

WELLBEING THAT WORKS

TACKLING BURNOUT THROUGH
LEADER-LED CHANGE



Burnout is a big issue...

...that demands bold action

£102bn
Cost of poor wellbeing and sickness to UK businesses in 2023¹

37%
of employees are close to or at burnout (see pg. 5)

In 2024, Google searches for burnout hit a **5-year peak**²




Employers are spending more to tackle it

Corporate wellness market
\$61.2bn in 2021, expected to rise to **\$94.6bn**³ by 2026



Most common⁴ employee wellbeing benefits provided by employers:

- Employee Assistance Programmes
- Free eye tests
- Access to counselling
- Occupational sick pay

¹Personnel Today, **Cost of work-related mental health issues doubles**, 2024.
²Google: **2024 burnout - Explore - Google Trends**.
³MarketsandMarkets, **Corporate Wellness Solutions Market worth \$94.6 billion by 2026**, PR Newswire, 2021.
⁴CIPD, **Health and wellbeing at work**, 2023.

Are employers focusing on the things that will make the biggest difference?

To proactively ensure wellbeing, leaders are key. Organisations need:

- Good change management
- Understanding leadership
- Great role-modelling

See pg. 12-13

If burnout is already an issue, managers should address:

- Too many demands
- Insufficient support
- Low job enjoyment

See pg. 8-9



The idea of human sustainability suggests that great wellbeing is less about benefits and more about culture and the employee experience

This reflects employees' priorities, too. See pg. 14-15

62% say it's very important that employers **listen to work-related concerns / issues raised by employees**

41% say a **flexible benefits package** is very important

Human sustainability: the degree to which an organisation creates value for people as human beings and leaves them with better health and wellbeing, stronger skills and greater employability.⁵

⁵Sue Cantrell et al. **The case for human sustainability**, Deloitte Insights, February 2024.

Measurement and leadership are vital for better wellbeing

- Wellbeing is on employees' minds. More than half of workers are worried about the effect of increasing work stress on mental health, outstripping concerns around new tech or the digital economy¹. Google searches for 'burnout' hit a 5-year peak in March 2024 and have only fallen slightly since then².
- As for whether or not wellbeing is on employers' minds, money talks. In 2021 the corporate wellness market was valued at \$61.2 billion; by 2026, the market is predicted to reach \$94.6 billion. A significant portion of that spend is on corporate wellness programmes³. Despite this level of investment, just one in five employers are currently tracking the return on their wellbeing spend.⁴
- Effective measurement can help businesses navigate this complex issue. Our analysis identified a way of exploring wellbeing through two lenses: corrective and preventative. The corrective lens highlights existing, defined issues, such as levels of burnout or strain. The preventative lens monitors an organisation's general approach, such as the positive action they're seen to take around wellbeing.

What can leaders do?

- As we illustrate in the rest of the report, people managers and middle managers can drive corrective actions (i.e. where there is already an issue present). That might include ensuring effective resources, tools and support are in place to ease demands in the short term, building skills / resilience in teams, and creating an enjoyable atmosphere that makes employees feel valued.
- Senior leadership can take preventative action by ensuring good change management and listening to employees to understand their concerns. There's also a powerful argument for role-modelling effective wellbeing strategies (such as setting boundaries and protecting work-life balance). Given findings on pg. 6-7, this role-modelling will have a two-fold benefit: reducing pressure on leaders and setting the tone for the rest of the organisation.

Reactive and proactive measurement in action

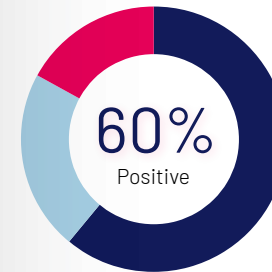
- Over a third (37%) feel close to / at burnout, pointing to the need for immediate action.
- Most employees (60%) believe that their employer takes positive action on health and wellbeing, although a notable neutral population (22%) suggests there's more work to do.

