



# The workforce of the future

How employee needs are  
changing post pandemic

# Supporting the workforce of the future

**During the pandemic, the ways in which people have had to live and work have changed dramatically. Everyone has had to rethink what really matters in the wake of a shared threat to health, livelihood and wellbeing.**

At Benenden Health, we're on a mission to improve the nation's health by making quality private healthcare accessible to everyone. We have been since 1905, when we were founded to support workers through a tuberculosis outbreak. Now, two years after the Covid-19 pandemic first began, we want to know if the things people value at work have changed.

As part of our Workforce of the Future survey, we spoke to 2,000 people from different regions, ages, genders, backgrounds and sectors in a demographically representative sample of the UK's workforce. Ultimately, we wanted to find out what employers can do to ensure they meet the needs of their teams today and tomorrow.

## Key findings at a glance:

- 55% of the UK workforce are re-evaluating what, how, where and when they work as a direct result of the pandemic
- Younger workers, especially those under 25 (Gen Z), say they will look for benefits other than salary in deciding which roles to accept in future
- 94% of people think remote and flexible working models will remain, and many predict the end to the 5-day week and 9-5 day within the next five years
- Younger people are far more likely to quit a job if it negatively impacts their health than those aged 55 and over
- 100% of respondents said they worry about their health and wellbeing needs in the coming years



## How priorities are changing

**Our research shows that most people are rethinking their working lives as a direct result of the pandemic, and priorities are shifting.**

This is particularly true for younger people, with Generation Z (16-24 year-olds) saying they will look for benefits other than salary in deciding where to work in future. And with over 20% of this age group saying they pursue side projects alongside their full-time jobs, future career paths may be more fluid than in previous generations.

The % of workers reconsidering their jobs:

Age 16-24 **75%**      Age 55+ **24%**

**55%**

of people say the pandemic has changed how they feel about work

**21%**

of 16-24 year-olds have a 'side hustle' as well as a full-time job

### What this means for employers

With younger workers particularly reappraising the value of a full-time job in their lives, it's unlikely employers will be able to attract and retain the best talent in future based on traditional packages and perks alone.



## A shift in power

The balance of power at work is shifting too: from employer to employee. Almost half the people we spoke to say the pandemic had changed their relationship with their employer and, again, this was especially true for Gen Z.

### Key findings

- Overall, 46% of people say their relationship with their employer has changed in the past two years
- For Gen Z, this rises to 76%, but applies to only 29% of those aged 55+
- Nearly 20% of workers say they have more power at work than ever before

### What this means for employers

For many, greater empowerment has led to employers offering remote or flexible working on a more permanent basis, having successfully trialled it during lockdown. However, most workers say their employer has not offered additional private healthcare or supportive health services in response to the pandemic, which could present a powerful lever for those employers who do.



# The impact of remote working

The biggest shift in the UK workplace over the past couple of years has been the move to remote working.

Though it hasn't been feasible in all industries or cases, and though our research shows it doesn't work for everyone, only 6% of the entire UK workforce say they don't want the option of remote working in future.

## Key findings

- 30% of women admit to overworking from home
- 37% of men admit to clocking too few hours when working remotely
- 64% of Gen Z say they struggle to focus remotely
- 40% of workers in Manchester admit to doing less than their contractual hours when at home

## But is it here to stay?

- 94% of all people want to keep the option of remote working in future
- Women are three times as likely as men to say that an inability to work from home negatively impacts their wellbeing

## What this means for employers

In order to stay competitive, employers could consider being more flexible in meeting employee needs. However, given that the success of working from home has varied for people, the best solution may be one that empowers employees to find the model that works best for them.

# The end to traditional ways of working?

As part of the shift towards greater autonomy, almost half of the employees we spoke to say they want to see an end to the traditional five-day working week in the next five years.

