



Whitepaper

Prioritising worker wellness in 2022



Introduction: it's time to rethink workforce wellness

"Improving the health and wellbeing of our employees makes good business sense. As a leading provider of workplace health services, we see every day the difference it can make to a company's bottom line and the impact it can have on employee morale and motivation."

Steve Flanagan, Commercial Director, Bupa

Good employers take care of their people. They believe that they have a responsibility to those that work for them. They recognise that this responsibility does not end as the working day finishes.

And of course, there are clear business benefits to ensuring the workforce is as healthy and happy as possible. Studies have shown that happy healthy workers are 12% more productive.¹

During the pandemic, many people have praised their employer for the support they offered. More attention is being paid to people's mental health.² Leaders recognise that, wherever possible, team members need a working pattern that suits their shifting circumstances.

But the changes in the way we work, as a result of Covid-19, are also raising big questions around how employers support worker wellness. How can managers understand the needs of employees that they rarely come face to face with? How can benefits previously dependent on the office be delivered to people who are increasingly working from home?

This white paper:

- **Explores the benefits and challenges with creating the right wellness programme**
- **Outlines the principles to crafting a wellness offer fit for the future of work**
- **Shows how Zest can help employers quickly implement a first-class programme**

¹ https://warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/pressreleases/new_study_shows/

² <https://www.acas.org.uk/over-a-third-of-businesses-report-that-employee-mental-health-support-has-got-better>



The right wellness programme: benefits and challenges

The right wellness programme can deliver for the workforce and for the business. It can reduce absenteeism by as much as 25%.³ It can increase engagement and boost productivity. Studies have linked wellness programmes to lower staff turnover, an increase in customer satisfaction and a rise in profits.⁴

However, the changes in the way we work, and the ongoing disruption of the pandemic, present a number of challenges to delivering worker wellness.



Employees require more support than ever

Economic disruption and uncertainty mean that team members may face financial difficulties and the stress and worry that accompany such challenges. Especially if their partner or family member has lost their job. Even before the pandemic, employers were losing 2.5 days per employee, per year due to financial stress-related absence.⁵

Greater awareness of mental health issues

Some 46% of professionals report that they have considered quitting their job because it impacted their mental health. Employers recognise that mental health challenges are among the toughest that workers face.⁶ But that doesn't make supporting them any easier.

Employees expect more from their employers

Workers have raised their expectations of the organisation they work for. Some 78% said they would be more likely to work for a company that supported their mental health.⁷

Wellness is harder to deliver

Many core components of a wellness strategy were centred around the office. Everything from discounted canteens to yoga classes were a means for employers to show their people that they understood their needs and wanted to help. But people are coming to the office less, or not at all. So these once-valuable offers have diminished impact.

³ <https://corporateports.ae/do-corporate-health-initiatives-reduce-absenteeism/>

⁴ <https://lefronic.com/blog/workplace-wellness-statistics/>

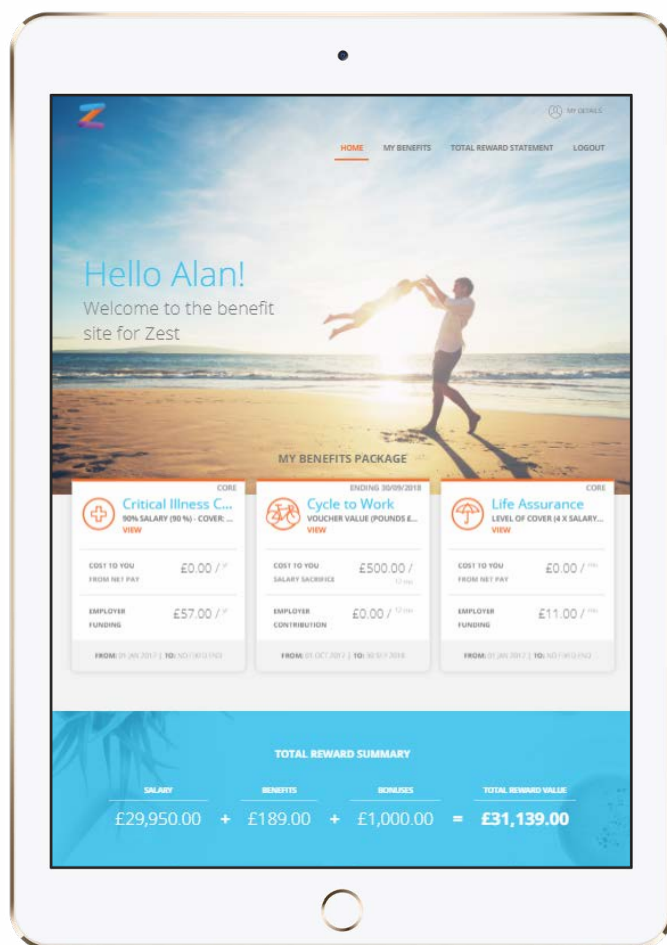
⁵ <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/financial-wellbeing-neyber-report-2019/>

⁶ https://www.cv-library.co.uk/recruitment-insight/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CVL_MentalHealthWorkplace_Report.pdf

⁷ https://www.cv-library.co.uk/recruitment-insight/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CVL_MentalHealthWorkplace_Report.pdf

Building a great wellness programme

A world-class wellness programme must be truly holistic. It should address every aspect of an employee's working life. Do team members have access to sufficient natural light? Is their home office fit for purpose? Is an individual's working pattern optimised to suit their circumstances?



