

HEKA

The definitive guide to
Employee Wellbeing
in 2024

www.hekahappy.com





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Our experts

We're delighted to have the expert opinions from some of the best leaders in the wellbeing space who will be sharing their thoughts, predictions, and opinions throughout this report.

Here's the line up.



Alex Hind
CEO at
Heka



Laura Pope
Director of People at
Trivandi



Melissa Santos
Head of People &
Culture at EvolveYou



Thea Bardot
CEO at Lightning Travel
Recruitment



Millie Wheaton
HR Advisor at
Leadenhall Search and
Selection



Masharee Walker
L&D Officer at James
Andrews Recruitment
Solutions



Clare Mullen
Global VP of People at
Scan.com



Michael Kahn
Chief of Staff at
Rostrum PR

Foreword

Most benefits are selfish. Let me explain.

Back in 2016 we started Heka because we realised that most benefits are utterly useless. In fact, back then, we were called GoSweat.

I was sick of working at companies where *benefits* didn't *benefit* people. And so you know what? No one ever used them.

So, we built a platform that allowed employees to stay physically fit by using an allowance to book gym classes and other in-person activities.

Things were going great. But I couldn't stop thinking that *really*, we were still part of the problem with wellbeing benefits. Not everyone wants fitness classes or gym memberships. Our offering was selfish.

So we started thinking about how we could *actually* support the wellbeing of everyone - no matter their situation.

Then covid happened. Gyms closed. In-person fitness classes stopped. And so it forced us to steer full steam ahead towards an employee benefit platform that impacts the entire team. And that's Heka.

Employee wellbeing isn't new, and most businesses already have some sort of "solution" in place. But that doesn't mean it's working.

There's a huge gap right now between talking-the-talk and walking-the-walk.

I speak with HR leaders about their employee benefits everyday and if they ever wonder why they have low employee engagement, I tell them the same thing; "Your benefits are selfish."

If you want to truly support the wellbeing of **all** of your employees, then cover **all** areas of wellbeing. We call it Total Wellbeing. But it's easier said than done.

Historically, that meant deploying a bunch of apps, services and providers. But in practice, this helps no one. It's messy, expensive and barely moves the needle on employee engagement.

You need to know what your employees actually want to ensure that your benefits are beneficial. And that's why we made this report.

We've got data from millions of interactions from thousands of employees across 2023 who are using Heka to **choose** the wellbeing benefits they actually want.

It's our gift to you in the hopes that come 2025, most wellbeing benefits will stop being so selfish.

- Alex Hind
CEO at Heka



Looking back at 2023

In 2022, Google searches for “wellbeing in the workplace” saw an increase of 190% from the previous year. In 2023, the volume of searches has grown even further.

If we look at the top searches around wellbeing in 2022 and compare it with 2023, it’s obvious how much the wellbeing market has changed in a single year.

And this isn’t unexpected. Wellbeing is constantly evolving based on location, time of year, socio-economic environment and so much more.

In fact, Heka added over 100 new wellbeing partners to the platform in 2023, nearly all of which were due to demand from users and the changing landscape of employee wellbeing.

	Top wellbeing search terms in 2022	Top wellbeing search terms in 2023
1.	Psychological stress	Job satisfaction
2.	Financial wellness	Workplace morale
3.	Occupational burnout	People experience

2023's best in class wellbeing categories

1. Nutrition
2. Learning & Development
3. Fitness
4. Mindfulness
5. Spa & Massage

The end of virtual exercise?

Virtual Yoga Classes made up just 17% of total yoga related bookings in 2023, a significant drop from 43% the year before.

Psssssst!

These are the ones that can slip under the radar and what you need to keep in mind for 2024 if you want to have total wellbeing!



Therapy that isn't inconvenient

4 in 5 employees prefer virtual experiences and apps compared with in-person therapy. Just because you offer support one way (like in-person therapy), doesn't mean that other members of your team don't need support.

Say hello to the underdogs

While not the top wellbeing categories of 2023, these are the ones that saw the most growth across the year.

- Health care
- Health testing
- Therapy
- Physio
- Recovery

Wellbeing in 2024

Another year, another set of resolutions. But what is going to stick and actually be the focus?

Yes, that's our job to figure out. But how do we do it?