Effective measurement of wellbeing is required to identify weaknesses

Proactivity in preventing issues

My employer takes positive action on health and wellbeing

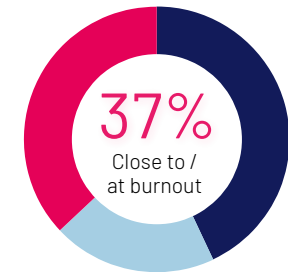
Key: ■ Positive
■ Neutral
■ Negative



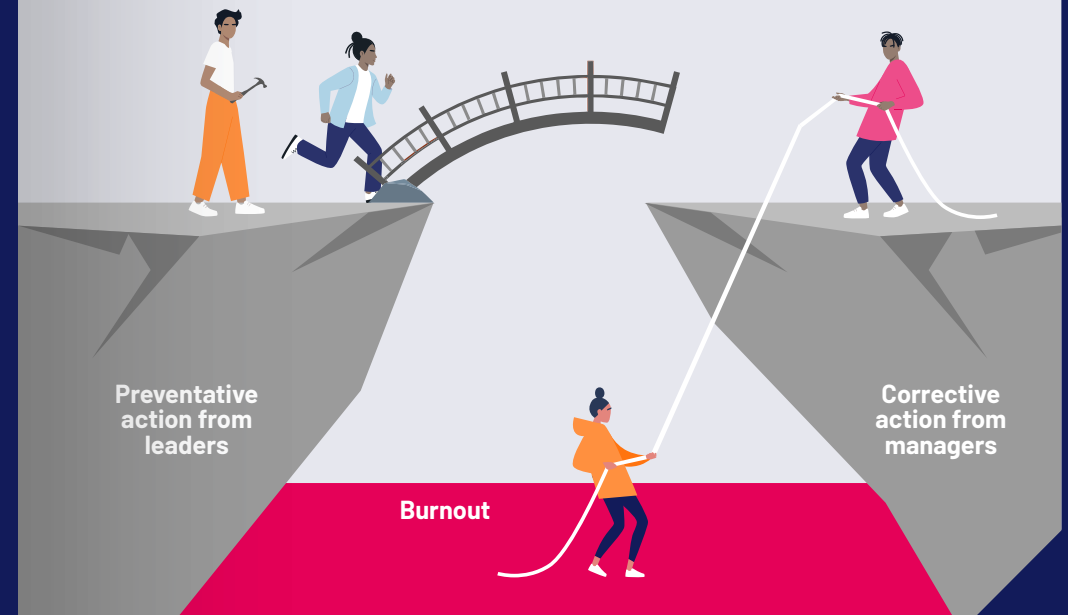
Presence of existing issues

I feel at or close to burnout

Key: ■ Not close to / at burnout
■ Neutral
■ Close to / at burnout



Both preventative and corrective action are needed to build healthy wellbeing



¹Sue Cantrell et al, **The case for human sustainability**, Deloitte Insights, February 2024.

²Google: **2024 burnout - Explore - Google Trends**.

³MarketsandMarkets, **Corporate Wellness Solutions Market worth \$94.6 billion by 2026**, PR Newswire, 2021.

⁴REBA: **Employee Wellbeing Research 2024**.

Who needs the most support to reduce the risk of burnout?

What the data says

- Demographic breakdowns show that disabled employees, shift workers and ethnically diverse groups are most likely to report burnout (45–49%).
- Despite being key to driving positive wellbeing, those in leadership roles report higher levels of burnout (40–48% depending on seniority) compared to non-leaders (33%).
- Employees aged 45+ and those working remotely and in the charity sector are least burnt out (24–31%).
- Burnout prevalence differs little between men and women and public and private sector employees (1pt in both cases).

Thoughts and considerations

- Our analysis shows that wellbeing challenges vary across different employee populations. When addressing these challenges, it's important to avoid a 'one size fits all' approach.
- Using targeted measurement can help provide an accurate picture of wellbeing in the workplace and inform meaningful action.
- At an organisational level, burnout is highest among those who manage team leaders (48%), highlighting the need for wellbeing support for those at the most senior levels. With three quarters of C-suite executives saying they would leave their current role for an organisation offering that support¹, it's potentially a pressing strategic issue for businesses.

In comparison to other employees...

Disabled employees are...

