



epassi

THE GREAT

# Employee Benefits Study.

2025

UK SNAPSHOT



# Structure.

<b>1. Employee Benefits Study 2025: Study structure, key definitions, and data.</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Why do benefits matter?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Investment realities vs. employee interests.</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4. Personal wellbeing at the workplace.</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5. Market-specific employee benefit interests.</b>	<b>18</b>





Section 1:

# GEBS 2025: UK SNAPSHOT

## Study structure, key definitions, and data.

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# The Great Employee Benefits Study 2025 surveys the UK workforce for the second year.

The Great Employee Benefits Study (GEBS) is an annual survey offering a comprehensive, **data-driven snapshot of employee benefits** across key European markets, surveying the UK sample for the second time in 2025.

By capturing insights from both employees and employers, **this dual-perspective research uncovers the often-overlooked gap between what workers want and what businesses currently provide.** It's essential reading for HR leaders and decision-makers dedicated to **building workplaces that inspire loyalty, boost productivity, and support employee wellbeing on every level.** In a time when employee needs are evolving faster than ever, and workplace wellbeing is paramount, this study provides a fresh lens on what truly matters.

This exclusive **UK Snapshot** compares this year's findings with last year's. It also provides new insights, diving deep into the themes that resonate most with British businesses.

GEBS2025 is crafted by professors and researchers from Aalto University, conducted by the Pole Star Advisory think tank in collaboration with Epassi.





# The GEBS 2025: key definitions.

## Employee benefits.

Benefits refer to **non-wage compensation** and perks that employers offer to their employees in addition to their regular salaries or wages.

These benefits can include a wide range of offerings, such as **flexible working arrangements, fitness benefits,** and more.

Benefits that are legally mandated are not considered part of these employment benefits.

However, additional benefits that are offered in addition to the legally required ones, such as more comprehensive insurance, are also considered employment benefits for the purposes of this study.

## Personal wellbeing.

Personal wellbeing encompasses the holistic state of an **individual's physical, mental,** and **emotional health** and satisfaction.

In the context of work, it involves factors such as **job satisfaction, work-life balance, professional growth,** and a **sense of fulfilment** derived from work.

This extends **beyond mere satisfaction** and includes a **positive work environment, opportunities for growth, meaningful tasks, sense of autonomy, and a healthy work-life integration.**

## How to follow the two-sided structure?



Insights from **employees.**



Insights from senior executives and management decision-makers participated as representatives of the **employers.**

# The GEBS 2025: More UK Data, Greater Insights.

The number of responses has significantly increased since 2024, indicating in part that the GEBS is solidifying its position as a barometer of employee benefits.

The data for GEBS2025 was collected through an online survey in February–March 2025.

The study targeted only companies with over 50 employees in each country and across all regions.

## Employees



## Employers



 2024  2025



Section 2:

# Why do benefits matter?

Employee benefits play a crucial role in workforce satisfaction, commitment, and retention.

This section examines the perceived value of benefits from both employees and employers, revealing how wellbeing, flexibility, and practical support contribute to employee engagement.

# Employees in the UK report higher satisfaction with benefits than last year, while employers' confidence remains stable.

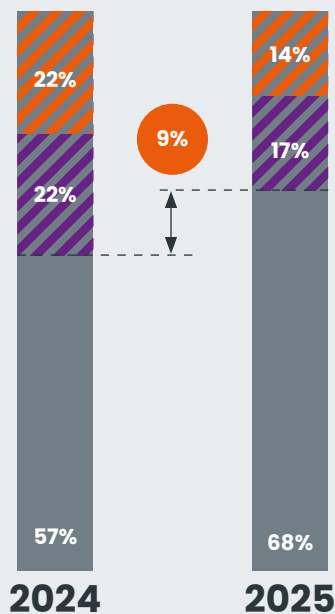
Employee satisfaction with benefit range shows significant growth. **68% of employees state that they are pleased with their employer's benefit offering in 2025, significantly up from 2024.** This reflects a 9 point increase in satisfied employees, alongside an 8 point drop in disagreement (from 22% to 14%).

**Employer confidence remains consistently high.** 76% of employers believe their employees are satisfied with the benefits provided, no major change between 2024 to 2025.

Perception gap persists but has slightly narrowed. **Although employee satisfaction has risen slightly, there remains an 8 point gap between employers' belief in satisfaction (76%) and actual employee agreement (68%) in 2025.**

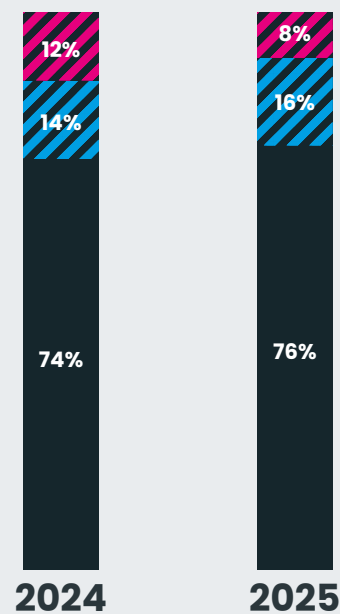
## Employees, the UK

I am pleased with the range of benefits offered by my employer.



## Employers, the UK

Our employees are satisfied with the range of benefits offered by our organisation.



Neutral Disagree

A photograph of two people, a man and a woman, high-fiving in an office setting. The man is on the left, wearing a green shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a white top. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background is slightly blurred, showing office furniture and a window.

**Section 3:**

# Investment realities vs. employee interests.

This section explores the alignment, and at times misalignment, between how employers allocate their benefits budgets and what employees actually value.

We examine the top benefit categories that employees find appealing and compare them with areas where employers are planning to increase investment.

The findings reveal where employer priorities align well with employee interests, and where gaps suggest potential missed opportunities for impact. Understanding these dynamics can help organizations optimise their benefits strategy to meet employee needs while making efficient use of budget.

# UK employers continue to increase their benefits budgets, though slightly fewer expect strong growth heading into 2026.

The majority of employers expect increases in the budget for 2026, with moderate increases being the most common plan. 76% anticipate increases for the budget next year. One fourth, 24%, of employers anticipate small increases (0–9%) in their total benefits spend for 2026, almost half (44%) expect moderate increases (10–49%), and 8% plan strong increases (+50%).