As you know, Heka doesn't just do the basics. We cover Total Wellbeing. That's how we can publish data across the entire spectrum of employee wellbeing.

From offering employees over 5,000 options to support their wellbeing, we see first hand how wellbeing needs change over time.

Data from any other source would be based on individual wellbeing solutions in specific categories with data tailored to support their intended message.

Our trend predictions are backed by a series of wellbeing industry experts who have contributed to this report.

This makes Heka one of the most reputable sources with the relevant data to create this report. That's to say, you're in safe hands.

Why does it matter? Because — spoiler alert! — the latest fads don't tend to stick around long.



It's time to lose the friction

Let me guess, you've got a wellbeing budget and at least some of it goes towards supporting mental health. So what's the problem?

Approximately 1 in 6 adults in the UK are experiencing depression but only 15% of women and 9% of men actually seek and receive treatment.

In short; it's not working. And if it's not working, it means that it's not good enough. Why?

Because there's so much
FRIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIICTION...

What do I mean?

Remember rooting around in random drawers trying to find a takeaway menu to order food? *Friction.*

Waiting more than 5 seconds for a web page to load? *Friction.*

Struggling with your mental health but you have to wait two weeks to get an appointment. *Friction.*

You get the point.

You need to diversify your mental health offering to cater for all employees no matter their preferred method of seeking support.

Oxford University study proves wellbeing strategies don't work

No matter how you measure it, the ways in which most organisations are providing support for mental health at work are simply ***not working***.

Oxford University Wellbeing Research Centre study



“It's not a one-size fits all approach that works. Giving employees the opportunity to choose what works for them means they are happier and feel more heard”

- Melissa Santos, EvolveYou

In-person therapy is often the go-to solution for employers, but in 2023 86% of employees opted for virtual experiences and apps instead.

Employers have an ~~opportunity~~ responsibility to actually make a difference.

Cost-effective mental health support is key but it should also spread awareness and remove the taboo around mental health.

When it comes to something as important as mental wellbeing, you need to lose the friction (last time you'll see this word I promise). Look at options for virtual calls, workshops, apps and subscriptions alongside in-person therapy.

Those that don't will only be providing support for a small group of employees, which simply isn't good enough in 2024.

Key takeaways

- **Mix it up.** Offer mental health support in different ways so that your employees can get support in the ways that work for them.
- **Keep it outside the business.** Employees don't want therapy internally at your business, no matter how "confidential" it is. There's always the thought that *word could get out*. So give them somewhere to go that's literally none of your business.
- **Establish a culture that is open** to talking about mental health. Have multiple places for employees to seek support and confirm that it's for them, anywhere, anytime.

Heka's mental health champions



Emplomind



MindBerry



Headspace



Jade Hoffman
Counselling



Mind Body
Goals



TREND #2: THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORTING QUALITY SLEEP

Time for a good kip

We all have a bad night's sleep every once in a while. Whether it be thanks to the crying baby in the room next door, an overenthusiastic dog with a love for early morning walks, or perhaps it's just *'one of those days'*.

Bad sleep happens. And that makes it easy to overlook.

But actually, your business might be in the middle of a bad sleep pandemic that is affecting your teams more than you'd think.

40%

of people in the UK suffer with sleep issues.

200k

hours of working time is lost every year due to poor quality sleep.

75%

of people with depression also suffer with poor sleep.

Despite more awareness of wellbeing at work over the past decade, sleep is still mostly overlooked – especially when it comes to what wellbeing support employers are offering. But it shouldn't be.

Good sleep is proven to reduce stress, improve immune systems, concentration, productivity, mood, heart health – basically *all* the good stuff. The point is, the benefits of a good night's kip are HUGE.

And it brings us back to wellbeing. It's not just about mental health, it's not just about job satisfaction, it's about EVERYTHING. That should include sleep.

For employees using Heka, sleep aid was the 6th most popular wellbeing category in both 2023 **and** 2022.

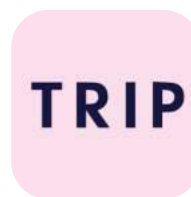
So next time someone is close to nodding off at their desk, perhaps it's time to ask how you can help.

And besides, with a bit of sleep aid, we might all be a little less grouchy.

