

Employee Benefits Report 2024





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Connor Broadley
Benefits Consulting

Executive summary

The Ukie Employee Benefits Report 2024, delivered in partnership with Connor Broadley, is based on survey responses from 40 member organisations, and provides key insights into the landscape of employee benefits within the UK games and interactive entertainment industry. The organisations surveyed each range in size from less than 20 employees to more than 500 employees, and represent a total workforce share of over 3,000 employees.

This second annual report builds on the benchmark established in 2023, whilst delving deeper into organisational decision making and focusing on staff welfare, wellbeing, and parental leave policies. This year's survey uncovers more key findings and trends across the games industry, and introduces supporting data; from next year, with this data we will be able to begin looking at year-on-year changes, but in the meantime, comparisons have been drawn with typical UK figures.

- 43% of respondents have added new benefits to their package despite budgets posing the most significant challenge.
- Significant improvements have been made to family and lifestyle benefits including maternity, paternity and flexible working.
- Healthcare remains a common theme across studios with many relying on it to also offer basic levels of mental and physical health support.
- Only 26% of studios have a neurodiversity policy in place, compared to a general UK average of 33%¹. Nationally the proportion of neurodiverse employees is thought to be 15-20%², and is reported to be as high as 18% in the games industry³
- Surprisingly, financial wellbeing is not being prioritised given the UK's battle with inflation and the cost-of-living crisis in recent years.

With economic challenges across the games industry, it is no surprise that budgetary demands pose the biggest obstacle for studios to progress or enhance their employee benefits package for staff. With changes to Employer National Insurance contributions, it has become important for a studio to proactively manage their benefits strategy to not only ensure offerings remain competitive for employees but also within budgetary constraints. Interestingly, only 49% of respondents utilise broker or IFA services to support benefits management.

It comes as no surprise that even though studios are still looking to enhance their packages during a difficult time, strategic enhancements have been made across policies that do not bring an immediate cost or are cost neutral. These include WFA flexibility, workplace nursery, cycle 2 work and electric vehicle plans, and enhanced leave – holiday, maternity and paternity, with the latter two ranking third and fourth highest benefits offered to staff. This is sensible and an action other sub-sectors have taken within the creative world. Tailoring packages to support life outside of work is important to over a third of respondents and done correctly can support retention and avoid presenteeism.

¹ACAS, Why UK businesses must prioritise neuroinclusion <https://www.acas.org.uk/why-uk-businesses-must-prioritise-neuroinclusion>

²Texthelp, Neurodiversity Inclusion: Leaders share how to Unlock Potential & Maximize Success <https://www.texthelp.com/en-gb/resources/blog/neurodiversity-inclusion-leaders-share-how-to-unlock-potential-maximize-success/>

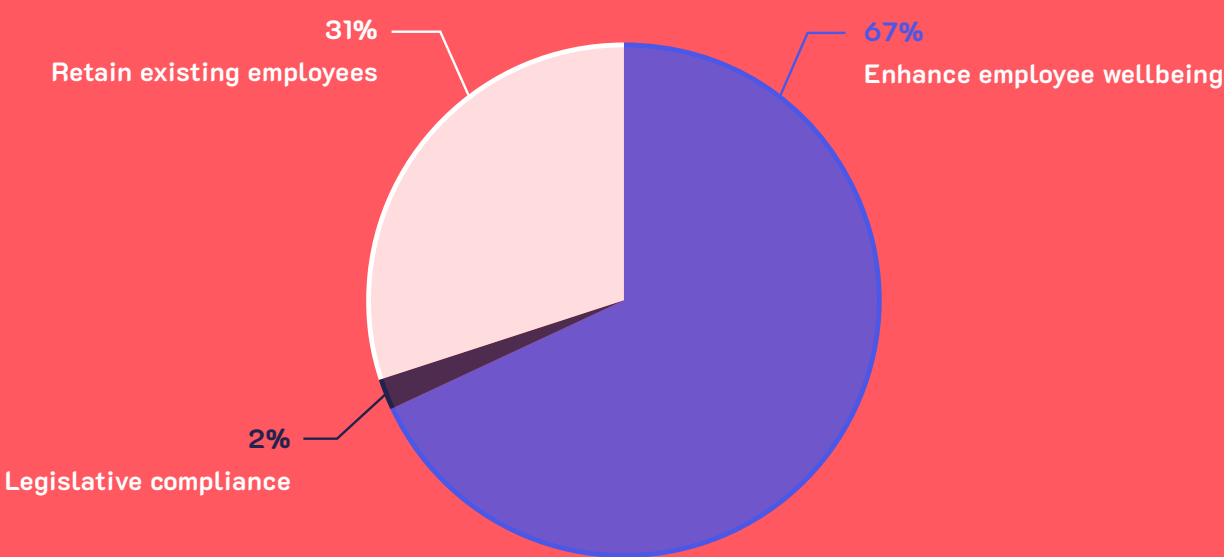
³Ukie, UK Games Industry Census 2022 (p37) <https://ukie.org.uk/news/uk-games-industry-census-2022/>





Employee Benefits Summary

What is the main reason for offering employee benefits?



