

# The *scientific guide* to employee wellbeing benefits

Your 360 blueprint for the perfect  
data-driven employee benefits strategy



# Contents

01

Introduction

02-04

The Employee Wellbeing Landscape

05-20

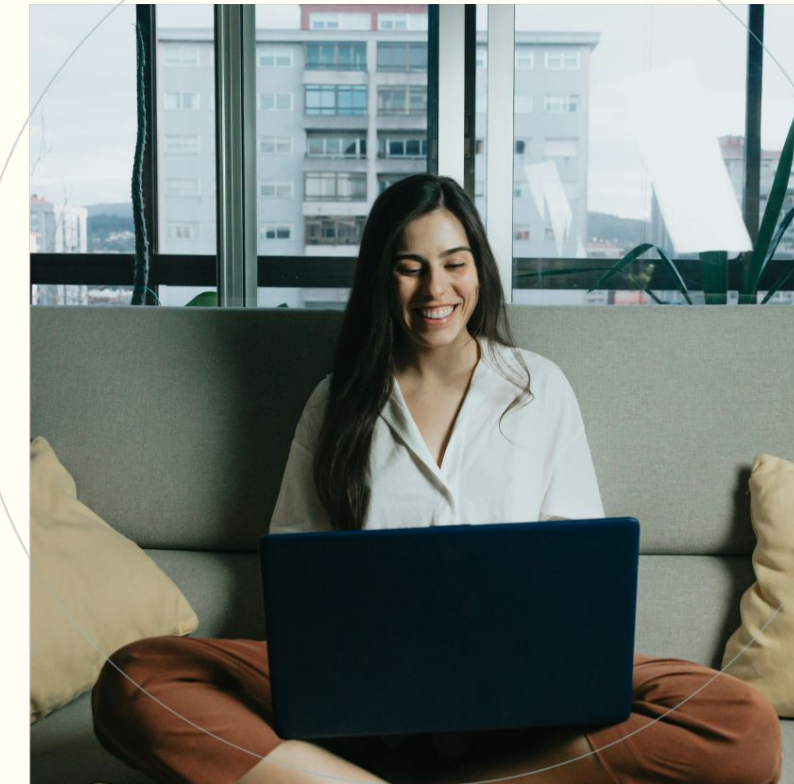
The Five Pillars of Employee Wellbeing

21

Measuring the ROI of your Benefits Strategy

22-24

Your 360 Blueprint for the Perfect Employee Wellbeing Benefits Strategy



## Introduction

As leaders in Rewards and Benefits, you're well aware that employee benefits have moved on from perks like gym memberships or free lunches - today, you need to be strategic in your approach to benefits if you want to drive down absenteeism, boost employee satisfaction and lower turnover rates.

So, how do you create the perfect data-driven benefits strategy to attract, retain and engage the best talent and build a healthier and more productive workforce?

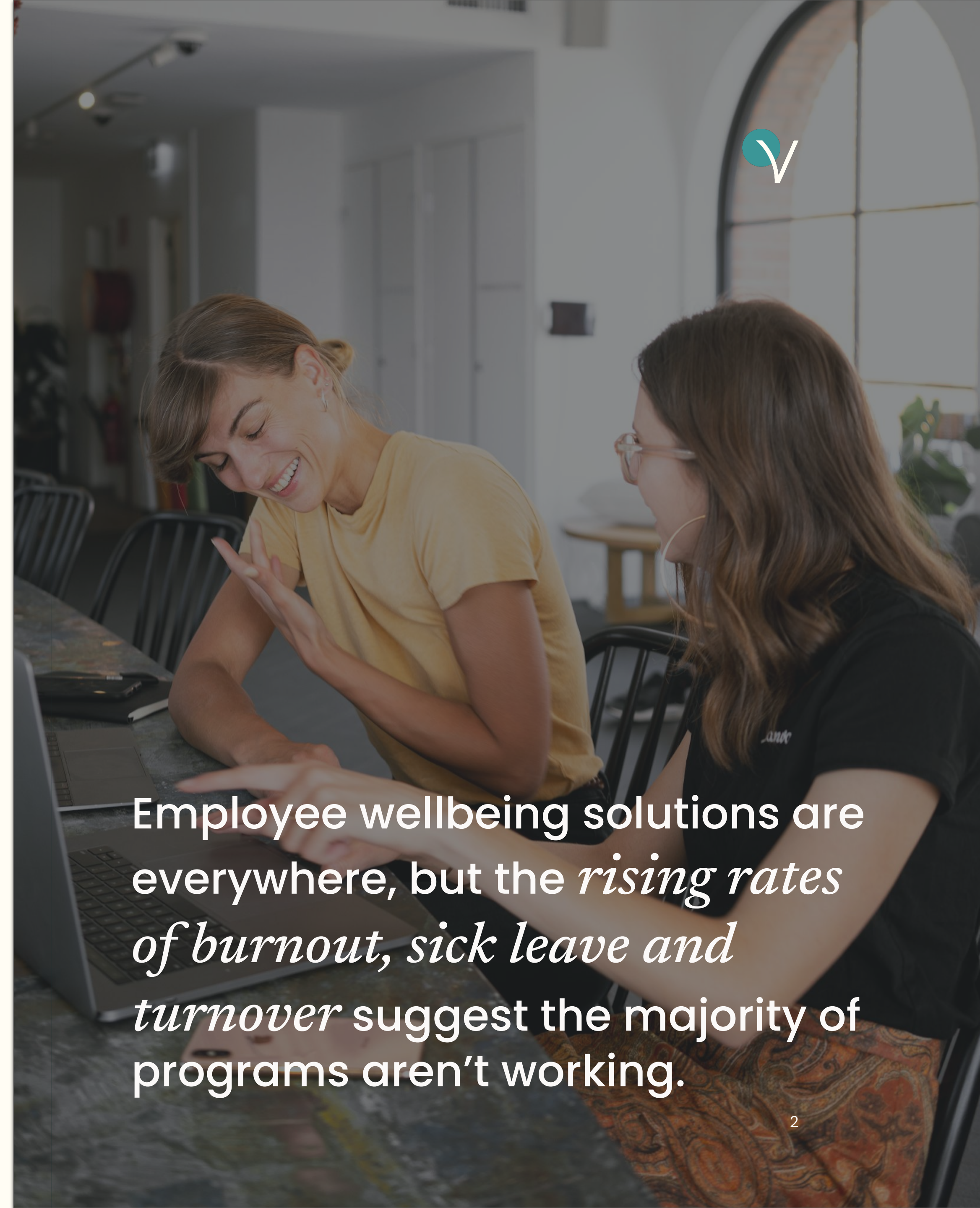
**This is your 360 blueprint to address every angle of employee wellbeing with a holistic approach, backed by science.**



