

Workplace Wellbeing Report 2018

An overview of results from the Premier
Workplace Wellbeing Appraisal



**“The rise in wellbeing
is forcing companies
to think differently
about how they
engage with their
employees.”**

Allyson Gayle

Head of Risk & Healthcare

Premier

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01 Introduction

Premier's 'Workplace Wellbeing Appraisal' enables employers to assess how their wellbeing strategy measures up across a wide range of health and wellbeing factors affecting employees today.

Workplace wellbeing is not about a single benefit or measure. It's about successfully combining a healthy working environment, with a progressive workplace culture and carefully targeted employee benefits that really make a difference.

Between November 2017 and March 2018, the Appraisal was completed by 101 employers ranging in size from under 10 staff up to those with 1000s of employees across a broad range of industry sectors.

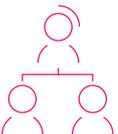
The Appraisal considers the following broad categories which impact employee wellbeing:



Work environment



Benefits



Culture



Engagement

Questions are asked under each category, as well as control questions relating to company size and industry, to give an insightful snapshot of how strongly employers are progressing in each area.

As well as an overall score, each employer is also provided with their score under each category, highlighting the areas where they excel and those that require more attention, with recommendations on potential improvements.

If you haven't got your own score yet, please visit www.wellbeingappraisal.com. You can also request a detailed report.

This report looks at the aggregate results from all respondents to date, to give an overview of how UK employers are rising to the challenge of ensuring they have healthy and happy employees.

It will be repeated annually, so as you make changes to your wellbeing strategy you can track what effect it has on your score and measure progress. We will also be reporting on general trends and, hopefully, an improving set of results year on year as workplace wellbeing evolves.



02 Overview

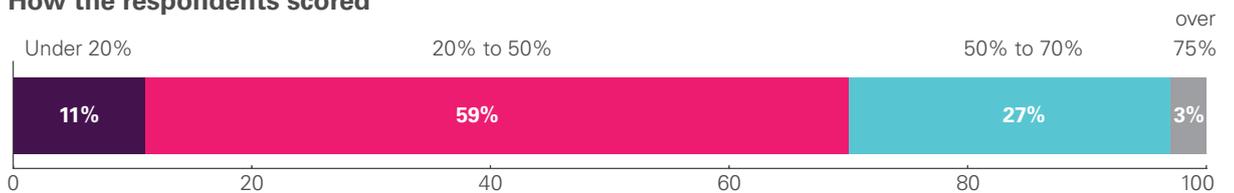
Too often it has been assumed that as long as employees turn up to work and do their jobs, they are fit and well. Little regard has been given to the impact their surroundings, culture, the benefits they receive and HR policies have on their overall wellbeing, productivity and performance.

However this is changing. Presenteeism is recognised as a growing problem and the most successful employers are investing in both their employees' health and the working environment to the benefit of the bottom line.