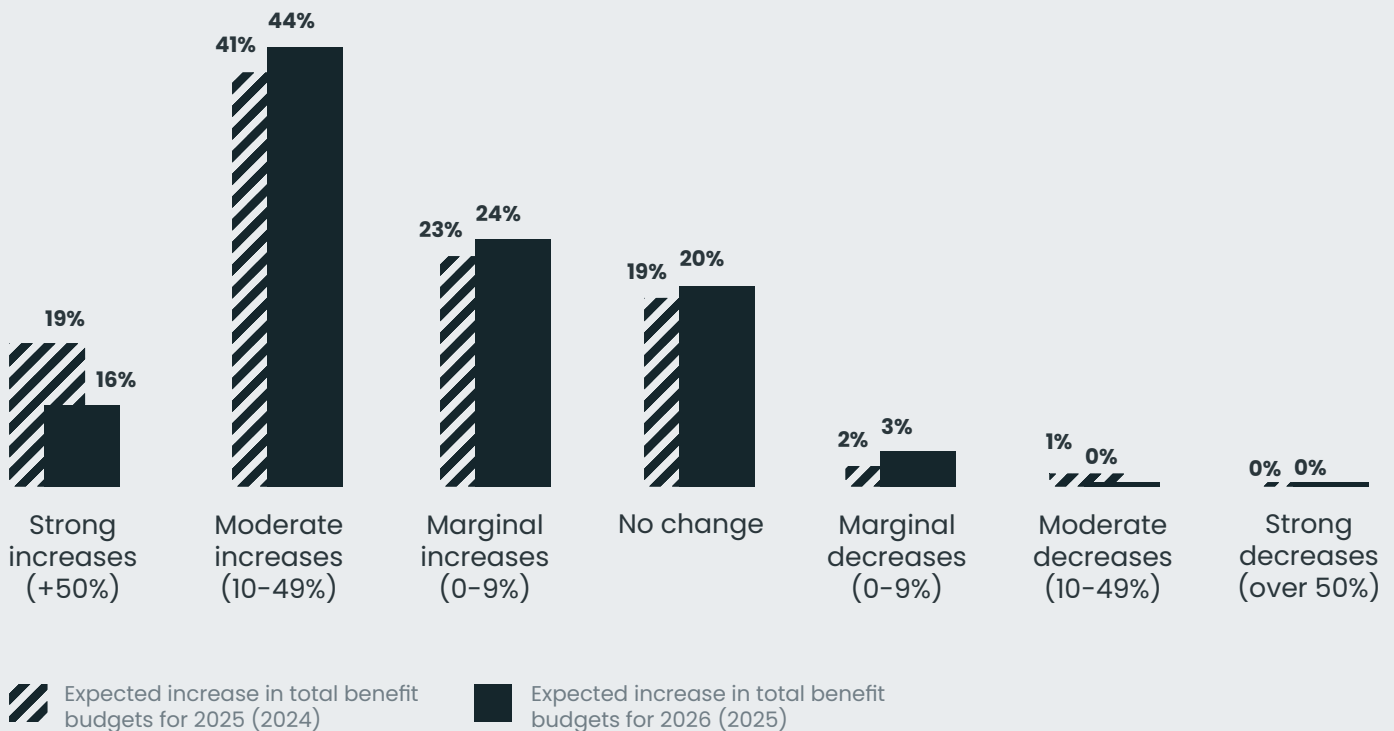
Only one-fifth plan no changes to the benefits budgets. 20% expect their benefits budgets to remain the same.

Strong increases are set to decline. The proportion of employers projecting strong increases (over 50%) drops from 14% last year to only 8% this year, suggesting more cautious budgeting going forward.

Only a fraction anticipates decreases to the budget. 3% expect marginal decreases, while no moderate or strong decreases are predicted.

## Employers, the UK

Projected distribution of total benefit increase in the UK: 2025 vs. 2026.



# Insurance and learning are the top categories where employers plan to increase benefit investment in 2026.

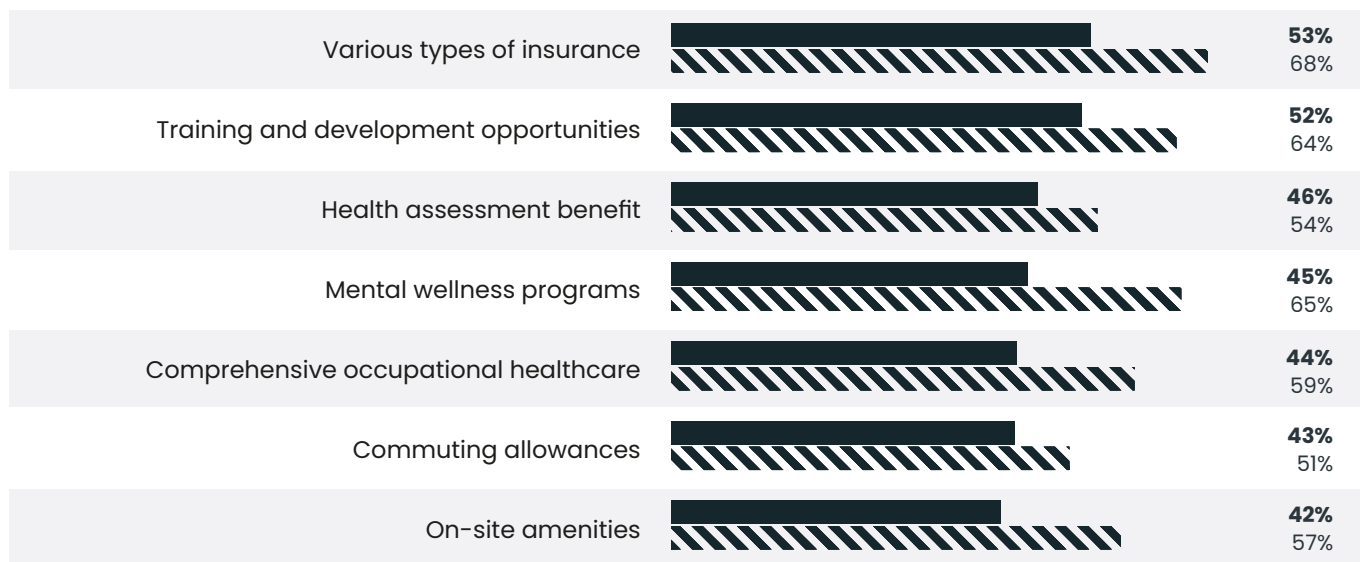
The expectation for investment increases are less common across all categories. Every subcategory shows a drop in the share of employers expecting budget increases in 2026 compared to 2025. This might reflect a more focused increases for employers, given that overall budgets are expected to increase for next year.