## What's the current state of employee wellbeing?

With 400,000 more people in the UK now out of work on long-term sick leave compared to before the pandemic, Deloitte estimates that the cost of poor workplace wellbeing has increased by 25% since 2019.

Employee wellbeing is complex and multifaceted, yet research from Unmind reveals that 95% of wellbeing platforms haven't undergone any scientific evaluation. There's a scientific connection between the five key pillars of wellbeing - mental, physical, social, financial and developmental - and the best employee benefits strategies address them all.



Employee wellbeing solutions are everywhere, but the *rising rates of burnout, sick leave and turnover* suggest the majority of programs aren't working.





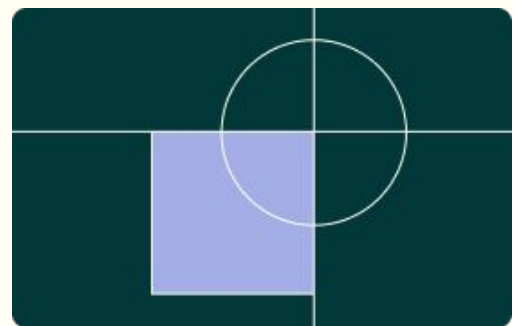
## Why is an employee benefits strategy important?

It's not just about offering a range of perks - it's about **designing a comprehensive employee benefits strategy that addresses all aspects of wellbeing**. A well-designed strategy ensures that all your benefits work together to meet the needs of your employees and align with your business goals.

Companies who invest in an employee wellbeing benefits strategy reap rewards across many areas, from attracting and retaining the best employees, to keeping them productive with fewer absences and lower healthcare costs.

93% of companies have noticed a *change in employee benefits expectations* in the past year, particularly in health and wellbeing benefits.

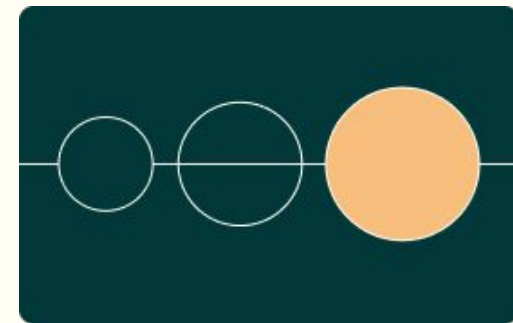




### Attraction and Retention

83% of employees view benefits as key when job hunting, and happy staff are 4x more likely to stay at a company. With £30,000 being the average cost to replace an employee, retaining top talent delivers significant cost savings.

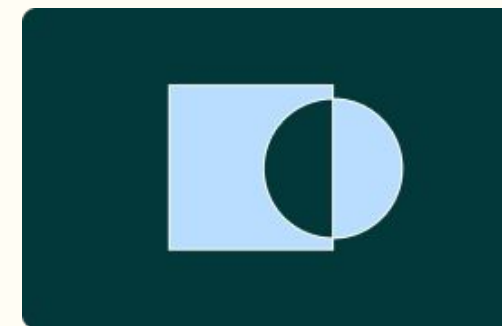
Source: EBRI (2023)



### Productivity

Low wellbeing leads to presenteeism - employees show up but are 15% less productive due to pain or stress. This costs the global economy up to \$1.69 trillion each year, making it critical for businesses to focus on improving employee wellbeing.

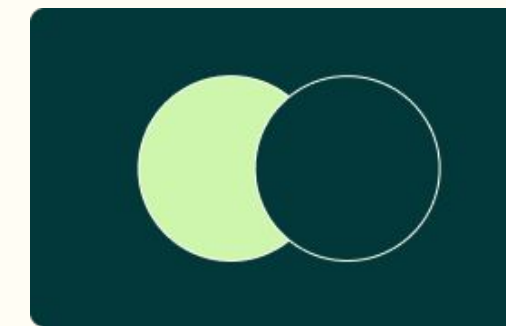
Source: The health-performance framework of presenteeism (2022)



### Fewer Absences

70% of workplace absences result from mental and physical health issues. MSK conditions are the second leading cause of short and long-term absences, according to CIPD's Health and Wellbeing at Work research.