40.5%

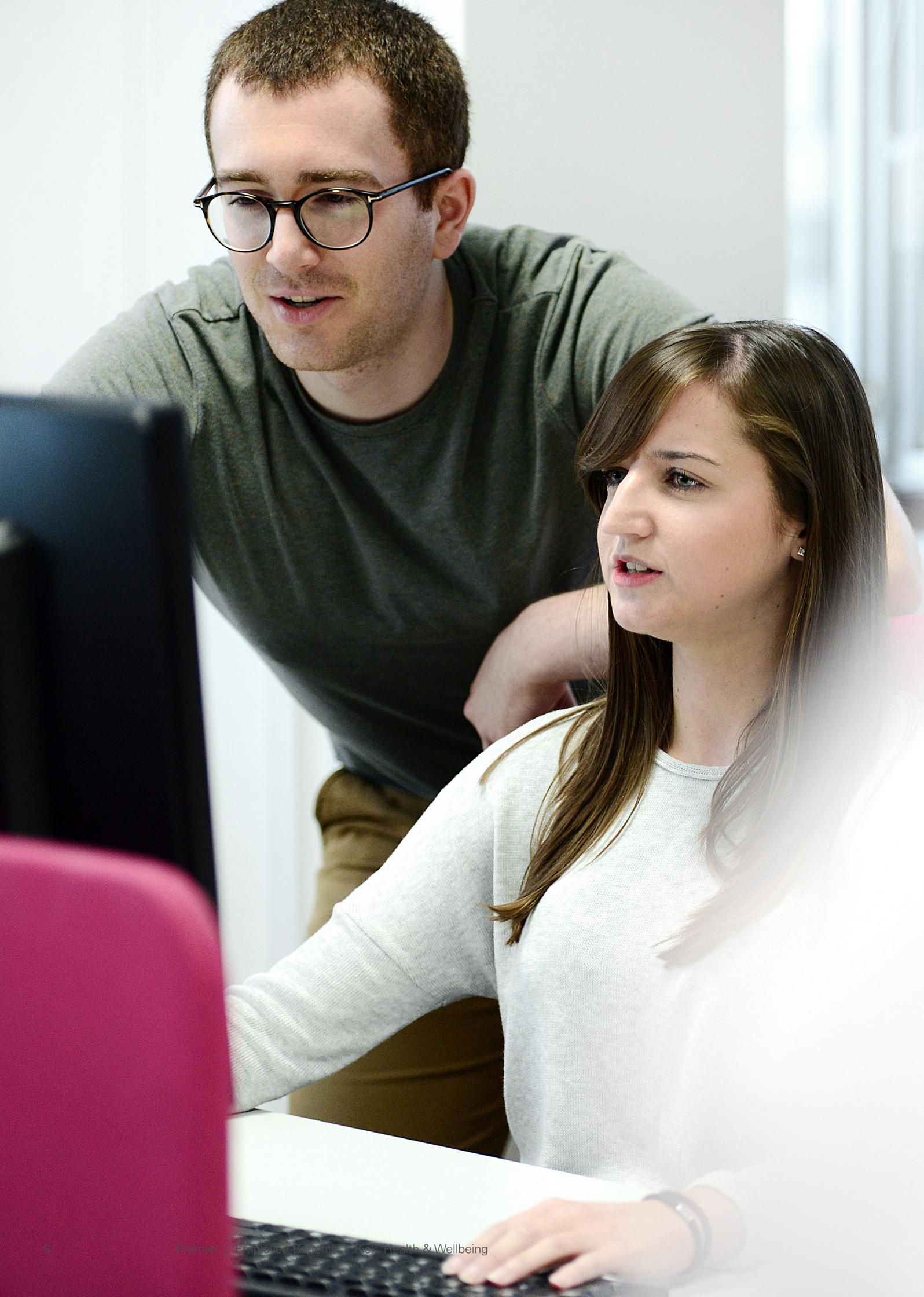
Overall score for companies' wellbeing strategies and provision

How the respondents scored



Positively, employee wellbeing has risen up the agenda as more employers recognise the success of the trail blazers and take action to tackle employee health. However, aggregating the answers to the questions across all respondents and all 4 areas combined resulted in an average workplace wellbeing score of 40.5%, where a score of 100% represents excellence across all four areas assessed: the working environment, benefits, culture and engagement.

As can be seen from the average score, at 40.5% there is a long way to go for organisations to improve, with over 70% of respondents scoring under 50%. Less than 3% of employers scored 75% or over and at the other end of the scale 11% of employers scored under 20%.

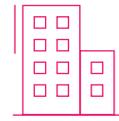


03 Work Environment

Working environments are not always within the respondents' control. Availability of space, the needs of remote/home workers and high property costs, can mean that it is not always possible to provide all the facilities that employers would like for their employees. Yet, for centrally located staff, moving the office furniture around to maximise light, ensuring the temperature is set at a comfortable level and providing breakout areas for informal group discussions are easier to arrange.

Changes such as access to outside space, car parking and canteens may not always be practical, but a more in-depth review will identify those facilities that have the greatest impact on a company's own employees without breaking the bank.

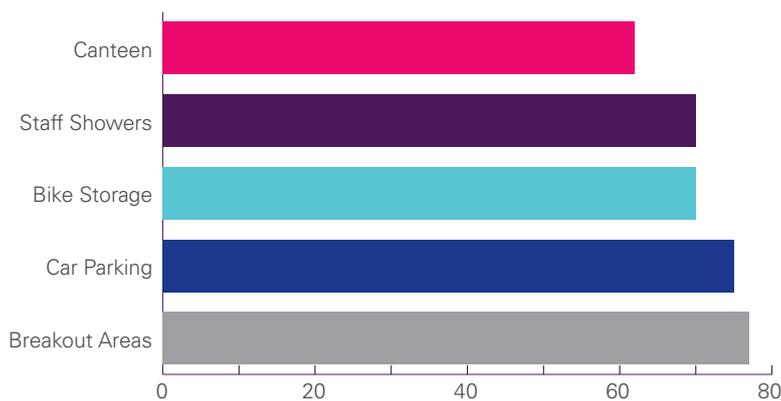
Over 75% of respondents in this category scored under 50% with only 5.5% scoring 75% or more.