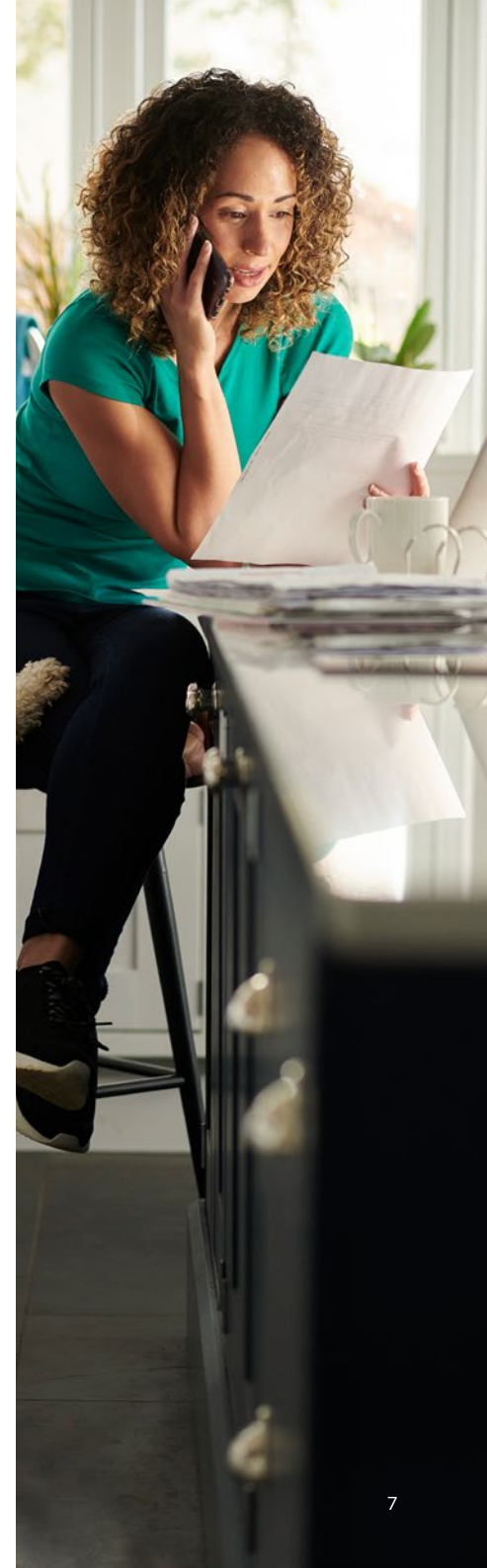
It's clear from the people we spoke to that flexibility isn't just about where they work, but when and how, too.

## Key findings

- 25% of people want to move away from the traditional 9-5 working model
- This is most important for 25-35 year-old millennials, who may be starting to have families in the next few years
- 52% of all UK workers think flexible working will be the most essential requirement for employees in future

## What this means for employers

Regardless of age, sector, gender or background, the pandemic has pushed everyone to reconsider long-established ways of working. Employers might want to consider where and how they can reasonably facilitate greater autonomy for their people.



## Stick or twist? The deciding factors

**After salary, the most important factor in how people feel about work is their sense of happiness and community.**

Having positive relationships at work is key for everyone, but we've discovered it's one of the main reasons Gen Z stay in a role.

Overall, we've found younger workers value their wellbeing highly.

If work negatively affects their health, they're more likely than any other age group to quit a job.

### Key findings

- Gen Z are twice as likely as those aged 55+ to leave a job because they don't like their employer
- People aged 25-35 are most likely to quit a job that negatively impacts their health
- This age group is 50% more likely to do so than those 34-45 and 100% more likely than 45-55 year-olds

### What this means for employers

Money isn't the only thing that matters to a young workforce, so employers might want to think more holistically about what they can offer. Consider benefits that support a sense of community, like mentorship and team building, and ones that underline health and happiness, such as wellbeing resources and support helplines.