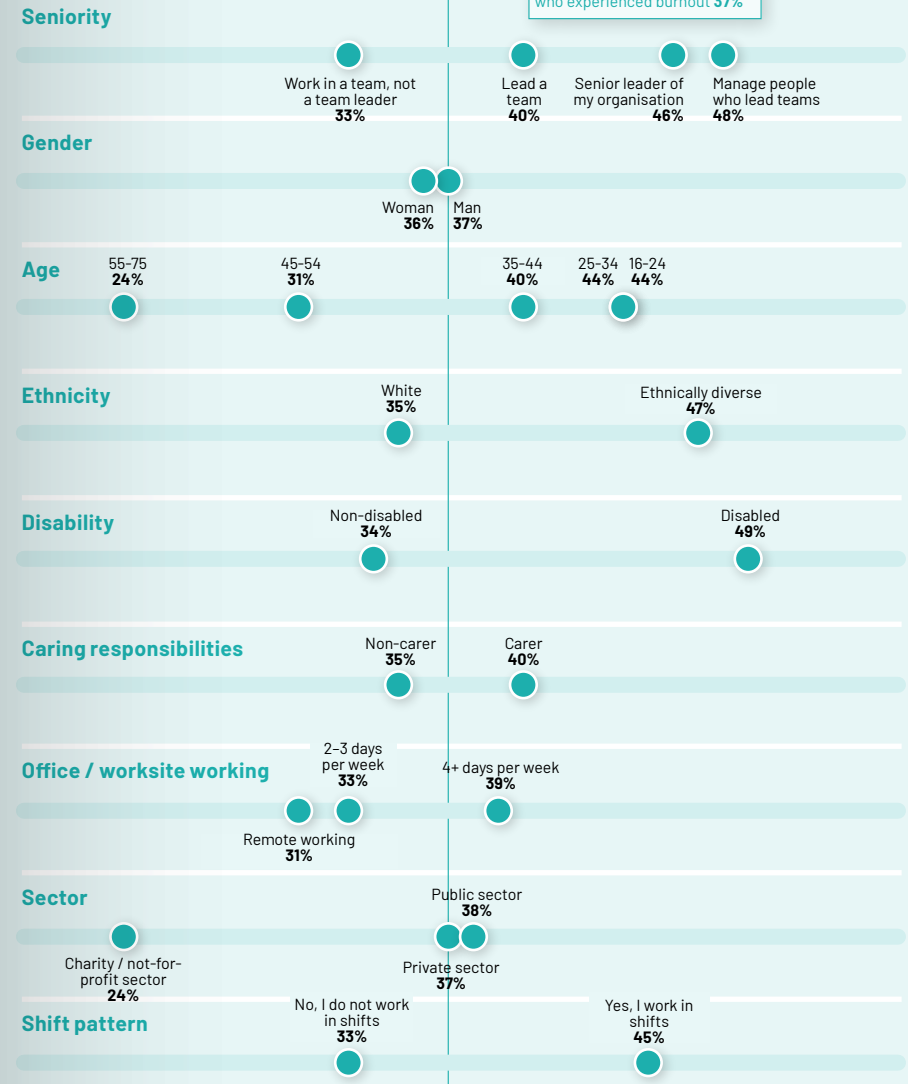
- 7pts less likely to feel respected
- 7pts less likely to have tools and equipment needed to do their job well

Younger employees are...

- 8pts less able to cope with day-to-day demands
- 5pts more likely to feel their employer provides training
- 2pts less likely to believe people have the right skills
- 5pts less likely to feel clear on job expectations



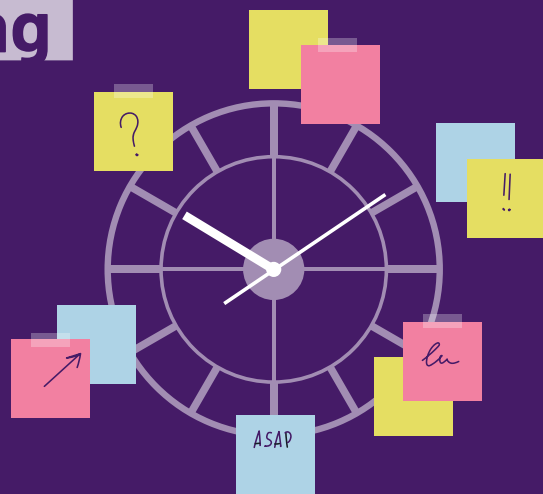
Proportion of employees surveyed who are close to / at burnout by demographic