**Insurance and learning remain top priorities**, despite a decline. While overall investment is decreasing, 53% plan to increase budgets for various types of insurance, and 52% expect to increase budgets for training and development, highlighting its sustained importance for these categories.

**Health and wellbeing are common investment categories. 46% anticipate increase in health assessment benefit** and 45% planning to boost investment in mental wellbeing programmes.

## Employers, the UK

Estimate how your company is planning to change its benefits budget allocation for the following subcategories?



 2024
  2025

# UK employees find a wide range of benefits appealing, with increasing interest in learning and health related benefits.

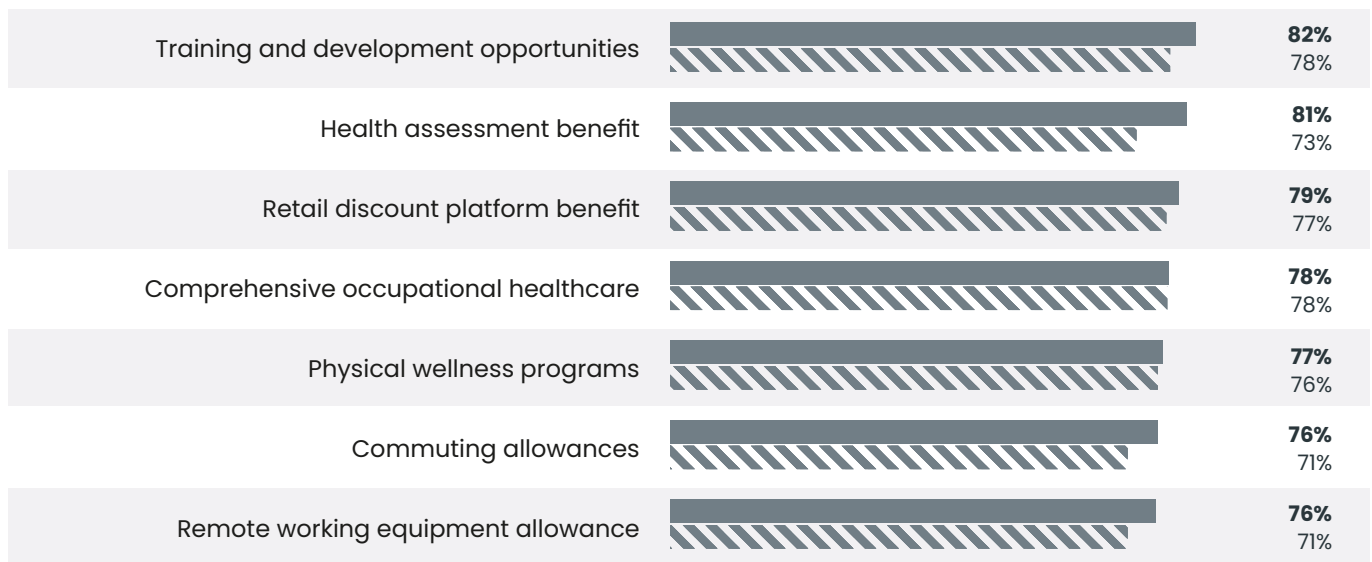
Learning is a top priority for employees in the UK. This year 82% of employees find training and development opportunities appealing, 4 point increase from previous year.

**Health and physical wellbeing-related benefits remain important. 81% find health assessment benefits appealing in 2025**, up sharply from 73% in 2024. In addition, 78% state that comprehensive occupational healthcare is appealing for them, and 77% say the same about physical wellbeing programs.

**Retail discount platform benefit remains a staple for employees in the UK.** 79% of employees find the benefit appealing, 2 point increase from previous year.

## Employees, the UK

How appealing are the following subcategories of benefits for you?



 2024
  2025

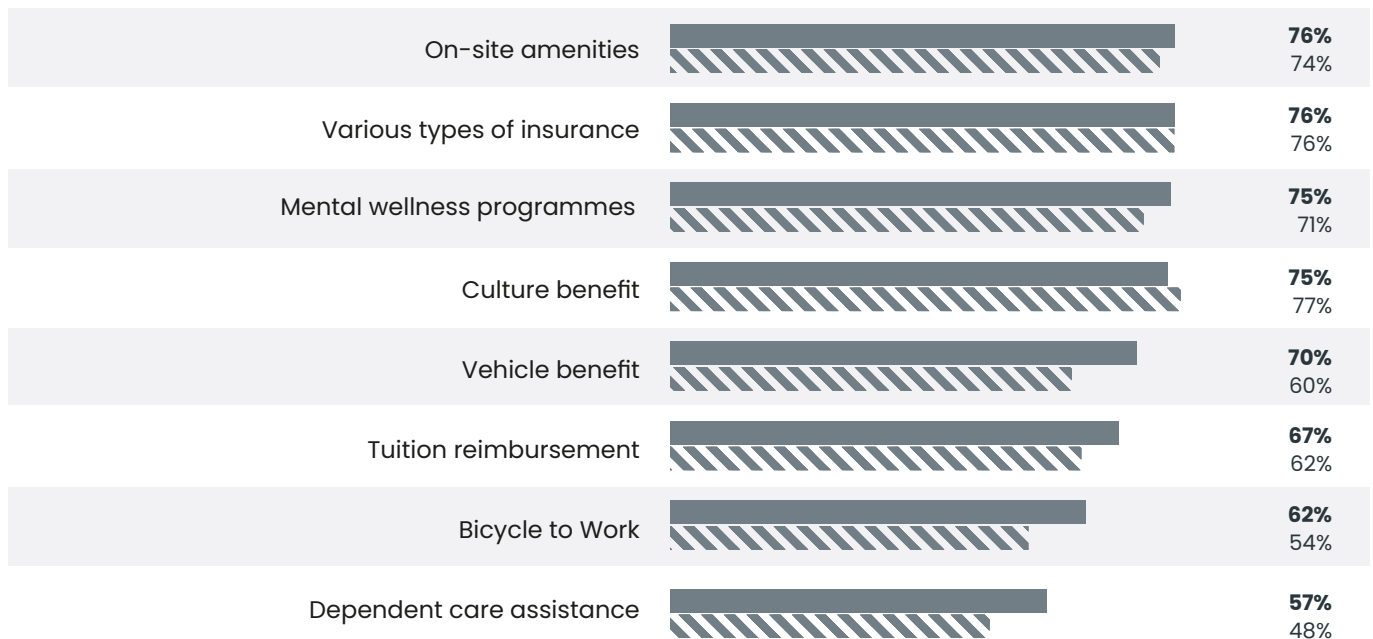
# UK employees prioritise commuting support and physical wellbeing.