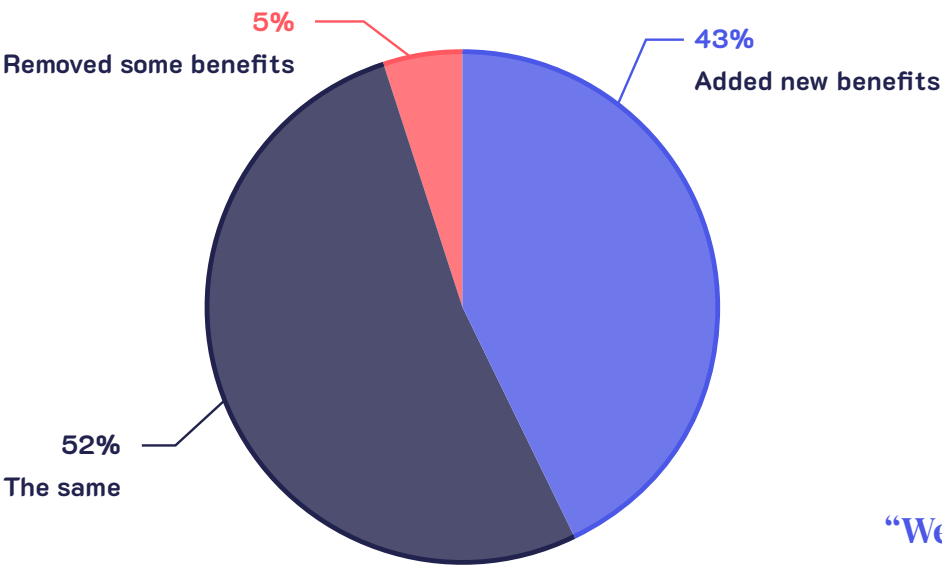
67% of organisations prioritise enhancing employee wellbeing as their rationale for offering benefits, compared with 31% prioritising employee retention. Legislative compliance was a minor factor, with no companies citing productivity or candidate attraction as their primary drivers. The vast majority of organisations ensure their benefits are accessible by all employees, (subject to waiting periods, e.g. probation), with only 7% granting access according to employee seniority and/or experience.

Who has access to your employee benefits?

All employees	93%
Tiered by seniority and/or experience	7%

“We have added benefits make us comparable to other studios, but also to work towards matching our company culture ambition”

How have your company’s employee benefits changed over the past year?



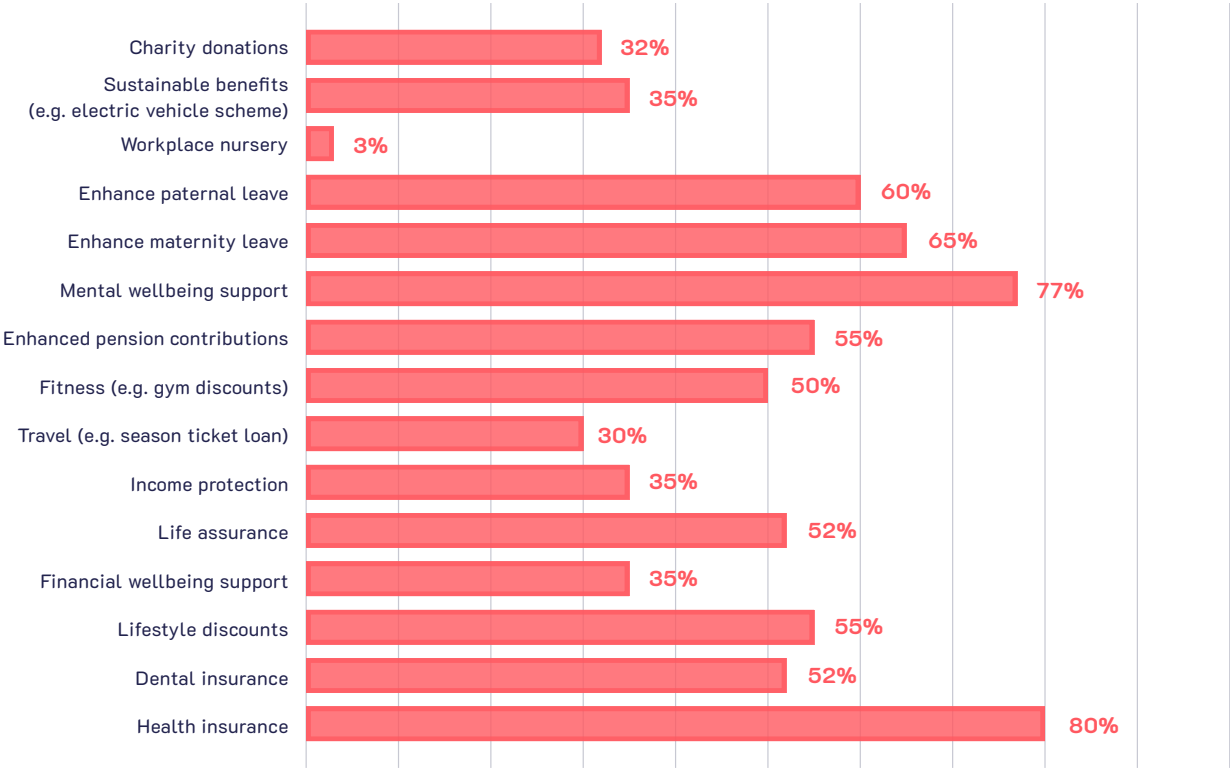
“We want to ensure we can attract and retain the best talent”

A little over half of the organisations surveyed were looking to introduce new benefits in the coming year (or make changes to existing benefits), citing reviews following employee feedback and shifting budget to more desirable benefits making their offering more effective and valuable for all employees, with enhanced parental leave prioritised by the majority. However, in the previous twelve months, a little over half of the organisations had made no changes to their benefits while only 5% of companies stated they had removed or reduced some of their benefits on offer, the reasons for which were unanimously due to budget constraints.

Are you looking to introduce new or change existing benefits in the coming 12 months?

Yes	55%
No	45%

What are the types of benefits that your organisation offers?



The companies surveyed listed a wide range of benefits on offer, with Health insurance (80%), mental wellbeing support (78%), and enhanced maternity leave (65%) among the most common. Workplace nursery support and sustainability focused benefits, (e.g. electric vehicle schemes), are less widely adopted.

