sizes and across a broad range of industry sectors.

**Figure 10.1:** Respondents by organisation size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-249</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-999</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000-4,999</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000-9,999</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-19,999</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10.2:** Respondents by industry sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-for-profit sector</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial services</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional services (including legal)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail and wholesale</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and construction</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing and production</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media and telecommunications</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and pharmaceuticals</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and logistics</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities and energy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and travel (including hotels and hospitality)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and drink</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining, oil and gas</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Full list of respondents

A P Moller – Maersk
ACCA
Ageas
AGI
AirTanker
Akamai
Alliance Homes Group
Antares
Underwriting
Anthony Nolan
Arcadia Group
Arcadis
Argent Foods Limited
Argyll Community Housing Association
Arthritis Research UK
Gallagher
Ascential
ASCO UK
ASOS
AT Kearney
Atos IT Services
AutoTrader
AXIS Capital
BACP
BAE Systems
Applied Intelligence
Balfeur Beatty
BAM Nuttall
Barnardo’s
Baxi Heating UK
Bidfood
Biffa
Bird & Bird
Birmingham City Council
BlackRock
Bombardier Transportation
Bouygues Energies & Services
Bury Council
BWI Group
Caferos
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG
Camellia PLC
Camelot
Cancer Research UK
Carey Group
Carmarthenshire County Council
CAYSH
CDK Global
Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust
CHADD
Charles Stanley
Charles Taylor
Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply
Cheshire East Council
Chubb Insurance Centre
Cisco
City Football Group
Chartered Management Institute
Colchester Borough Council
Communisis
Companies House
Computeriale
Connect Group
Coventry University
Crown Agents
Crown Worldwide
Croydon Council
Cushman & Wakefield
De La Rue
Defence Equipment and Support
Dentons
Department for International Trade
Donnington Grove Veterinary Group
Draeger Safety UK
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Ecclesiastical Insurance
Education Development Trust
Electricity North West
EnerMech ENGIE
Epcom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust
Epson Europe BV
Evergreen Group
Expand Executive Search
Experian
Expro North Sea
FCC Operations
Fidesa
Financial Conduct Authority
First Utility
FIS
Fluor
FM Global
Four Seasons Health Care
Fourfront Group
Freight Transport Association
GAME Digital
Gatwick Airport GDUK
Genesis Housing
GKN Aerospace
GL Education Group
Glory Global Solutions
Grant Thornton UK LLP
Hamphire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Harrods
HAVAS Just
HCA
HCBO Group
Higgs and Sons Solicitors
Honda of the UK Manufacturing
Horsham District Council
Howard Kennedy LLP
Howard Tenens HS2
HSBC
Hyde
Hymans Robertson
ICG
ICG Medical
Inchcape
InComm
Invest NI
J Murphy & Sons
Jami
Jardine Motors Group
JLL
John Lewis Partnership
KBR UK
Kent County Council
Kier
Kirklees Active Leisure
Knight Frank LLP
Kobalt Music Group
Lime Global
Liverpool John Moores University
London Stock Exchange Group
Lululemon
Mansfield District Council
Mars UK
Mattioli Woods
Mazars LLP
Marsa UK
McCaig
McCann Central
Merlin Entertainments
Merseyrail
Moody’s
Mournant Ozannes
National Trust
Natixis
NetApp
New Look
NHBC
NHS Blood and Transplant
Northern Devon Healthcare
NHS Trust
NS&I
NSPCC
Nuffield Health
Ocado
Ocean Housing Group
Octavia Housing
Ofwat
Openfield
Orange Business Services
Ordnance Survey
PCL Pharma Services
Penningtons Manchese LLP
Police Scotland
Port of Tyne
Portakabin
Poundland
Priory Group
QVC
RBS
Red Carnation
Hotel Collection
RGP
Ricoh UK
Rix
Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation Trust
Royal HaakonningDHSV
RSK Group
RSM
RSPB
Rydal
S&P Global
SAP
SAS
Schlumberger
Schneider Electric
Screwfix
SEI
Shell International Shop Direct
SIG
SimplyBiz
Sky
Skyo
Sky scanner
SMBCE
South East London
District Council
Southern Co-op
Southwark Council
Speedy Hire
Sunrise Senior Living
TalkTalk Group
Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust
Taylor Wessing
Telegraph Media Group
THB
Trident
Six
The Hyde Group
The Isle of Wight College
The Poppy Factory
The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
The Walt Disney Company
Three
Topps Tiles
Translink
Travelport International
Travis Perkins
TRH
T-Systems
TUI Group
UCB
Unipart Group
United Learning
United Utilities
University of Salford
Virgin Atlantic
Virgin Management
Virgin Media
Virgin Money
Volkswagen
Financial Services
W&G Foyle
Walker Morris
Warmup
Watford Community Housing
Webhelp
Weightmans LLP
Well
Welcome Trust
Wells Fargo
Whistl UK
Wigan & Leigh College
WM Housing
Wrexham County Borough Council
Wrigleys
Solicitors LLP
WYG Group
Xerox
Yorkshire Building Society
Yell
Appendix 3: Who we are

About our sponsor:
Punter Southall Health & Protection

As a nation, we are at a demographic tipping point. For UK employers, one of the biggest risks is our ageing workforce and the expected increase in comorbidity. At Punter Southall Health & Protection, we recognise the challenges today’s businesses face. At the heart of this change is the increasing need to look after your employee wellbeing.

Healthy staff tend to be happier staff and therefore more productive. So investing in an effective and data driven wellbeing strategy is a win-win for businesses and employees.

We work with organisations of all sizes to build and deliver creative, innovative and cost-effective employee benefits solutions.

We’re passionate about challenging tradition to create more valued, alternative products and services to help you deliver your responsibilities better. We make sure your benefit solution really is as good as it looks. And as award-winning consultants, you know that your wellbeing strategy is in safe hands.

Speak to a member of our team to find out more.

Punter Southall
Health & Protection

Website: www.pshp.co.uk
Email: marketing@pshp.co.uk
Tel: 020 3327 5700
About us: 
Reward & Employee Benefits Association

What REBA does:
REBA is the professional network for reward and benefits practitioners. We make members’ working lives easier sharing experience, ideas, data and insight. We help members pursue best practice, increase professionalism in the industry and prepare for upcoming changes.

Our key functions are:
- Connecting members via digital tools and live events
- Proprietary data and insight from research
- Distributing useful content
- Curating an industry-wide research library
- Helping with the supplier selection and procurement process

Key products:

Digital
- www.reba.global for content, research, events and digital tools
- rebaLINK for member-to-member information sharing and supplier due diligence
- REBA Express, our weekly email
- REBA Spotlights, our topic-focused emails
- Supplier Shortlist, our tool to source and compare suppliers

Conferences
- Reward Leaders Forum, April
- Employee Wellbeing Congress, July
- REBA Innovation Day, November

Awards
- Employee Wellbeing Awards, February

Research
- Employee Wellbeing Research
- Reward & Benefits Technology Research
- Financial Wellbeing Research
- Reward & Benefits Strategy Research

Contact REBA:
- Debi O’Donovan, Founder: debi.odonovan@reba.global
- Phil Hayne, Partner: phil.hayne@reba.global or 0771 466 0857
- Website: www.reba.global