

WELLBEING THAT WORKS

Smarter Support with Smaller Budgets

E-BOOK



wellhub 

1. INTRODUCTION

There's never been more focus on employee wellbeing. But while expectations are going up, budgets are going the other way.

Traditional wellbeing benefits come with a hefty price tag, extensive administrative work for culture teams, and not much to show for it.

There's a **trend of gym subsidies going unused**, tools sitting untouched, and the inability to track what's actually working. **Meanwhile, your people are asking for more.**

They want flexible options, proper mental health support, and benefits that actually fit into their lives.



With every pound under review, HR and culture teams are being asked to stretch their resources further while still keeping employees happy and supported.

This isn't about cutting corners. It's about **finding smarter ways to offer meaningful support that people will actually use.**

In this guide, we'll look at what's no longer working, what employees really want today, and how you can **deliver more value without needing a bigger budget.**

CHAPTER I

What Legacy Programmes Don't Tell You Up Front

On paper, traditional benefits look generous. In practice, the story is often very different.

Take gym reimbursement schemes, for example. They can **cost £300 or more per employee, but most companies see fewer than 1 in 10 people actually use them.** That's a lot of budget going out the door with not a lot to show for it.

Then there's the admin. Managing a handful of vendors, scattered tools, and manual processes creates extra work for HR, who are already stretched thin. And even with all that effort, **it's tough to measure what's working or if employees are getting real value.**

A lot of these legacy programmes were built in a different time. They're often one-size-fits-all and miss the mark when it comes to supporting today's diverse, multi-generational workforce.

And the thing is, **people notice.**

"Younger generations have grown up in a world of personalised experiences, from streaming services to online shopping," said [Jim Link, CHRO at SHRM](#). "It's no surprise **they now expect the same level of customisation in their careers.** HR leaders who fail to meet these expectations will struggle with engagement and retention."

If we think of wellness as a whole, it isn't just limited to physical and mental.

There's a whole spectrum of wellbeing that needs to be addressed, and everyone needs each in varying degrees. This can include:

- **Financial wellbeing**
- **Social wellbeing**
- **Intellectual wellbeing**
- **Environmental wellbeing**
- **Occupational wellbeing**
- **Spiritual wellbeing**

In short, **ticking the box doesn't cut it anymore.** If benefits aren't built around what your people actually need, they won't use them. And that's where the real waste happens.

CHAPTER II

Budget Cuts, Rising Demands

HR teams are stuck in the middle. On one side, **budgets are being frozen or cut. On the other hand, employees expect more support than ever.**

With inflation, economic uncertainty, and cautious leadership teams, a lot of companies are scaling back on HR and wellbeing spend. In fact, more than eight in ten UK employers said that budget approval was a barrier to improving employee benefits in 2024 and 2025. That's a huge roadblock when needs are only going up.

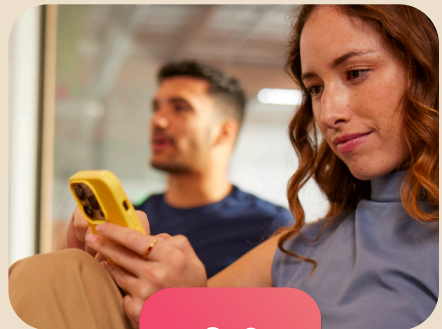
From the employee side, **wellbeing isn't seen as a cherry on top anymore.** It's expected. Mental health support, flexible working, and access to tools that support life outside of work are now seen as essential. And for many, they're just as important as the salary.

Recent research shows that 88% of UK workers now see their wellbeing as equally important as their pay. So while leadership might be trying to scale back, employees are expecting companies to step up.

That expectation spans age groups, industries, and backgrounds, but there are, of course, nuances.

Younger generations, like **Gen Z and Millennials, are typically looking for flexibility, mental health care, and digital-first options.** They want tools that support emotional wellbeing, financial health, and work-life balance.