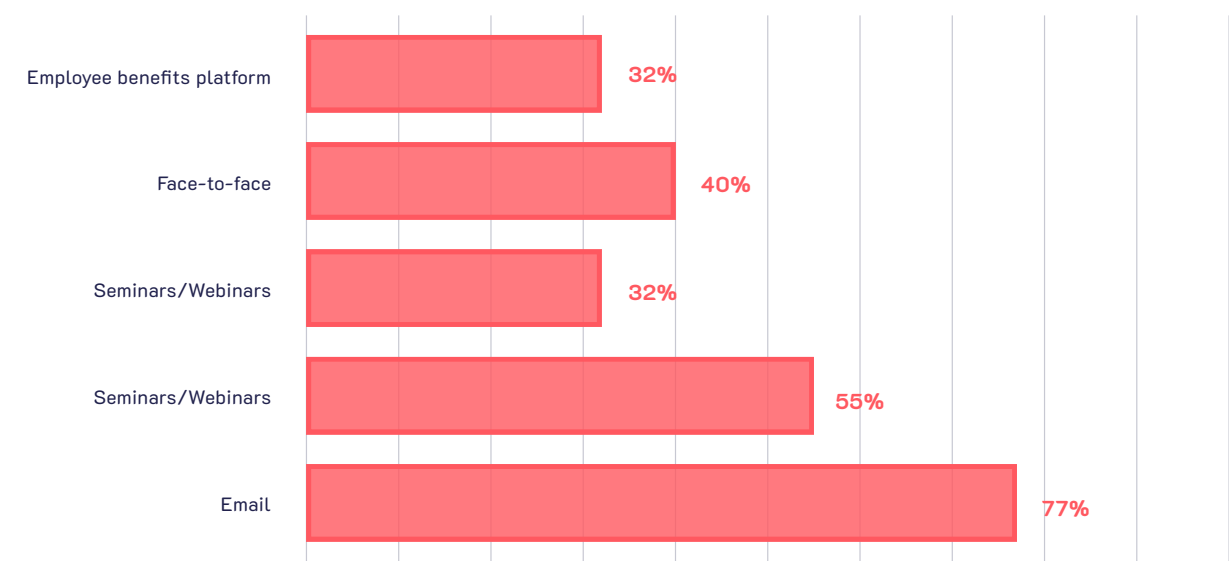
CB*: At 80%, **health insurance** remains the most common benefit across studios, we suspect though this figure includes private medical insurance (PMI), health cash plans and wellbeing funds. It is estimated that in the UK as a whole, 50% of firms offer PMI, and 25% health cash plans. This is unsurprising given the demand for healthcare post Covid-19 and long ongoing NHS waiting lists. Private medical insurance now offers ease of access to day-to-day healthcare services such as virtual GPs, prescriptions, helplines and health assessments, with the industry moving more towards a total healthcare approach. Schemes also regularly include gym discounts and tech wearables to support physical wellness, which is often overlooked by companies.

*Commentary from Connor Broadley



CB: Some studios have taken time to assess their **pension contributions** and increase their offering to employees. It is well known within the pension industry that the existing contribution levels are not enough to fund a moderate living standard at retirement and there are calls from the UK’s largest pension providers that these levels should be increased. Aviva is an advocate that employees should be saving at least 12.5% of their salary to secure a more comfortable retirement. To encourage inclusivity and avoid benefits being linked to seniority, we believe any enhanced contribution structure should be linked to length of service and on a matching basis, with the employer increasing their contribution if the employee does (with a maximum cap applicable). This encourages employees to consider their contribution if they know they can receive more from their employer. Labour is yet to generate their full pension review report, expected later this year, however the document will fully assess the UK workplace pension system.

How do you communicate your company benefits to employees?



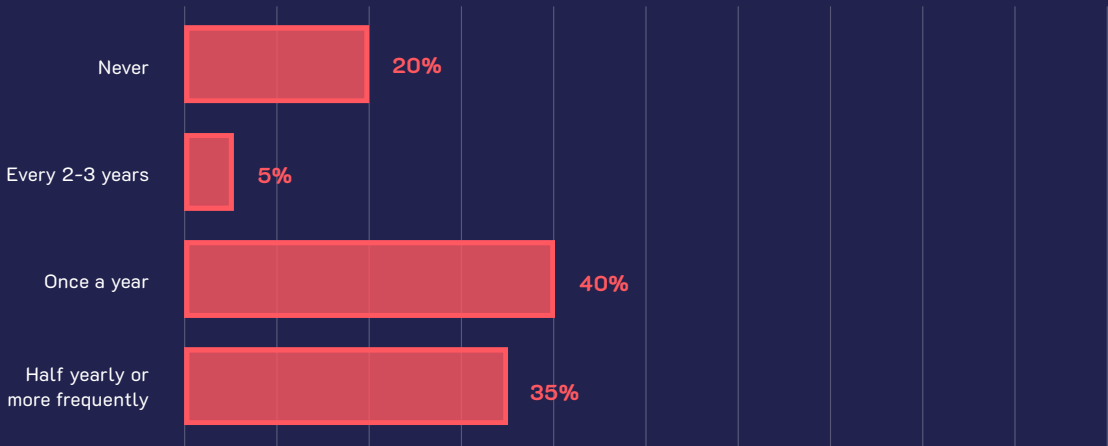
Do you use a broker or IFA to support your employee benefits strategy?

Yes 49%

No 51%

CB: Having a benefits package in place is only of any value to employees if they are fully aware of what they are entitled to. How benefits are communicated internally is crucial. Interestingly the results showed that the most common way for information to be shared is via email (77%), and yet company emails are often cited by internal comms specialists as being one of the least effective methods of communication. Employee benefit platforms are an effective method to increase engagement and awareness of a studio's offering, as a one stop shop to view all benefits. Most platform providers now offer smartphone apps as an accessible way for employees to find employee benefit information. Platforms at this stage are designed for studios with headcounts over 150 with recurring annual fees roughly between £5,000 -£10,000, but there are expected developments for SME companies soon.

Do you conduct staff surveys or focus groups to gather feedback about your offering?