Commuting allowance takes priority over cycle-to-work and vehicle benefits. While 76% of employees find a commuting allowance appealing, only 70% say the same about vehicle benefits, and just 57% about cycle-to-work schemes.

Although employers tend to invest more in mental wellbeing, physical wellbeing holds slightly greater appeal for employees. 77% of employees say they find physical wellness initiatives appealing, compared to 75% who say the same about mental health programmes.

## Employees, the UK

How appealing are the following subcategories of benefits for you?



 2024
  2025



Section 5:

# Personal wellbeing at work.

Employee wellbeing has become a central theme in modern workplaces, with many companies investing in benefits designed to promote physical, mental, and emotional health.

What's more, wellbeing investments can have a material impact on company performance. Employees who feel well are more likely to be engaged and committed. This section explores how both employees and employers perceive the value of these benefits, and how they can work together to prevent burnout.

# For the majority of employees in the UK, wellbeing investment boosts commitment.

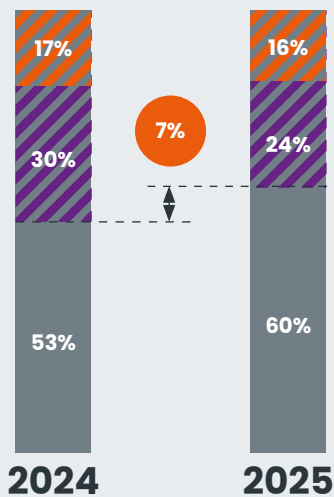
The link between employee commitment and wellbeing investment is strengthening. This year, 60% of employees state that they are more likely to commit to their work if their employer prioritises investing in their wellbeing over salary increases alone, a slight increase from 2024.

Employer confidence in wellbeing-driven commitment remains strong. The share of employers who believe employees are more likely to commit if wellbeing is prioritised over a salary increase alone increased slightly from 72% in 2024 to 75% in 2025.

**The perception gap between employees and employers is narrowing.** While employee agreement levels remain stable, the increase among employees might signal the growing importance of work-life balance and wellbeing among the workforce.

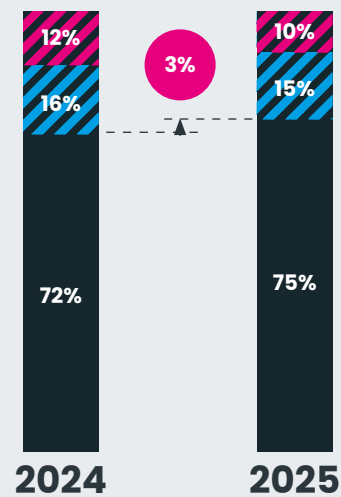
## Employees, the UK

I am more likely to commit to my work if my employer prioritises investing in my wellbeing rather than simply increasing my salary.



## Employers, the UK

Our employees are more likely to commit to the organisation if we place an emphasis on wellbeing, rather than solely relying on salary increases.



Neutral Disagree

# Most UK employees believe their employer supports their wellbeing.

**Almost three quarters of employees feel supported in their overall wellbeing.** This year, 69% of employees report that their employer supports their overall wellbeing, marking a six-point increase from last year. What’s more, only 12% disagree, indicating an improvement in perceived support.

The perception gap narrows slightly. Despite the improvement among employees, there is still a 16-point gap between employee and employer perspectives—highlighting a continued disconnect between intent and impact.

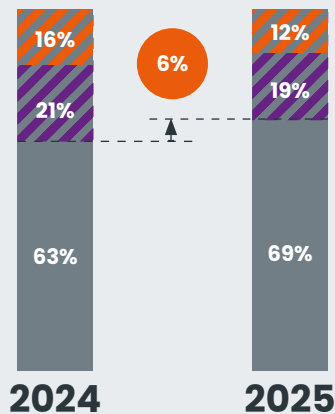
For physical wellbeing, 67% of employees believe their organisation supports them, compared to 86% of organisations who say they provide this support. This reflects a perception gap of 19 points.

In terms of mental and emotional wellbeing, 68% of employees feel supported, while 80% of organisations claim to offer support—a 12-point gap, which is the smallest among GEBS countries.

When it comes to exercise, **53% of employees say their organisation encourages them to be active, while 74% of organisations say they do, demonstrating a 21-point gap.**

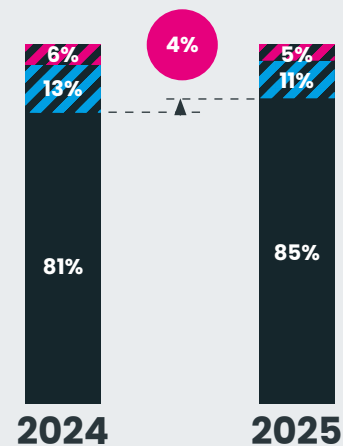
## Employees, the UK

My employer supports my overall wellbeing.



## Employers, the UK

Our organisation supports the overall wellbeing of our employees.