39.5%

Overall score for companies' working environments

Most popular facilities provided



Source: *The Premier Wellbeing Appraisal - March 2018*

While it is recognised that there will be marked differences based on company size in this area (with smaller companies unable to realistically provide facilities such as an on-site gym and crèche) and that changes can be restrained by the physical design of buildings, only 10% of employers scored under 20% in this category. This has left most companies scoring between 20% and 50%.

The most popular facilities provided amongst all the respondents are shown in the chart to the left.

04 Benefits

With so many options to choose from, it is often a challenge for employers to ensure that they offer benefits that will be appealing and most useful to their employees.

Reviewing and making changes to an existing benefit structure can improve matters and does not always mean spending more – in many cases, spending differently and communicating well can have a dramatic impact. Ensuring the benefits provided are appealing to your employees, meet expectations and provide maximum value to the company is an ongoing process, so a regular review was recommended in the results reports to ensure that benefits are kept up to date as employee expectations and employer budgets change.

This was, perhaps surprisingly, the lowest scoring category overall at 35.5%, though one employer did manage a perfect 100% score here! This highlights the divide between companies that provide benefits and those that do not, with one organisation scoring 0%!



35.5%

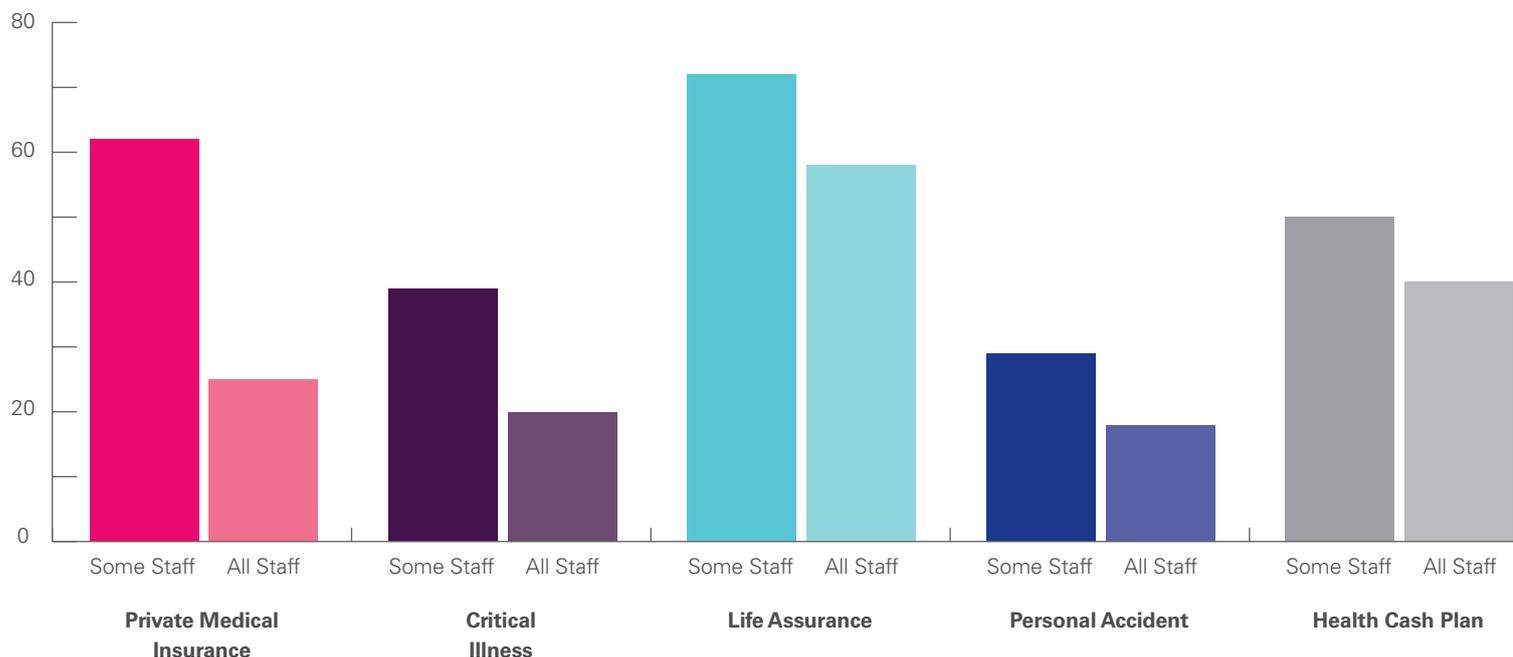
Overall score for companies' benefit provision