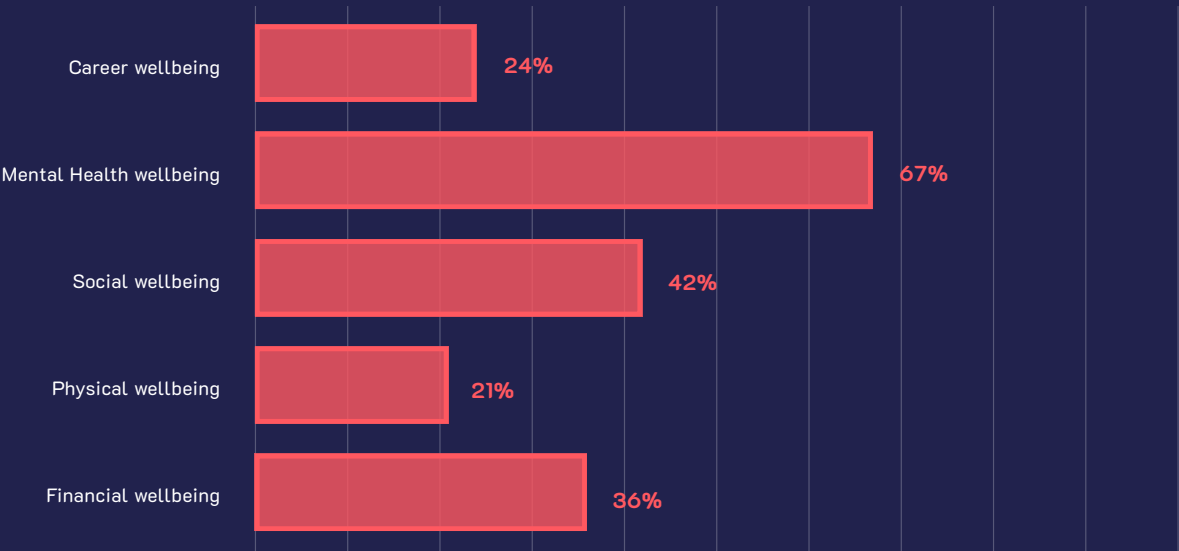
CB: Gathering staff feedback across studios appears to be regular with 75% of respondents collecting feedback via surveys or focus groups every year. This allows studios to be proactive and versatile around the package ensuring that it delivers good value for money, we recommend larger employee benefit strategy projects take place every 3 years and feedback around benefit experience and providers should be collected annually.

Employee Wellbeing

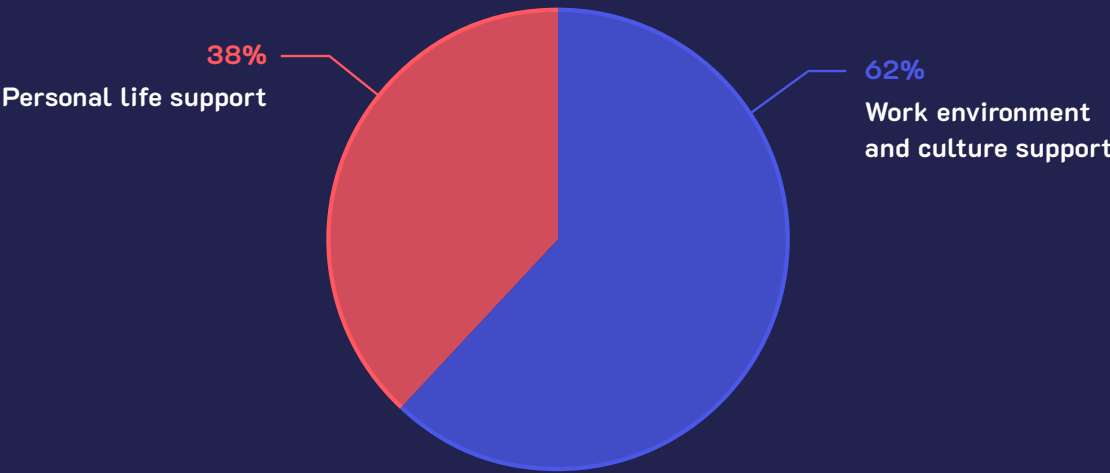
Employers prioritise workplace culture and personal life support in their wellbeing initiatives with mental health support being the key focus, followed by social and

financial wellbeing. Popular mental health benefits include dedicated health cover, mental health apps, and mental health first-aider training programs.

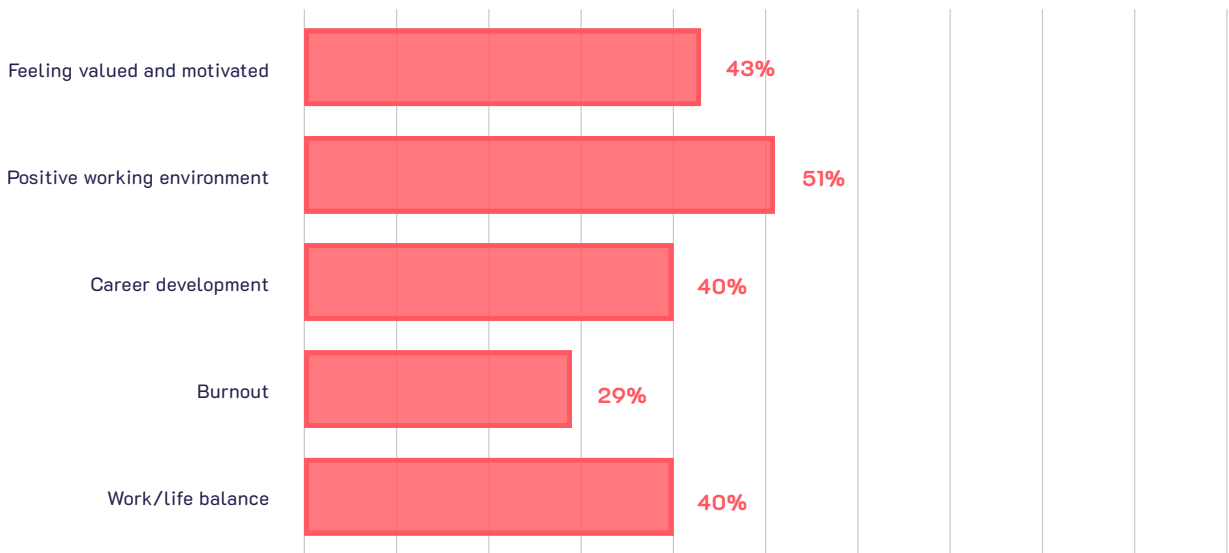
What two pillars of wellbeing does management and HR currently prioritise when choosing benefits?