Base: 2,549 employees in the UK, aged 18–75, surveyed online between 26th July – 5th August 2024.
Seniority: Work in a team, not a team leader (1,402) | Lead a team (530) | Manage people who lead teams (274) | Senior leader of my organisation (236).
Gender: Man (1,311) | Woman (1,225).
Age: 16–24 (351) | 25–34 (653) | 35–44 (544) | 45–54 (560) | 55–75 (411).
Ethnicity: White (2,097) | Ethnically diverse (422).
Disability: Disabled (405) | Non-disabled (2,014).
Caring responsibilities: Carer (850) | Non-carer (1,641).
Office / worksite working: Remote worker (354) | 2–3 days (727) | 4+ days (1,456).
Sector: Private (1,534) | Public (860) | Charity / not-for-profit (121).
Shift pattern: Shift worker (758) | Non-shift worker (1,772).

¹ Jen Fisher et al. **As workforce well-being dips, leaders ask: What will it take to move the needle?** Deloitte Insights, June 2023.

What's driving high levels of burnout?



What the data says

- Our analysis of the main factors driving burnout shows that feeling able to manage work demands has the most significant impact on employee sentiment.
- Other influential factors are being able to disconnect from work (a particular problem for younger workers - see pg. 10-11), having the right equipment and feeling respected at work.
- Job enjoyment is similarly influential. Employees who report not feeling close to burnout are more likely to enjoy their job, feel supported by their manager and successfully balance their work and personal life.

Thoughts and considerations

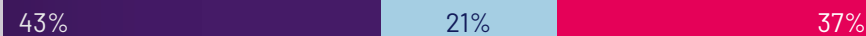
- Taking targeted action on the factors that have the most influence on burnout is likely to have the biggest impact on reducing it.
- Managers and senior leaders are closest to burnout (pg. 6-7). This is a particular concern, given leaders play a critical role in supporting their teams, managing their workloads and instilling psychological safety¹. Investing support at this level could have a knock-on effect across an organisation (see pg. 12-13). How can businesses create the culture and conditions those leaders need to thrive?
- More than two in five employees (43%) report feeling constant strain at work over the last 6 months. This is more highly correlated with burnout than any other driver and can therefore be a useful measure to employ during prolonged periods of change, such as organisational restructures, to gauge the overall mood of the workforce.

¹ Sue Cantrell et al, **The case for human sustainability**, Deloitte Insights, February 2024.

What has the biggest influence on burnout?*

I feel at or close to burnout

Key: ■ Not close to / at burnout ■ Neutral ■ Close to / at burnout



Key: ● Influence on burnout

Base: 921

Too many demands

During the past 6 months, I have felt under **constant strain at work**



I usually feel able to **manage the day-to-day demands** of my role



I am able to **disconnect from work** during non-work time



Insufficient support

My employer provides **appropriate tools and equipment needed** to do the job well



At my company / organisation, I am supported to **balance my work and personal life** in a way that suits me



My manager provides me with the **right support** to do my job well



Low job enjoyment

I enjoy my job at my company / organisation



I receive the **respect** I deserve from my colleagues at work



*Due to rounding, some charts may not add up to 100%.

Younger workers feel less able to regulate their work-life balance

What the data says

- Compared to employees of all other age groups, 16-24-year-olds are 8pts more likely to feel close to or at burnout.
- Younger employees are less confident in managing the day-to-day demands of their role (72%) and disconnecting from work during their personal time (60%). Positivity broadly increases with age, as 55-75-year-olds feel more able to manage demands (84%) and switch off (78%).
- Data shows that, compared to employees of all other age groups, 16-24-year-olds are more likely to receive training (+5pts), but are less clear on expectations (-5pts).