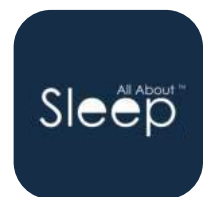
Key takeaways

- **Speak to your teams.** Find out how you can support them to have better sleep.
- **Consider supporting your employees with sleep tracking** apps, blue light filter glasses, and access to CBD products.
- **Spread awareness** that sleep matters and is a huge part of wellbeing. Don't let it get lost in the noise.

Heka's sleep and CBD champions



TRIP



All About Sleep



Ajora



Ocushield

TREND #3: SUPPORTING THE WELLBEING OF NEURODIVERGENT MINDS

Did somebody say neurodiversity at work? Unlikely.

How many neurodiverse people do you work with right now?

Take a second to actually think of a number that you think sounds right. Remember it.

When we think of the word “neurodiverse” we all think of something different. Some might consider severe cases of autism, but others might think of their dyslexic friend.

But the world of neurodiversity is practically endless with various spectrums and levels of severity. So let’s look at some stats.

2 million+

**people in the UK
alone believe they
have undiagnosed
ADHD.**

1.5 million

**people in the UK
are dyslexic.**

2.8 million

**people in the UK
have dyspraxia.**

And those are just stats from 3 of many medically recognised neurodivergent conditions that make up an approximated 15–20% of the UK’s population.

That’s right.

15–20% of the UK’s population are neurodiverse... from what we know of. In fact, many people don’t seek official diagnoses or simply just don’t know themselves.

Now consider the number of neurodiverse people you guessed were at your business again...

Seems a little low now, doesn't it?

That's why you need to consider what support you can provide your neurodiverse colleagues.

The "big gesture stuff" can include flexible work arrangements, sensory-friendly workspaces, and health benefits that cater to the diverse healthcare needs of neurodiverse individuals.

But it doesn't necessarily need to be that complex. On Heka, the most popular neurodiverse tools are apps and digital products that help employees manage tasks, plan more effectively, and digest information in ways that work better for them.

If "Wellbeing" and "Inclusivity" are on your HR bingo card for 2024, then neurodiversity is a big one to get right.

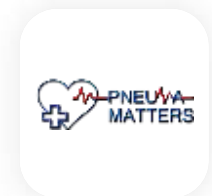
Key takeaways

- Some people don't want to ask for support. If you want to do it right, make it accessible and easy. None of this "speak to your manager" nonsense. It doesn't work.
- Consider having noise cancelling headphones available for people who want some sensory deprivation, or notes shared digitally following meetings.
- If you've got teams that work remotely or flexibly, then consider giving them access to apps, and digital services to help.

Heka's neurodiversity champions



Addie



YourPneumamatter



Phillip Montague



Doqit

A lesson on how to suck eggs

Do you like learning?

It's the kind of question you don't get asked often. But think about it.

The general consensus is that Yes, people like learning (unless you're "that guy" and your answer was "*It Depends*").

A large part of people's self-worth is derived from different areas of their job from seniority and salary, to... you guessed it - how much they're learning.

In fact, learning is so important that not learning is one of the biggest reasons why employees decide to quit. And this isn't a new revelation. Research from as far back as 2018 found that it's one of the the most important factors when considering a job role.

But people don't want to be told how, when, or what to learn. They want guidance and to learn stuff they find interesting.

So it's no surprise that across 2023 employees seeking learning and development opportunities increased by over 100% on Heka.

Top 5 reasons employees quit

- 1.** It wasn't motivating
- 2.** There was no room to progress
- 3.** Management didn't care about my wellbeing
- 4.** I didn't like the atmosphere
- 5.** The pay was less than I wanted

In a similar vein, more than double the amount of employees were booking life coaching sessions in 2023 compared with 2022.

Employees today are keen and savvy enough to want to support their own development and career growth. So give your employees the tools they need to grow inside your organisation.

Because if you don't, it's likely they'll outgrow their role, lose motivation, be less productive, and ultimately find themselves with poor wellbeing.



Key takeaways

- Some organisations offer time to be used as “learning time” to upskill themselves in a specific area.
- Give employees access to development apps, life coaches, and learning courses so they can grow and develop in a way that works for them.
- Consider how you can approach different ways of learning. Not everyone learns the same way.