Of the total respondents, 22% scored under 20% and only 4% of employers scored 75% or more.

The low overall score in this area is at odds with the noise that is often made regarding benefit provision and demonstrates that a significant number of employers have work to do ensure their benefits programme is fit for purpose going forward, with the increased focus and employer responsibility for employee health and wellbeing.

The chart below illustrates what percentage of employers provide certain benefits. The first column for each benefit shows where a benefit is provided to some or all staff (combined) and the second only where it is given to all staff.

Top Employer Funded Benefits



As can be seen the difference between those companies providing a benefit for all staff varies considerably. Not unexpectedly cost plays a large role here, with the smallest number of employers providing private medical insurance, critical illness cover and health screens to all staff – possibly due to them being relatively expensive benefits per employee to provide.

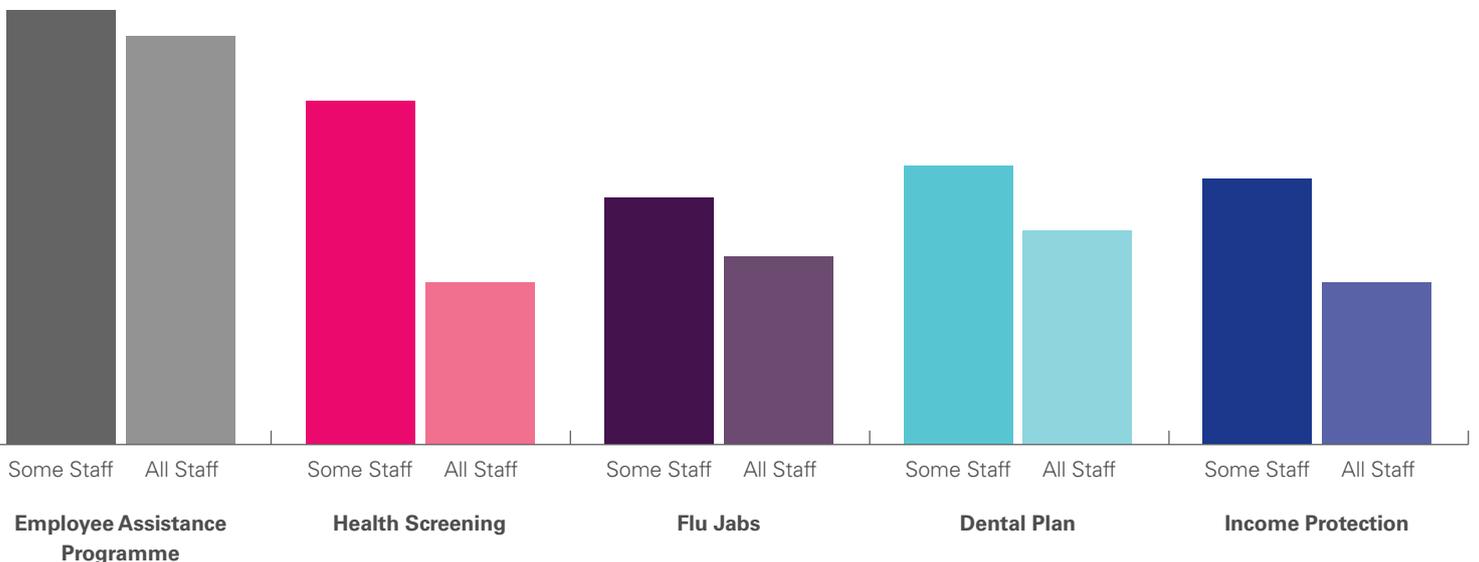
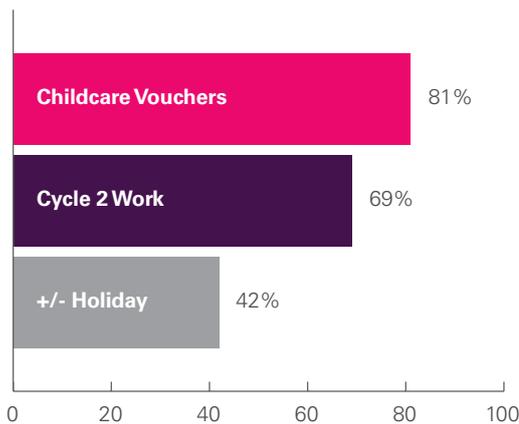
It is interesting that Employee Assistance Programmes (often cited as having the widest coverage) do indeed have the lowest gap between being given to all staff versus employers who only provide one for some staff.

