

Which trends are driving engagement now?

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24

**Employee
survey**

QUESTIONS

PeopleInsight

Introduction from Kate Pritchard, Head of Consulting at People Insight

Maintaining a culture with high levels of employee engagement, productivity and performance has been tough over the last few years. Now HR leaders are being asked to keep this going with fewer resources while responding to new challenges around flexible working, the cost-of-living crisis, and talent shortages.

People Insight work with hundreds of UK organisations and analyse over 50,000 employee survey responses every month, giving us a unique insight into how the employee experience is changing. Based on this data and the latest research, we've identified five trends shaping today's workplaces and designed a set of survey questions so you can measure their impact.

The survey questions in this guide are ready to use in pulse surveys, as part of your engagement survey, or to prompt team discussions. All our questions are designed with action in mind so you can move straight from reviewing results to sparking positive change.



I hope you'll
find these helpful,

Kate.

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Which trends are driving engagement now?

Our survey consultants have looked at People Insight's employee survey database and broader research to identify 5 trends driving engagement in today's workplaces.

Read on to discover the issues that matter to today's workforce, how you can respond, and survey questions to assess how your people feel.

5 trends driving employee engagement:

1. **Supporting employees through a cost-of-living crisis**
2. **Expanding your wellbeing programme**
3. **Creating better connected hybrid workers**
4. **More targeted support for women in the workplace**
5. **Building a culture of accountability**

1. Supporting employees through a cost-of-living crisis

Since the start of the cost-of-living crisis [half of employees](#) report worrying about money at least once a week, and [one in seven Brits](#) are struggling to make ends meet. Money worries show no signs of easing up, so employers will need to find new ways to help their people cope.

Despite interventions so far, research from [Wagestream](#) suggests that the financial climate is making employees less trusting of their employers. Only 30% of employees believe their employer cares about their financial health, down from 52% before the cost-of-living crisis. This is likely to affect how engaged and motivated people feel, and how likely they are to stay with your organisation.

Taking targeted action to reduce costs for employees, showing sensitivity when it comes to spending, and being honest about the financial pressures organisations are facing can all help rebuild this trust.

Support for financial wellbeing might include:

1. Reducing costs

While bonuses or extravagant pay increases aren't realistic for most organisations at this time, offering [non-monetary rewards](#) can help employees reduce costs. **Examples include:**

- ▶ John Lewis and Waitrose **offer partners free meals**, including packed lunches for delivery drivers.
- ▶ **Salary sacrifice schemes** provide electric vehicles, childcare, or home insulation at a reduced cost
- ▶ **Hybrid working or remote working policies** reduce the cost of commuting
- ▶ **Employee discount schemes** help employees save on essentials like school uniforms and groceries as well as treats like cinema tickets or meals out


2. Personalised financial support

What employees need will differ depending on their personal circumstances. The aim of financial wellbeing is to help employees feel in control of their finances and informed about how to manage them. Ideas for financial wellbeing support for employees include:

- ▶ **Financial literacy advice and coaching** via platforms like Bippit and Neyber
- ▶ **Targeted employee benefits** to help people access the right help for them. Gattaca provide employees with lifetime ISAs to help buy a first home, what3words provide interest free loans for train season tickets, while other organisations provide private health insurance or reimburse eye tests.

3. Creating a supportive culture

The success of financial wellbeing initiatives may well come down to your company culture. 91% of employers believe their environment is supportive of financial health, yet just 52% of employees agree. The stigma and shame around talking about money means some people wait [three years](#) before seeking help. So, creating a truly supportive environment will also require giving guidance & training for managers about what to do if an employee is struggling to afford their commute; which tools and benefits are available to colleagues; and how to open conversations around financial wellbeing.



People Insight client StepChange offer [resources to help employers start conversations around budgeting, borrowing, and debt](#). Hear advice and insights from Sian Evans, Director of People and Culture at StepChange in our webinar.

[WATCH THE WEBINAR](#)

Employee survey questions about financial wellbeing

Before introducing a financial wellness programme, consult employees about how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting them and what they need to get through it. Also ask what your employees think about the initiatives and support you put in place, to measure their impact and highlight where more help could be needed.

