



eBook

Building belonging:

engaging hybrid
workers in 2022



Introduction: creating a sense of belonging has never been more important

Employee benefits help to forge organisational identity.

They can signify what a company stands for and demonstrate care and respect for employees – but only if people engage with them.

As employers settle on hybrid working arrangements for the long term, it's time to think about creating a benefit programme that's fit for the future.

As we head toward 2022, hybrid working is emerging as the model of choice.¹ It's clear why. Nine in ten employees are looking for more flexibility², but many still see value in the workplace as a creative, collaborative and social hub.³

Hybrid working, when managed well, offers the best of both worlds. But it also presents a cultural challenge. The long-term impacts of the model are yet to be confirmed. Some 64% of hybrid workers already believe that office culture has changed forever, and not necessarily for the better.⁴

With different people in and out of the workplace at different times, employees can start to feel like working nomads. They can lose connection with one another and what their organisation really stands for.

This can damage employee engagement, and by extension organisational performance.

Employers should do all they can to mitigate this risk. Employee benefits can play a central role. Staff that are happy with their benefit package estimate their engagement as 11% higher than average, and 25% higher than the least satisfied.⁵

Benefits can signify organisational purpose and personality. They can demonstrate care, understanding and appreciation of employees. But only when the benefits are carefully considered and delivered in the right way.

This ebook explains how a transition to hybrid working can impact employees' requirements of their benefits and benefit programme. It shows how employers can create a winning offering for the new world of work.

¹ <https://employeebenefits.co.uk/83-employers-have-hybrid-working-model/>

² https://www.ey.com/en_us/news/2021/05/more-than-half-of-employees-globally-would-quit-their-jobs-if-not-provided-post-pandemic-flexibility-ey-survey-finds

³ <https://newsroom.poly.com/English/press-releases/news-details/2021/Poly-Evolution-of-the-Workplace-Report-Highlights-Need-for-Work-Equity-and-Total-Meeting-Equality-for-Hybrid-Workers/default.aspx>

⁴ <https://newsroom.poly.com/English/press-releases/news-details/2021/Poly-Evolution-of-the-Workplace-Report-Highlights-Need-for-Work-Equity-and-Total-Meeting-Equality-for-Hybrid-Workers/default.aspx>

⁵ <https://info.benify.com/thank-you-for-downloading-our-happiness-index-2019?submissionGuid=45592a25-cd9e-4917-86c4-3554ea164f46>



How will hybrid work affect the benefits people need?

Over the last decade, organisations have realised the value of creating fantastic employee experiences.

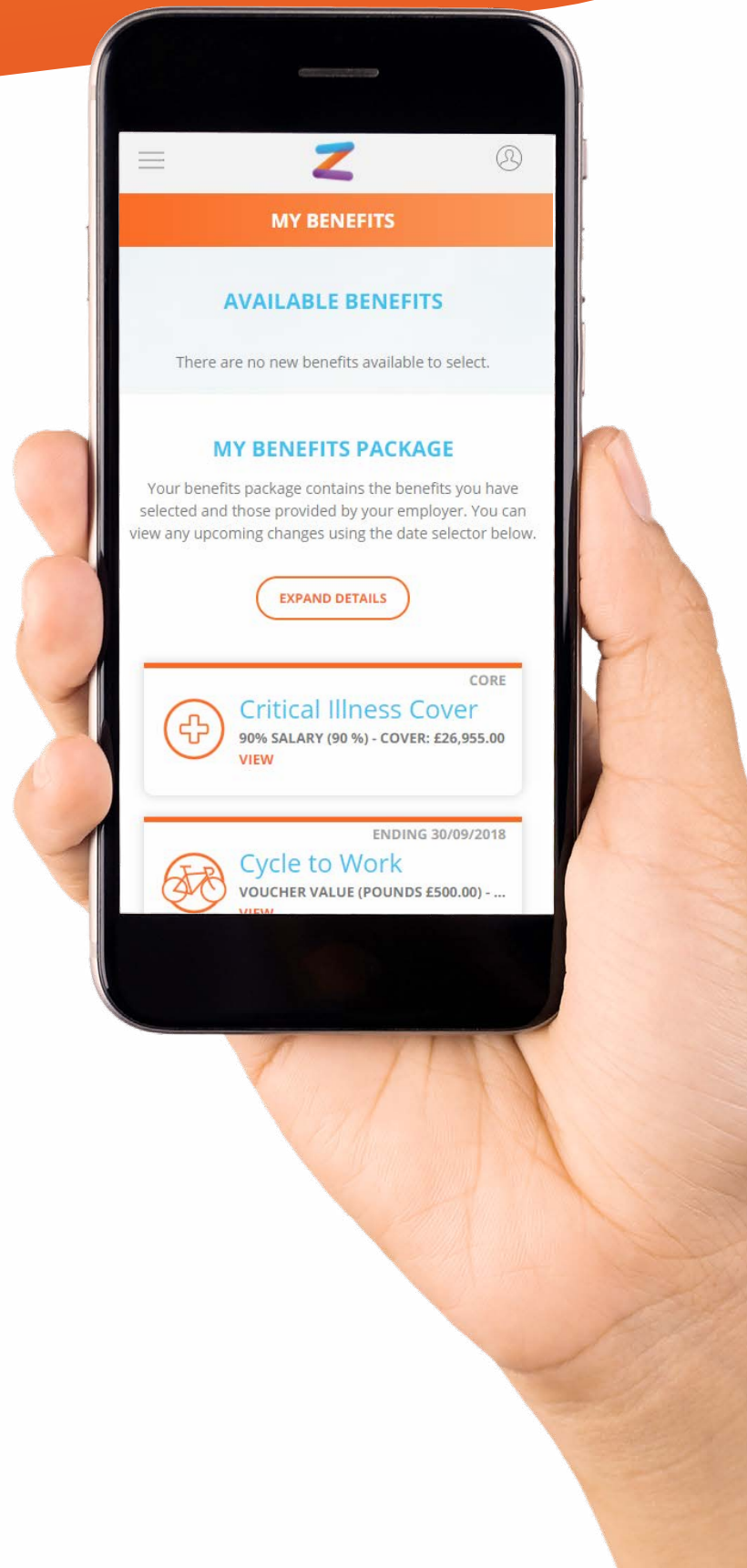
For many employers, the office or workspace has been at the heart of their engagement and reward strategies. Free meals, games rooms, onsite creches and yoga classes all became popular. They demonstrate that employers understand their teams' needs and care enough to support them.