Source: CIPD Health and Wellbeing at Work (2024)



### Lower Healthcare Costs

Even the smallest aches and pains can escalate into chronic conditions if left untreated. It costs £8,000 on average in medical costs to treat a person's back pain and a total cost of £40,000 to a business in time off and lost productivity.

Source: Abraham et al, Rolls Royce Study (2023)



# The *five pillars* of employee wellbeing

Mental, physical, social, financial and developmental wellbeing

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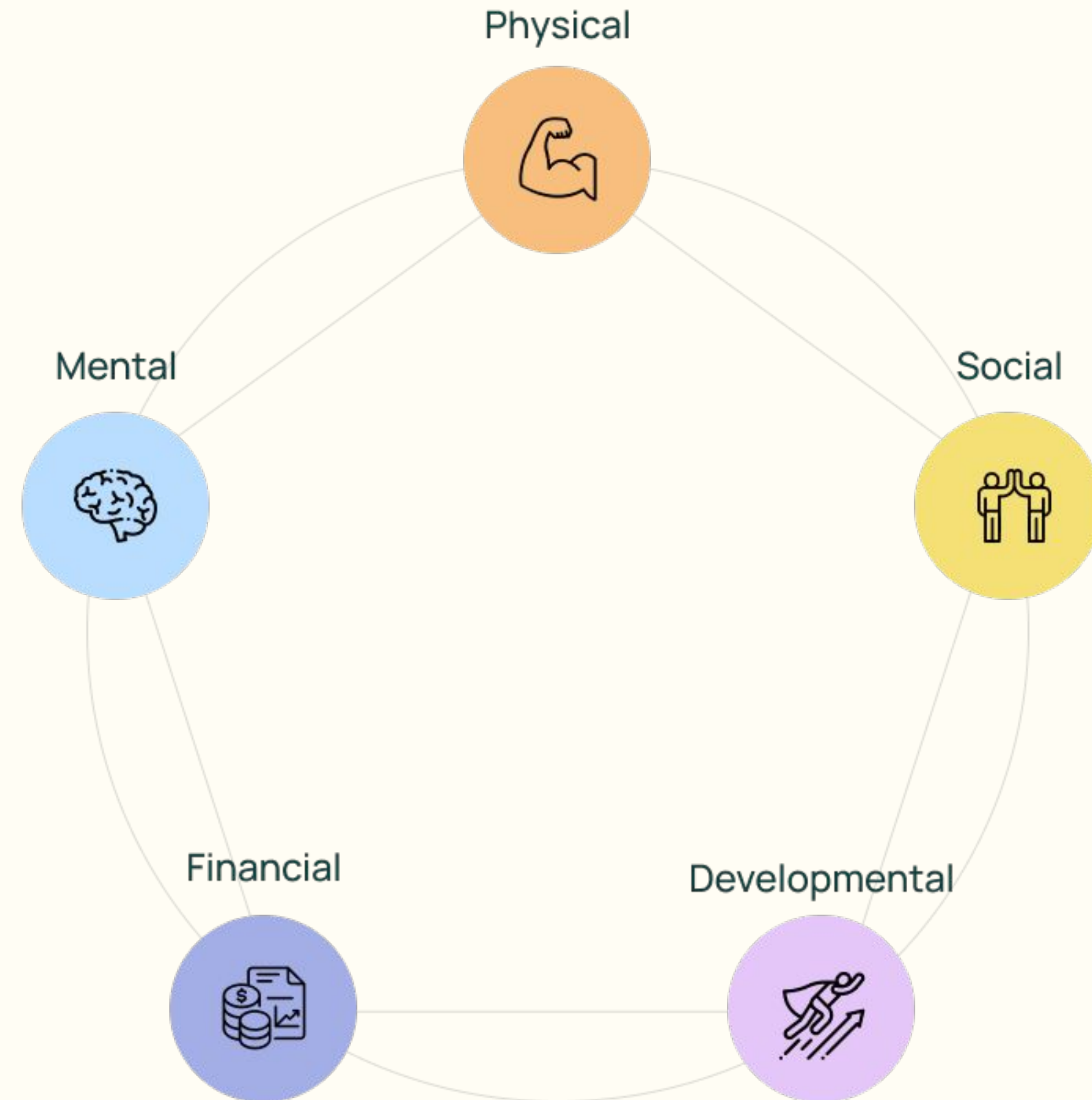
● THE FIVE PILLARS OF EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

# What are the five pillars of wellbeing?

To design a truly impactful employee benefits strategy, it's essential to understand the core elements that make up employee wellbeing.

Employee wellbeing is often defined as feeling healthy and happy at work, but in reality it's much more complex.

It's not a one-size-fits-all concept, but the sum of multiple interconnected pillars that touch every aspect of a person's life: mental, physical, social, financial and developmental wellbeing.







## ● THE FIVE PILLARS OF EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

01/05

# Mental wellbeing

Encompassing everything from minor day-to-day stress to more significant conditions like anxiety or depression, mental wellbeing exists on a spectrum of emotional and psychological health.