But it is actually Life Assurance that is provided most. 72% of employers provide some or all staff with cover.

The rapid growth of Health Cash Plans is also noted, especially where they apply to all staff. Up to the turn of the century, this type of healthcare plan was not generally provided by employers. Now 40% of respondents say their company provides this benefit for all staff compared to only 25% for Private Medical Insurance. Again the marked disparity in cost is the expected driver for this difference.

When asked about the top employee funded benefits (Childcare vouchers, cycle to work and buy/sell holiday) penetration of the first two is markedly higher than the latter.

Top Employee Funded Benefits



05 Culture

This is an interesting area as we have found significant variations, even where businesses appear to share many other similar characteristics. This can result in a conflict where benefits are not aligned to the Company policies, leaving a gap or overlap.

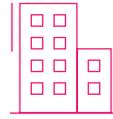
Often this is due to the business growing quickly and policies lagging behind or a change in workforce demographics.

Reviewing company policies in line with the benefit structure on a regular basis can help to avoid this and help the business stay current. An in-depth analysis reviewing policies and benefits, identifying efficiencies and areas that could use an update is time well spent.

This was the highest scoring category overall with an average score of 48.5%. It also had the most employers at 13% of respondents scoring 75% or more.

Lower scores generally reflect policies linked to the statutory minimum levels required only. Where this is the case, those employers' scores will continue to remain low.

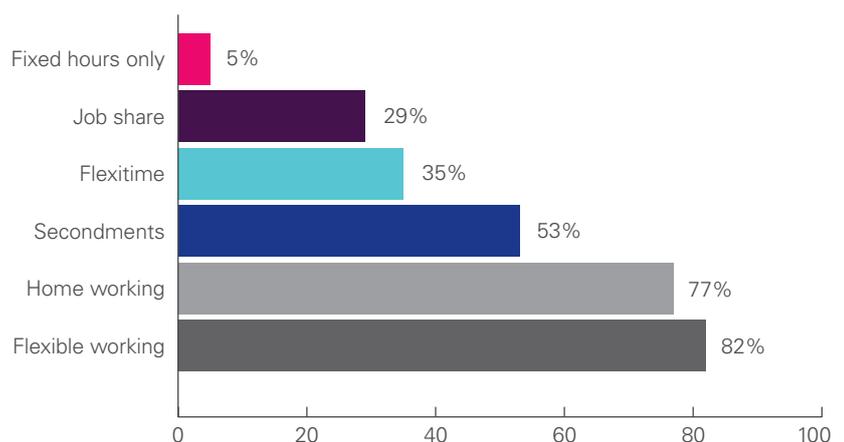
Flexibility around how employees work and get the job done continues to be growing with the number of employers offering at least some form of flexible working now topping 80% based on the survey answers, as illustrated in the chart to the right.



48.5%

Overall score for companies culture

Most popular policies



Source: The Premier Wellbeing Appraisal - March 2018



Career Development

Looking at career development, 87% of employers provide regular 1:1s for staff and 73% provide management training. It is possible that management training has increased the number of 1:1s raising appraisal scores in the process. Employer funded professional study is provided by 71% of responding companies.

The following table sets out the answers given in detail, in order of popularity.