Heka's L&D champions



Skillshare



Blinkist



Music Teachers



Busuu

TREND #5: FOCUSING ON THE RETURN TO THE OFFICE

A new “normal” in the workplace

We're in a very different world to even just 5 years ago. And in 2023 there's been a big push on employers enforcing a mass “return to office” with the hopes of getting back to “normal”. The problem is, *normal* has changed.

With some employees working remotely, others hybrid, and others always in the office, how can you effectively support the wellbeing of your entire workforce no matter where they work?

The truth is, many organisations simply just *don't*.

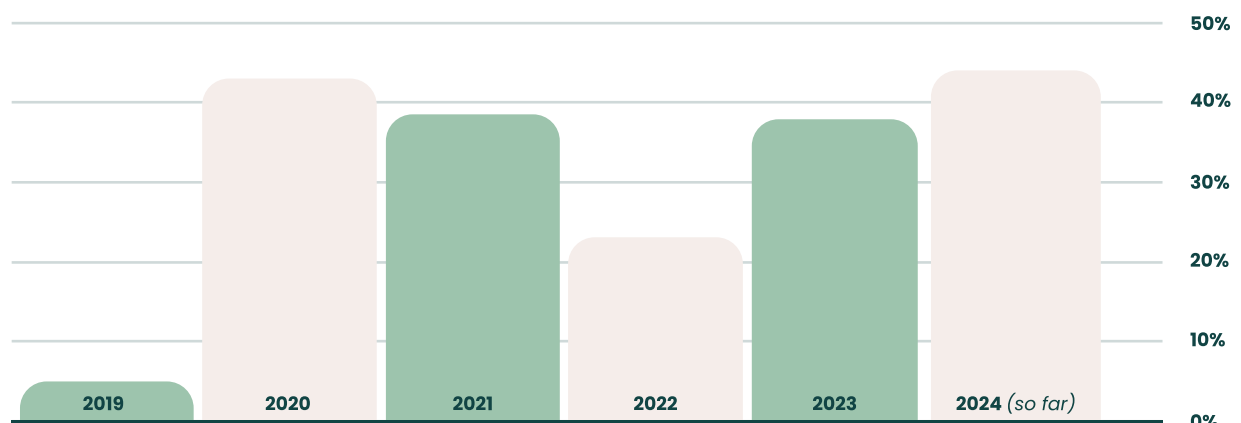
If your teams are working in different places then you need to change your way of thinking when it comes to wellbeing.



“Even now, we are still feeling the repercussions of the pandemic on workplace culture. Wellbeing trends in 2024 will need to focus on creating a positive post-pandemic/hybrid culture that fosters a strong bond and a sense of purpose across the team.”

- **Michael Kahn**, Rostrum PR

Population of the UK working remotely





“As more employees are encouraged to return to the office, the impact on wellbeing that lockdown had is going to become more difficult to ignore – presenteeism and absenteeism are likely to increase as burnout worsens, and companies that don’t make that investment into wellbeing are going to lose productivity and talent.””

- **Millie Wheaton**, *Leadenhall Search and Selection*

It’s easy to assume you’re doing right by your employees by offering gym memberships to the local gym next to the London office. But what about the people who work down in Bristol? Or up in Manchester?

It means that one portion of your workforce has *everything*, while the rest get *nothing*.

Your wellbeing offering needs to support all employees no matter where they work. A diverse team needs diverse wellbeing solutions.

If you don’t then you’re revoking access to wellbeing for huge portions of your workforce. And that’s not a good thing for you, your business, or your employees. That’s not *total* wellbeing.

Remote and hybrid working isn’t going away. The pandemic simply opened the box for employees to see how they preferred to work. Things have changed and the ways in which you offer wellbeing support should change too. There is no “returning to normal”. We’re not in Kansas anymore.

Key takeaways

- Consider how you can implement wellbeing benefits that support employees no matter where they work.
- Increase the effectiveness of your wellbeing support by adding digital alternatives that can be accessed anywhere.
- Employees can still be effected by the scars of the pandemic and lockdown. Take wellbeing seriously, and provide the support that employees need.

The cat's outta the bag

Before the pandemic, employee benefits were just additional perks. But the days of a small store discount and free fruit in the office being considered a benefit are well and truly over.

The pandemic taught employees across the world that employers can and should do more to support their wellbeing.

Study proves employees take wellbeing seriously

Over 90% of job-seekers actively consider or research an employer's wellbeing benefits before applying.

Bright Network study 2024



“From hiring graduate talent, it is clear that they are tuned into the conversation around wellbeing, balance, and flexibility. I’ve been asked several times in first-stage interviews about how we support work-life balance and the wellbeing of our team”

- Millie Wheation, Leadenhall Search and Selection

”

“I’ve noticed a general shift in employees having more power over the benefits they are offered, pushing towards a better work-life-balance.”

- *Marsharee Walker, James Andrew Recruitment Solutions*

The employment landscape has undergone a significant transformation. Job seekers and employees, now more than ever, are prioritising their wellbeing.

If you want to attract and retain the most talented employees then you need to start taking your wellbeing support seriously. Because they certainly do.

If you don’t, then they’ll find an employer who does.



TREND #7: FEMALE AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SUPPORT AT WORK

Periods. Babies. Menopause. Not so scary anymore

Let's consider this bluntly. 50% of your staff are in need of medical wellbeing support frequently and yet most employers choose to ignore it.

This is exactly what many women face every day, week and month in the workplace, with organisations naive to the fact that female and reproductive health affects over half of the UK population.

50%

of women have had to miss work due to their period symptoms.

1.5 million

women are affected by Endometriosis.

Only 1 in 10

employers provide support for menstrual health.

** Research by CIPD*

Period symptoms, endometriosis, menopause, postpartum depression – these are all common physical and emotional challenges for women that are frankly not supported enough (or at all) in the workplace.

There's a high chance this sounds like your workplace. If it does, then it's time to change.

Just because periods are a monthly occurrence for most women doesn't mean they're easy, doesn't mean they're "used to it", and doesn't mean that they can be overlooked.

But it's not just about periods. It's not just about menopause. It's not just about pregnancy. It's about all of them.

Some of the most popular female health partners on Heka include sustainable menstruation products, postpartum packs and support, apps for menopause relief and much more.

In fact, during 2023, bookings on Heka for female health support increased significantly by 28% compared with the previous year. Supporting just one area of female health isn't good enough - it means you are still not supporting female health in the workplace, just one subset of women. And wellbeing should support everyone.

Key takeaways

- Nurture a culture that isn't afraid to talk about periods.
- Get wellbeing solutions in place to support women across all areas of female health.
- Some women might not feel comfortable speaking to a manager of the opposite sex about this stuff. So make sure there's someone that they can speak to.

Heka's female health and fertility champions



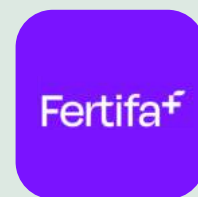
Don't Buy Her Flowers



DAME



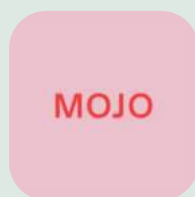
Rock Me Momma



Fertifa



Nua Fertility



Mojo



Clementine



Stella

PDFs and Pension providers don't help financial wellbeing

The beginning of 2023 marked the largest banking stress since the Great Financial Crisis in 2007-2008.

That means more jobs at risk, more redundancies and budgets being slashed.

It's a challenging time for businesses. But it's arguably more challenging for employees.

At times like these it's imperative to support employees' financial wellbeing. Perhaps you already do. But are you doing it in the right way?

The most financially illiterate people are likely going to be the youngest. They might be saving to buy their first house, scared about losing their job, and anxious about the rise in the cost-of-living.

They don't care about pensions (generally). They've got another 40 years before they need to worry about that. Telling them that your pension provider offers financial wellbeing advice is like telling your Grandma to subscribe to Peloton. They won't care, they won't find it useful, and it's just going to cause confusion.

54%

rise in planned redundancies in 2023.

+83,000

jump in UK job cuts in 2023.

77%

of UK employees experience financial stress.



“With finances getting squeezed for everyone and pay far from keeping up with inflation, we are seeing people looking to get the most out of their benefits package, and also a growing trend towards people asking for more from their employer.”