An integral component of overall health that influences how we think, feel, behave and make decisions. In the workplace, mental wellbeing has a big impact on how employees cope with stress and interact with others.

Source: Health and Safety Executive (2023)



~900,000 UK employees  
suffer from work-related *stress*,  
*depression* or *anxiety* every year





● THE FIVE PILLARS OF EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

1 in 6 people experience *mental health problems* at work



Mental health has been under the spotlight in recent years, with 81% of workplaces increasing their focus on employee mental health since the pandemic.

Companies who prioritise mental wellbeing create a culture of support and resilience, leading to a more engaged and productive workforce.

Source: Mental Health Foundation (2024)



# Why should you take a *proactive approach* to employee wellbeing?



Many traditional employee benefits are reactive in nature, where support is provided only after problems arise.

Benefits such as Private Medical Insurance (PMI), physio appointments and workers' compensation certainly do provide a valuable safety net for employees who are already sick or injured. The trouble is, they don't address the root of the problem or prevent it from happening again in the future. Costs spiral, wellbeing plummets, and the cycle continues.

**So, why should you take a proactive approach to employee wellbeing? It saves your business money.**

Preventative benefits like health screenings, mental health tools and financial planning resources can help prevent more serious issues from developing later down the line. A proactive approach encourages employees to take their wellbeing into their own hands, leading to a healthier, happier and more productive workforce.





● THE FIVE PILLARS OF EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

02/05

## Physical wellbeing

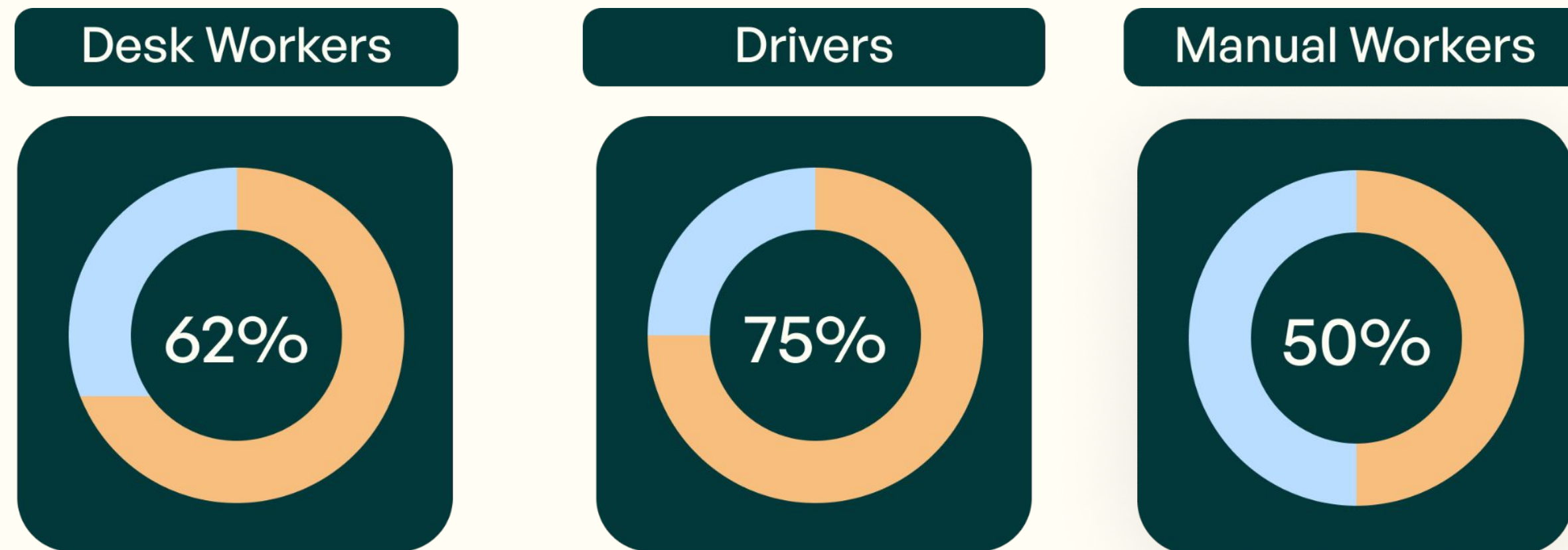
Physical wellbeing is all about maintaining a healthy body, whether it's through movement, nutrition or preventative measures such as posture changes.

A key component of physical wellbeing is the health of muscles, bones, joints and ligaments - a network known as our musculoskeletal (MSK) system. They all work together to support our body's weight to help us move, maintain posture and perform daily tasks.

Over 60% of all workplace  
*productivity losses* are due  
to MSK issues



● THE FIVE PILLARS OF EMPLOYEE WELLBEING



develop *MSK issues* like back pain

Our working setup, habits, routine, posture, lifestyle and a myriad of other factors all play a part in whether or not we develop issues like back pain.

Whether the pain stems from working long hours at a desk, playing golf at the weekend or constantly bending down to pick up children, it impacts our productivity at work, happiness and quality of life.

Workplace pain is even more complex for employees with mobility issues or chronic physical health conditions. Individuals with pre-existing conditions need tailored and inclusive solutions to manage their specific needs and prevent pain in the workplace.



