

June 2026

ukie

Employee Benefits Report 2026



ukie.org.uk

In partnership with:



Connor Broadley



Contents

Executive Summary	4
Rationale for Employee Benefits	6
Types of Benefits on offer	7
Changes to Employee Benefits	8
Perception of Benefits	12
Mental Health Support	14
Financial Support	15
Pensions	16
Maternity Leave	18
Paternity Leave	21
Annual Leave	22
Challenges	25





Executive summary

The 2026 survey paints a picture of a games industry whose approach to employee benefits is becoming more mature and inclusive, but which is also operating under clear cost pressure. The data, drawn from responses representing 3,400 employees, shows that firms across the sector continue to evolve their approach to employee wellbeing, reward, and workforce support. The findings demonstrate a growing recognition that benefits play an important role not only as a perk and in attracting and retaining talent, but also in creating positive, supportive workplaces where employees can thrive. Benefits are increasingly being viewed as a core part of the overall employee experience, helping to support wellbeing, strengthen engagement, and build a positive workplace culture.

The results indicate that wellbeing is now the primary driver behind benefits strategy within the industry. When asked why benefits are offered, 60% of employers identified enhancing employee wellbeing as their main objective, while 32% highlighted employee retention. Only a small proportion cited attraction alone as the primary reason, suggesting that employers are increasingly focused on the long-term employee experience.

One of the clearest themes from this year's survey is the growing importance of Private Medical Insurance (PMI). With 92% of employers already offering PMI, it has become one of the most established and expected benefits within the sector. Employers referenced increasing demand for quicker access to healthcare and additional support alongside NHS provision, reinforcing the view that PMI is increasingly seen as a core benefit rather than a premium add-on. Significantly, PMI was also identified as the most commonly considered future benefit among organisations currently reviewing or expanding their employee offering.

The survey also highlights the importance of mental health across the industry. Almost all employers offer some form of mental wellbeing support. PMI is largely relied upon for longer-term mental health support, while firms also provide a range of proactive initiatives to help employees manage their mental wellbeing, including

wellbeing check-ins, mental health first-aid training, and access to mental wellbeing apps.

When employers ranked wellbeing priorities for the year ahead, mental wellbeing emerged as the highest overall priority. This suggests that employers are increasingly incorporating conversations around mental wellbeing into everyday management practices.

Enhanced leave policies also continue to gain momentum and are becoming increasingly standard across the industry. The survey found that 64% of employers offer enhanced maternity leave, 56% provide enhanced paternity leave, and just under half offer enhanced holiday flexibility or buy-and-sell leave arrangements.

The continued expansion of enhanced family leave and flexible time-off policies reflects a broader shift towards supporting work/life balance and creating a more positive employee experience. Employers appear to recognise that flexibility and supportive leave arrangements are becoming increasingly important in remaining competitive within the games talent market. Financial wellbeing has also emerged as a significant area of development. Ongoing cost-of-living pressures are clearly influencing reward strategies, with many employers placing greater emphasis on helping employees make the most of their salary and access additional financial support.



A large proportion of employers (77%) offer salary sacrifice benefits as a way of creating savings for staff. However, only 57% are capitalising on the savings associated with pension salary sacrifice – the most common benefit offered across all employers in the UK.

Financial wellbeing is inextricably linked with mental wellbeing, with financial worries often creating stress and anxiety. With this in mind, 45% of respondents offer access to a financial adviser to discuss day-to-day finances. However, only 23% run financial wellbeing seminars to provide company-wide financial education.

While pension provisions continue to vary significantly between studios, there is evidence that employers are increasingly reviewing how pension support can form a more strategic part of their overall benefits package. However, there is still work to be done, as the survey found that 67% of employers do not offer enhanced pension contributions, falling below the minimum combined contribution level of 12% recommended by pension providers. Across the broader creative industries, the importance of pensions is increasingly being recognised by employees, which we feel will naturally filter through to the games industry over time.

The survey also indicates that employers remain engaged in reviewing and evolving their benefits offering despite wider economic and budgetary pressures. While 68% of employers stated that benefits had remained largely unchanged during the past year, 20% introduced new benefits and 16% are actively planning further changes within the next 12 months. In addition, more than half of respondents indicated that they are currently reviewing potential future enhancements.

Key areas being explored for future implementation include:

- Private Medical Insurance
- Enhanced pension contributions
- Enhanced maternity and paternity leave
- Additional holiday flexibility
- Financial wellbeing support

Alongside benefits development, the survey highlights several wider workforce concerns facing games employers. Career development, burnout, employee motivation, and creating a positive working environment were identified as some of the most significant challenges. Interestingly, staff turnover ranked relatively low compared with wellbeing and engagement related concerns, suggesting that employers are increasingly focused on creating supportive working environments and improving overall employee satisfaction.

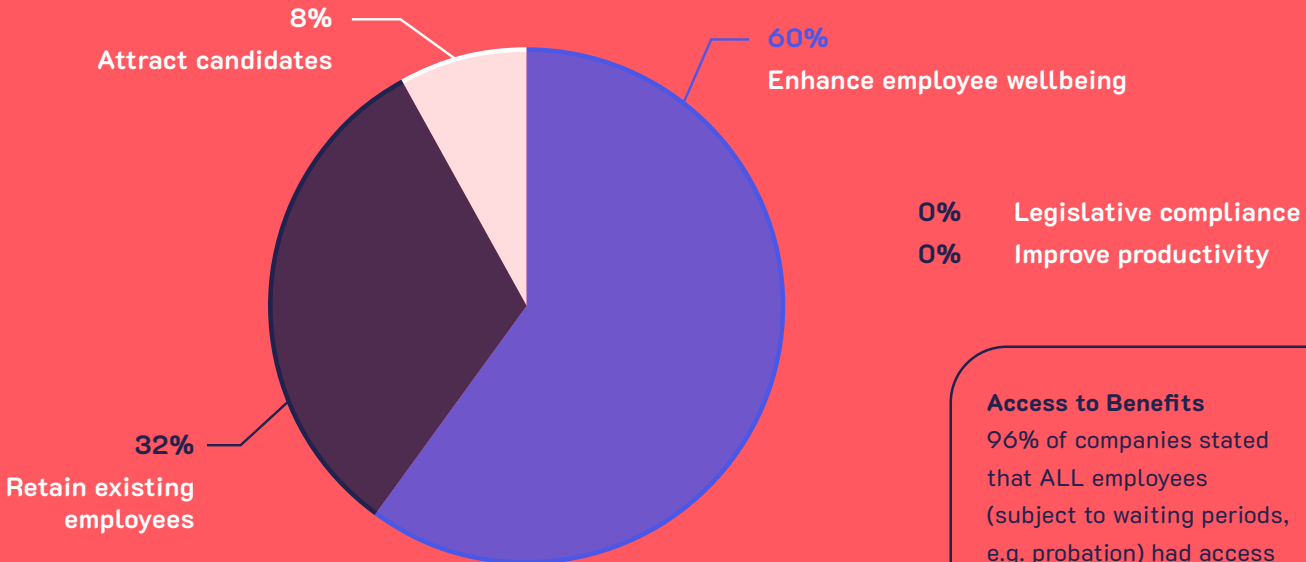
The industry also continues to broaden its focus on inclusion and policy development. All surveyed employers reported having Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policies in place (compared with 80% in 2025), while many organisations are expanding support through women's health policies, learning and development initiatives, volunteering policies, and neurodiversity support frameworks.