Neutral Disagree



Section 6:

# Market-specific employee benefit interests.

This year, there was a section probing locally relevant benefit themes and topics from employees and employers.

The findings from these questions are presented in the following section.

# Gym memberships and physiotherapy are the most appealing fitness-related benefits among employees in the UK.

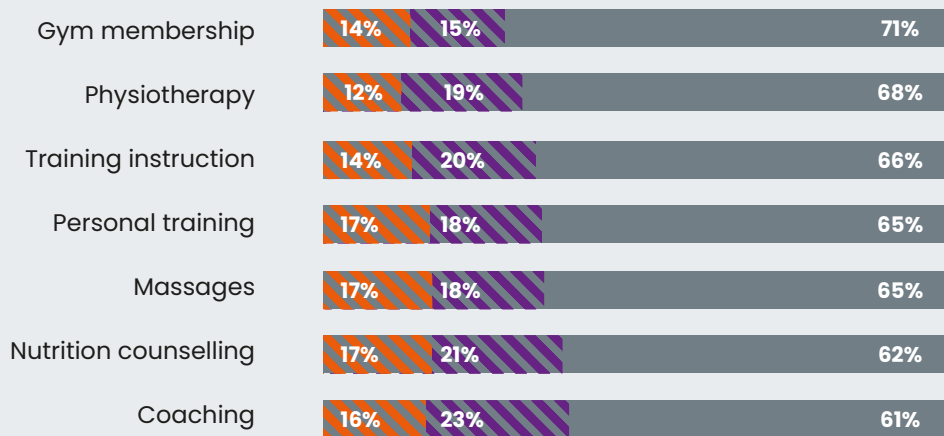
Traditional fitness benefits hold the highest appeal. **71% of employees find gym memberships appealing**, while 68% say the same about physiotherapy.

Structured, tailored guidance also resonates with employees. 66% of employees find training instruction appealing, while 65% are attracted to personal training. These benefits provide tailored support, reinforcing employee interest in personalised fitness services.

Softer, holistic wellness services are slightly less appealing but still relevant. 65% find massages appealing, while 62% find nutrition counselling appealing and 61% do so for coaching. While not topping the list, these services still garner interest from a significant portion of the workforce.

## Employees, the UK

How appealing are the following fitness related benefits to you?



 Unappealing
  Neutral

# Exercising during the workday and health assessments are highly relevant wellbeing services to employees in the UK.

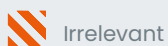
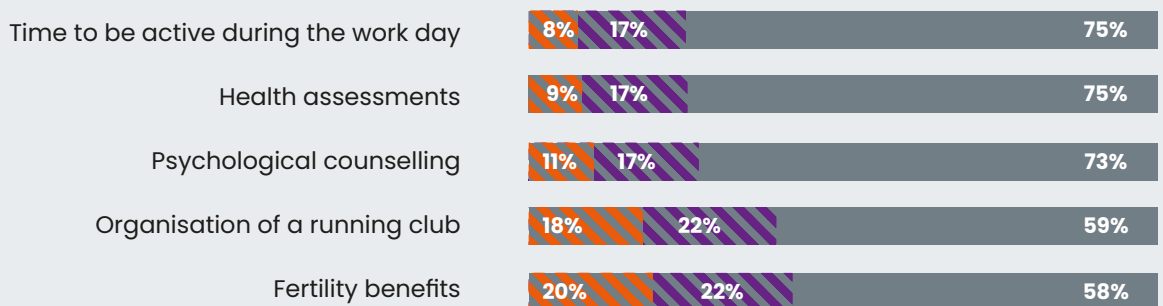
Time to be active during the workday is a top priority. **75% of employees find dedicated time for physical activity during the workday to be a relevant wellbeing service.** This might reflect the growing demand for flexibility of work.

Wellbeing and health-related benefits are commonly valued. **75% find health assessments relevant**, and 73% value psychological counselling, showing **strong support for both physical and mental health initiatives in the workplace.** Only 9 and 11% respectively consider these services irrelevant.

Reproductive health support is relevant but not a priority, at 58%.

## Employees, the UK

How relevant would you find the following new corporate wellbeing services?



Irrelevant



Neutral

# Fitness benefits are highly valued and seen as impactful for wellbeing and motivation.

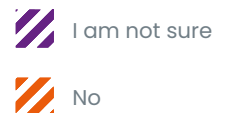
**52% of employees say their company provides a fitness benefit**, and of those, **an impressive 81% make use of it**, highlighting **strong engagement** when such support is available.

Fitness benefits are widely relevant and seen as impactful. **83% of users say they value the fitness benefit greatly**, and **87% agree it positively influences their overall wellbeing and motivates them to stay healthy and active**.

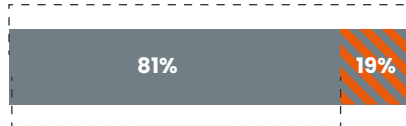
Fitness benefits also support employee engagement. **84% of users agree that the benefit makes them feel valued by their employer**, highlighting its role in employee appreciation and retention.

## Employees, the UK

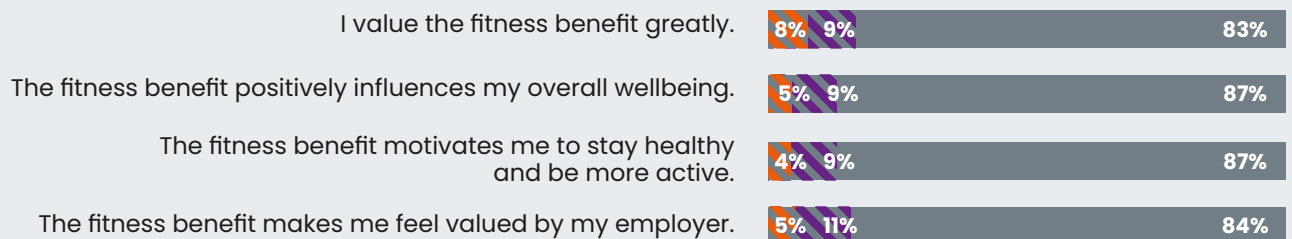
Does your company offer a fitness benefit?



Do you use the company-provided fitness benefit?



Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



# Employees primarily use fitness benefits to support their physical and mental wellbeing.

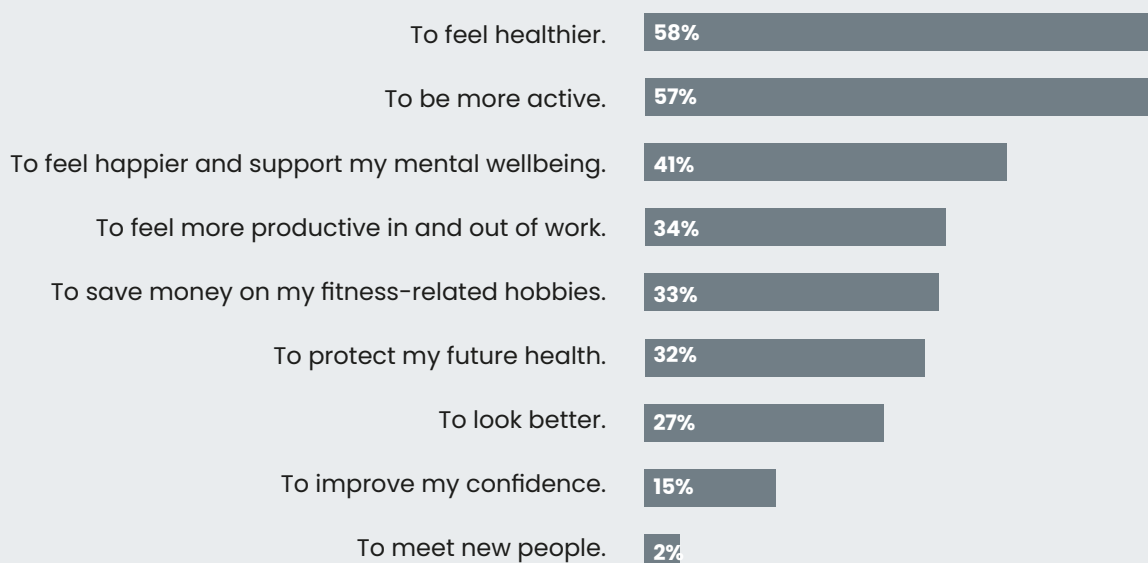
**Physical wellbeing is the top driver for fitness benefit usage.** 58% of employees use their fitness benefit to feel healthier, and 57% use it to be more active, showing a strong focus on overall physical wellness.

**Mental wellbeing is also a motivator for many.** 41% of employees say they use their fitness benefit to feel happier and support their mental wellbeing, highlighting the perceived emotional value of the offering.

Productivity and cost savings also play a role. 34% cite feeling more productive in and out of work, and 33% value that the **fitness benefit enables them to save money on fitness-related hobbies**, showing how **the benefit intersects with work performance and personal finance**.

## Employees, the UK

What are the most important reasons you use your fitness benefit?



# Corporate fitness benefits influence employer choice for most employees in the UK.

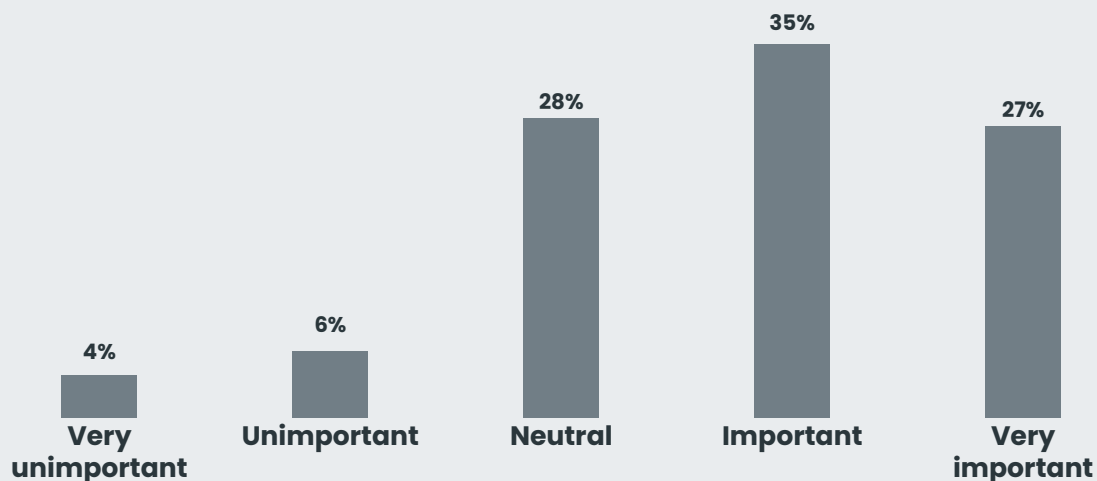
Fitness benefits matter in recruitment decisions in the UK. **62% of UK employees consider corporate fitness benefits important (35%) or very important (27%)** when choosing an employer.

Only a small minority dismiss their relevance. Just 10% respond that fitness benefits are unimportant (6%) or very unimportant (4%).

Less than one in three remain neutral towards the role of fitness benefit in evaluating an employer. **28% of employees are neutral, suggesting an opportunity for employers to better communicate the value of fitness benefits** to influence this group.

## Employees, the UK

Are corporate fitness benefits important to you when choosing an employer?



# Digital fitness tools are a key way to support remote and hybrid workers.

Apps and virtual personal training top the list of preferred fitness benefits for hybrid workers.

36% of employees selected subscription-based apps for individual workouts and wellness as one of the most appealing fitness benefits for remote or hybrid work. This is closely followed by virtual personal training sessions (33%).

Support for home training gear is also highly valued. 32% of employees would appreciate an allowance for purchasing home fitness equipment, highlighting a preference for flexible, independent training options.

Different types of online content is also considered relevant by around a third of employees. Pre-recorded classes (29%) and live online sessions (28%) are popular ways to stay active while working remotely.

## Employees, the UK

### What would be the most interesting fitness benefits to support remote/hybrid work?



# Employers and employees in the UK align on digital fitness tools, but differ on priorities for personalisation and equipment.