# How can I support the *silent sufferers* in my company?



One of the biggest drawbacks of a reactive approach to benefits is that **many employees don't report mental or physical health issues until they become severe.**

A study by Rolls Royce found that 56% of employees with persistent pain hadn't disclosed their condition to their managers, and 30% of people felt uncomfortable doing so. Additionally, 19% said they didn't receive enough support at work to improve their wellbeing. So, they suffered in silence until their problems grew.

Research also shows that at any given time, a large number of employees are not ill, but not exactly well either. 55% of employees are in a state known as 'languishing', where their wellbeing is slipping and it's much easier to snowball towards a more serious state of poor mental or physical health. This is where a proactive benefits strategy is most powerful. With the right tools, employees can take action to protect their wellbeing before things get worse.





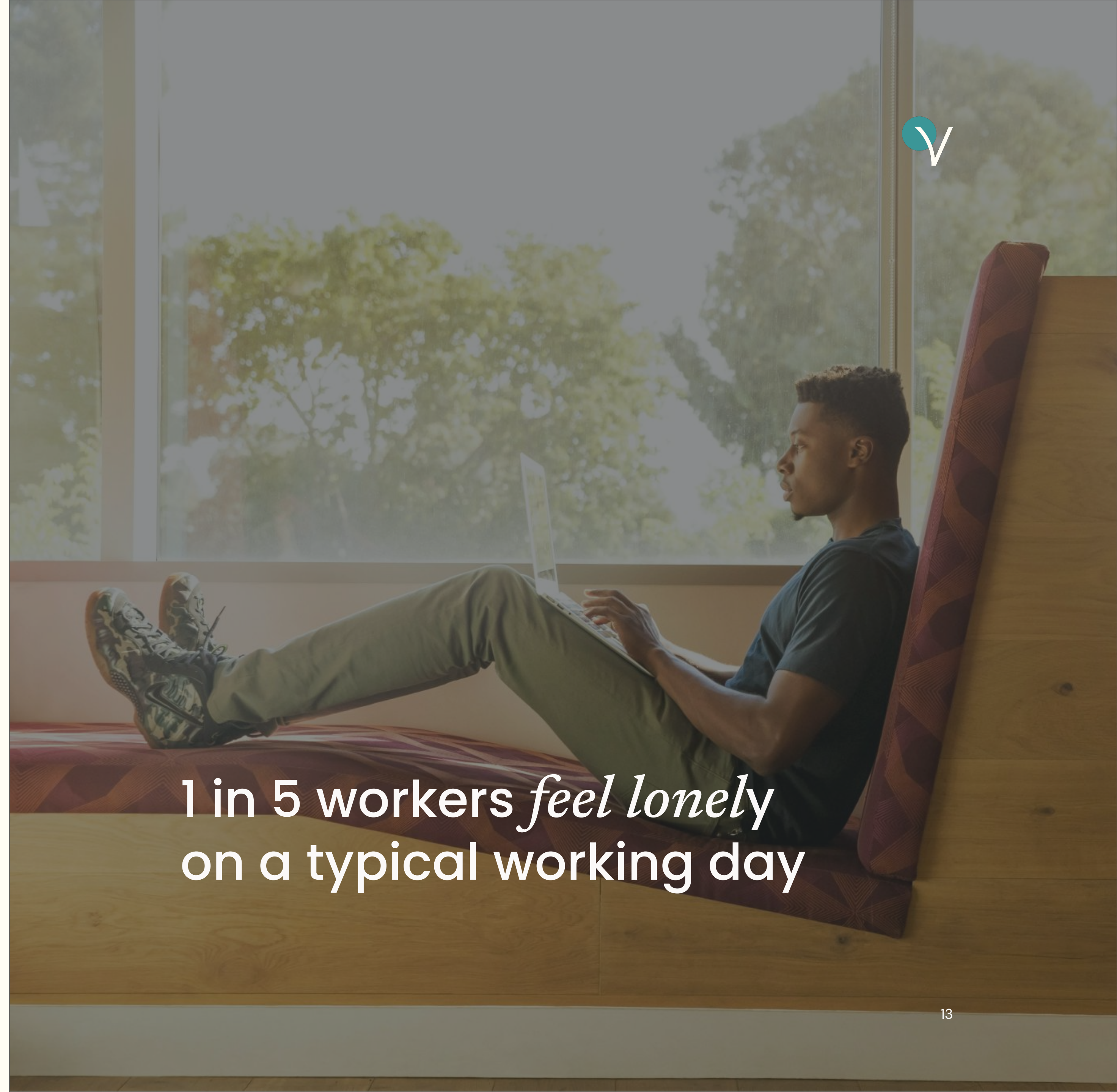
## ● THE FIVE PILLARS OF EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

03/05

# Social wellbeing

Social wellbeing is centered around the quality of relationships and sense of belonging within a team or community. It involves having meaningful connections and being part of a positive and inclusive environment.

It's also about feeling supported and trusted at work, particularly by managers or leaders in the workplace. A survey of 2,000 US remote workers shows that 60% of employees working from home feel guilty taking breaks and 30% don't take a lunch break at all.