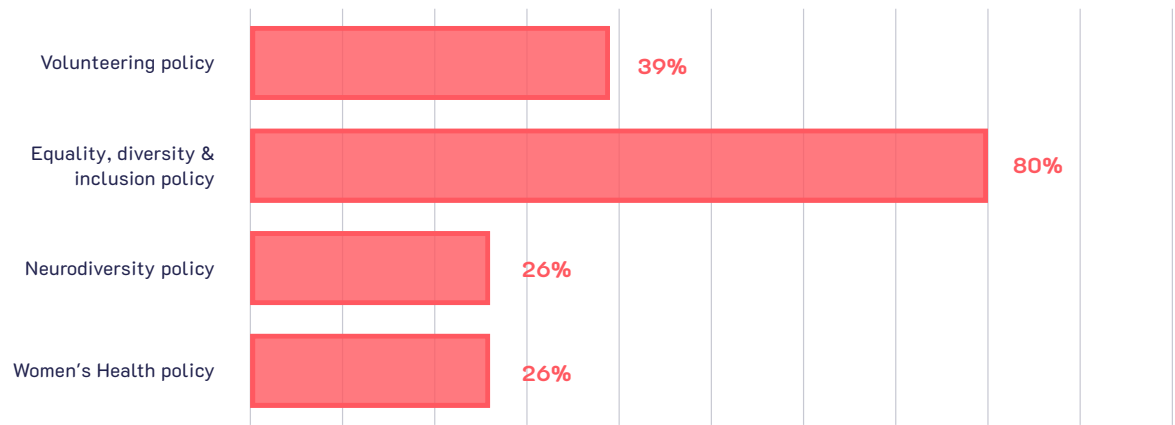
What is more of a priority when it comes to wellbeing support?



Which two employee issues are management and HR most concerned about?



Do you currently have any of the below policies?



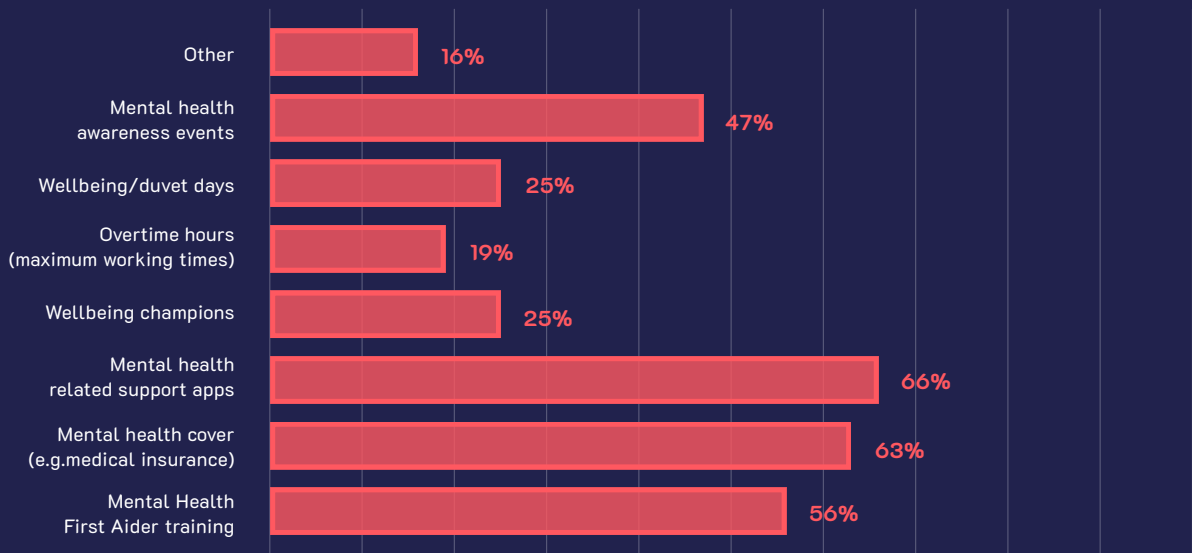
CB: Neurodiversity remains an area in which many studios are yet to implement support or generate a formal policy, that said, a workplace solution has only recently been brought to market by the benefits industry, which includes company education, which can be useful for line manager training, and ongoing one to one support for employees. With this in mind, together with the fact that the games industry has a higher-than-average proportion of neurodiverse people working within it, we hope neurodiversity policies rank highly in Ukie's findings next year.

Any other policies you are planning to introduce?

- Gender identity
- Learning & Development
- Increased Compassionate Leave



Mental health support offered

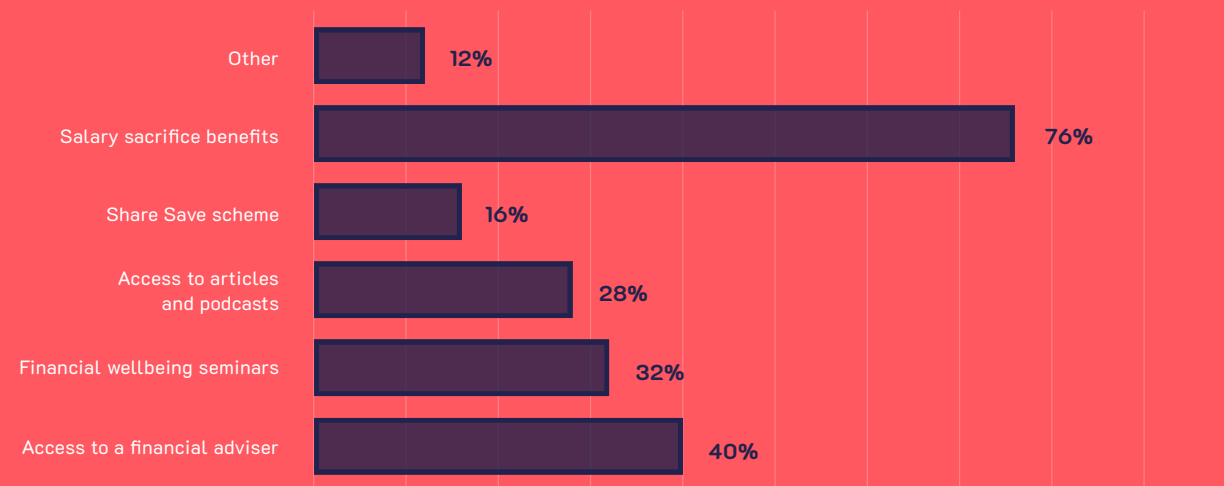


Additional Mental Health support offered:

- Mental Health resources on our Employee Guide
- Mental health workshops, Mental health support with BUPA (therapy sessions)
- Juno points (wellbeing platform)
- Wellbeing check-in during quarterly one-to-ones
- Mental Health sickness days
- EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) Counselling sessions.
- Activities in the studio with opportunities to talk about Mental Health.