This was one of the few questions that every respondent answered and where all employers provide at least one or more of the career development options listed.

Development/Training Options	Percentage of Employers Providing
Regular 1:1s	87%
Management training	73%
Employer funded professional study	71%
Internal skill-based training	67%
Mentoring/coaching/buddying	57%
External skills based training	56%
CPD support	40%
Mental health awareness training	37%
Graduate intake programme	32%

06 Engagement

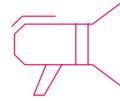
This area tends to be one of the most challenging and arguably one of the most important. Workforce demographics as well as an organisation's culture, structure and budget all play an important part in the design of an engagement strategy.

A robust and dynamic communications strategy can make an average benefits proposition stand out and get the appreciation that would typically be associated with more substantial benefit packages. Reviewing this regularly, setting specific objectives and measuring the success against these objectives can be enlightening.

The overall score in this category came in at 41%, so a close match to the overall average score for all areas combined.

Although the overall score is comparable, in this category over 52% of respondents scored under 50% (compared to 70% for the overall score) suggesting engagement for many employers is more of a priority than some of the other areas, albeit too many companies still come in under the 50% mark.

Less than 8% of employers scored 75% or over for staff engagement and at the other end of the



41%

Overall score for employee engagement

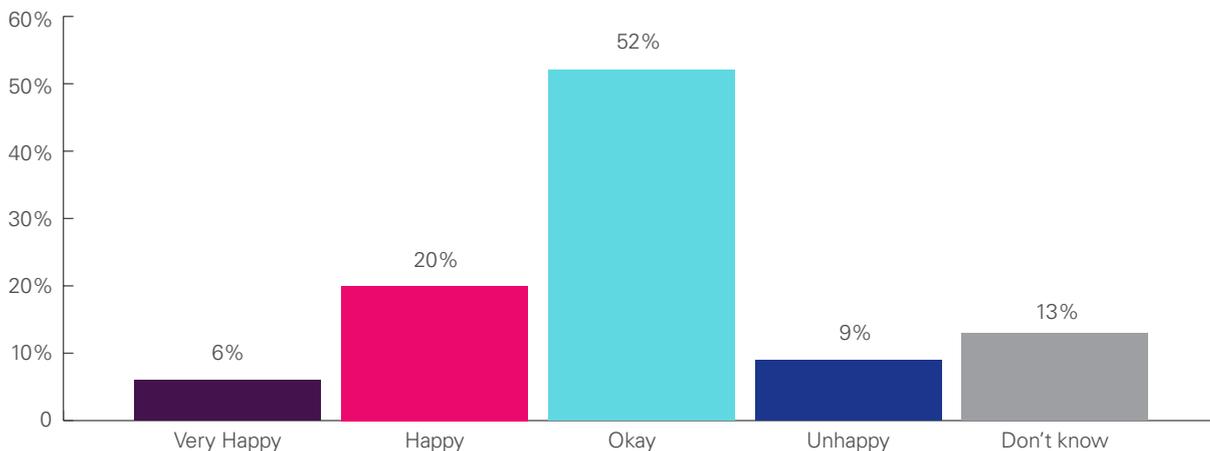
scale 11% of employers scored under 20%. The highest overall single company score did reach 86%, but conversely some employers have barely started to address engaging with their staff given that the lowest score came in at under 10%.

The scores below showing how respondents rated the happiness of their staff were particularly interesting, with a wider range of answers than under most other measures.

Apart from the diversity of answers, it is likely that employees will rate their level of own happiness at a lower level than their employers – but that is a whole other survey.

Positive action on engagement can include career development and training as well how employers communicate with their employees.

How happy are your employees?



Source: The Premier Wellbeing Appraisal - March 2018

Staff Communication

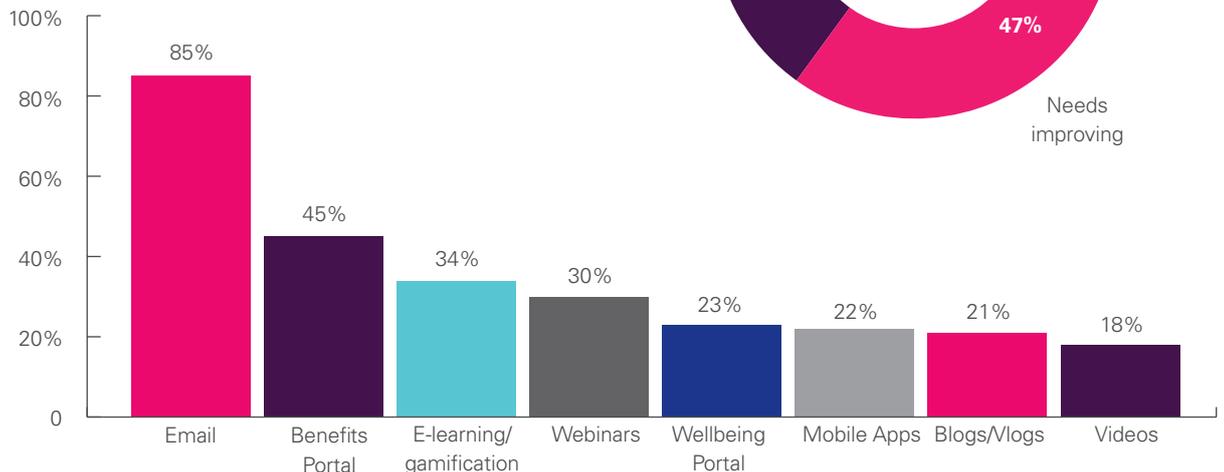
Developing an effective communication plan across a range of channels will help low scoring employers not only improve their rating but truly engage with their staff. This can include the use of interactive technology to support a wellbeing strategy while also focusing on how communication is targeted in order to prioritise the medium used to reach specific groups of employees.

Communication can be divided into three main streams: (i) Face to Face, (ii) Digital and (iii) Paper.

Taking Face to Face first, 80%+ of employers responding provide new staff inductions, hold departmental meetings and 1:1s with 74% having company meetings and 58% offering presentations. Beyond these mainstays, less than 40% of employers offer lunch and learn sessions, employee forums along with benefit fairs scored lowest with only 11% provision.

Digital replies showed that 85% of employers communicate by email and 45% have a benefits portal. All other options scored 34% or under, illustrated below.

Digital communication trends

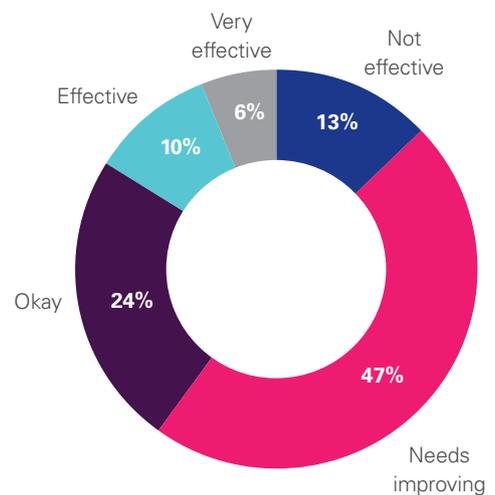


Paper communication is hanging in there still, although only one element: 'posters' are used by over 50% of employer's responding. Around 40% of employers use personal letters, staff newsletters and staff surveys. With booklets provided by 29% of employers and desk drops used by 23%.

Interestingly, 9% of employers did not use any of these, suggesting perhaps that their employee communications are now 100% face to face and/ or digital?

Considering whether respondents felt they needed to see an improvement in the communication of their wellbeing strategy specifically, 47% felt this was required and 13% felt their existing strategy was not effective. Only 10% and 6% stated that their strategy was either effective or very effective respectively as summarised in the chart below.

Effectiveness of communications



Source: The Premier Wellbeing Appraisal - March 2018

07 Barriers

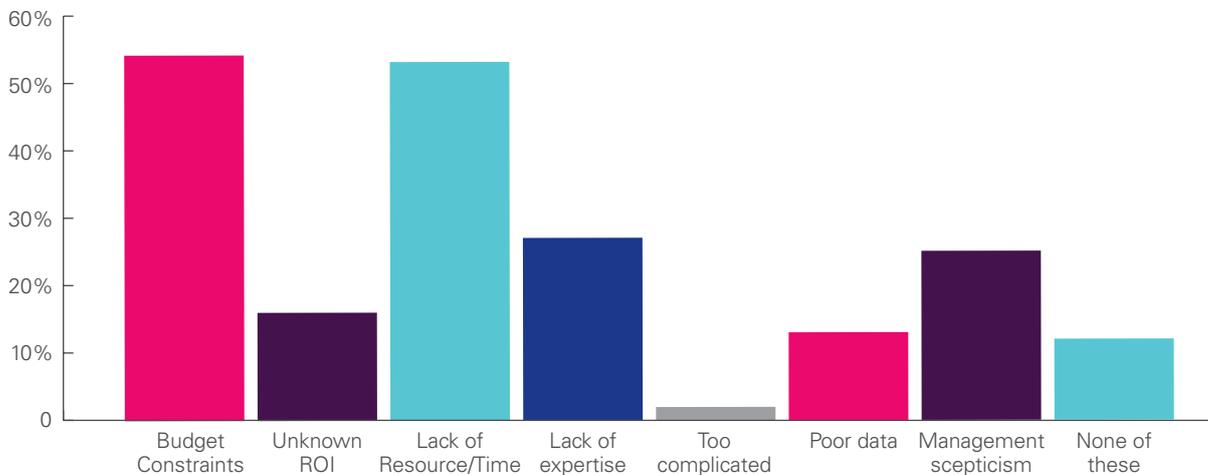
What's stopping employers from improving their wellbeing programmes?

Building a robust Wellbeing Strategy takes time and energy. Struggling with internal resource and understanding is common and in many cases Wellbeing can straddle several departments, so co-ordination can be a challenge. Co-operation across a business can therefore maximize impact, spread the workload and ensure ongoing success.

It is clear from the survey results (perhaps unsurprisingly), that the two largest barriers to improving existing wellbeing programmes (or introducing new ones for that matter) are a lack of time/resources and budgeting constraints.

Although we often hear the comment that wellbeing is such a broad subject and companies do not know where to start, in actual fact only 2% of respondents said being too complicated was a barrier to improving wellbeing for their staff.

Main barriers to implementing a wellbeing strategy



Source: The Premier Wellbeing Appraisal - March 2018

A key challenge for HR is to drive improvements in employee health & wellbeing programmes in light of the objections that it is felt will be made by management.

08 Conclusions

A clear conclusion from the respondents answers is that the vast majority of employers are doing something when it comes to the wellbeing of their staff even if they do not currently recognise their approach as falling within the wellbeing remit.

The Appraisal questions were carefully crafted to cover a broad range of possible initiatives and impacts on staff wellbeing. This allowed respondents to demonstrate their ability to score highly where they have taken action, while drawing attention to a lack of provision in other areas.

At the same time an overall score of 41% can be seen as disappointing with employee wellbeing reportedly being top of the agenda for HR departments across the UK. In short, so far so good, but there is a long way to go for many employers' good intentions to match their actions.

This is a story of potential. Even two years ago employee wellbeing was lower down the priority list with budgets constrained by pension auto-enrolment and the slow improvement in the economy. Today however, employer focus has shifted and there is ever growing recognition that investing in employee wellbeing is good for a business's bottom line as well as being good for employees.

A further 12 months on again and wellbeing can be expected to be even more high profile, despite a short interruption for GDPR. Let's not forget though, that GDPR is a wellbeing issue in itself, protecting employees in general.

Our experience is that budget limitations in relation to wellbeing can be overcome through a reallocation of current resources/ expenditure. Working with professional Wellbeing consultants removes resource and expertise barriers and can help develop a robust and cost-effective wellbeing strategy.

Management opposition is often linked to a lack of understanding about Return on Investment (ROI) and the impact on productivity. Challenge to new initiatives and expenditure is often overcome by removing the other barriers which form the foundations to decision maker reluctance – without them, the opposition to positive change melts away.

To understand or review how your own wellbeing provision currently scores complete the Workplace Wellbeing Appraisal for yourself. It takes five minutes and can be found at: www.wellbeingappraisal.com. You can also request a detailed report to identify the areas in most need of improvement.

Get in touch

If you would like to find out more about the topics covered in this guide, call us for a friendly chat.

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Premier is an employee benefit, pensions and wealth management group of companies with over 160 employees based across Croydon and Bristol.

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We provide a full range of tailored services to pension plan trustees and companies. With a focus on utilising technology to back a client-focused approach, our client base ranges in size from individuals and SME's to multinationals.

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