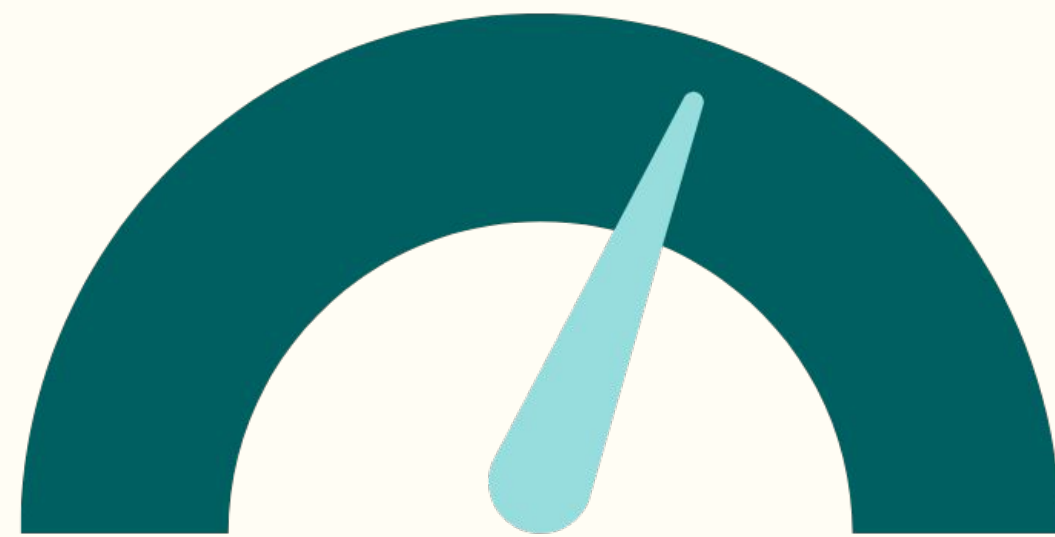


1 in 5 workers *feel lonely*  
on a typical working day





61% of people are *less social*  
if they have physical pain



Workplace social wellbeing is especially important in remote or hybrid organisations where maintaining a sense of community can be challenging.

Strong social connections at work can improve teamwork, reduce feelings of isolation and enhance job satisfaction.



## Financial wellbeing

The concept of financial wellbeing has gained more attention since the recent cost of living crisis. It's about having the knowledge and confidence to manage your finances effectively.

People with a strong sense of financial wellbeing are able to stay in control of their financial obligations, save for the future and handle financial stress without it overwhelming other areas of their life.



86% of employees have *money worries* and 74% admit these worries affect them at work





**4x**

Employees with financial concerns are 4x more likely to be clinically depressed

**2.2x**

Financially stressed employees are 2.2x more likely to leave your company

Financial stress is a leading cause of anxiety which can significantly impact employee mental and physical health.

Supporting financial wellbeing in the workplace, through education, resources or tools, helps employees proactively combat money worries and improve their overall wellbeing.





## Developmental wellbeing

Everyone wants to feel like they are growing and developing in life and work.

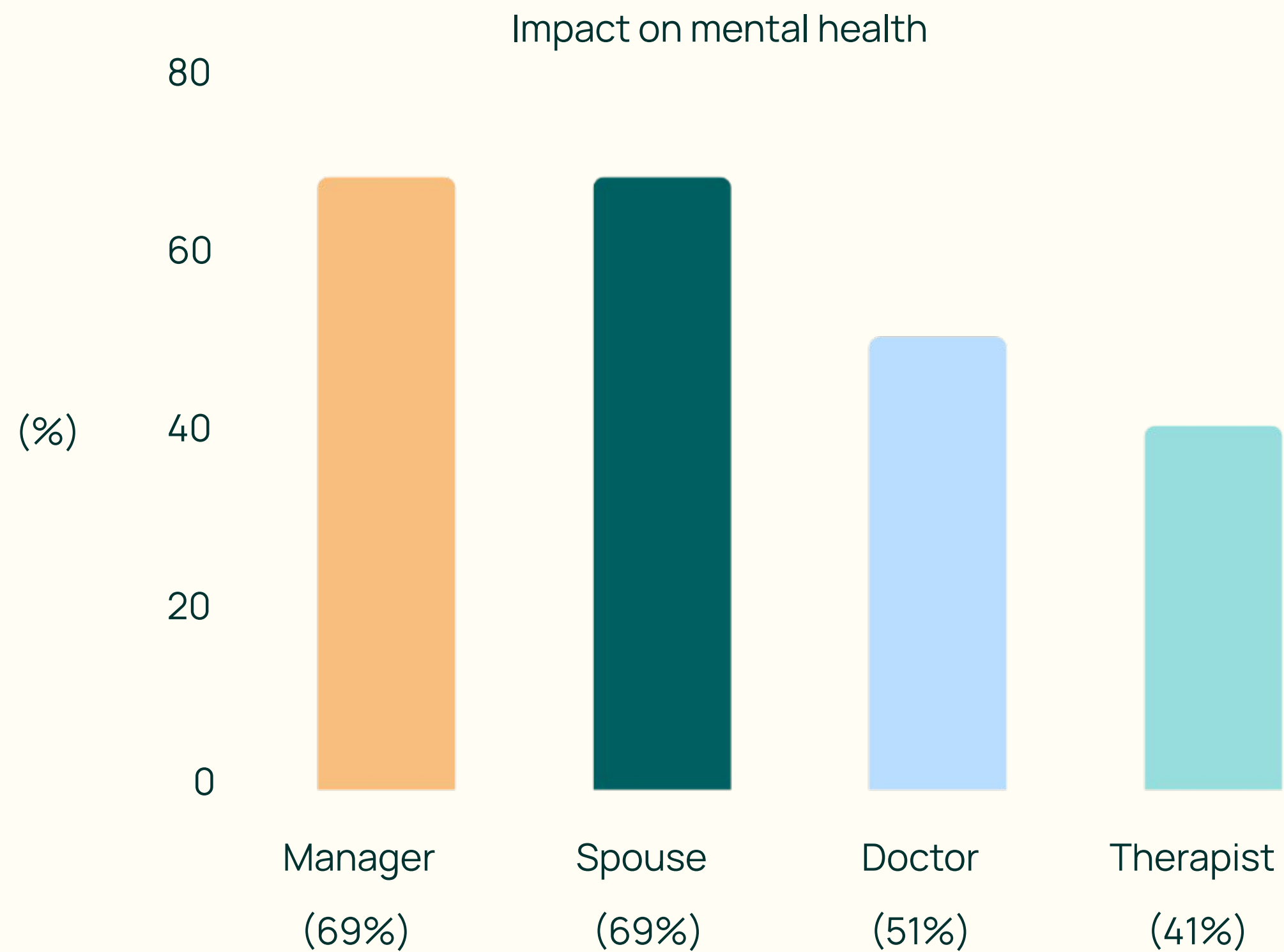
Developmental wellbeing is all about continuous growth and improvement, both personally and professionally. Whether it's improving skills, progressing in a career or feeling challenged and fulfilled at work.

Only 41% of employees feel there is a *climate of trust* at their organisation





● THE FIVE PILLARS OF EMPLOYEE WELLBEING



Managers have just as much of an impact on a person's mental health as their spouse, and even more of an impact than their doctor or therapist.

Studies show that learning and development can boost brain health and improve employee motivation, engagement and retention.

Source: UKG Workforce Institute, Mental Health at Work: Managers and Money (2023)



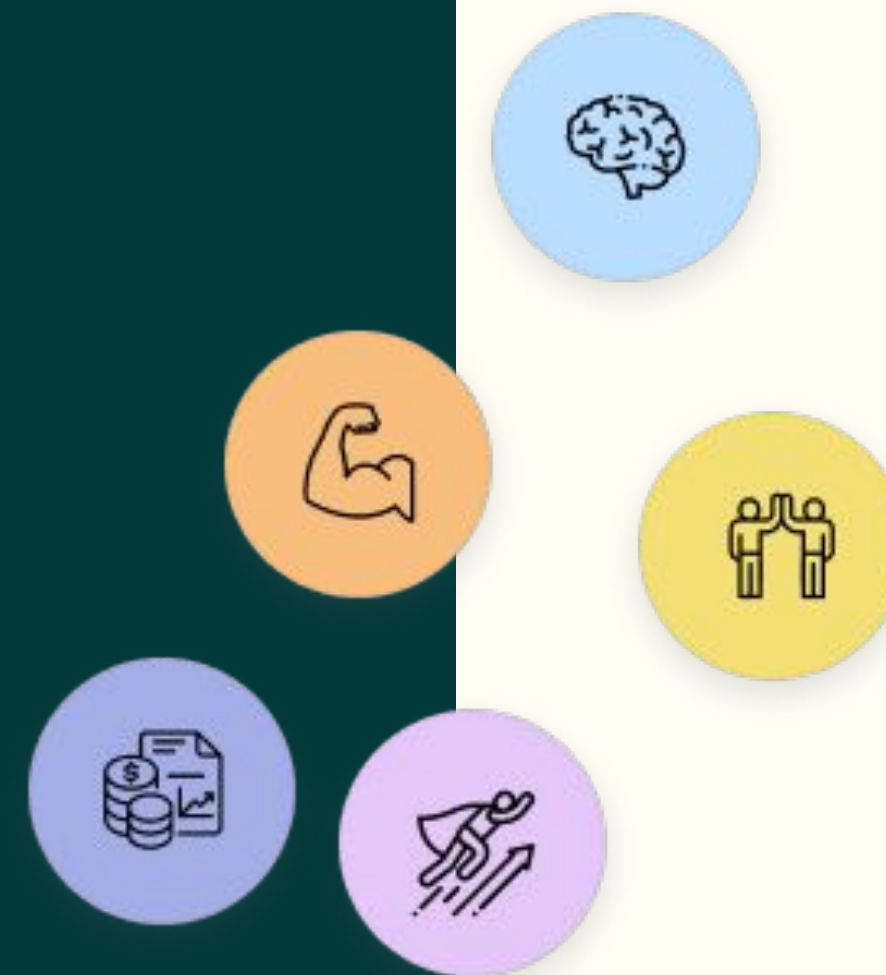


## ● THE FIVE PILLARS OF EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

# The scientific link between the five pillars of wellbeing

There's a deeply rooted scientific connection between mental, physical, social, financial and developmental wellbeing. The five pillars influence each other in a continuous cycle - when one area suffers, it can have a knock-on effect on all other aspects of wellbeing.

People with pain or chronic physical health issues are 54% more likely to develop mental health conditions like depression and anxiety. And vice versa, mental health issues prime your brain to feel more pain and drain your energy levels, trapping you in a vicious cycle of pain and poor mental health.



Studies show that people who take time off work for physical pain are 30% more likely to retire early. These employees typically experience a 15% decrease in earnings over the following 10 years, affecting their financial wellbeing.

Likewise, there's a strong correlation between financial stress and the symptoms of anxiety and depression. Chronic stress often causes people to withdraw socially and impacts their development at work, but improving social wellbeing can do wonders for mental and physical health.

So, the science is clear: to craft a truly comprehensive benefits strategy, it's essential to address these interconnected pillars and support every aspect of employee wellbeing.



# How can I measure the *ROI* of an employee benefits strategy?



Measuring the return on investment (ROI) of your employee wellbeing benefits strategy can be challenging, but it's a crucial step to understand its true impact.

While it's difficult to quantify some aspects of wellbeing, combining different measurement methods can give you a clearer picture. Here are some ideas to get started.

01

## Measure concrete business metrics

Analyse key business metrics such as absenteeism rates, healthcare costs, productivity levels and turnover rates before and after implementing your strategy, to help quantify its impact and highlight cost savings.

02

## Gather employee feedback

Use surveys, focus groups and feedback sessions to collect qualitative data and insights into how employees feel about the benefits on offer, and identify areas for improvement.

03

## Track uptake and engagement

Monitor how many employees are using your benefits to understand which initiatives are resonating with employees the most.





# Your *360 blueprint* for employee benefits

How to build the perfect data-driven strategy across the five pillars of wellbeing

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# Your 360 blueprint for the perfect employee wellbeing benefits strategy

Hopefully by now it's clear that the five pillars covered in the previous section are the foundations of a strong employee wellbeing benefits strategy.

Ready to transform your benefits strategy but not sure where to start? We've developed a science-backed blueprint to help you introduce proactive employee wellbeing benefits in your company. The first step is to outline the core goals of the program for your business.







● 360 BLUEPRINT FOR THE PERFECT BENEFITS STRATEGY

Example 1	Goal: Improve employee satisfaction
Mental wellbeing	Integrate a digital mental health platform like Unmind or Headspace into your benefits offering, which provide on-demand mental health support and resources to empower employees to take care of their mind.
Physical wellbeing	Provide engaging preventative physical health tools like Vitruve VIDA to reduce pain in your team. VIDA uses AI to assess your posture and workspace and offers personalised guidance and exercises to reduce the risk of pain before it develops.
Social wellbeing	Introduce corporate social responsibility (CSR) and volunteering activities. Aligning your benefits to social impact goals can boost employee satisfaction and wellbeing, whilst improving your brand as a sustainable employer.
Financial wellbeing	Implement financial management tools to support effective financial planning. Tools like Bippit provide personalised resources to manage finances more effectively, helping employees take their financial wellbeing into their own hands.
Developmental wellbeing	Provide a budget for employees to access learning and development opportunities such as online courses, workshops and certifications. This can help to build a culture of continuous learning, driving job satisfaction and loyalty.
KPIs	Improve employee satisfaction by x%





● 360 BLUEPRINT FOR THE PERFECT BENEFITS STRATEGY

Example 2	Goal: Reduce absence rates
Mental wellbeing	Train managers in mental health awareness and MHFA (Mental Health First Aid) to identify and address workplace mental health issues early, reducing absenteeism later down the line and fostering a healthier work environment.
Physical wellbeing	Give employees access to physiotherapy sessions or health screenings. Early detection of physical health issues reduces PMI claims and occupational health referrals, supporting long-term physical health and reducing absence rates.
Social wellbeing	Establish peer support or buddy programs to provide emotional and practical support for employees. These systems promote a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation, which can have a direct impact on mental health related absences.
Financial wellbeing	Organise financial education workshops to improve financial literacy and knowledge, helping employees manage their money better. Financial empowerment reduces money-related stress, which is closely linked to mental and physical health.
Developmental wellbeing	Offer mentoring and coaching programs with experienced professionals to support career growth and skill development. Learning and development is directly linked to employee motivation and engagement, which affects absence rates..
KPIs	Reduce absence rates by x%





● 360 BLUEPRINT FOR THE PERFECT BENEFITS STRATEGY

Your template	Goal:
Mental wellbeing	
Physical wellbeing	
Social wellbeing	
Financial wellbeing	
Developmental wellbeing	
KPIs	



## Ready to build your data-driven employee wellbeing benefits strategy?

In today's ever-evolving workplace, offering a benefits package that comprehensively addresses all five pillars of wellbeing is not just a competitive advantage - it's a necessity. Overlooking even one aspect of wellbeing can weaken the impact of your entire strategy, impacting employee engagement and wellbeing.

By embracing a holistic, data-driven approach using the 360 blueprint and tips in this guide, you can build a benefits strategy that actually makes a difference to employee wellbeing. The result? Lower turnover, fewer sick days and a thriving workplace where every employee feels valued and supported.





● GETTING STARTED

# We're here to help you take the *pain* out of your workplace

At Vitrue Health, we're passionate about helping organisations adopt a proactive, science-based approach to employee wellbeing.

Our AI-powered platform, VIDA, is designed to seamlessly integrate with your benefits strategy, providing personalised insights and targeted support across all pillars of wellbeing. Get started with VIDA today!

[Book a demo today](#)



Analysing...

What are the easiest things I can start doing to improve wellbeing in my team?



[www.vitruehealth.com](http://www.vitruehealth.com) | [hello@vitruehealth.com](mailto:hello@vitruehealth.com)