## Experiences of redundancy

**For many of the people we spoke to, leaving a job role during the pandemic wasn't within their control. A surprising 19% of those surveyed left their last job because of redundancy.**

### Key findings

- The number of redundancies during the pandemic was marginally higher for men
- It also increased with age, as only 2.8% of 16-24 year-olds were made redundant compared to 10% of 35-45 year-olds and 18% of people over 55
- Regionally, the East Midlands ranked highest for redundancies with a rate of 17%
- The manufacturing and utilities sectors faced the most lay-offs during the pandemic

### What this means for employers

For older workers and those in certain industries, job security has been tested by the pandemic. This may explain why some groups feel different to others about what they value most. Employers shouldn't discount any of the benefits available to them to secure the right candidates.

## Money, time and benefits

**In terms of employee packages, our survey shows that people prioritise money, time, and then benefits: in that order.**

It's not surprising that we found the main reason people chose their current role, and why they will choose roles in future, is salary.

After that, we found women are more likely than men to choose a role that promises 'good career prospects' over other benefits.

### Employee benefits ranked in order of priority after salary:

1. More holiday
2. A three-day weekend
3. Mental health days
4. Financial support for commuting
5. Private healthcare

#### What this means for employers

Salary is still the most important factor in choosing a job. But being able to offer other benefits that give people more time or contribute to their wellbeing can also increase consideration.

## The expectation gap in healthcare at work

### The case for holistic healthcare

It's clear from our survey that health concerns have been shaped by experiences of the pandemic. Most people we spoke to worry about how their wellbeing needs could change in future.

Our survey also indicates that add-on Private Medical Insurance (PMI) may not provide the reassurance people are looking for. In future, healthcare will be about more than simply treating acute conditions, as people seek ongoing, holistic support with both their mental and physical wellbeing.

#### Key findings

- 18% of people would like to have private healthcare provided by their employer
- 17.6% feel 'wraparound services' that contribute to their overall and complete health will be essential in what they look for in a role in future
- This increases marginally with age and for women, though men statistically are more likely to have a healthcare policy in place
- Most people worry about changing mental and physical health needs in 5-10 years
- Women are twice as likely as men to be concerned for their family's mental health
- Surprisingly, the youngest age group surveyed showed the greatest concern for their future health and wellbeing needs

#### What this means for employers

Nearly everyone we spoke to worries about their health and wellbeing in the future. There's a clear opportunity for employers to provide accessible support, advice and resources that can offer complete peace of mind. It could be a compelling workplace incentive if employers are explicit about how it removes fear and offers greater peace of mind.



## So what does the future look like?

Our Workforce of the Future survey confirms that the pandemic has changed not just how and where people work, but what they want to get from it.

## Things to consider as an employer

### Be mindful that salary alone may not be enough to retain the right people

Even though salary is still the number one motivating factor, ask yourself: where could I also give people more time and support? Start by auditing your employee offer to see where the gaps are against the benefits prioritised in our survey.

### Consider what flexible working could look like for your business

Could you implement flexi-time, or some occasional remote working, for example? Giving your people more ways of working could empower them to work in a way that best supports their productivity and wellbeing.

### Get ahead today, with healthcare for all

Benenden Healthcare for Business provides an affordable private healthcare solution to support all your employees with their wellbeing. With 24/7 access to GP and Mental Health helplines, we can offer greater peace of mind and help you protect the health of your business long term.



# Get ahead with healthcare for all

## Joining Benenden Health

We can help you attract, retain and support your workforce of the future for only £11.90 per person, per month. With easy set-up and no exclusions for pre-existing medical conditions, we're making quality healthcare a standard of employment for everyone, rather than just a perk for the few.

## With membership:

- **Employees get quick access to essential services**  
With our 24/7 GP and Mental Health Helplines, your employees can get the help they need, when they need it
- **You can always look out for the health and wellbeing of your employees**  
You can rest assured that our healthcare helps to support both the physical and mental wellbeing of your employees, with access to physiotherapy and mental health support
- **Staff can get back to health faster with speedy access to our services**  
Reduce the worry for your employees for answers with diagnosis and access to 250+ non-urgent medical treatments across our hospital network
- **We can help to reduce absenteeism and presenteeism**  
Look out for employee welfare, whilst also supporting staff and improving retention across your business
- **A membership means showing staff you care for them (equally)**  
With one affordable price for all, you can offer all your staff the same cover





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