- Laura Pope, Trivandi

It doesn't mean that they don't need financial wellbeing. It means you're not providing the *right* support.

PDFs in a Google Drive, or a cheesy animated video aren't going to cut the mustard either.

Most employees using Heka prefer financial advice through virtual classes with professionals and online apps to help them manage their finances daily.

Financial wellbeing is about giving the employees the tools to look after their own money better. Don't forget this.

The other issue businesses are facing is budget cuts which can mean that wellbeing budgets are on the chopping block. But if wellbeing budgets are being squeezed in 2024, employees aren't going to find support at a time where they arguably need it most.

The solution?

It might be time to be ruthless. Interest in financial wellbeing fell by 14% in 2023, so if you have a standalone financial wellbeing solution that is hard to prove is working, then it could be worth cutting your losses and putting the budget towards a more holistic wellbeing solution.

The cost-of-living crisis means that people can't afford to invest in themselves. So fill the gap, and give them the means to do so in the times they need it most.

Some more expert advice

As we wrap up our predictions for the world of wellbeing in 2024, we asked our expert contributors to share their advice for HR leaders considering their plans to improve workplace wellbeing.



“Selecting a bunch of benefits that have zero engagement is costly and time consuming. Find out what matters to them, take a risk and scrap anything not adding value.”

- **Clare Mullen**, *Scan.com*



“Ask the employees themselves what they value most, whether they have any recommendations from friends, and where they feel we may have gaps.”

- **Millie Wheaton**, *Leadenhall Search and Selection*



“REMOVE one size fits all policies - they are ableist, sexist, neurotypical and do not reflect the beautiful diversity that exists in our workforce and outside of it.”

- **Thea Bardot**, *Lightning Travel Recruitment*



“Treat your employees like adults - because they are adults. They are not your students and they are not your children. Open communication, genuine transparency and mutual respect are the real keys to employee engagement.”

- **Michael Kahn**, *Rostrum PR*



“A company is nothing without its employees, literally, so it’s vital to protect and nurture them. A lot of companies will tell you that their employees are their biggest asset – but what are they doing to protect that asset?”

Investing in your team and their wellbeing is the single best investment you can make for the business.”

– *Michael Kahn, Rostrum PR*



“Create an overarching benefits strategy that is aligned with your culture, then ask your employees what they want and create a package that responds to their needs.

Ideally, this would include a great deal of flexibility to enable individuals to select what works for them.”

– *Laura Pope, Trivandi*



“Companies must act with integrity, if they genuinely want to make things better. For example, so often we see DE&I tackled through a through a non-disabled, cis-het, neurotypical lens – this will only take you so far in terms being able to interrogate the real challenges facing minority groups.

So widen the pool of insights and check your own privilege. It is only in truly understanding the individual needs of your employees that you can deliver meaningful employee wellbeing.”

– *Thea Bardot, Lightning Travel Recruitment*

Next steps



Share the love!

Remember, sharing is caring! If you think there's someone who would benefit from knowing the wellness trends of 2024, share this report with them.

Plan ahead

This report is the first set of building blocks for you to build a happier and healthier workplace. So use it to consider your wellbeing priorities.



Talk it out

If you want to chat about your wellbeing strategy and see your wellbeing options, then feel free to reach out to us at sayhello@hekahappy.com. We know a thing or two about wellbeing!

Total Wellbeing

If this report had a lesson to be learned, it's certainly that employee wellbeing can't be solved easily.

Friday beers and good coffee in the office are not benefits that support wellbeing. What employees want is flexible wellbeing support tailored to their wants and needs.

Different employees want to approach their wellbeing in different ways - whether it be through mobile apps, subscriptions, products, virtual classes or in-person experiences.

The other challenge is that wellbeing isn't static. Employees might need mental health support at some

points throughout the year, financial advice at other times, and L&D support later. But you'd need hundreds of wellbeing and employee benefit partners if you wanted to cover everything, right?

Not with Heka — the world's first Total Wellbeing platform.

If you want to support your employees wellbeing no matter their needs and personal circumstances, Heka has it all in one platform. It's the best employee wellbeing solution out there.

But of course we'd say that. Why not see for yourself by booking a demo?

[Book a demo](#)



Let's make 2024 the year of wellbeing, together.