Overall, and encouragingly, the results confirm that, despite challenging economic pressures, games employers are continuing to take a more people-focused approach to benefits, viewing them as an important investment in employee wellbeing, workplace culture, and long-term business success.



Rationale for Employee Benefits

What is your main reason for offering employee benefits?

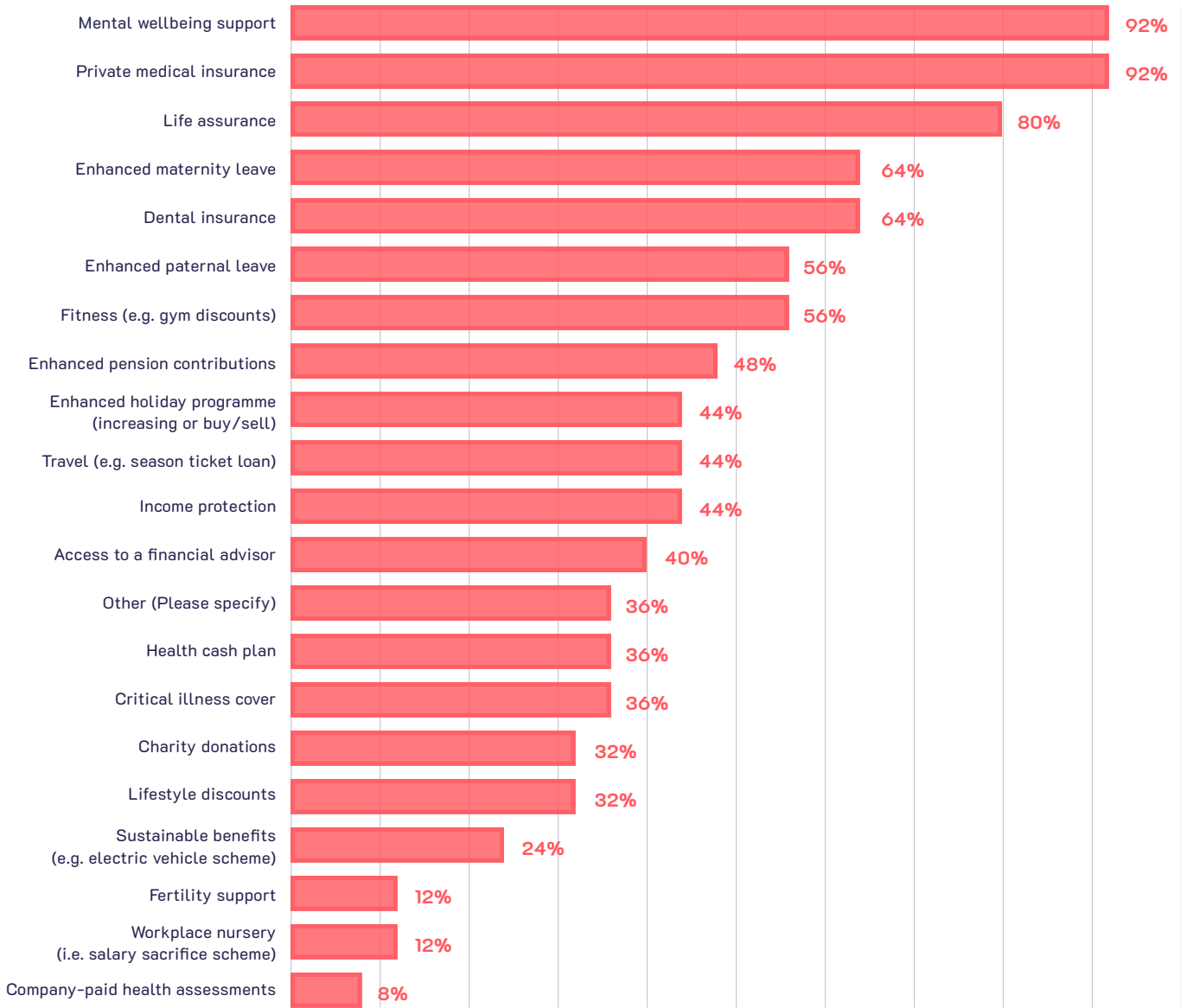


Similar to last year's survey results, the prime rationale for Employee benefits remains to support and sustain existing workforces, rather than as a means to attract new candidates.

Access to Benefits
96% of companies stated that ALL employees (subject to waiting periods, e.g. probation) had access to their full suite of benefits, rather than tiering benefits by seniority and/or experience (e.g. reserving certain benefits only for senior management).

Types of Benefits on offer

What types of benefits does your organisation currently offer?



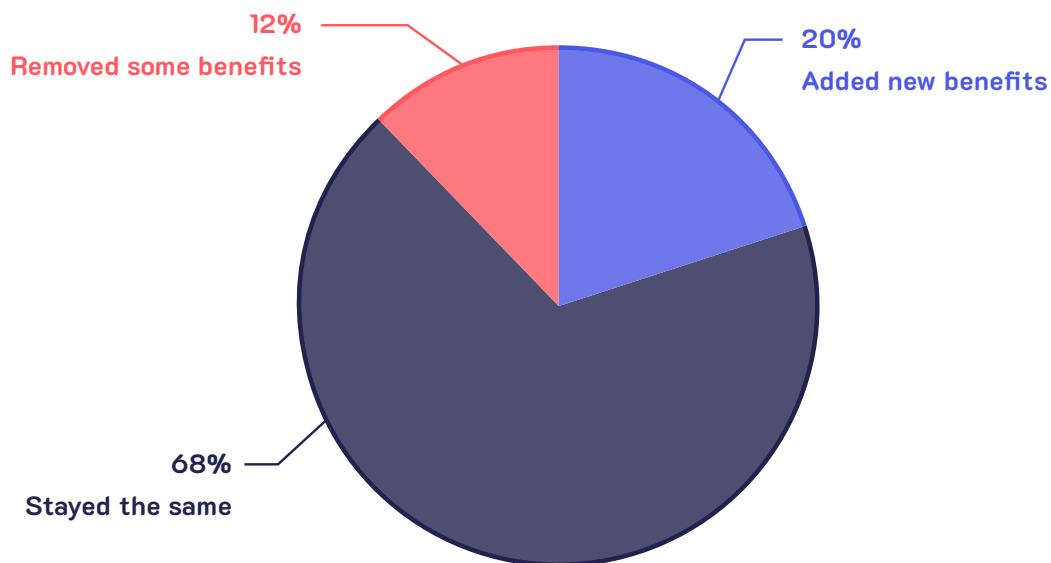
As with last year, Mental wellbeing support and private medical insurance remain the top two benefits on offer. Despite this however, one company commented that “private medical premium increases have been extremely high in the recent years which makes us worry if we will be able to continue to provide this benefit”, which could suggest a change in the trend next year. Interestingly, Life Assurance, the third most widely offered benefit, has seen a significant year-on-year increase, rising from 52% of respondents offering last year to 80% this year.

Other benefits mentioned included:

- Share Options,
- Remote working stipend,
- Events budget,
- Self-development / Learning budget,
- Paid charity days
- Flexible working,
- 4 day week,
- Gaming device funding

Changes to Employee Benefits

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



In the past year, 12% of companies have scaled back their benefits offering, more than double the 5% reported in 2025. Meanwhile, the proportion of companies adding new benefits (20%) has fallen by more than half compared to last year (43%) with fewer companies overall seeking to adjust their existing offer at all. Delving deeper into the different shifts in employee benefits, when asked why reductions in benefits had been made, companies reported **financial pressures** as well as a **consolidation** of benefits.