Thoughts and considerations

- Covid may provide some context for low scores. Lots of 16-24-year-olds may have entered the workforce during or just after the pandemic, with many initially working remotely. Research from the Resolution Foundation highlights the career disruption experienced by this age group, with one in three subsequently out of work for extended periods over lockdown or returning to more precarious work afterwards¹.
- Younger employees have had fewer opportunities to learn from their peers in areas such as setting work boundaries or leaving the office on time.² They may also not have had the same continuity and consistency of access to in-person support and guidance that their senior colleagues benefitted from at the start of their careers.
- Wellbeing support for this age group is a potentially crucial aspect of setting younger employees up for success and building a resilient workforce for the future.

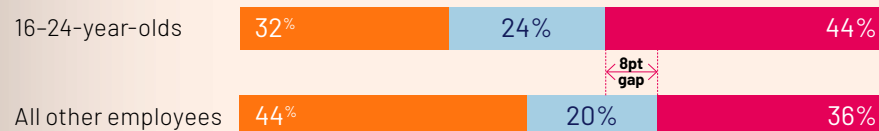


¹ Louise Murphy, **Leaving lockdown – Young people’s employment in 2021: improvements and challenges in the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic**, Resolution Foundation, January 2022.

² Ipsos Karian and Box, **Making the case for the office**, 2023.

Burnout particularly high for 16-24-year-olds due to job demands

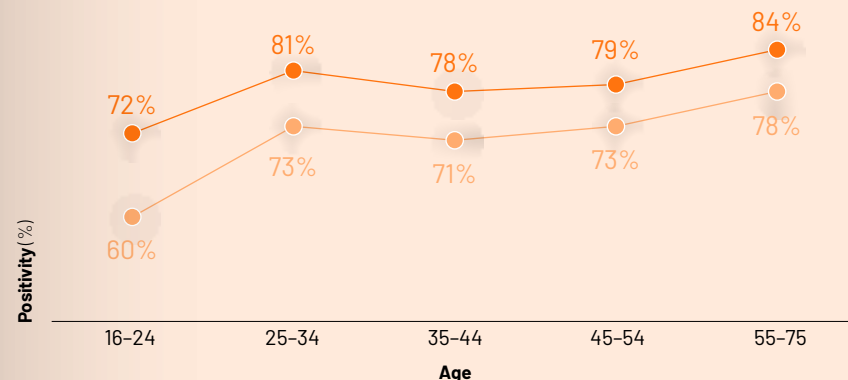
Key: ■ Not close to / at burnout ■ Neutral ■ Close to / at burnout



Younger employees feel less able to disconnect or manage day-to-day demands

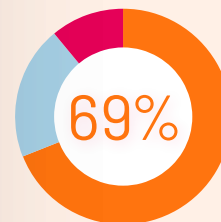
Key: ● I usually feel able to manage the day-to-day demands of my role

● I am able to disconnect from work during non-work time



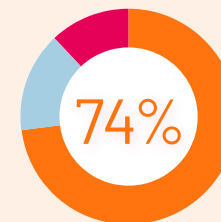
16-24-year-old employees have more training but less role clarity than other age groups

Key: ■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative



My employer provides the training employees need to do their job well

+5



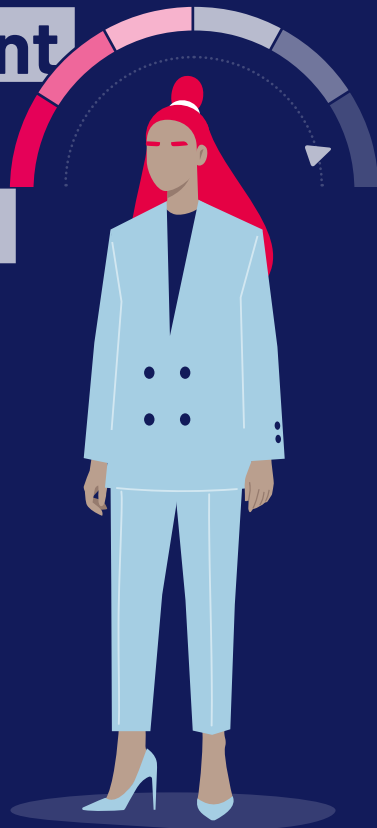
I am clear on what I am expected to achieve in my job

-5

vs. all other employees

Base: Age: 16-24 (351) | 25-34 (653) | 35-44 (544) | 45-54 (560) | 55-75 (411).