A benefit programme is a powerful means of building and enhancing a wellness strategy. But to be effective a programme must be:

Personalised

One size cannot fit all. A worker struggling to manage the pressures of family life will need radically different support to a colleague dealing with loneliness. The benefit offer must include sufficient variety, with the right information easily made available to the right people.

Accessible to all

Whether based remotely or at headquarters, all workers need equal access to the right benefits.

Holistic

Health insurance will always remain important for many employees. But it is no longer enough simply to help out employees when they are ill. A whole range of benefits should support ongoing wellness. These can range from gym memberships to mental health days.

Constantly evolving to meet the real issues

The pandemic has shown how quickly people's needs can change. New issues – such as mental health – are constantly coming to light. To be meaningful, a wellness programme must quickly be able to adapt to new realities.

¹ <https://blog.smarp.com/deskless-workers-challenges-how-to-solve-them>

² <https://smallbiztrends.com/2019/05/remote-workers-feel-disconnected.html>

How Zest can help

Zest enables employers to personalise how they communicate to each employee. It is lightning-fast to install and adapt meaning that programmes can be easily evolved.

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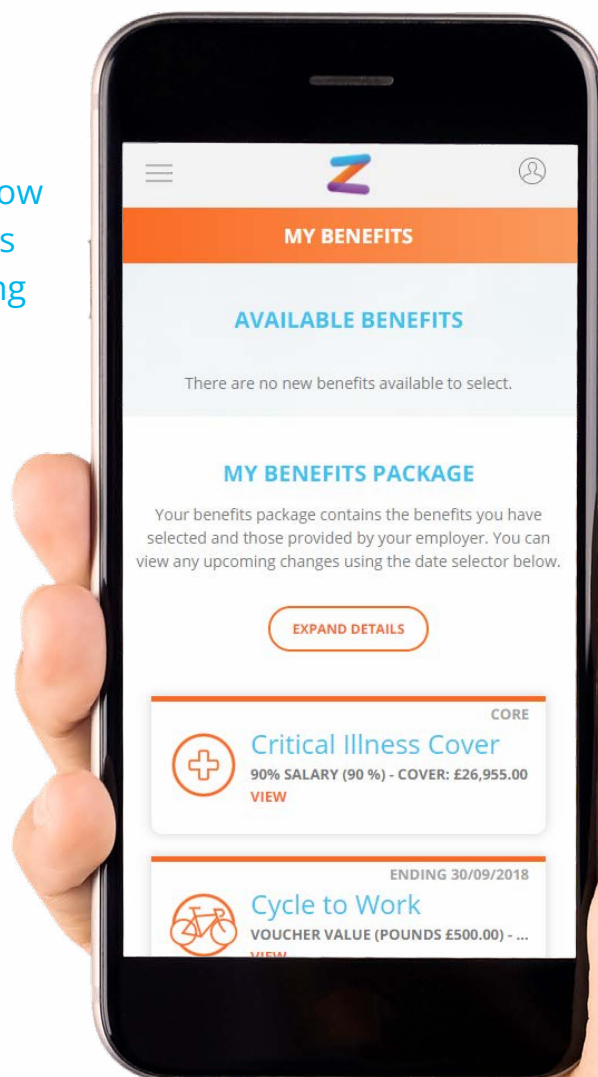
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Conclusion: a wellness programme fit for the future

Good employers take their responsibilities to their workers' welfare seriously. But the pandemic has raised expectations and exposed the scale of mental health issues. At the same time, new ways of working are making an effective wellness strategy more difficult to deliver.

Despite the challenges, this is something that employers must get right. The best staff expect the organisation they work for to care about their wellbeing across the whole of their life. If necessary, they will change jobs to find an employer that does.

Zest equips employers with the technology to deliver the right wellness programme for their workforce. Benefits can be easily updated to adapt to evolving needs. The wellness offer can be personalised to suit the circumstances of each employee. As a result, employers can build trust with their workers, increase engagement and ensure they retain the staff they need to help them deal with the challenges.



Please get in touch with us to find out more about creating a compelling and diverse flexible employee benefit programme with Zest.

Get in touch

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