- **Financial Pressures:** “Financial need to revise benefits - removed travel allowance and monthly lifestyle/ wellbeing allowance”
- **Consolidation** “We’ve made some updates to our employee benefits. Juno Points, previously used to support employee wellbeing, have been removed,

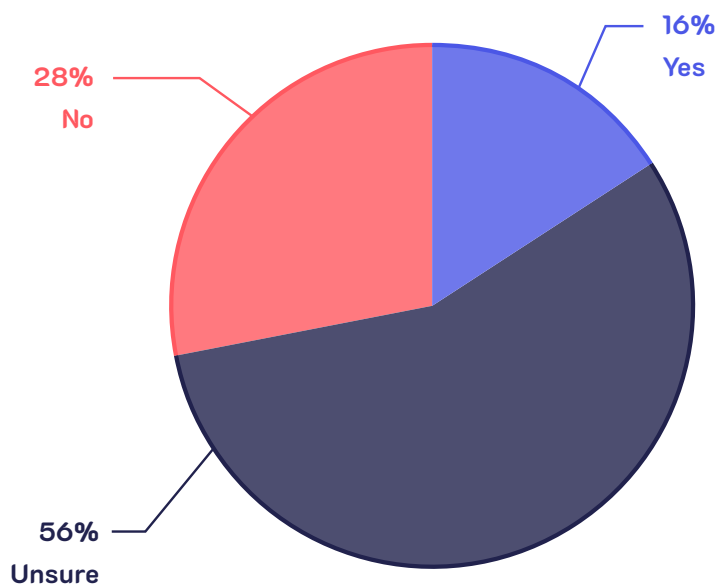
but we continue to offer a range of mental health resources and support. In addition, the option to claim travel expenses up to £500 per year has been removed. The equivalent value has been incorporated directly into employees’ salaries, giving more flexibility in how it’s used.”

Those offering new benefits aligned with the established rationale, namely support and sustain existing workforces, whilst ensuring a competitive edge.

- “We have added new benefits, which ensure we are competitive against other studios, but also offer benefits that our team members want and not just because they are a tick box activity”
- “Retention, modernisation, support culture shift”



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



Whilst only 16% of companies were looking to introduce new benefits in the coming year, the following were listed as priorities:

- Dental insurance
- Access to a financial advisor
- Travel (e.g. season ticket loan)
- Enhanced pension contributions
- Enhanced maternity leave

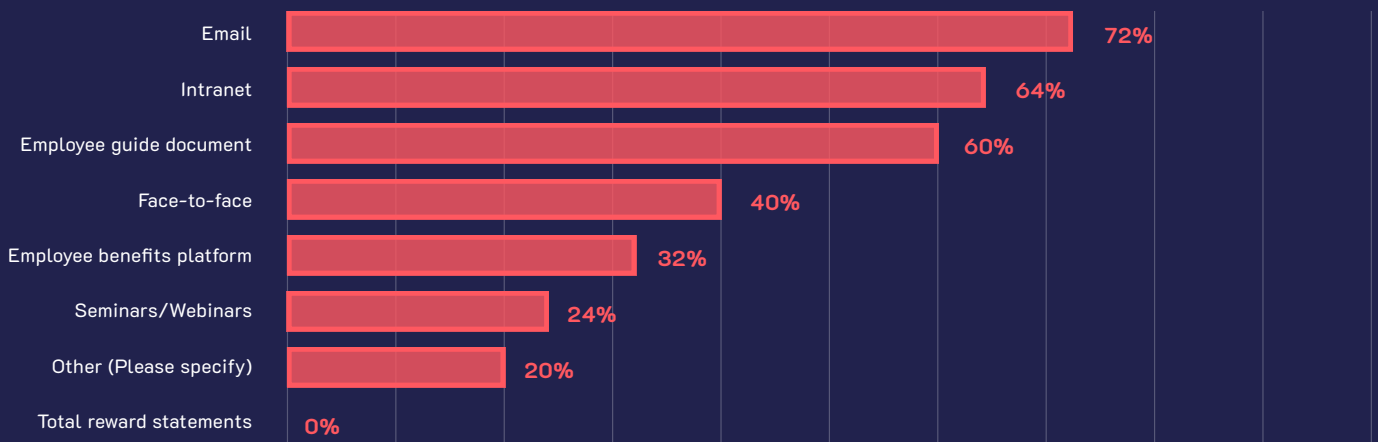
- Enhanced paternal leave
- Enhanced holiday programme (increasing or buy/sell)
- Company-paid health assessments
- Private medical insurance (PMI)

These priorities align closely with what companies considered to be the top three benefits most desired by their employees, with the exception of Life Assurance and Enhanced Pensions.



Perception of Benefits

How do you communicate your company benefits to employees?



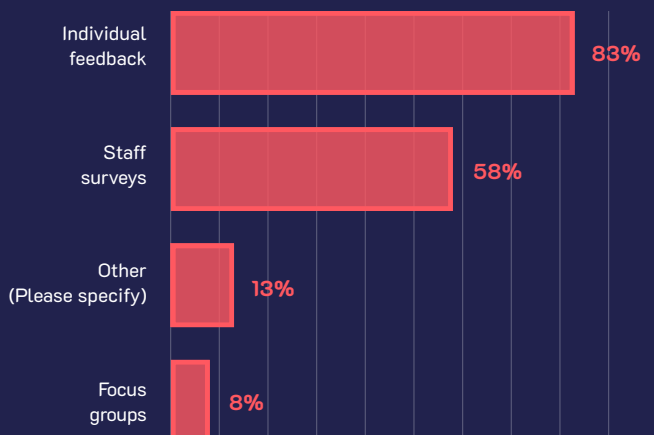
Other strategies for communicating company benefits mentioned:

- Company handbook,
- Company meetings (e.g. presentations / town halls)
- During onboarding
- Company Discord server.

Other strategies for assessing how the value of benefits are perceived included gathering general feedback and monitoring the take-up of benefits themselves.

68% of companies report using a broker or Independent Financial Adviser (IFA) to support their employee benefits strategy.

How do you assess the perceived value of your employee benefits strategy?