There is strong alignment on app-based solutions. 42% of employers selected subscription based apps as the most interesting benefit, closely matching 36% of employees who selected the same. This shared priority signals mutual recognition of the importance of flexible, digital-first fitness tools for hybrid work.

Employers are commonly trusting live online engagement as a means to support the activity of hybrid workers. 33% of employers value live online classes, compared to 28% of employees. This may reflect an assumption among employers that structured, synchronous content drives higher engagement. Employees place more value on fitness equipment support. 32% of employees would appreciate an allowance for home fitness equipment, while only 26% of employers highlight this benefit.

## Employers, the UK

### What would be the most interesting fitness benefits to support remote/hybrid work?



# Flexibility of offerings and range of services are top priorities for UK employers when selecting wellbeing and fitness benefit providers.

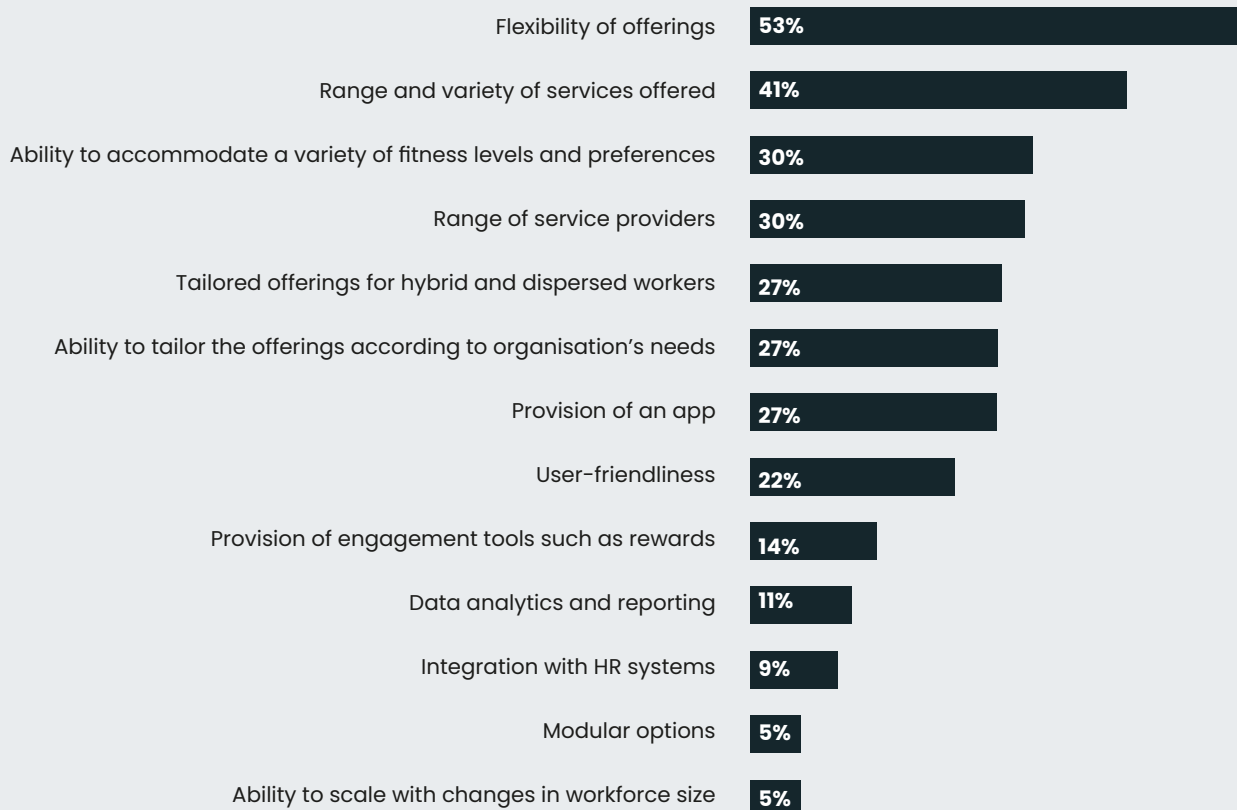
The ability to provide flexible offering is the most valued of features of the benefit provider. **53% of employers rank flexibility of offerings among their top three criteria.** This reflects a growing need to adapt benefits to diverse employee needs, work modes, and personal preferences.

Broad range of services is also essential. **41% of employers prioritise a range and variety of services offered, while 30% value the range of service providers.** This highlights the demand for inclusive benefit ecosystems rather than narrow or fixed offerings.

**Tailoring and ability to cater to the needs of hybrid workers are key capabilities.** 27% of employers highlight the importance of tailored offerings for hybrid workers, customisation to organisational needs, and provision of an app. These needs reflect the needs of hybrid teams and the importance of tech-enabled personalisation.

## Employers, the UK

What are the most important characteristics of the wellbeing and fitness benefits provider?



# Employers in the UK offer fitness benefits to promote healthier and more active lifestyles among employees.

Encouraging physical activity is a key reason to provide fitness benefit. 66% of employers offer fitness benefits primarily to encourage employees to be more active.