CB: Mental wellbeing remains top of the agenda for studios with many relying on support through private medical insurance plans as their core solution. Outside of this mental health first aid training for HR and line managers remains a key area to upskill staff and impact studio culture. Poor mental wellbeing at work is a UK wide issue with reports estimating it costs the economy £300 million a year, it is therefore no surprise that creating a positive work environment is the most common issue (51%) that managers and HR are concerned by. Interestingly employee burnout ranks lowest (29%), a surprising outcome as the two are very much linked. Across the creative sector companies have implemented working hour policies to help separate work from personal lives, designed to prevent burnout. Other popular methods of mental health wellbeing support include app-based services for employees to utilise at their discretion, and office awareness events, both are useful with 1 in 6 people experiencing common mental health problems in any given week.

What financial support do you offer?



CB: Only 36% of participating studios provide financial wellbeing support and is less recognised as a priority, being below mental health (67%) and social wellbeing (42%). This comes as a slight surprise given the long term struggles the UK economy has seen with inflation and households needing to manage their money closely. It also shows perhaps that the games industry is a little behind the curve with the national figure showing that 44% of UK companies actively promote or support employees' financial wellbeing to a moderate or large extent (National Forum for Health and Wellbeing At Work, 2023).

A popular method of financial wellbeing support is through salary sacrifice benefits, a clever way to help employees make tax and NI efficiencies. Some studios have offered access to mortgage broking services, another way to support life/household outside of work. 40% of those studios who are prioritising financial wellbeing do offer access to an adviser which can improve day-to-day financial wellbeing, which in turn can be an important contributory factor to positive mental wellbeing.

What other financial support do you offer?

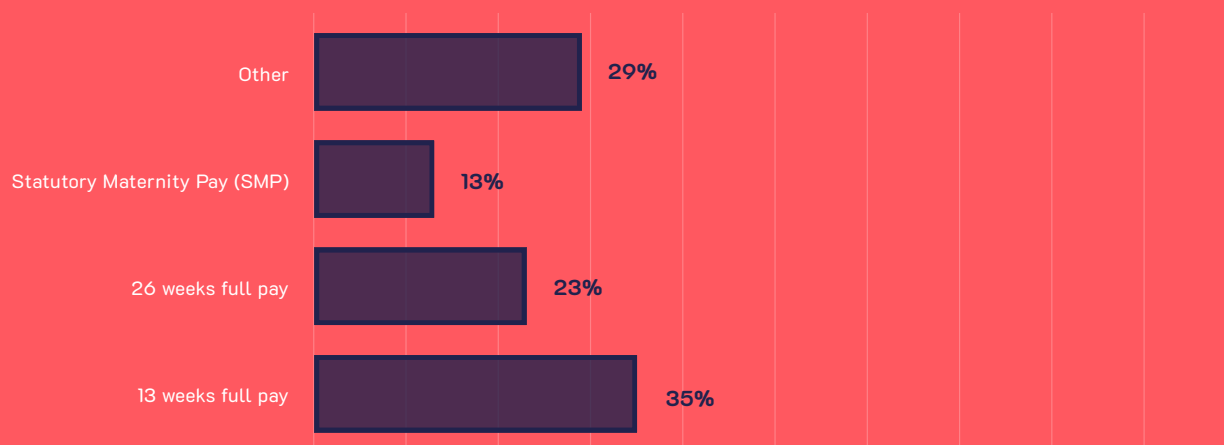
- Access to mortgage adviser
- Loans





Parental Leave & Flexible Working

Current maternity leave policy



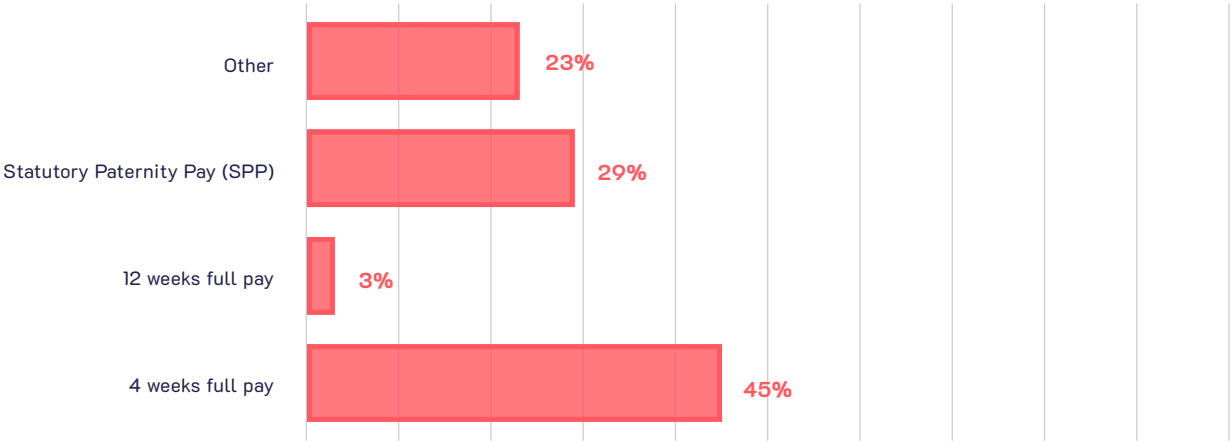
“We wanted to become a leader in benefits and not become a barrier to people who want to start families”

Other specified Maternity Leave Policies included:

- 12 weeks full pay
- 26 weeks (6 months) at full pay, then another optional 13 weeks at statutory amounts of £151.97 or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower)
- 20 weeks full pay
- 18 weeks full pay
- 48 weeks paid, depending on length of service depends on how long full pay is
- 39 weeks full pay



Current paternity leave policy



“We want to work towards having similar lengths of leave and pay for both maternity and paternity”

Other specified Paternity Leave Policies included:

- 6 weeks full pay
- 3 weeks full pay
- It’s the same as maternity
- Enhanced parental leave (26 weeks full pay)
- Need reviewing and specifying
- 8 weeks full pay



CB: Maternity and paternity benefits appear to be the most common policies reviewed by studios, with the 35% of respondents providing 13 weeks full pay. Assess all responses, the average studio policy provides 13 to 26 weeks full pay, this largely falls in line with the wider creative sector, (between 15-17 weeks), with companies linking their enhanced pay to length of service. 13% of respondents offer statutory pay only, no doubt with budget constraints a factor.