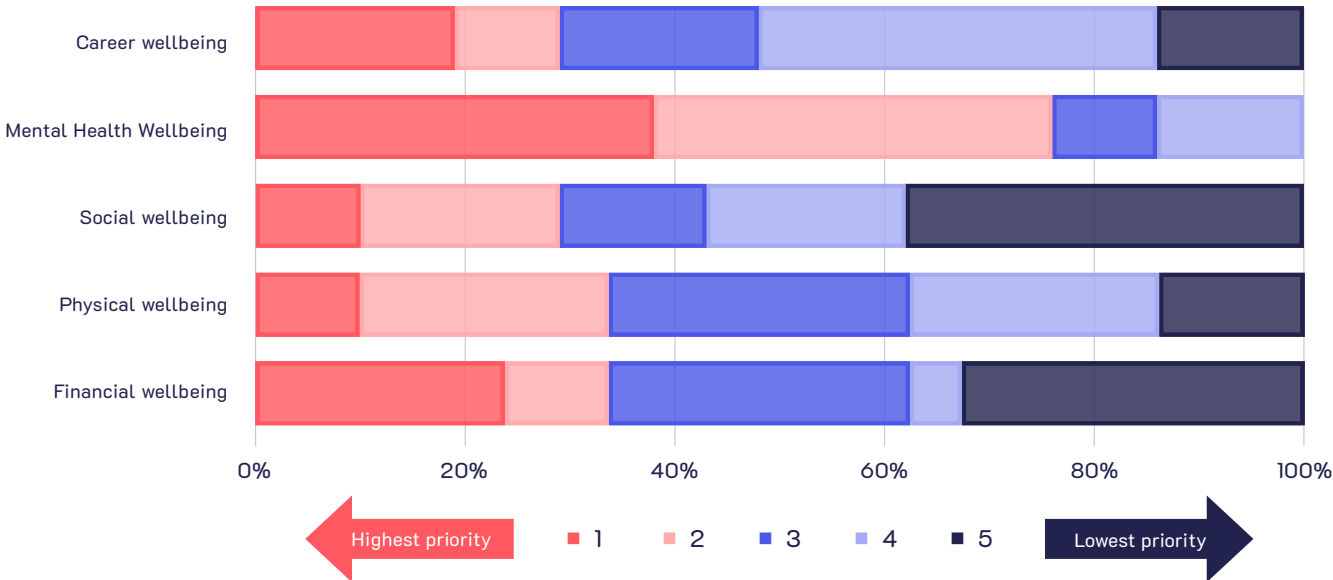


What is the perceived value of your benefits package?

Comprehensive	36%
Good	48%
Limited	8%
Unsure	8%

How do management and HR prioritise wellbeing pillars when selecting benefits for the coming year?

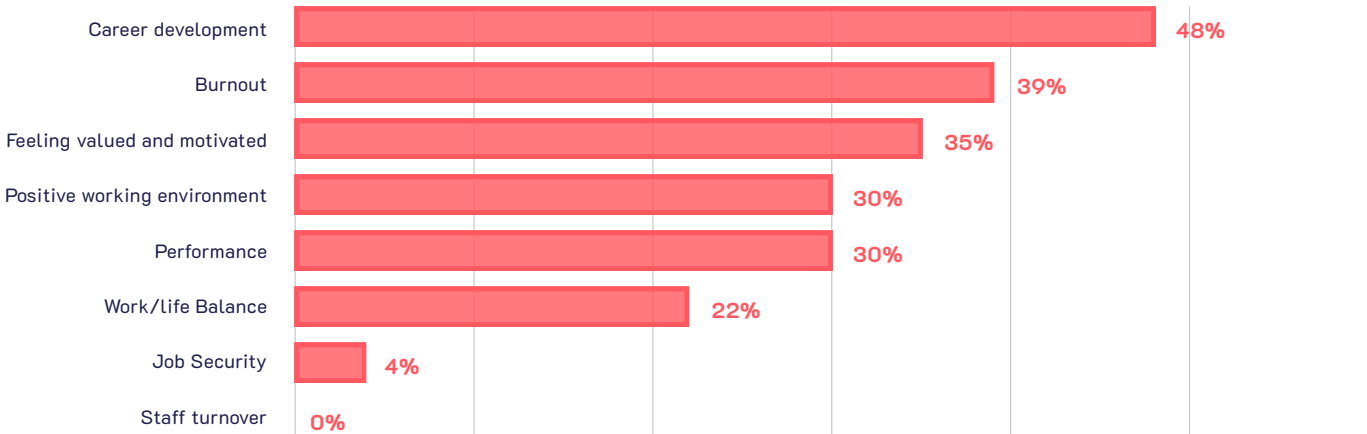
("1" being highest priority, "5" being lowest priority)



Mental Health Wellbeing stands out as the highest priority, with over 75% of respondents ranking it in their top two priorities and none listing it as their lowest priority, matching its prevalence in

last year's results. Financial wellbeing shows more varied and divisive opinions, while social wellbeing is generally lower priority overall, with physical and career wellbeing have moderate, mixed importance.

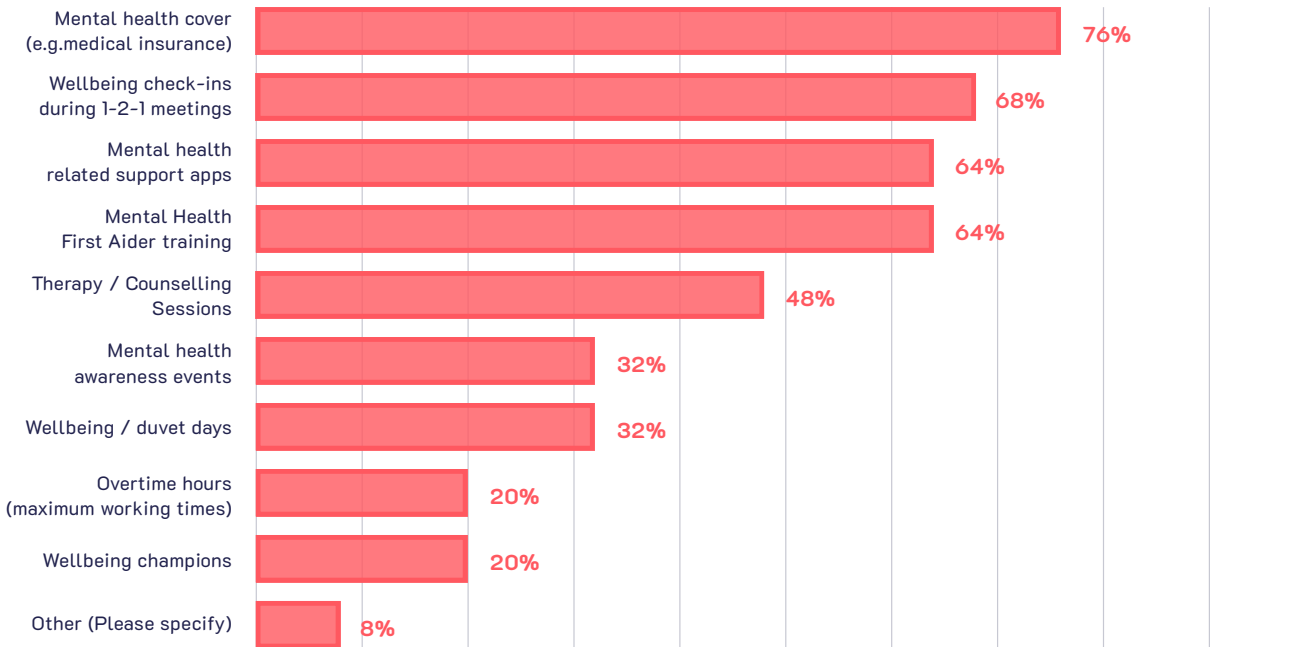
Which employee issues are management and HR most concerned about?



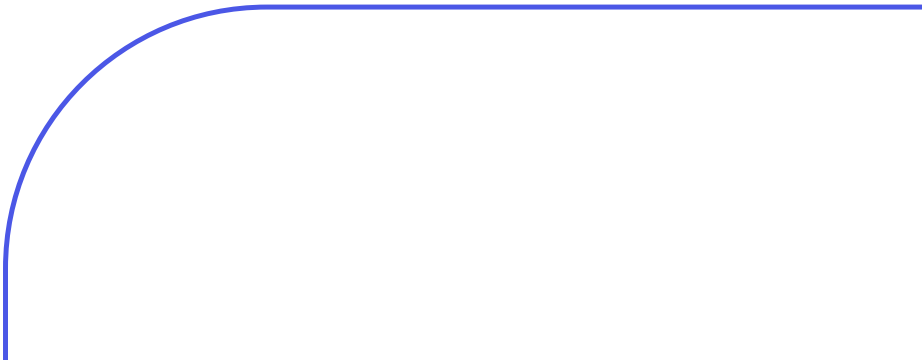


Mental Health Support

What mental health support do you offer?

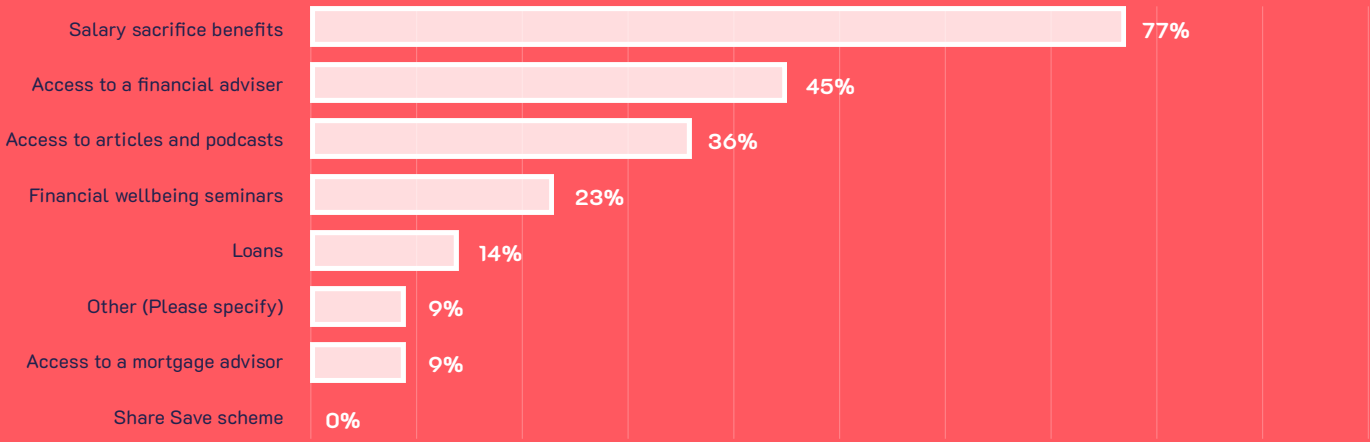


One company offered a 4 day week and flexi time (rather than duvet days), claiming "we have had less than 5 sick days over past 12 months for the whole team [of 13] since starting 4 day week, so I believe this definitely has had a huge impact on mental (and physical) wellbeing."



Financial Support

What financial support do you offer?

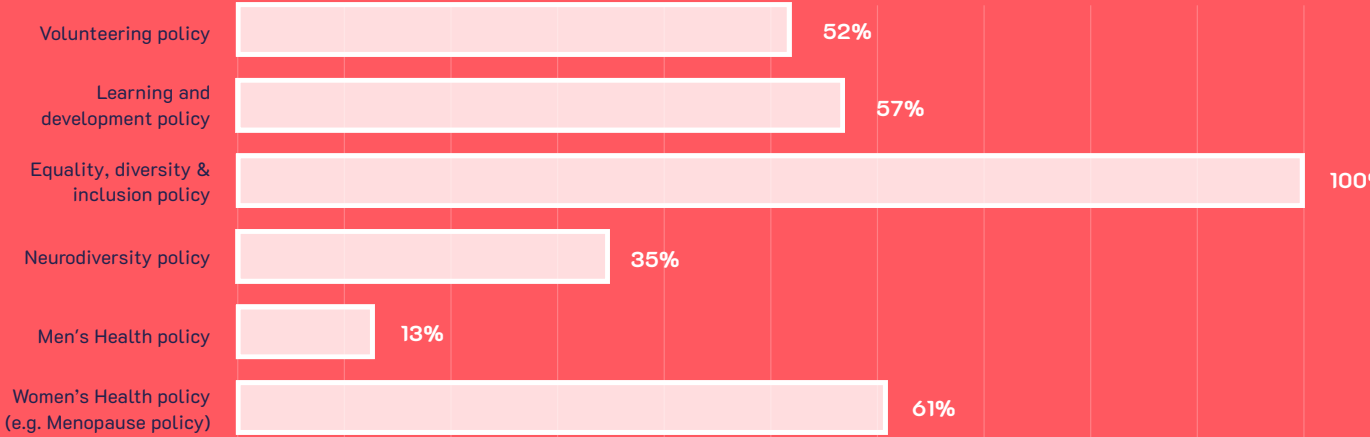


Other types of financial support offered by companies included having a thirteenth salary in December, as well as access to senior managers to discuss financial matters.

Compared to last year’s survey data, the priority of Women’s Health policies has shown a marked increase,

more than doubling from 26% to 61%. Whilst Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies remained the top priority across both years, their prominence increased from 80% to 100%. Volunteering policies are also seeing an increase in precedence, rising from 39% to 52%.

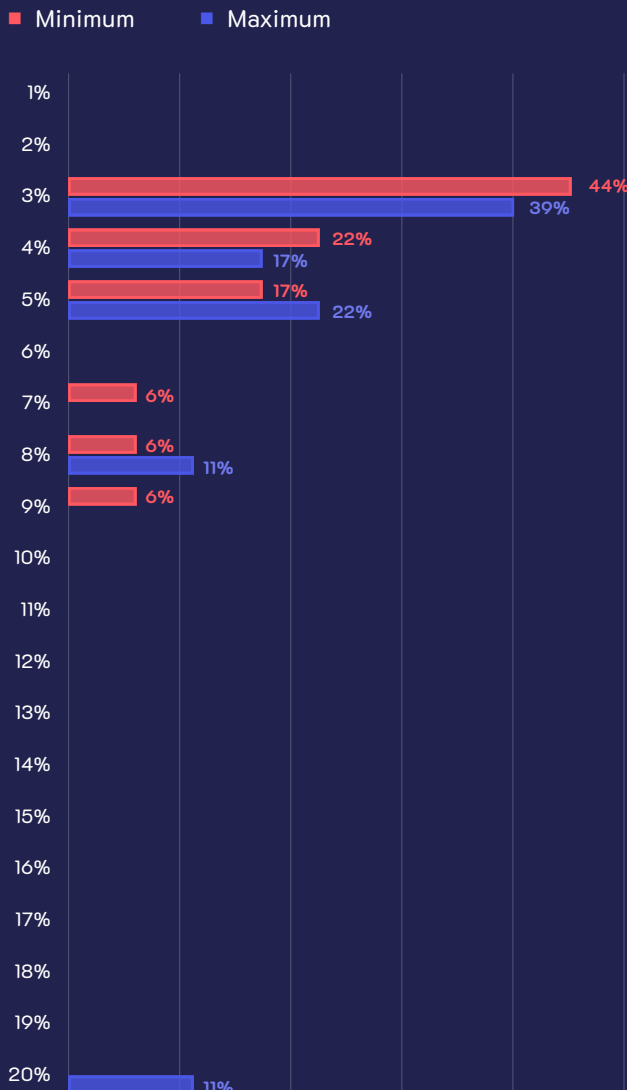
Do you currently have any of the below policies or plans to introduce them?



Pensions

Minimum contributions are heavily concentrated at 3% whilst Maximum contributions are more spread out, with some going up to 20% although there's a clear "market norm" around 3–5% pension contribution.

What are the Minimum and Maximum employer pension contributions you offer to employees?

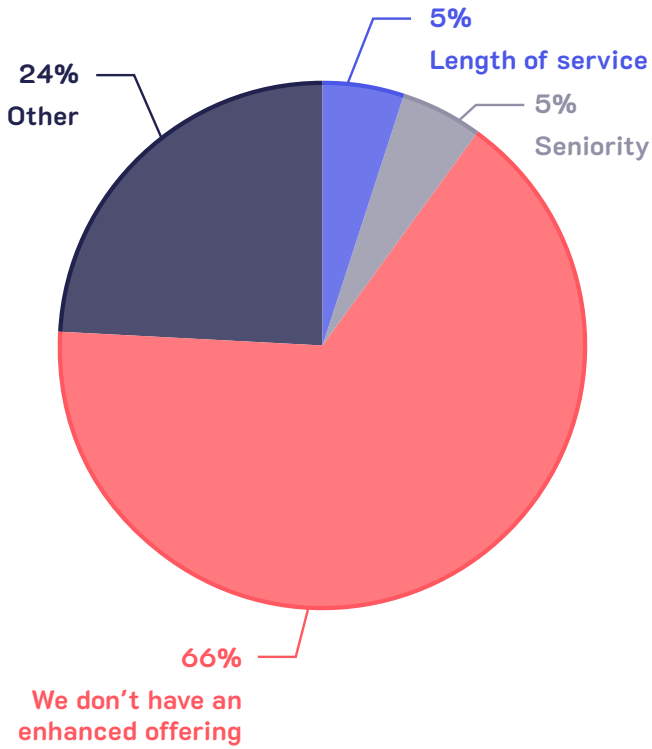


Do you operate your pension via salary sacrifice?

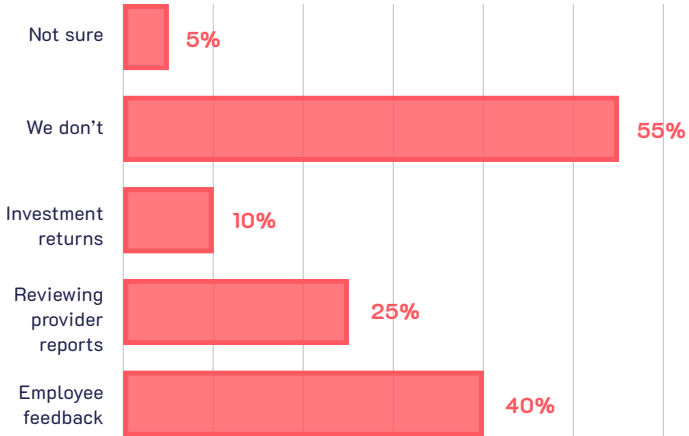
Yes 57%
No 43%



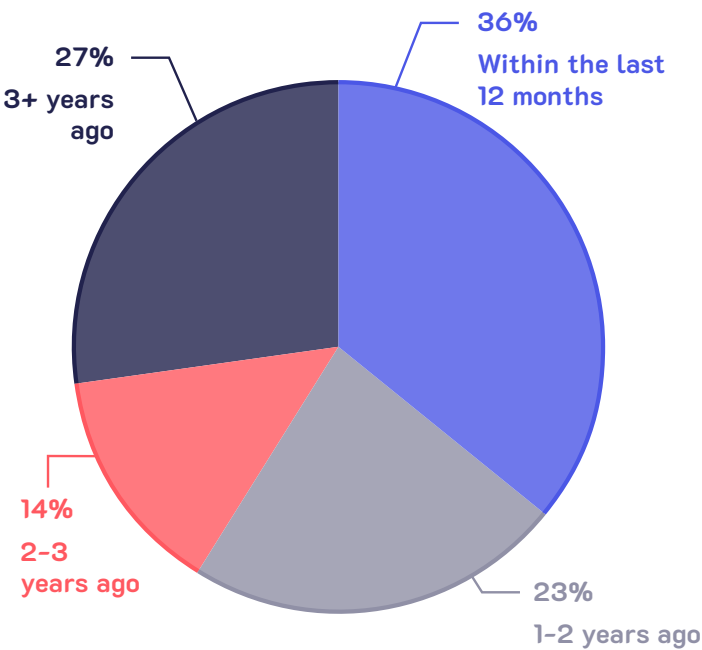
What is your enhanced pension contribution eligibility?



How do you assess value for money in respect of the company pension scheme?



When was the last time you reviewed your pension?





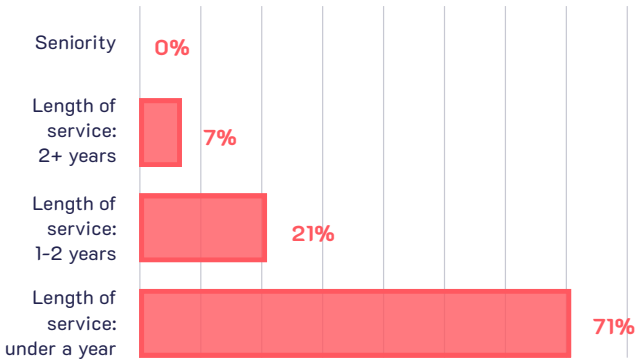
Maternity Leave

Do you offer enhanced maternity leave?

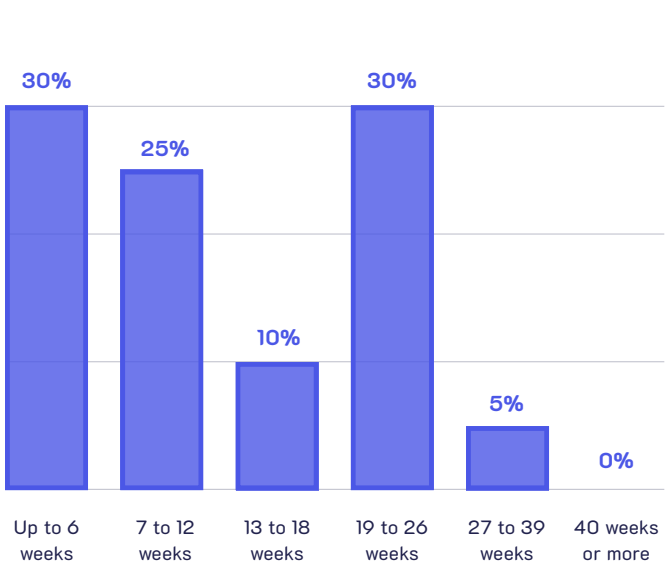
Yes 67%

No 33%

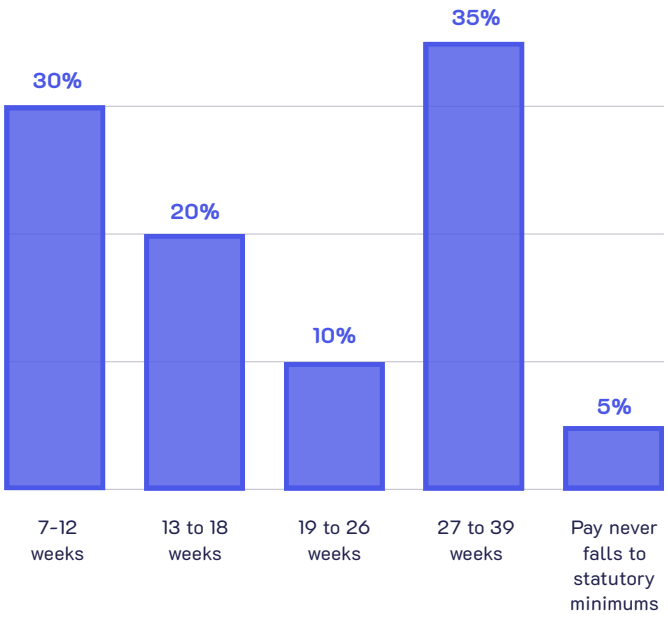
How do employees qualify for the enhanced maternity policy?



How long does your maternity plan offer 90% or more pay?



When does pay fall to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) minimums?



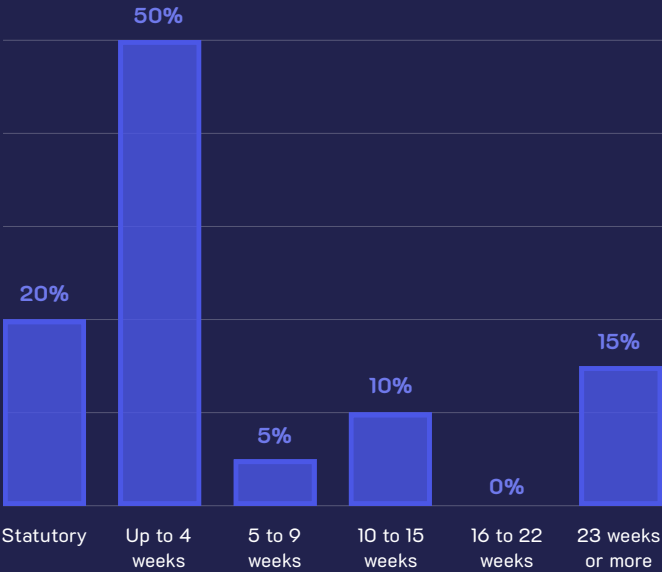




Paternity Leave

80% of companies offer more than the statutory paternity plan, a slight increase on just 71% last year.

How long does your paternity plan offer 90% or more pay?



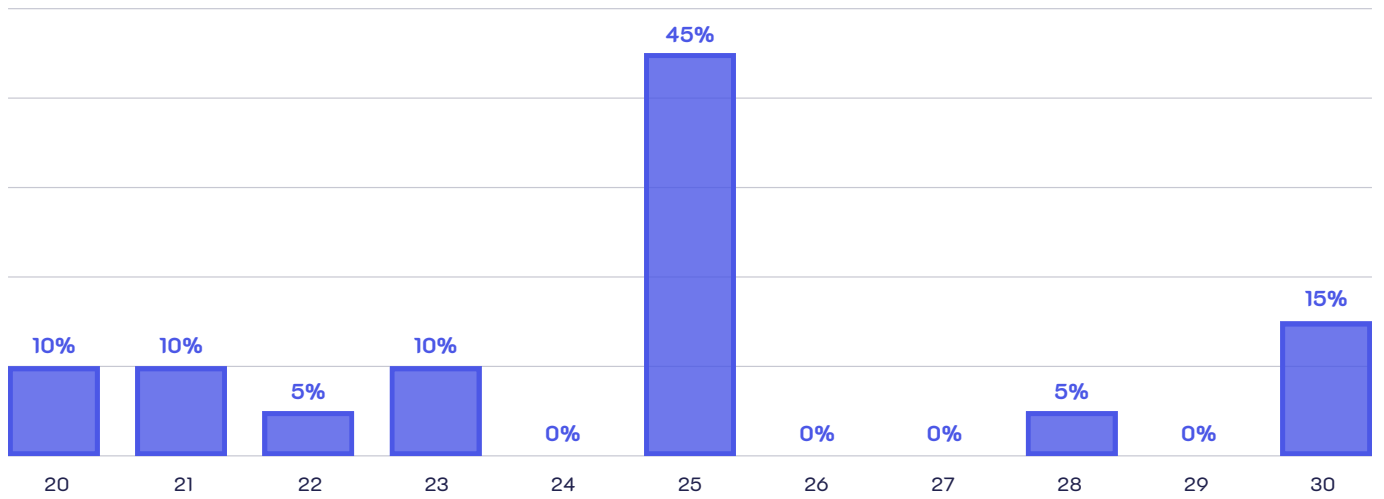
Is your paternity policy the same as maternity leave?

Yes	38%
No	52%
We are considering this	10%

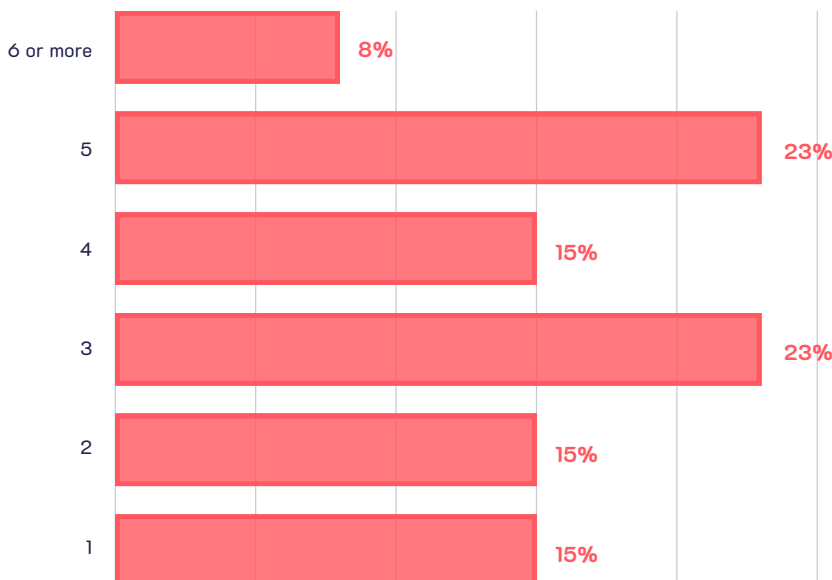


Annual Leave

How many days annual leave do you offer as standard?
(excluding bank holidays)



What is the maximum number of enhanced days you offer?



Do you increase holiday entitlement with length of service?

Yes 33%
No 67%

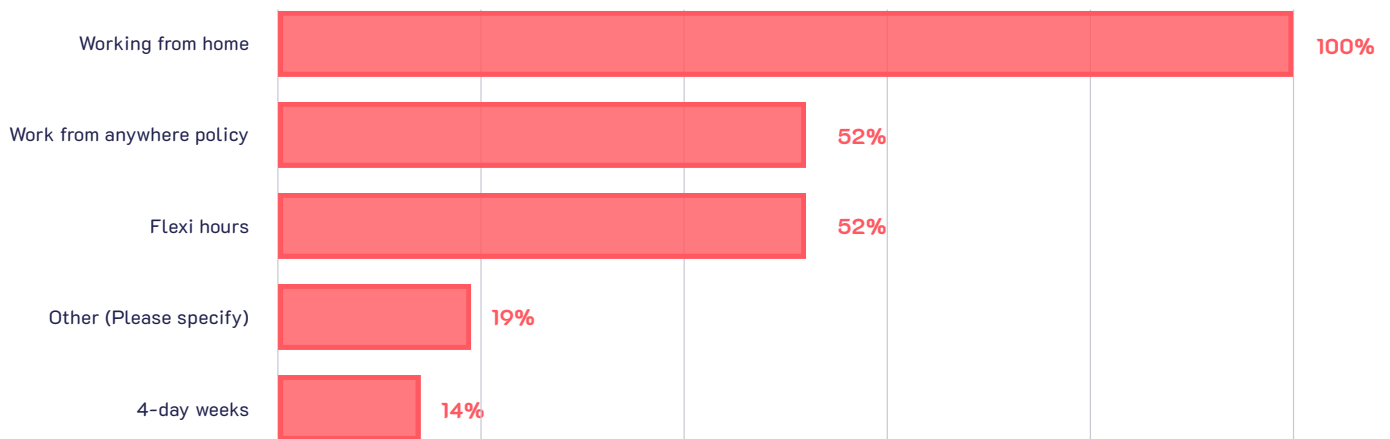
Do you offer a buy/sell holiday programme?

Yes 33%
No 67%

Do you offer paid or partially paid sabbaticals?

Yes 14%
No 86%

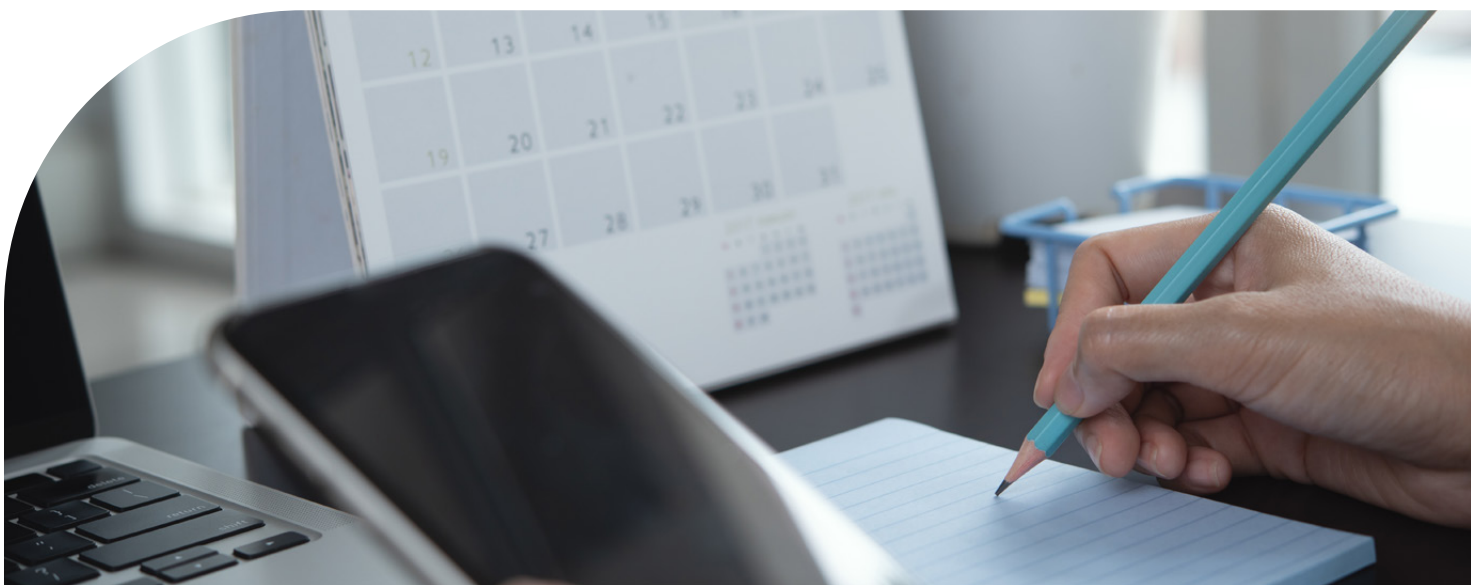
What flexibility do you offer to employees?



Compared to last year’s data, all studios surveyed now offer the option of working from home, up from 83% previously. Conversely, flexi hours have seen a slight reduction from 67% last year, down to 52% this year.

Other types of flexibility mentioned by companies included:

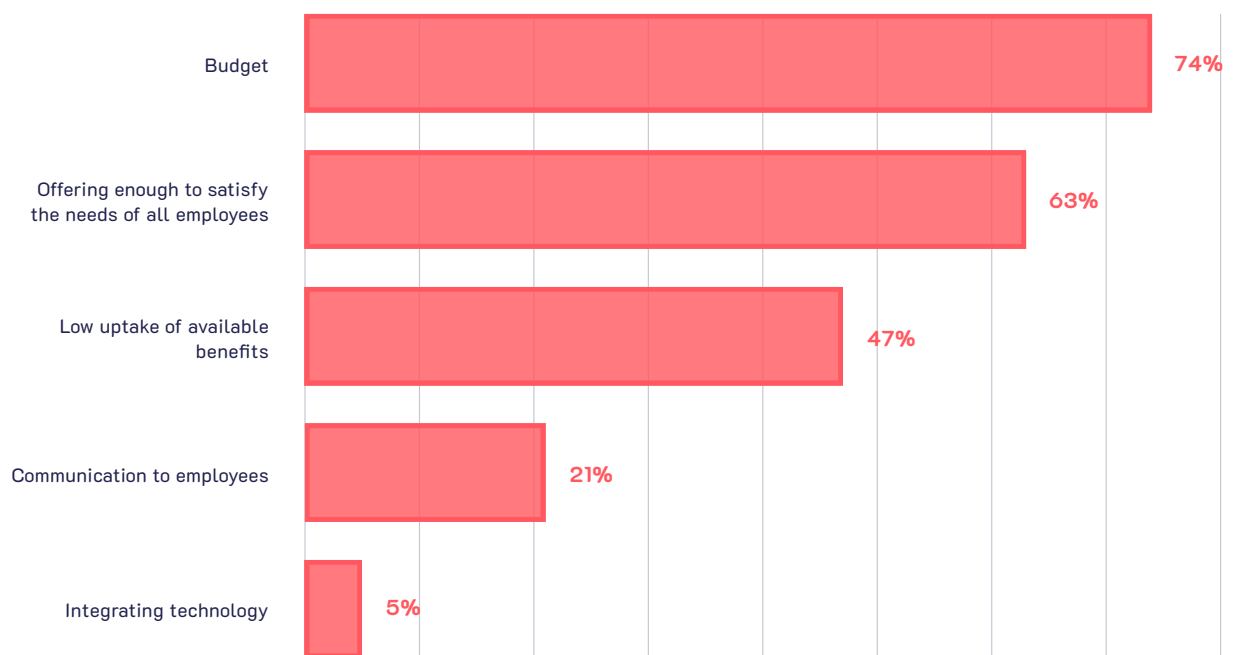
- part time working,
- 9 day fortnights,
- 2 days working from home per week
- work abroad policies





Challenges

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



As with last year, budget constraints remain the most significant challenge in offering benefits.

“We want to increase our employee benefits offered but we are on a restricted income and therefore budget currently”



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**



ukie



+44 020 7534 0580 | hello@ukie.org.uk
www.ukie.org.uk