How management and leadership affect wellbeing



What the data says

- Three in five (60%) employees say their employer takes positive action on health and wellbeing.
- A number of factors contribute to why this proportion of people feel positive. The strongest and most influential driver is feeling well supported during times of change.
- Having understanding leadership that walks the talk also contributes. Employees are more positive about their employer's wellbeing approach when leaders talk positively about wellbeing and lead by example, and when people are treated fairly.

Proportion who intend to leave their organisation within a year

7%

when they say their employer takes positive action on health and wellbeing

13%

when they say their employer **does not** take positive action on health and wellbeing

Thoughts and considerations

- The data highlights the importance of supporting employees through change – which can be a turbulent process.¹ As everyone reacts to and navigates change differently, support and resources should be varied and tailored accordingly.
- Proactive metrics – such as whether an organisation takes positive steps to address wellbeing – measure human **outcomes** (i.e. benefits to people) as opposed to **outputs** (i.e. their productivity or discretionary effort). This can be much more useful in terms of monitoring and managing human sustainability².

What has the biggest influence on employers taking positive action on health and wellbeing?*

My employer takes positive action on health and wellbeing

Key: ■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative

60%

22%

17%

Key: ● Influence on wellbeing

Base: 1,518

Good change management

I feel **well supported** by my employer **during** periods of **change**



My **company / organisation** supports their employees through its transitional periods or **times of change**



Understanding leadership

Leaders at my company / organisation genuinely **care for employee health and wellbeing**



My **company / organisation** listens to work-related concerns / issues raised by their employees



At my company / organisation, people are **treated fairly**



Walking the talk

Leaders in my company / organisation **talk positively about mental wellbeing**



Managers in my company / organisation **lead by example**



My company / organisation provides **access to resources** to help their employees live a healthy life outside of work



Proportion who advocate their organisation when they...

32%

...say their employer **does not** take positive action on health and wellbeing

79%

...say their employer takes positive action on health and wellbeing

47pt gap

Base: 434 who say their employer does not take positive action on health and wellbeing. 1,518 who say their employer takes positive action on health and wellbeing.

¹Ipsos, **Navigating through Turbulence**, 2024.
²Deloitte: **Workplace wellbeing research**