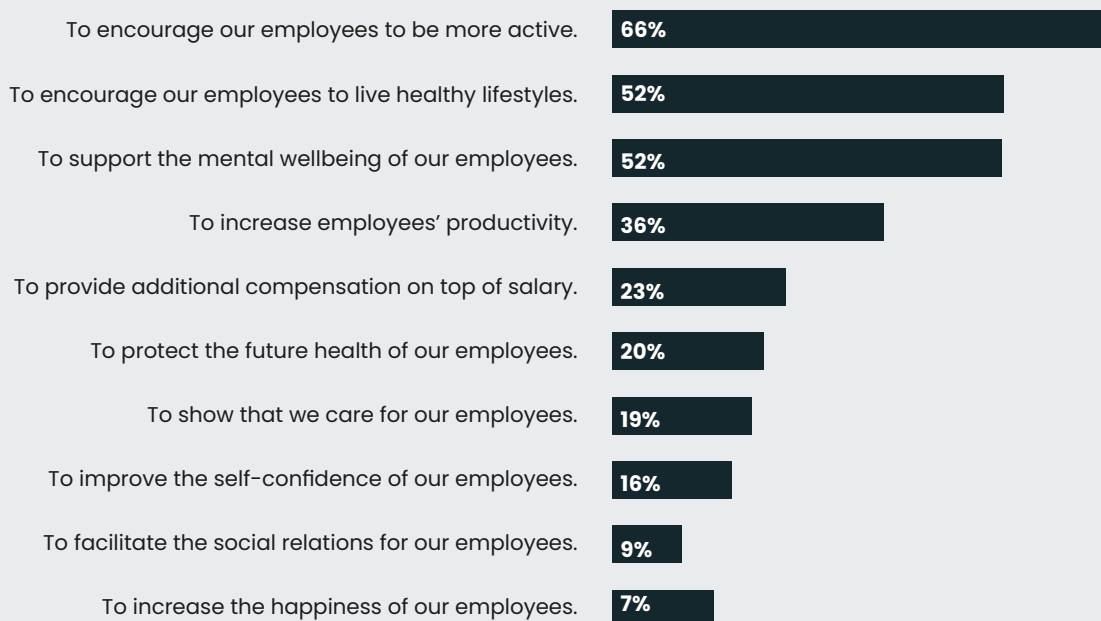
Supporting healthy lifestyles and mental wellbeing are equally common reasons. 52% of employers cite encouraging healthy lifestyles and another 52% mention supporting mental wellbeing as key reasons, highlighting the focus on both physical and mental health.

More than a third are also confident that fitness benefit would increase productivity. 36% of employers offer fitness benefits to increase employee productivity.

**One in four employees view fitness benefits as a form of additional compensation. In fact, 23% say these benefits are offered specifically to supplement salary.**

## Employers, the UK

Why does your company provide a fitness benefit to your employees?



# Cost and competing compensation priorities are the main reasons UK employers opt out of fitness benefits.

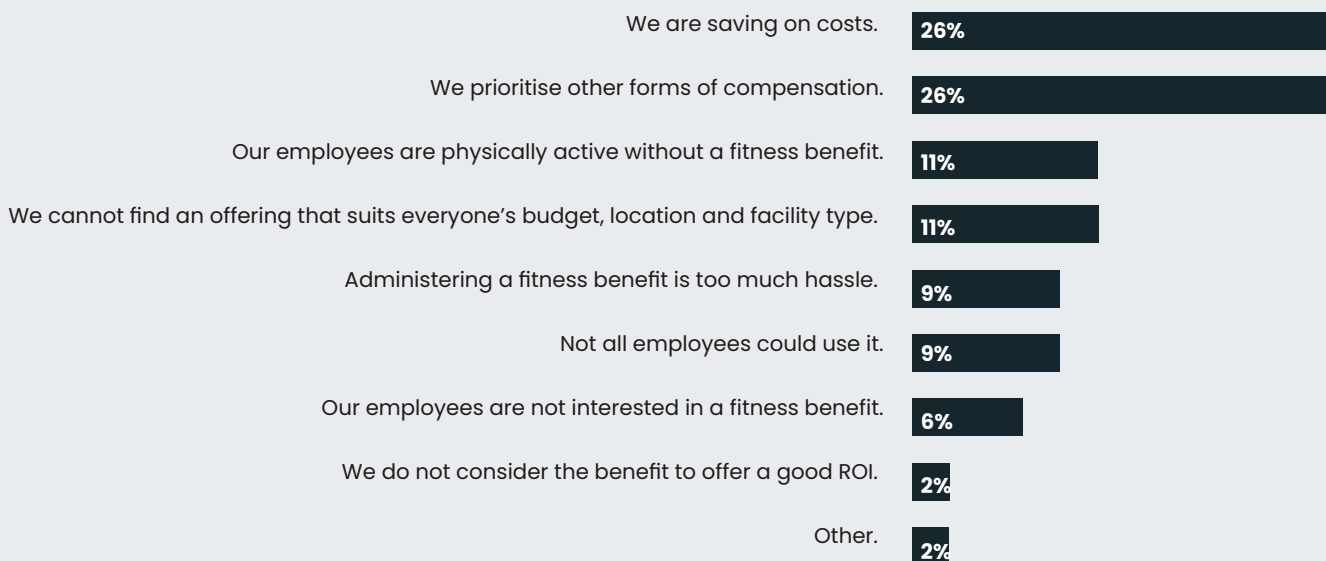
Cost-saving and alternative compensation are the top barriers. 26% of employers mention cost saving as key reason, while 26% mention they prioritise other forms of compensation. This indicates that budget constraints and internal compensation strategies are the primary reasons for not offering fitness benefits.

For some, a fitness benefit is not seeing as having a desired impact of increasing activity. 11% of employers believe employees are already physically active. This suggests **some employers view fitness as a personal responsibility**.

Other: "In general, employees prefer a higher base salary."

## Employers, the UK

Why does your company not currently offer a fitness benefit to employees?\*



\*This question was only presented to respondents representing organizations that do not offer a fitness benefit to their employees.

# Employers most often associate corporate fitness benefits with increased motivation and engagement.

**Motivation is the most commonly observed impact.** Nearly one-third (29%) of employers identify increased employee motivation as the most significant outcome of offering fitness benefits.

**Employee engagement also stands out as a key benefit.** A quarter (24%) of employers report a noticeable boost in engagement, suggesting that fitness benefits are more than just 'nice-to-haves': they can enhance employees' emotional connection to the organisation.

Retention is cited less frequently, with only 16% of employers reporting that fitness benefits have had a positive impact on employee retention.

However, few report no impact at all. Just 7% selected "none of the above", indicating that the vast majority of employers see fitness benefits as a valuable and effective tool.

## Employers, the UK

What is the key outcome that you have achieved through providing a corporate fitness benefit?\*



\*This question was only presented to respondents representing organizations that offer a fitness benefit to their employees.



## Want a deeper dive into the employee benefits landscape across Europe?

The full GEBS2025 report compares insights from the **United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, and Germany**, highlighting the similarities and differences between employee and employer perspectives across the continent.

The full **GEBS 2025** report provides a comprehensive overview of the **latest trends, innovations, and best practices** shaping employee benefits across these diverse European markets. Discover how these countries line up in terms of **benefit offerings, employee expectations, future spending, and wellbeing initiatives**.

Access the full report here: