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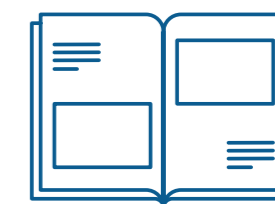
THE NEW
REWARD
DIRECTOR

THE NEW REWARD DIRECTOR

Exploring the new landscape of employee
experience, wellbeing and benefits



Benefefex™
A Zellis Company



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FOREWORD: MATT MACRI-WALLER FOUNDER & CEO, BENEFEX



The world of work has changed immeasurably and irreversibly over the past 18 months. In some industries, entire workforces have had to pivot to remote working almost overnight. In others, employees have had to operate in the most challenging conditions imaginable, facing the threat of a deadly virus every day, with strict restrictions on their movement and behaviour.

The employer community that we serve has seen an expanding list of responsibilities to the people they employ. This is the driving force behind this research. We wanted to discover exactly what the Reward Director is facing in terms of priorities, problems, and especially opportunities. Because, despite the enormous stresses of the last 18 months, there is much to be positive about.

These findings show how HR and reward leaders are grabbing the potential to put wellbeing at the centre of their role and make the case for the strategic importance of the reward function.

WELCOME TO THE NEW REWARD DIRECTOR.



EMPLOYEES LOOKED TO EMPLOYERS TO HELP THEM COPE

From a business perspective, one of the most striking dynamics that has emerged over the last 18 months has been the extent to which employees have looked to their employers to help them through the crisis. Workers have turned to their employers to provide support with their mental health and physical wellbeing. What's more, whereas before there was a reluctance to speak openly about mental health issues, employees have become far more willing to share their struggles with employers.

Employee expectations have risen dramatically around benefits provision – workers have become more engaged with the benefits and have actively sought out benefits that could help them with all aspects of their own wellbeing. Where these haven't been adequate, they have demanded new types of benefits and greater choice and flexibility in the benefits available to them.

WELLBEING IS NOW THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY FOR HR AND REWARD LEADERS

In response to these new dynamics in the workforce, employers have had to move quickly to provide employees with access to the support and services they needed to protect and enhance their wellbeing.

Some organisations have successfully embedded positive cultures across their workforces; implementing the processes, tools and behaviours to ensure that wellbeing is a constant consideration in all areas of the business, and promoted by both senior leaders and line managers. Other organisations remain at the early stages of this journey. Nonetheless, across the board, there is now widespread recognition that employee wellbeing is a critical strategic priority going forward, not just for HR departments, but for board-level leaders.

For many businesses, this has meant re-thinking their benefits strategy to focus more on employee wellbeing.



A HUGE CHALLENGE AND A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE NEW REWARD DIRECTOR

For the past 18 months, HR and reward leaders have stepped up to guide their organisations through the pandemic, managing wholesale workforce transition on a scale and at a speed never seen before. In doing so, they have taken on a range of new roles and responsibilities.

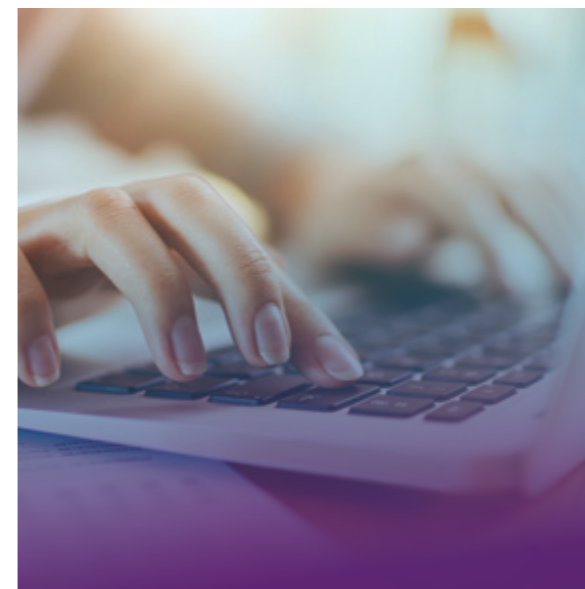
As a result of the pandemic, and the changes it has triggered in the workforce, the brief of the reward director has expanded to encompass a far wider remit. Today, The New Reward Director is not just responsible for benefits, recognition and rewards, but for technology strategy and implementation, employee wellbeing and employee experience, among many things.

As this research shows, the pressure on reward directors has been relentless and, understandably, for many the situation is now taking its toll. HR and reward

leaders are becoming increasingly frustrated in their roles, as they continue to operate in a cycle of constant firefighting and managing an increasingly broad remit.

However, despite the many challenges, the research highlights the opportunity that is now presenting itself to HR professionals across all industries. The pandemic has proved once and for all why employee engagement and wellbeing are so important within organisations. Business leaders have seen first-hand the bottom-line impact that enhanced employee wellbeing can deliver to their organisations, as well as the potential risks of not doing enough to support wellbeing and mental health, in particular. The result is increased budgets and board-level sponsorship for employee wellbeing initiatives and benefits provision more broadly.

This is the landscape in which The New Reward Director is set to emerge and thrive. An ambitious and strategic operator who will champion employee wellbeing as a business-critical imperative within the organisation and demonstrate the commercial value that it can deliver.



ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Benefex commissioned independent research among senior HR and Reward professionals.

The research consisted of **213 online interviews** with **200+ employers**, across a representative sample of industries.

The research was split between HR and Reward professionals in organisations that had employees both inside and outside the UK (62%), and those that only employ people in the UK (38%).

INTRODUCTION: EMPLOYEES LEAN ON EMPLOYERS FOR SUPPORT DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

Across all industries, employees have looked to their employers to help them navigate through the pandemic, both inside and outside of work. As this research finds, 90% of HR and Reward leaders state that employee expectations around what the business does to support their wellbeing are increasing. Employees are looking more closely at their benefits packages, demanding greater choice and a greater focus on benefits which directly protect and improve their wellbeing, and the wellbeing of those closest to them.

90%

state employee expectations around wellbeing are increasing

87%

say employees are more likely to disclose issues around their mental health

82%

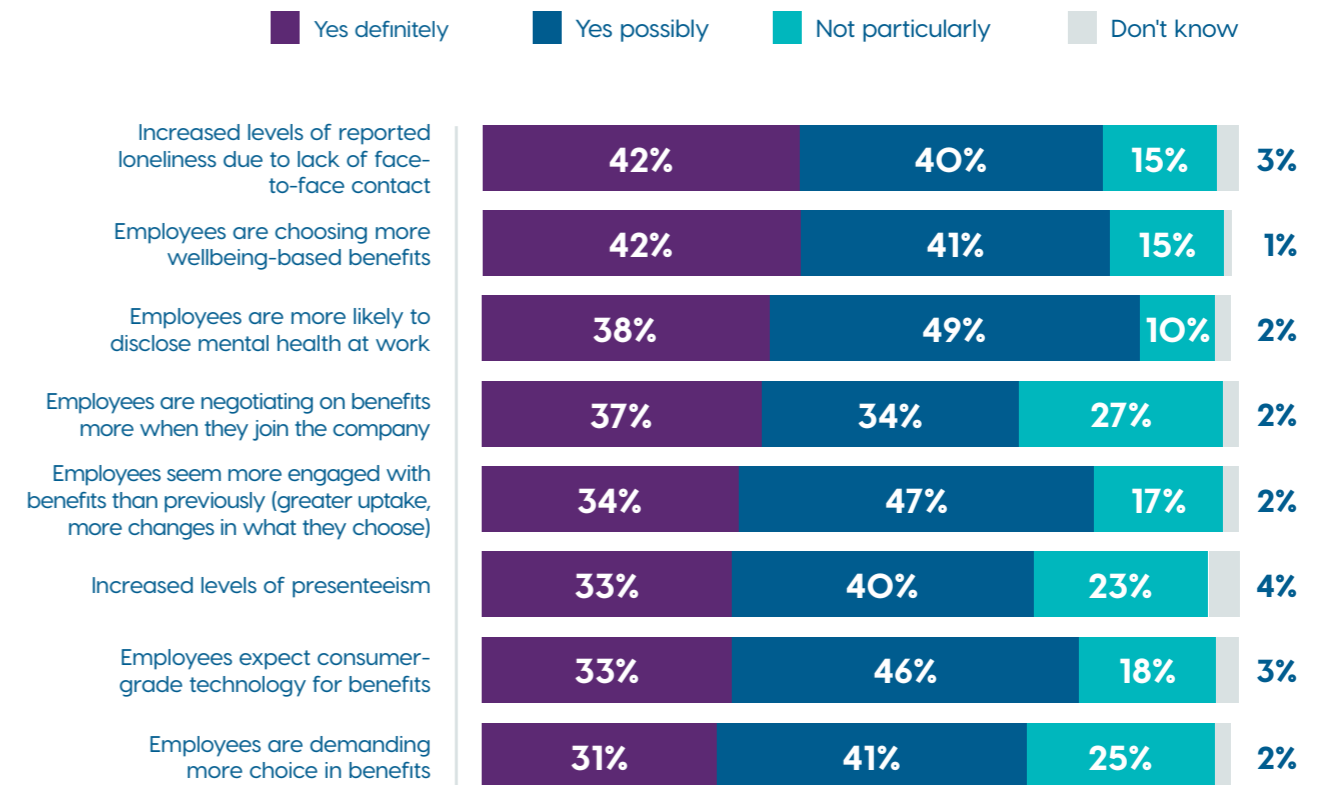
point to increased levels of loneliness among employees

At the same time, the research indicates that employees are becoming more open about their own personal struggles. 87% of HR and reward directors state that employees are now more likely to disclose issues around their mental health at work than prior to the pandemic, and 82% point to increased levels

of employees who are reporting feeling lonely because of a lack of face-to-face contact. Where once people were reluctant to share their issues and struggles with their managers and senior leaders, now there is a willingness to be open – and to ask for help.

CHANGES IN EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR DURING THE PANDEMIC

What changes have you seen in employee attitudes and behaviour during the Covid-19 pandemic and in the last 12 months generally?



EXPERT INSIGHT

“Rather than change the workplace overnight, the pandemic accelerated trends that were already gathering pace. One of the most significant of these was employees’ desire to work for more caring and supportive employers. Across the world, trust and confidence in the institutions that many expected to provide support during challenging times has been falling, but trust in one institution has continued to blossom – the employer. So, it’s no surprise that, as soon as the pandemic hit, people turned to their employers for support.

This generational shift in what we now expect from our employer, and the continued opening-up about wellbeing at work, has created a new benchmark for candidate expectations of the Employee Value Proposition (EVP). Employees are now actively seeking out those organisations with great benefit packages, who foster emotional connections among colleagues and prioritise their mental health.

”With ‘The Great Resignation’ on the horizon, employers must grasp the importance of these new expectations and the resurgence of the once-stagnant EVP to appeal to employees looking for a new role.

Gethin Nadin | Director, Employee Wellbeing



FRUSTRATION AND OPPORTUNITY: A GLIMPSE INTO THE WORLD OF THE NEW REWARD DIRECTOR

Across the board, in all sectors and in companies of all sizes, HR professionals have risen to the challenge of the pandemic, acting with great skill and speed to respond to rapidly changing employee and business needs. Understandably, many HR professionals are now feeling the strain after 18 months of relentless pressure, long hours and an ever-growing list of priorities.

The research reveals significant frustration being felt right across the HR department, caused by a wide range of different factors. Many HR and reward leaders report being stuck in a cycle of firefighting, continually having to react to problems, and unable to get onto the front foot and take a proactive approach.

They're having to focus too much of their time on tactical, admin-based work, and not enough time on the strategic, high-value initiatives which could make a real difference to employees and the business.

Elsewhere, HR and reward leaders report difficulties in balancing organisational imperatives with employee needs as another source of frustration.

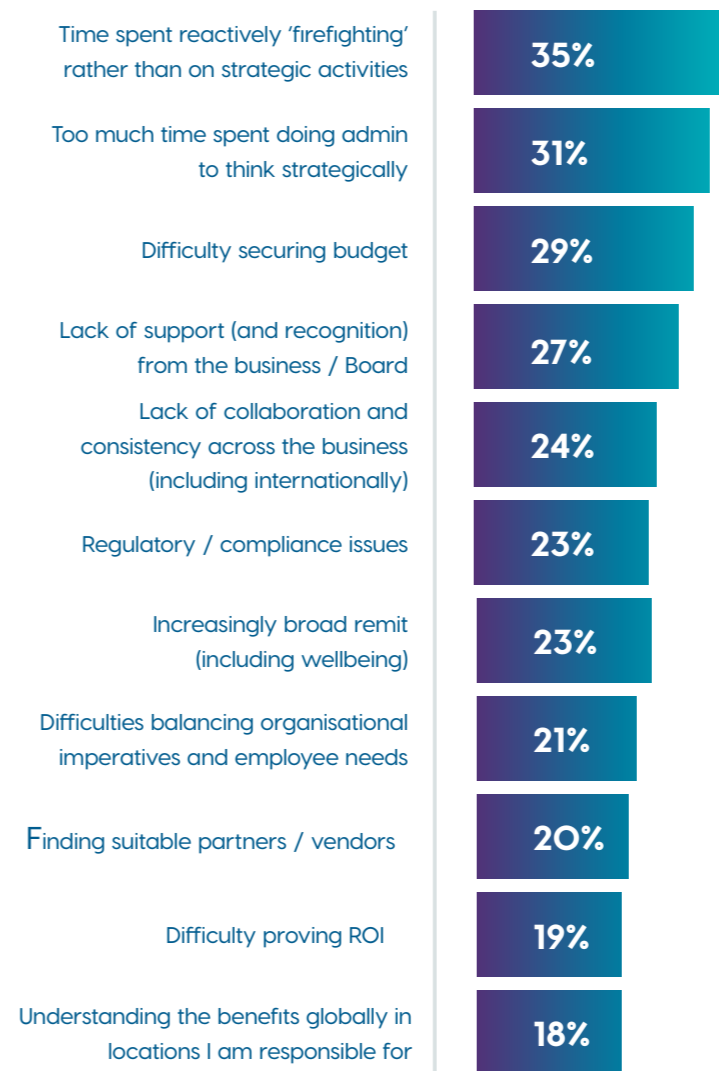
The research also reveals how HR and reward leaders themselves are being asked to manage a far wider remit as a result of the pandemic. This is one of the major challenges for The New Reward Director.



Over one third of HR and reward leaders report being stuck in a cycle of firefighting, continually having to react to problems, and unable to get onto the front foot and take a proactive approach.

CURRENT FRUSTRATIONS FOR HR AND REWARD LEADERS

What frustrates you most in your job right now?



However, for all the frustration and stress, there is also a feeling amongst HR and reward leaders that the current situation presents them with a career-defining opportunity to demonstrate their value. In almost all organisations, business leaders are recognising the importance of employee engagement and wellbeing to workforce retention and productivity, and to overall business performance.

As a result, many businesses are finally starting to invest seriously in HR-led initiatives which were often severely under-funded prior to the pandemic. The research finds that 82% of businesses are planning to increase their investment in employee wellbeing initiatives over the next 12 months, and 65% are planning to increase spending on employee benefits programmes.

Boardroom leaders are realising the value that enhanced benefits and rewards can deliver in building an engaged, motivated and high-performing workforce, fit for the post-pandemic world.

No longer perceived as tactical and compliance-focused, The New Reward Director has a critical, strategic role to play in the business, managing employee wellbeing and the wider employee experience in an uncertain and rapidly evolving market. The New Reward Director can step up and take responsibility for building a workforce with the right skills, culture and motivation to thrive for years to come.

82% | planning to increase investment in employee wellbeing

65% | planning to increase spending on employee benefits

THE NEW REWARD DIRECTOR'S TO-DO LIST

HR and reward leaders have seen their workload increase dramatically during the pandemic. The expanding remit of The New Reward Director is evident in the sheer number and scale of priorities they point to over the next two years.

As you would expect in the current circumstances, employee wellbeing is the most pressing priority for HR and reward leaders today. But alongside this, there are also urgent objectives around enhancing the employee experience (91% cite this as a priority), communications (89%), improving diversity, equality and inclusion (87%) and recognition (86%).

Greater use of data and analytics is also set to be an important area of focus over the next two years.

And while overall budgets for benefits programmes may be increasing in many organisations, HR and reward leaders report that business leaders are still looking to them to deliver cost efficiencies across the board, and within benefits broking in particular.

TOP PRIORITIES

99%



wellbeing

91%



employee experience

89%



communications

87%



diversity, equality and inclusion

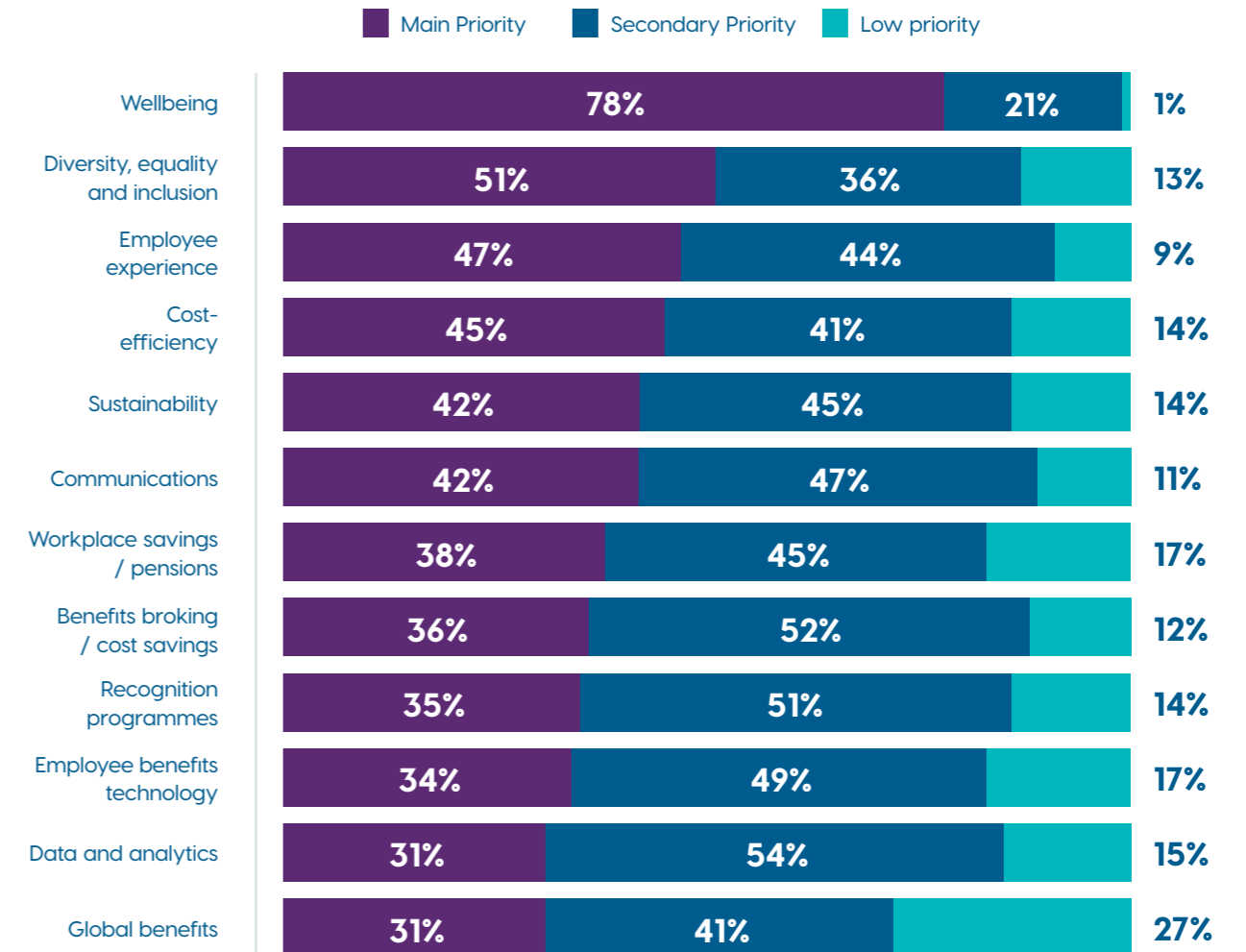
86%



recognition

HOW DO YOUR PRIORITIES STACK UP?

To what extent do you think the following will be priorities in your role over the next two years?



Evidently, The New Reward Director is facing an almost impossible task, with an ever-expanding to-do list and a finite amount of time and resource at their disposal. They're being asked to drive through massive workforce transformation programmes at high speed, while at the same time being expected to successfully deliver market-leading employee engagement and wellbeing programmes to ensure employees are supported. The challenge for The New Reward Director is to cut through the noise to identify the key strategic initiatives which will deliver most impact, both to employees and to the business.

EXPERT INSIGHT

The pandemic and the shift to remote working means employers have to find new ways of making employees feel connected to the organisation and its values. There's a strong link between effective recognition programmes and employee wellbeing, productivity and retention; we've seen this first-hand at Benefex through our work with customers.

The challenge for people professionals is how do you empower your managers to bring your values to life, measure the impact, and keep engagement high? How do you ensure the right behaviours get recognised, alongside the already expanded remit of the New Reward Director? Technology plays a key role in this. Beyond that, consideration needs to be given to how recognition forms part of, and complements, the wider reward and EVP strategy.

Michael Tigwell | Chief Customer Officer



CHANGING PRIORITIES AND A LASER FOCUS ON EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

With widespread concerns around the impact of the pandemic on the mental and physical health of people all over the world, it's unsurprising that employee wellbeing has jumped to the top of the priority list for The New Reward Director.

However, the research reveals that only 43% of organisations have a clearly-defined wellbeing strategy in place. Around a quarter of employers (26%) are still developing a strategy to enhance wellbeing, and almost a third (31%) have no plans for a standalone strategy.

43%

have a clearly-defined wellbeing strategy

26%

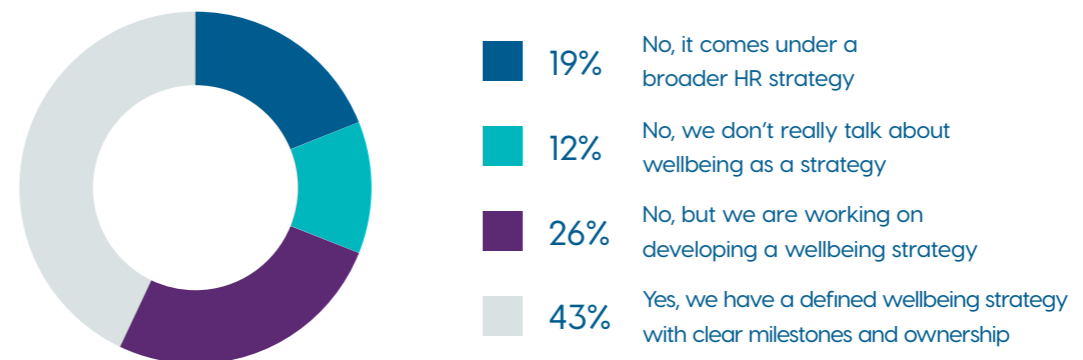
are still developing one

31%

have no plans for a wellbeing strategy

PROPORTION OF BUSINESSES THAT HAVE A CLEARLY- DEFINED WELLBEING STRATEGY IN PLACE

Thinking specifically about employee wellbeing, does your organisation have a defined employee wellbeing strategy with clear milestones and ownership?



Interestingly, there are marked differences in approaches to wellbeing across industries. While 60% of financial services organisations and 52% of technology and media companies have a wellbeing strategy in place, only 28% of professional services organisations currently do so.

RECOGNITION AS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF WELLBEING

The research finds that employee recognition has become another major focus area for HR and reward leaders. Recognition is seen as a critical tool for improving employee engagement and, at a wider level, for enhancing employee wellbeing. Employees that are receiving regular and real-time feedback feel more engaged, appreciated and supported in their work. Therefore, they are more motivated and incentivised to perform to their full potential. The research reveals a mixed picture when it comes to current organisational

approaches to employee recognition. More than one-in-five HR and reward leaders (21%) admit that employee recognition is not embedded or formally encouraged as part of the culture of their organisation. This means that recognition is generally restricted to annual performance appraisals and pay reviews.

At the other end of the spectrum, 13% of HR and reward leaders report that their organisation has a culture of recognition in place. This means they have implemented a digital recognition platform to enable peer-to-peer and manager recognition of employees in a transparent and consistent way. As many as 21% of businesses in the technology and media sector have reached this level of sophistication. Overall, 87% of HR and reward leaders say that employee recognition needs to be embedded as part of their organisation's culture and not treated as a series of one-off events.

CURRENT ORGANISATIONAL APPROACHES TO EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Which of the following best describes how your organisation currently approaches employee recognition?



REIMAGINING WELLBEING POST-COVID

The research reveals the extent to which HR and reward leaders are having to re-think their wellbeing strategies and processes, not only to support their workforces through the pandemic, but to prepare for a very different landscape in the future.

As many as 96% of HR and reward directors have already reviewed their wellbeing provision to ensure it is relevant in a post-Covid world, or are planning to do so in the coming months. Interestingly, 86% claim the pandemic has given them an opportunity to review wellbeing in a more strategic way.

96%

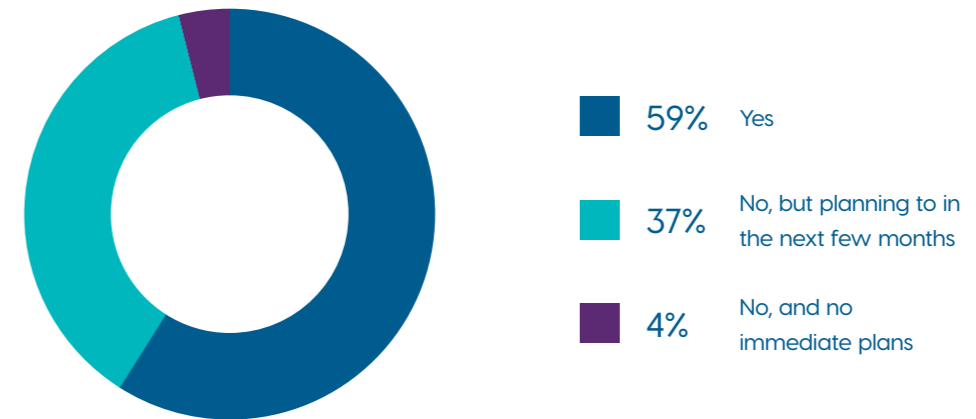
have reviewed or plan to review their wellbeing strategy post-pandemic

86%

claim the pandemic has created a strategic view of wellbeing

PROPORTION OF BUSINESSES THAT HAVE REVIEWED THEIR WELLBEING STRATEGY TO ENSURE IT IS FIT FOR THE FUTURE, BEYOND THE PANDEMIC

Have you reviewed your wellbeing provision and / or strategy to ensure it is fit for a post-Covid world?

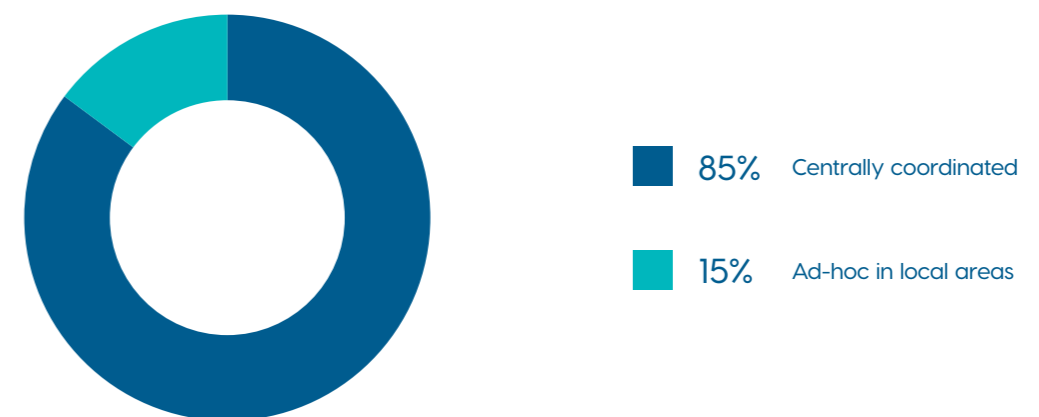


One of the areas that HR and reward leaders will have focused on over the last few months is assigning ownership and responsibility for wellbeing strategy within the organisation. Alongside this, many will have explored how wellbeing support is delivered day-to-day across the workforce, both in terms of internal management and access to specialist, external services.

The research finds that wellbeing is currently managed and coordinated centrally in 85% of organisations. This figure rises to 100% in financial services and 88% in the technology and media sector. Within professional services, almost a third (31%) of firms are still taking an ad-hoc, decentralised approach, with wellbeing managed within individual teams or business units.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGEMENT OF WELLBEING WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

How is wellbeing managed in your organisation?



BALANCING URGENT WELLBEING PRIORITIES WITH LONGER-TERM VISION

As expected, given the enormous pressure businesses are under to support employees during the pandemic, organisations are generally taking a short-term approach to wellbeing provision. HR and reward leaders estimate that 53% of their wellbeing provision and investment is focused on short-term, responsive measures, while 47% is more preventative and proactive in nature.

This is wholly understandable given the current situation; but looking beyond the pandemic, HR and reward leaders know they need to adopt a more strategic, long-term approach. This means putting more emphasis on strategies which promote wellbeing on a proactive basis. It also means investing in services, tools and technology platforms which enable a more sustainable approach to wellbeing, both in and out of work. The need to make this shift is recognised across all sectors and in companies of all sizes.

At a broader level, HR and reward leaders are split when it comes to assessing the maturity of their organisation's wellbeing strategy.

More than a third (37%) of HR and reward leaders describe their provision as 'Foundational', meaning they are offering health and safety support to employees through initiatives such as gym membership and employee assistance programmes. Another third (34%) state that their organisation has reached an 'Advanced' level, where it has adopted a preventative and holistic approach to wellbeing. These organisations offer wellbeing programmes based around longer-term, preventative measures; supporting employees with all aspects of wellbeing, from nutrition and sleep, through to mental health and financial wellbeing.

These two groups – Foundational and Advanced – account for more than 70% of all businesses and are in the middle of the wellbeing maturity curve.

Around one-in-eight UK businesses (12%) are still at a 'Basic' level of maturity provision, with a compliance-led approach, centred on health and safety, sick pay and pensions.

17% of HR and reward leaders claim that their organisation is now offering optimised, best practice wellbeing provision. At this 'Progressive' level, these businesses have successfully embedded a culture of wellbeing across the workforce, where employees are encouraged to prioritise their own wellbeing, and line managers and business leaders reinforce and promote this culture in every area of the business. Technology platforms, processes and internal communications are all designed to nurture and build this culture on an ongoing basis, and ensure that wellbeing is the lens through which all decisions are taken.

Interestingly, the technology and media sector leads the way when it comes to wellbeing maturity, with 39% of organisations claiming to be delivering wellbeing provision at a 'Progressive' level.



This means putting more emphasis on strategies which promote wellbeing on a proactive basis, and investing in services, tools and technology platforms which enable a more sustainable approach to wellbeing, both in and out of work.

MATURITY OF WELLBEING PROVISION WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

In terms of maturity, how would you describe the current wellbeing provision in your organisation?



- 12% BASIC: HEALTH & SAFETY LED**
Focused primarily on health & safety and compliance. Standard benefits provision such as pension and sick pay
- 37% FOUNDATIONAL: BROADER HEALTH & WELLBEING SUPPORT**
More consideration given to wellbeing initiatives offered to improve employees lives such as gym membership, employee assistance programmes
- 34% ADVANCED: PREVENTATIVE & HOLISTIC APPROACH**
Programmes with a long-term focus on preventative measures covering discrete areas of wellbeing such as nutrition, sleep, financial wellbeing, and mental health.
- 17% PROGRESSIVE: A CULTURE OF WELLBEING**
We have created an environment where employees are encouraged to prioritise their own wellbeing and self-care. This is embedded in the business by line managers and through policies and internal communications

EXPERT INSIGHT

When Benefex designed our Wellbeing Matrix, it was an acknowledgment that for some global employers, their journey to formally support employee wellbeing was just starting out. By establishing levels of maturity, our aim was to give our customers a wellbeing roadmap for the future. Aligning with our expectations, a third of employers told us they are at a 'Foundational' level of wellbeing maturity. However, just over 15% of employers told us that they've reached the 'Progressive' level. This shows just how much work is still required to get as many employers as possible to embed wellbeing in their culture.

At a progressive level, employers will have created an environment where employees are encouraged to prioritise their own wellbeing, managers fully understand the connection of wellbeing to performance, and senior leadership actively promote, and role-model, wellbeing. I'm looking forward to a near future where all employers have reached this zenith of employee wellbeing.

Gethin Nadin | Director, Employee Wellbeing

BENEFITS ARE SEEN AS CRITICAL TO ENHANCING WELLBEING AND DELIVERING BUSINESS IMPACT

With the pressure mounting to help employees navigate through the pandemic, HR and reward leaders have looked to benefits provision as a critical lever to enhance wellbeing provision.

73% report that employees are demanding more choice in benefits

70% state that candidates are negotiating more around benefits

81% have seen more engagement with benefits

84% point to employees choosing more wellbeing-based benefits

Interestingly, the research indicates that employees are also paying more attention to benefits as they look for ways to manage and improve their own wellbeing during the pandemic. 73% of HR and reward leaders report that employees are demanding more choice in benefits and 70% state that candidates are negotiating more around benefits when joining the company.

Perhaps most significantly for HR departments, the pandemic has led to people taking a greater interest in benefits. After years of trying (often unsuccessfully) to encourage their workforces to engage with benefits, 81% of HR and reward leaders now report that employees seem more engaged with benefits. Employers are reporting greater uptake of benefits and more regular changes in benefits selections.

It may have taken a pandemic but suddenly UK workforces have started to engage with benefits in a meaningful way. The onus is now on businesses and HR departments to maintain this level of interest, post-pandemic.

Much of this increased engagement is driven by employees paying more attention to their own wellbeing. 84% of HR and reward leaders point to employees choosing more wellbeing-based benefits over the past 12 months.

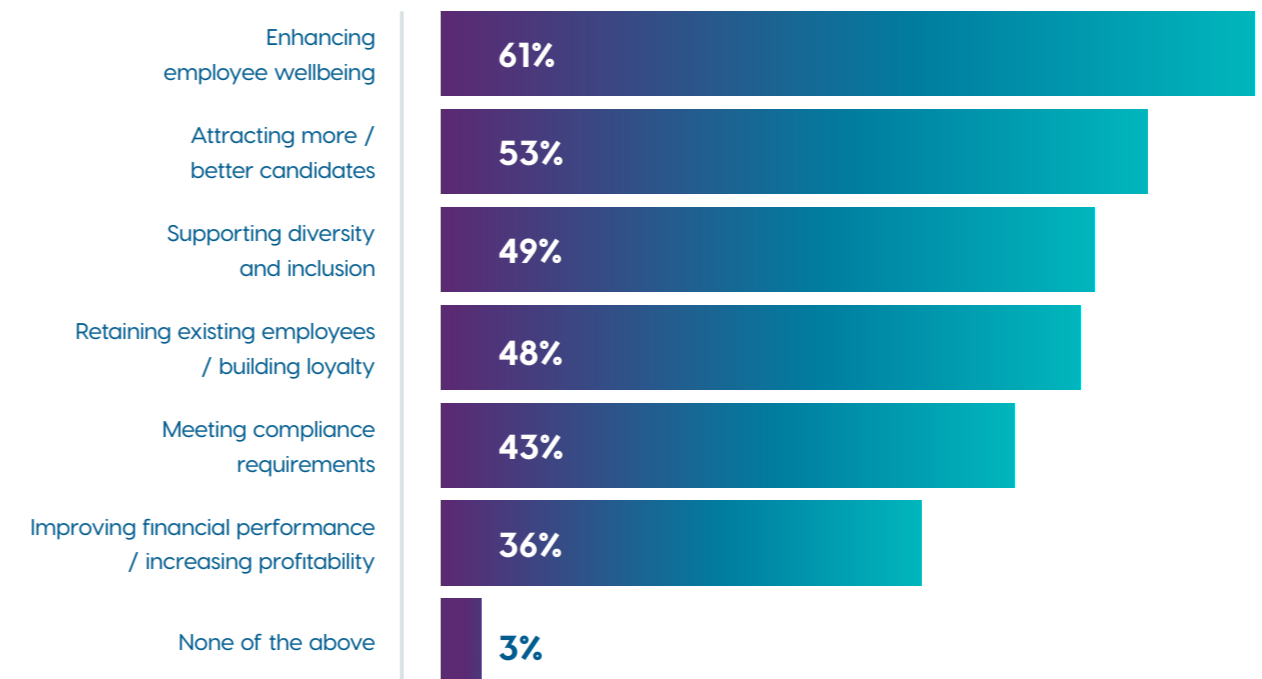
In line with this, employee wellbeing is now seen as the number one area where benefits provision can deliver a positive impact to the business. 61% of HR and reward leaders state that their current benefits provision is enhancing employee wellbeing.

Benefits are also viewed as important in enabling businesses to attract and retain high quality talent, and to support diversity, equality and inclusion objectives.

Interestingly, more than a third (36%) of HR and reward leaders point to benefits provision delivering improved financial performance and profitability within their organisation.

HOW CURRENT BENEFITS PROVISION IS POSITIVELY IMPACTING BUSINESSES

In which of the following ways is your current benefits package having a positive impact on the business?



EXPERT INSIGHT

It's not surprising to see businesses citing wellbeing as the most positive outcome of employee benefits. We expect this to continue, driven by the changing needs of employees, with a greater focus from employers and better communications.

It's fair to say that pretty much everyone's lives have changed since the beginning of 2020 - be that our household finances, a greater awareness of our physical and emotional health, or a reassessment of our work-life priorities. As a result, employers are offering more to support wellbeing and we've seen more new benefits introduced than ever before.

In the last 18 months, we've also seen a reversal of the trends around benefit communications. Previously, as benefit schemes had matured and budgets had been repurposed, communications had taken a hit. But that's changed. Now with a resurgence in effective communications, employees are much more aware of what's available and how it can support them, which has led to an increase in engagement and uptake.

Diversity and inclusion is one of the top areas of focus for businesses and HR over the next year, so it's encouraging to see so many respondents feel that benefits positively impact this area of business.

We expect this to increase as organisations use feedback from employees through DE&I networks to drive changes to the benefits offering.

Overall, these results show that benefits can, and do, make a real difference to business performance. Now, as we move to hybrid models of working, we're likely to see another shift in employee expectations and needs. The benefits offering, and how benefits are communicated, need to continue evolving if we're to build on this progress.

Charlotte Godley | Head of Proposition



REIMAGINING THE BENEFITS PACKAGE FOR A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

A holistic approach to wellbeing, which supports mental, emotional, physical, community, and financial wellbeing is now viewed as critical in most organisations.

The research finds that benefits which protect and enhance mental health and emotional wellbeing are regarded as the most important and impactful to overall employee experience. These are followed by those that focus on financial wellbeing and physical wellbeing.

Just over one third (37%) of HR and reward leaders claim their current benefits provision closely aligns with the needs and priorities of employees today, rising to 53% in financial services organisations. More than half state that their benefits provision aligns 'quite closely' with what is currently most important to employees.

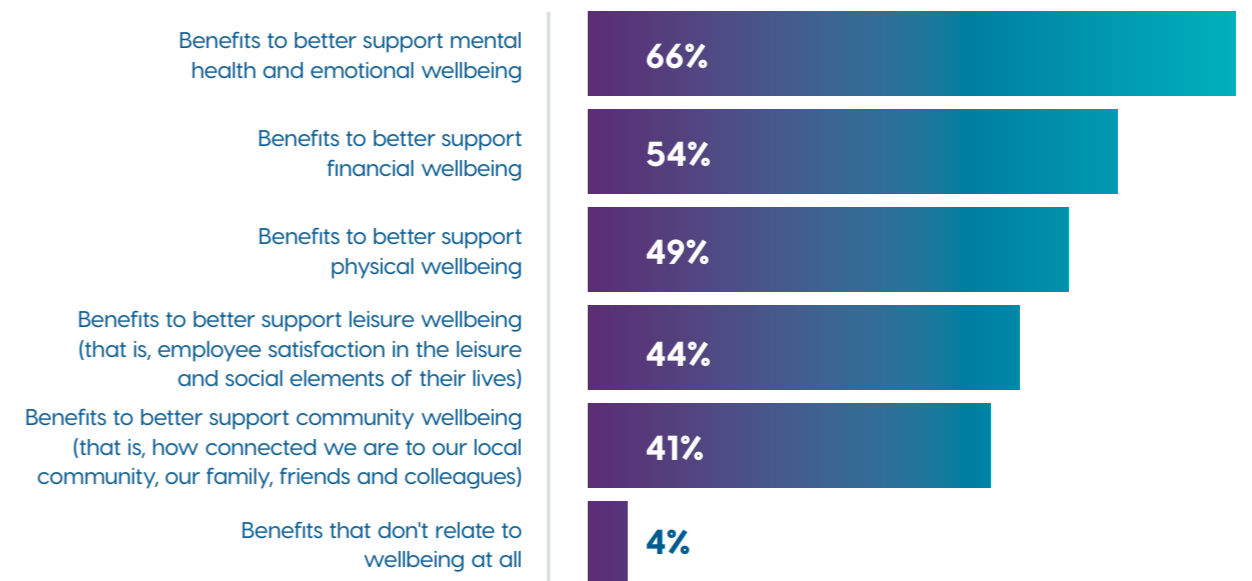
While most organisations appear to be doing a good job in adapting their benefits provision to meet rapidly evolving employee requirements, HR and reward directors identify a wide range of areas in which they would like to evolve their offerings over the next two years.

Again, the leading priority is to give more focus to employee wellbeing, but there is also an appetite to deliver more personalised benefits, greater choice and flexibility, and to make it simpler and easier for employees to engage with benefits.



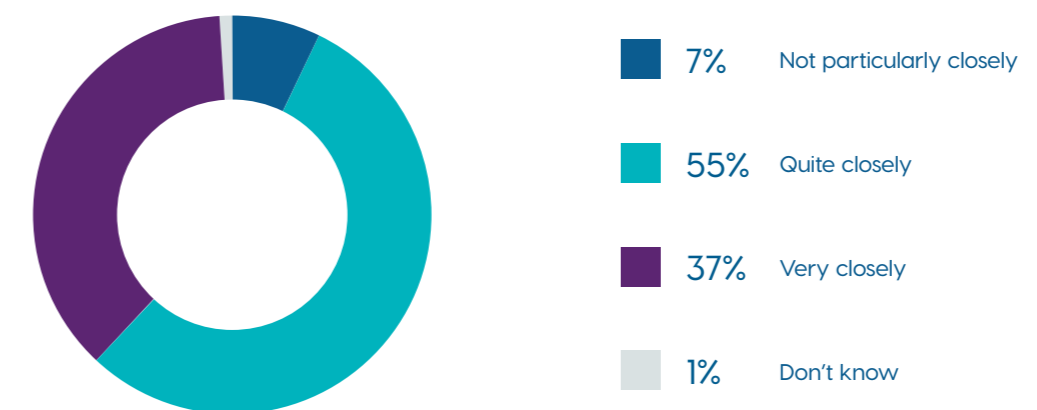
MOST IMPORTANT BENEFIT TYPES IN TERMS OF CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Which three of the following benefit types are most important in terms of how much you think they contribute to the overall employee experience in your workforce?



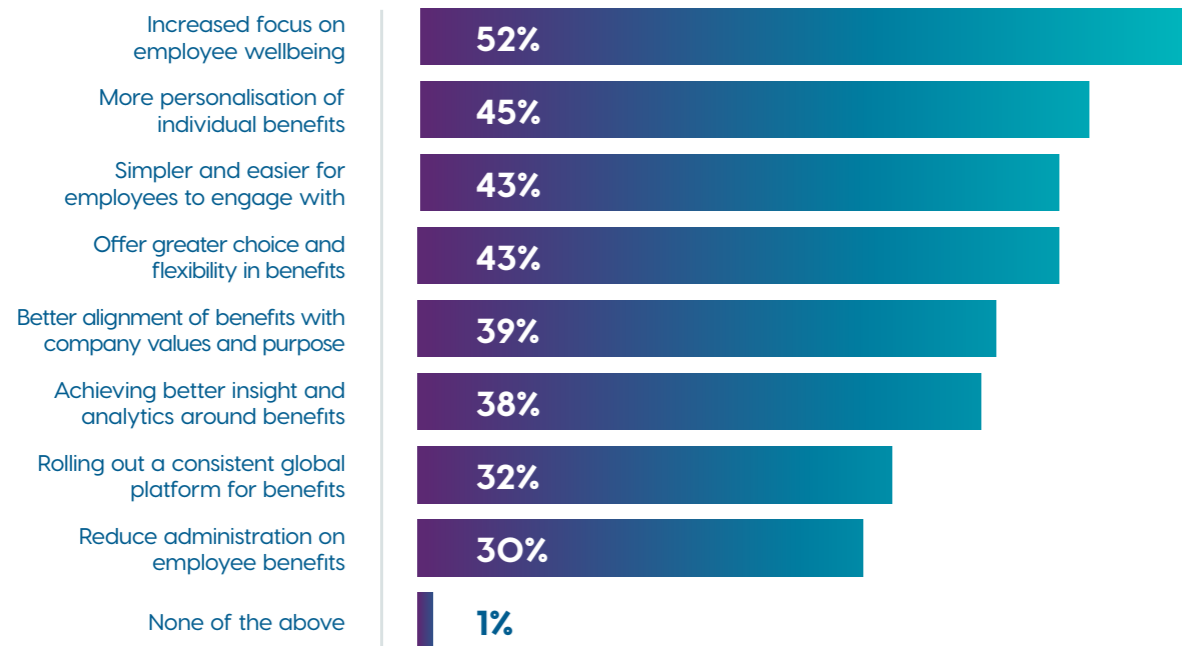
HOW BENEFITS PROVISION ALIGNS WITH WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO EMPLOYEES TODAY

How closely does your benefits provision align with what is important to employees today?



THE EVOLUTION OF BENEFITS PROVISION OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS

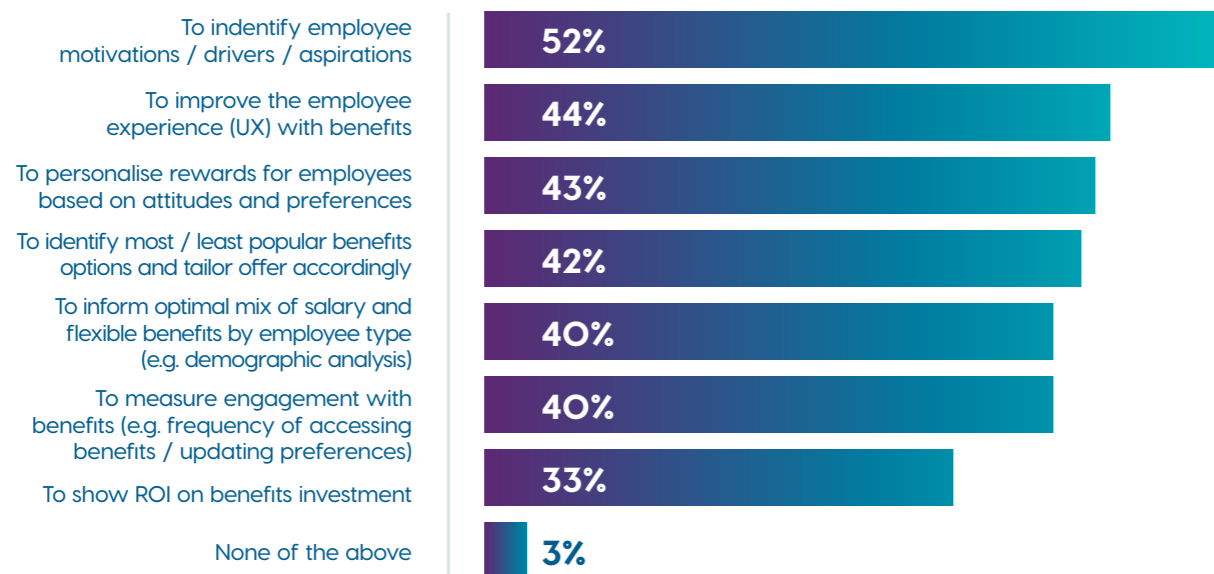
How would you like to evolve your benefits provision over the next two years?



The research finds that almost all organisations currently use data in some way to inform or analyse their benefits provision, but this is largely done on an ad-hoc, inconsistent basis. Most businesses aren't currently using data to personalise rewards, nor to assess the popularity of benefits options or track engagement levels and ROI.

CURRENT USE OF DATA WITHIN BENEFITS PROVISION

How is data currently used within benefits provision in your organisation



Evidently, data and analytics is an area that HR and reward leaders will look to focus on heavily to ensure their benefits provision remains relevant and meets employee needs over the coming years. This will be particularly important in the wake of the pandemic, when business leaders give more scrutiny to increased HR spend.

The New Reward Director needs real-time data and insight at their fingertips to demonstrate the impact of their work on employee wellbeing, engagement and performance, and how that is in turn driving business value.

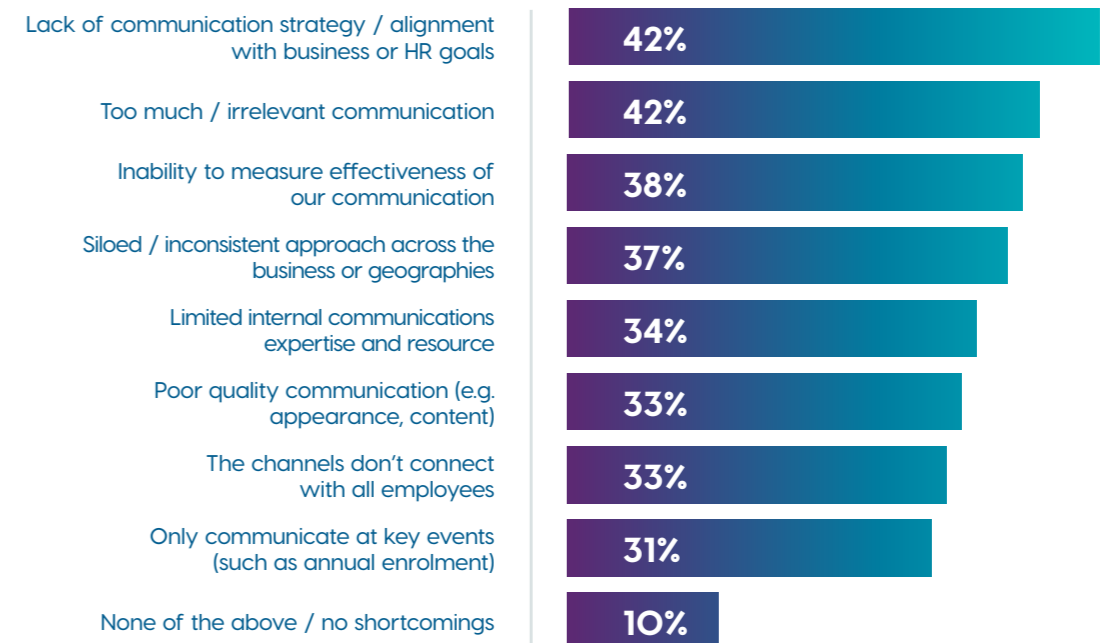
Another area where HR and reward leaders see room for improvement over the coming years is in internal communications, around benefits. They point to a range of shortcomings with their current communications,

most notably a lack of alignment with business and HR goals. Many others point to poor-quality content and inconsistent approaches across the business as significant communications issues.

25% of HR and reward leaders report that they don't use the right channels to reach all their employees, and 30% admit that they don't have the tools to measure the impact of communications.

CURRENT SHORTCOMINGS IN COMMUNICATING BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEES

What do you see as the biggest shortcomings when it comes to communicating benefits to your employees?



EXPERT INSIGHT

The research shows that organisations are still struggling to surface the data and insights they need to make informed decisions around employee benefits, but change is coming. The reward team has a host of data sources at their fingertips and, in our work at Benefex, we've helped customers use that to uncover meaningful insights to drive their future wellbeing strategy. Along with enhancements in digital health technology, organisations are now able to use this rich insight to integrate health into their core business strategies.

Our findings are also clear that organisations feel held back by the quality of their employee communications. Employers who are successful in motivating employees to engage in all the elements of their wellbeing strategy (including emotional, community, and financial, as well as physical health) over the long term will be those that have a clear and effective communication strategy. The key is to implement communications that reach target audiences effectively and at the right time;

communications that educate, motivate and inspire, without being overwhelming. There is a great opportunity for organisations to review their current communications channels and bring them into the digital, hybrid-working age.

Stephen Hackett | Head of Corporate Benefits



FINAL THOUGHTS: – A DEFINING MOMENT FOR THE NEW REWARD DIRECTOR

As rapidly evolving workforce dynamics continue to challenge employers across all sectors, HR and reward leaders find themselves facing a defining moment in their careers. For the first time, many now have a genuine opportunity to deliver the workforce transformation which can prepare their organisations for the future and propel their own careers to new heights. They have the Board-level support and investment commitments to deliver real strategic change and create engaging and seamless employee experiences.

But, as this research has found, many HR and reward leaders are still caught up in the firefighting and reactive approaches that have (understandably) characterised the last 18 months. They're struggling to escape the day-to-day demands and intense pressure that have engulfed HR departments throughout the pandemic.

Evidently, HR and reward leaders have clear ideas and intentions around what they need to focus on in the coming months and years, to address current and future employee wellbeing issues and build a healthy, engaged and motivated workforce. For many, this means embarking on initiatives to embed a culture of

wellbeing within their organisation and to implement the right structures, processes and technology platforms to enable and support this.

Without doubt, employee benefits will become a massive focus area for employers over the next few years, as business leaders recognise the role that benefits can play in addressing wellbeing and diversity objectives, and in driving greater engagement and loyalty among staff. To achieve this, HR and reward leaders will need to embrace a strategic approach to benefits, ensuring their offering is constantly evolving to meet employee needs and support broader business objectives. This means improving their use of data and analytics, and aligning benefits strategy with wider company values and purpose.

The challenge for The New Reward Director is to grasp the opportunity. This means finding ways to focus on the things that really matter and that will deliver most impact to employees and the business. In doing so, The New Reward Director will continue to build credibility within the business and demonstrate the value that they can deliver, both now and in the future.



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