In respect of paternity leave, 43% of respondents offer 4 weeks full pay being the most common setup, with a handful increasing paid leave to 6 or 8 weeks. Many studios have made efforts to support new parents by creating family focused policies, these include offering workplace nursery, childcare schemes and flexible working. We believe this trend will continue, with reproductive health benefits gaining traction within the benefits industry.

Enhanced maternity and paternity leave are widely provided with 87% of organisations offering enhanced maternity leave and over 70% offering enhanced paternity leave. Factors influencing decision making on enhancing parental leave include:

- budget
- size of company,
- striving to be family focused,
- retention and attraction of more women employees,
- desire to offer better than statutory
- observing policies adopted by companies with high employee satisfaction



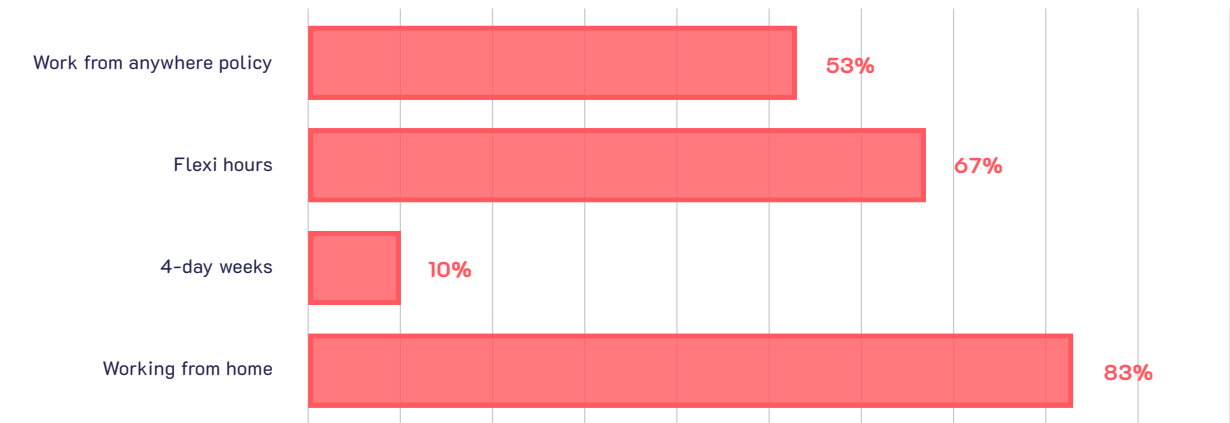
11% provided other 'above and beyond' support for new parents, including:

- TED Childcare scheme (parents can save up to 50% off annual nursery fees)
- Juno points
- £400 net payment per month up to the child's 3rd birthday as part of our Childcare Support Scheme.
- Flexible working on return





What flexibility do you offer to staff?



Remote and flexible working is widely embraced by most organisations, with 83.% offering remote work from home, 66% offering flexi-hours, and 53% supporting work-from-anywhere policies.



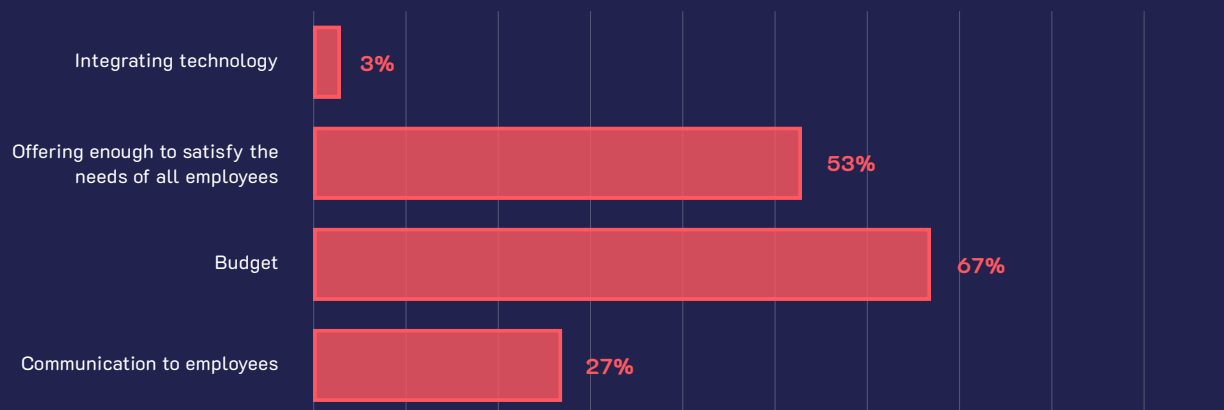
Additional commentary on policies and models adopted relating to Flexible Working:

- 4-day work week, two days in office, two days out and flexible working hours around our core hours
- 35 hour working week, flexibility on hours, ability to work from home as required
- 4-day weeks are an option at the time of hiring, but come with a reduced salary. We prefer to offer extensive flexibility with work hours rather than a set 4-day policy.
- We consider our company to be as flexible as we can wherever possible, and try to meet the needs of staff vs projects as much as possible
- Flexible start and end times, up to certain bounds
- Work from anywhere only if legally allowed to do it & no issues with work

Challenges and Conclusion

Budget constraints are the most significant challenge in offering benefits. Struggling to meet employee needs and effectively communicating available benefits are additional concerns.

What challenges do you face when it comes to your employee benefits package?



Further comments on challenges:

“Difficult to get the right balance of benefits that employees value without having to do flexible benefits. Cost is a huge factor”

“Very hard to change benefits once in place so need to think about the package very carefully for good value for money and no unexpected impact on work productivity”

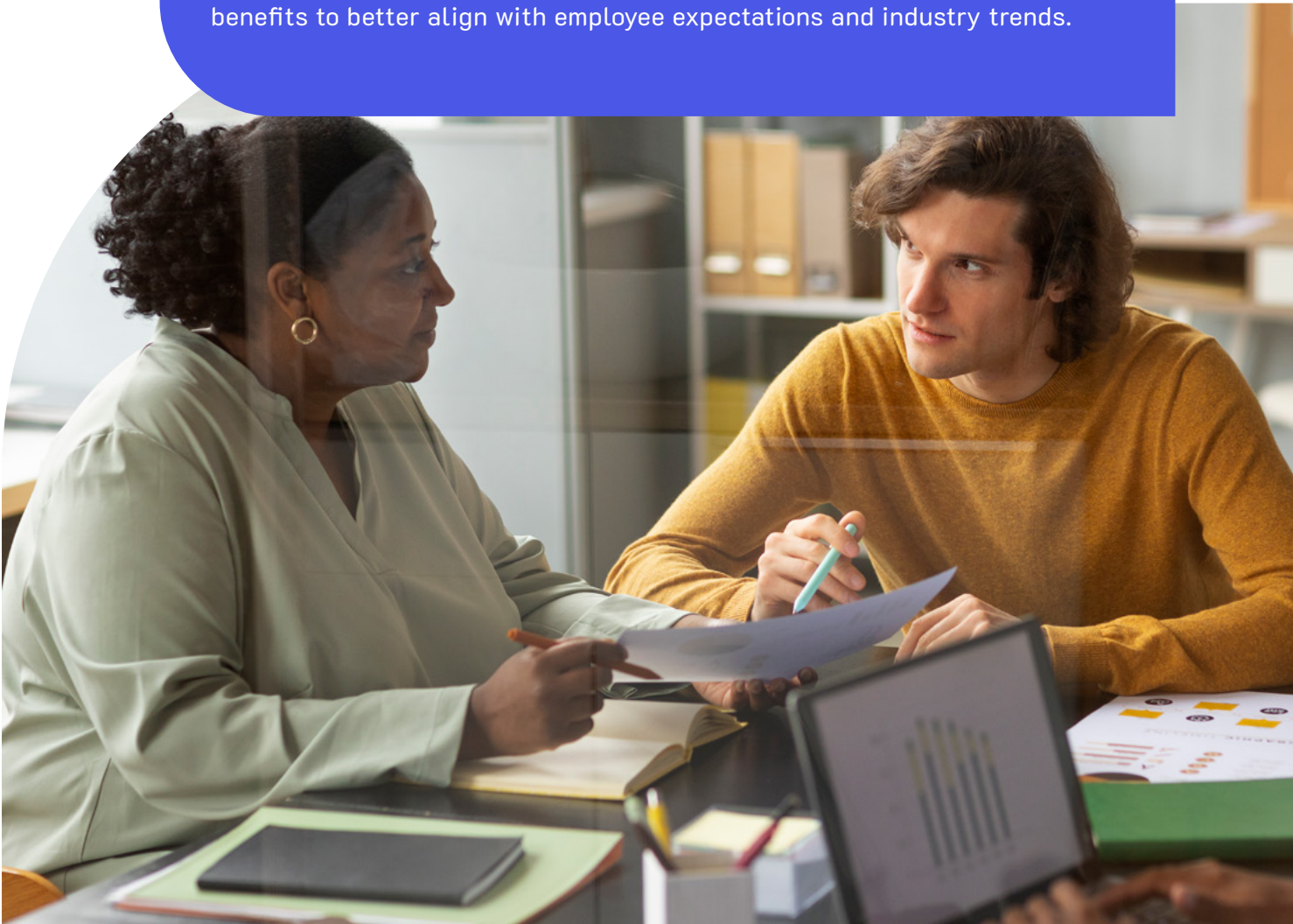


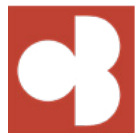
CB: The 2024 Ukie Employee Benefits Survey paints a picture of a sector striving to support its people despite economic pressures. Studios are navigating budget constraints with strategic, often cost-neutral enhancements that reflect evolving employee priorities—particularly around family leave, flexible working, and healthcare. However, notable gaps remain in financial wellbeing and neurodiversity support, areas increasingly recognised as essential to a truly inclusive benefits strategy.

As the industry develops, the opportunity lies in creating benefits packages that not only retain talent but genuinely enrich working lives. With better communication tools, improved employee feedback processes, and a continued focus on long-term wellbeing the sector can set a benchmark for the wider creative industry.

Future Plans for Benefits:

A significant number of companies plan to introduce new benefits or modify existing ones within the next year with key areas of focus including cycle-to-work schemes, increased pension contributions, additional paid leave, and flexible working options. Organisations are also reviewing benefits to better align with employee expectations and industry trends.





Connor Broadley
Benefits Consulting

If you have any questions about employee benefits or wellbeing on the back of these findings from our recent informal poll, please feel free to contact our Benefits partner Connor Broadley. You will find more details below.

Connor Broadley is an independent financial services business, specialising in employee benefits and financial wellbeing consultancy for companies, and financial planning for individuals. We work with over 100 companies, predominantly within the creative industries partnering with their HR and finance teams to help implement and maintain employee benefit programmes, tailored to their particular circumstances, and covering all aspects of physical, financial and mental wellbeing.

A popular introductory service we offer is our 'Benefits MOT', designed to review the core policies underpinning a company's existing benefits programme. We often find that a fresh perspective can help ensure benefits continue to meet the demands of staff and their evolving needs, but also that optimisation can deliver better value for employees and employers alike.

To kick-start this process, we discuss your objectives and any existing policies and arrangements you may already have in place. Things we can cover include everything from auto-enrolment pensions, life assurance and income protection, to private medical insurance, health cash plans and employee wellbeing. Our team will provide feedback on the setup of your current benefits and highlight any suggestions to consider or implement. This could include exploring new benefits, insurer reviews and cost containment measures.

If this sounds of interest, please do not hesitate to reach out and contact **Charlie Pitt** on **0207 647 8810** or **charlie@connorbroadley.co.uk**





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