What employees think employers should prioritise



What the data says

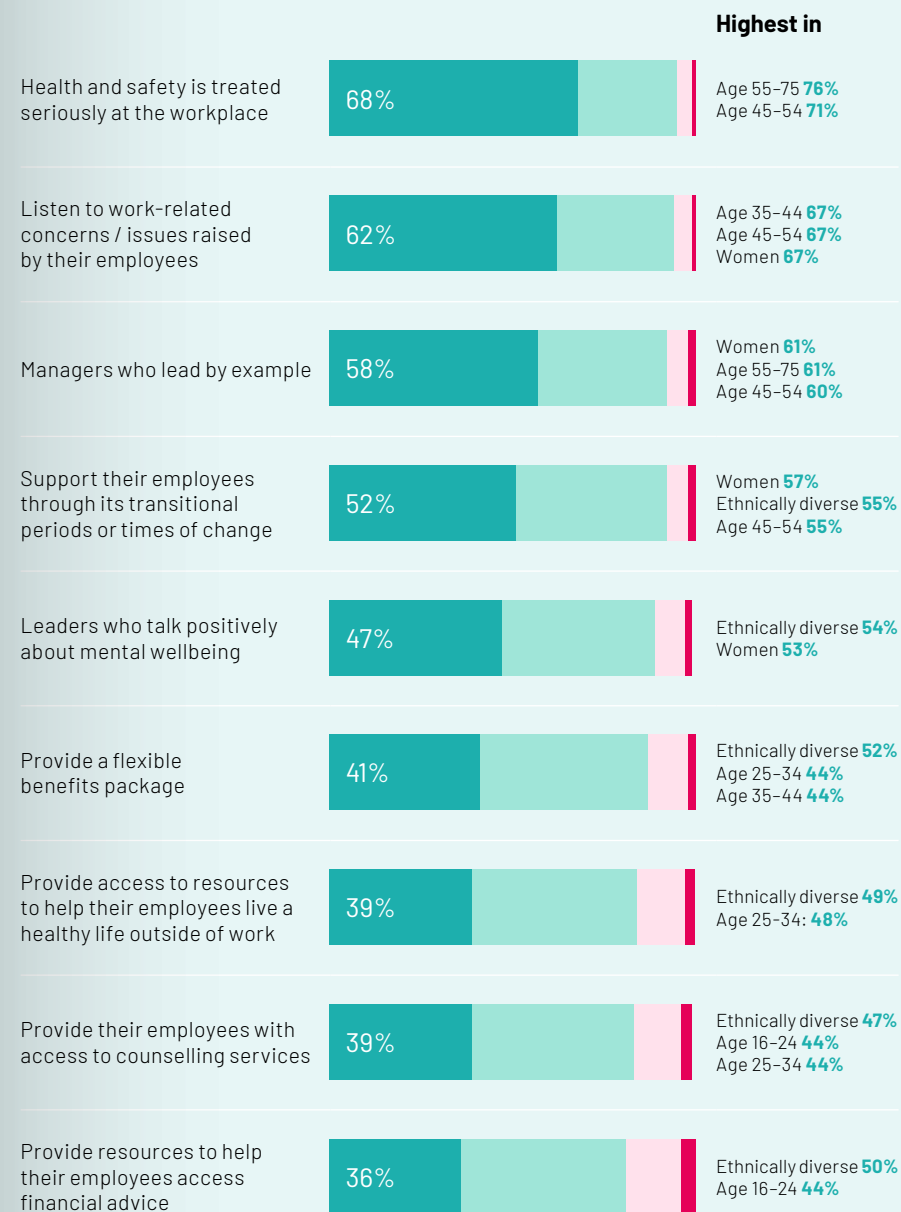
- Analysis shows that ways of working and employer behaviours are broadly more important to employees than the benefits side of wellbeing, despite employers most commonly spending their wellbeing budgets on EAPs, free eye tests, counselling and sick pay¹.
- It's very important to most employees that health and safety is treated seriously (68%), work-related concerns are listened to (62%) and managers lead by example (58%). Women are among the most likely to feel that listening and manager role-modelling are very important to wellbeing.
- Employees aged 55-75 are the strongest advocates for manager role-modelling (61%), while 35-54-year-olds advocate most for employers listening to work-related concerns (67%).

Thoughts and considerations

- Employees appear to see leader-led wellbeing practices as essential elements of workplace culture. Four of the top five most important employer qualities (listening, leading by example, supporting through change and positive role-modelling) are instrumental in driving a positive sense of how an employer views wellbeing (see pg. 13-15).
- Wellbeing programmes are lower down the list but still matter to people. Similar proportions regard flexible benefits, lifestyle resources and counselling / advice services as fairly or very important, with ethnically diverse groups valuing them even more.
- Programmes and benefits are perhaps best viewed as non-negotiable, basic requirements that underpin a progressive, leader-driven approach to human sustainability – one that creates wellbeing that works for everybody.

How important is it, if at all, that employers have the following?

Key: ■ Very important ■ Fairly important ■ Not very important ■ Not at all important



¹ CIPD, **Health and wellbeing at work**, 2023.

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Technical note

Ipsos interviewed a representative quota sample of 2,549 adults aged 16–75 identifying as full- or part-time employees in the United Kingdom using its online i:omnibus between 26th July and 5th August 2024. The sample obtained is filtered from an overall all-adults sample that is representative of the population with quotas on age, gender, region and working status. The data has been weighted to the known offline population proportions for age and full- / part-time status within gender, social grade, government office region and education to reflect the adult population of the United Kingdom. Percentages rebased to exclude "Don't know" responses.