Older generations, like **Gen X and Boomers, tend to value more conventional benefits.** They often prefer in-person services, routine, and practical support for their physical health. Not only are expectations rising, but they're also shifting with the workforce. And when benefits don't keep up, the result is more than just low engagement. You risk, morale, and retention taking a dive.



CHAPTER III

Why a Platform Approach Works

1

One Tool not ten

A platform model offers more value, with less admin, and a better experience for everyone. With a centralised solution like Wellhub, you're managing one tool instead of ten. That means fewer logins, less admin time, and a much smoother experience for both HR and employees.

2

Holistic Wellbeing

Everything your team needs is in one place. **Gym access, therapy, meditation, sleep tools, nutrition support, financial guidance and more.** No jumping between systems, no chasing up multiple vendors.

3

Improved costs

Costs come down, too! Because it's built on shared infrastructure, you only pay for what actually gets used. That means no more budget going to waste on underused perks or disconnected tools.

4

Employee choice

people get to choose what works for them. That personal touch makes a real difference in the long run and engagement takes care of itself!

5

Real time data

What you gain is visibility. **You can spot patterns, track engagement, and use those insights** to make smarter decisions.

CHAPTER IV

Wellbeing Isn't a Perk, It's a Business Driver

Wellbeing isn't a perk anymore. It's a core part of how your business performs, and that's how it should be treated.

When people feel supported, they show up differently. They're more focused, more productive, and more likely to stay. **This isn't just a feel-good outcome—it's a measurable one.**

According to the Return on Wellbeing Report, nine out of ten companies say their wellbeing programme has helped reduce healthcare costs. **Moreover, 99% have seen a boost in productivity.**

That's not surprising! When wellbeing is built into how your organisation runs, it shows up in the results. **Fewer sick days. Better retention. Stronger engagement.** In fact, over half of HR leaders using Wellhub say it plays a critical role in keeping people around, and helps reduce absenteeism too.

It also has a **big impact on how your company is perceived.** A strong wellbeing offer helps you stand out to top candidates and strengthens your employer brand in a crowded market.

And the value doesn't stop at your own bottom line. Research from the McKinsey Health Institute, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum, shows that improving employee health and wellbeing could unlock up to \$11.7 trillion in global economic value.



In other words, investing in wellbeing **doesn't just support your team. It supports your business,** your goals, and the wider economy too.

Wellbeing has a direct impact on the metrics that matter: performance, cost, and culture. Supporting your people supports your business. When sharing this with senior leadership, it helps to reframe the conversation. These aren't feel-good extras. They are strategic tools that contribute to how the business performs. Giving wellbeing the weight it deserves **starts with showing the value it really brings to the table.**

CHAPTER V

The Proof in Practice

It's one thing to talk about potential. It's another to see it in action. Here are three companies using Wellhub to reshape how they support employee wellbeing. Each had different goals, but all saw meaningful results.

British Financial Research and Technology Firm

Goal: Attract top talent

For this UK firm, which assists in investment strategies, their HR team wanted to stand out to top-tier talent by **offering more meaningful wellbeing support**. They upgraded to Wellhub+, giving employees access to premium mental health resources at no cost.

While the initial goal was to attract new talent, a **high enrollment rate of 44% showed it was just as valuable for the people already there**. By offering meaningful mental health support, they met a real need and made a strong statement about the kind of workplace they want to be.

Viral Video Platform

Goal: Curb burnout

Burnout had become a growing concern, especially in high-pressure tech roles within the company. In response, this social platform took a proactive approach and replaced its cash and gym subsidies with Wellhub's flexible platform.

Within just a few months, enrollment company-wide made a difference, with sign-ups reaching:

- 69% in the UK
- 55% in Spain
- 51% in Germany
- 42% in the US

These high enrolment rates showed that the singular gym offering had much less appeal for people and that flexibility and choice mattered more across different teams and regions.

This new offering met employees where they were, providing them with far more comprehensive access to wellness tools, along with genuine support both offline and online, to prevent workplace burnout.



CHAPTER V CONTINUED

Tesco UK Grocery Chain

Goal: Expand wellness offerings after years of success

This affordable food and goods store has worked with Wellhub for over six years. What began as access to fitness facilities has grown into a full wellbeing ecosystem which helps to address the growing needs of people.

Today, more than 25,000 employees are enrolled. The programme continues to grow as it adapts to the needs of a diverse workforce. Key features include:

- Support for different working patterns and locations
- Options at a range of price points
- Family-inclusive plans
- A simple and intuitive user experience
- Tailored resources for groups like parents and women's health
- Company-wide wellbeing challenges to encourage participation

"After six years of partnership, Wellhub has evolved from simply being a gym benefit to becoming an **essential cornerstone of our holistic wellbeing strategy**," said Dhavani Bishop, Head of Group Colleague Health & Wellbeing.

"**The platform's ability to adapt to our diverse workforce**—from store colleagues to delivery drivers to office teams—has made it uniquely valuable. What's particularly powerful is how **Wellhub supports not just physical fitness, but mental wellbeing, family health, sleep**, and nutrition, and the specialised needs of different employee groups."



CHAPTER VI

The Risk of Doing Nothing

Ignoring employee wellbeing is no longer a neutral decision. **Choosing not to act comes with real, measurable consequences.**

Replacing a single employee costs companies around £30,000. That figure doesn't even account for the time lost, the disruption to teams, or the impact on culture. According to recent research, 86% of employees say they'd be more likely to leave a job if it didn't support their wellbeing.

When high performers walk away due to burnout or lack of support, it affects more than just headcount. It hits morale, productivity, and reputation. **Teams lose momentum. Managers struggle to backfill. And trust in the organisation can take a hit.**

The longer burnout is left unaddressed, the more it compounds. Stress-related turnover alone is estimated to account for up to 20% of total payroll costs.

And then there's perception. **Inaction on wellbeing sends a message.** It can make a company seem out of touch, or worse, indifferent to the people who keep it running.

Not investing in wellbeing doesn't reduce cost. It simply **shifts costs elsewhere, such as to absenteeism, turnover, and lost productivity.**



CHAPTER VII

Time to Reassess Your Strategy

If your current wellbeing setup isn't getting the engagement or results you expected, it might be time for a **closer look**.

Start by asking a few simple questions:

- How much are we actually spending per employee?
- What percentage of our people are using their benefits?
- Are we measuring real engagement, or just offering access?
- Can our current approach scale with the business?
- Do we have the data to show what's working and what's not?

Even a quick internal audit can reveal a great deal. Look at usage and sign-up rates. Track how much time your team spends managing different vendors or platforms. **Calculate the cost per actual engagement, not just per head.** And, most importantly, listen for signs that employees feel overwhelmed or unsupported.

The goal isn't to overhaul everything. It's to **understand what's truly adding value**, and what might be ready for a rethink.



CHAPTER VIII

Final Thoughts

You don't need to spend more to deliver more. You just need to spend smarter.

Wellbeing programmes **don't just support employees. They deliver real results.** According to the Return on Wellbeing Report, 56% of companies see a return of over 100% on their wellbeing investment, meaning they get more than £2 back for every £1 invested.

A platform model like Wellhub gives you broader reach, better outcomes, and far less admin to manage. It helps you **support more people, more effectively, without asking for more budget.**

Most importantly, **wellbeing should be treated like any other business function.** It should be measured, evaluated, and refined based on real data.

So now's a good time to take stock! Start by auditing your current benefits and wellbeing spend. Look at what's getting used, what's not, and where your people might be missing out. From there, consider where a more flexible, consolidated platform could **help you do more with what you already have.**

If you're ready to rethink your approach and unlock **more value with Wellhub, [we're here to help!](#)**