Employers must continue to demonstrate this understanding. But with increasing remote working, office-based benefits risk irrelevance. They don't work when people aren't in the workplace.

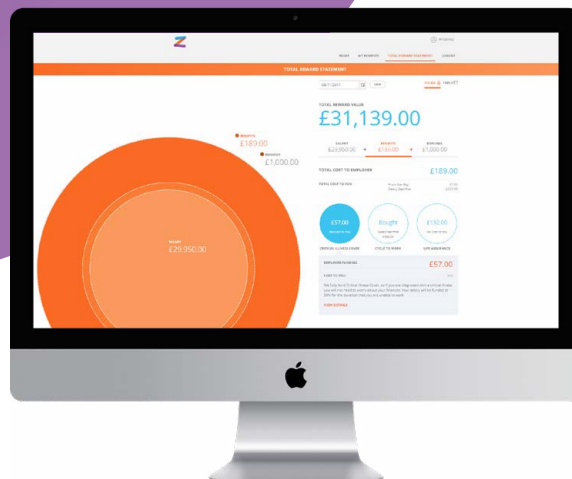
The pandemic – and consequent shift to hybrid working – has accelerated the need for change and for more personalisation.

When employees are in different locations and situations, a one-size-fits-all approach to benefits won't work. At best this will leave employees feeling misunderstood. At worst, they could feel excluded.

Instead, organisations need to offer a raft of flexible benefits and target employees with those most relevant to them.



Hybrid working and a successful employee benefit programme: seven core principles



Employers need to consider how they deliver benefits and whether their methods are still fit-for-purpose.

To serve the needs of a hybrid workforce, a benefit programme must be:

- 1 Personalised**
Using Zest, employers can direct communications and content to specific employee groups. This reduces pointless email traffic and makes employees feel like their benefits are designed for them. The Zest's Claims Centre enables employers to dedicate funds for people to offset claims against, allowing benefits to be highly tailored.
- 2 Accessible**
Employees need to be able to engage with their benefits in the workplace and remotely. With Zest, employees can access their benefits anywhere, on any device.
- 3 Adaptable and flexible**
Using Zest's Insight Centre, HRs can see which benefits are most popular. They can then gauge the effectiveness of their strategy and calibrate it to boost engagement. This is easily done with Zest's Benefits Builder, which enables teams to implement any benefit from any provider at lightning speed.
- 4 Delivered through a simple and intuitive platform**
Engaging with their benefits should be enjoyable and easy for employees. Any friction in the process will turn an activity that should improve the employee experience into one that deteriorates it.
- 5 Clearly communicated**
Remote employees can't just nip over to HR if they have a benefits question. Employers need to cover every possible need through their platform. Zest enables employers to provide all the information workers could look for, all in one place.
- 6 Supporting the employer brand**
In a hybrid world, technology is often the interface between employees and their organisation. Employers need to make sure that this experience gives a sense of what the organisation stands for, its brand and values. Using Zest, employers can personalise the look and feel of their benefit platform so that employees feel they're engaging with their organisation every time they log on.
- 7 Secure**
Hybrid working can bring added security risk. Zest encrypts all sensitive data and provides two-factor authentication as standard, helping to mitigate this and give employers peace of mind.

Conclusion: an employee experience that transcends the workplace

There is a risk that moving to hybrid working could damage organisational culture and the employee experience. **But it really doesn't have to.**

HR teams can help avoid this by drawing on all the tools at their disposal to reinforce these, and ensure they extend beyond the four walls of the workplace.

And employee benefits and benefits technologies are powerful tools. Using Zest's superior and flexible technology, employers can show every employee how they are an important part of a caring and cohesive organisation, no matter where they're based.

It's worth noting that implementing Zest technology is also very simple, so the set up and transition needn't be a barrier.

For more information on our lightning-fast set up, check out our ebook, *"It's never too late to change: deliver flexible employee benefits and retain a winning team."*



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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