People Insight's expert team have developed four financial wellbeing survey questions* which can indicate how employees are feeling:

1 If I found myself in financial difficulty, I would know where to seek help and advice

2 I feel on top of my personal finances

3 {MY ORGANISATION} provides appropriate advice and guidance that help me manage my personal finances effectively

4 {MY ORGANISATION} provides benefits and support that help me avoid getting into financial difficulty

**Responses to these statements are based on a 5-point scale, ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree".*

2. Expanding your wellbeing programme

70% of HR leaders named employee wellbeing a top priority for 2023. With just 24% of employees believing their employer cares about them, there's clearly work to be done.

Last year saw the trend of "quiet quitting" as employees, particularly Generation Z, chose to go through the motions at work in order to reduce stress and have a more peaceful life. In 2023 employees will continue to put themselves and their health first and will expect more holistic wellbeing support from their employers.

To meet the needs of employees now, employee wellbeing programmes must reflect the full range of wellbeing including:

- ▶ **Mental wellbeing** - Initiatives that support people's psychological, emotional, and social wellbeing at work. For example, offering access to counselling, introducing meeting-free days, or holding workplace meditation sessions.
- ▶ **Physical wellbeing** - By this we mean helping employees make healthy lifestyle choices, avoid preventable conditions, and maintain high energy levels by offering things like healthy meals/snacks, subsidising gym memberships, or encouraging walking meetings.
- ▶ **Financial wellbeing** - As discussed above, financial wellbeing is about feeling in control of your finances, able to pay your bills, deal with unexpected costs, and save for the future. Initiatives could include financial education support, perks and benefits that help employees save money, or updating your company pension scheme to provide long-term financial security.
- ▶ **Community wellbeing** - Community wellbeing includes the social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political factors that help communities flourish. For organisations, it's about how they protect and support the communities around them, and how they care for their employees outside of work. Offering healthy meal choices in the office canteen is great. Community wellbeing extends this by ensuring all employees can also access fresh produce at home. Many organisations also offer volunteering days, on top of annual leave, to encourage people to give back to local causes.

Tackling burnout in HR

The priorities above will pile more work onto HR's plate. As burnout levels in HR teams rise, more needs to be done to support the people tasked with taking care of everybody else.

Covid-19 left many HR professionals experiencing burnout and exhaustion as they juggled the demands of the pandemic. This [continued post-pandemic](#) with 94% of HR departments feeling overwhelmed and 97% of HR professionals feeling emotionally fatigued. Alongside these pressures, HR teams feel increasingly undervalued. Only [1 in 2 HR professionals](#) feel that their work is valued, and 78% are considering pursuing a new job opportunity in the next 12 months.

Ideas to reduce stress and burnout for HR include:

- ▶ **Give HR a seat at the table** during executive discussions and decisions so they can raise concerns, offer input, and share their perspectives
- ▶ **Embrace HR technology and platforms** that can save time and lighten the workload for teams (Did we mention the time-saving features of the [People Insight Platform](#)?)
- ▶ **Bring in an external consultant, coach or organisational psychologist** that HR teams can speak openly and honestly to
- ▶ **Review workloads and schedules** to help HR teams take advantage of the wellbeing support they put in place for others



Employee survey questions to measure employee wellbeing

The employee wellbeing survey questions* below are from our **THRIVE model**, designed by People Insight's organisational psychologists to measure and improve wellbeing at work.

- 1 {MY ORGANISATION} does enough to support my health and wellbeing at work
- 2 If I was experiencing poor mental health I would feel confident to raise it with someone at work
- 3 I can comfortably cope with my workload
- 4 I feel valued and recognised for the work that I do
- 5 I make an effort to maintain my own wellbeing

**Responses to these statements are based on a 5-point scale, ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree".*

3. Creating better connected hybrid workers

It's no secret that most employees prefer hybrid working. Now that hybrid working is established, it's time to tackle what it means for Learning & Development and how to keep your hybrid workers engaged and connected.



Your hybrid working policy should consider:

1. Upskilling and growth opportunities

[58% of employees](#) are afraid that their skills have gone stale and are committed to upskilling in the next 12 months. Despite the uncertain financial climate, employees will still be looking for new opportunities. To retain their workforce and attract new talent, organisations need to step up their Learning & Development plans. Wondering what's next for L&D? Tech will lead the way. Innovative organisations are adopting [Virtual Reality](#) to offer immersive training experiences, while others are using AI to gamify learning and personalise content.

2. Tech to connect hybrid colleagues

At least [one in three hybrid workers](#) reports feeling lonely, and most feel like their colleagues don't care about them. Organisations must act to help employees feel more connected to their company culture, vision, and purpose. From [VR office spaces](#), to 360-degree cameras, to collaborative tools like [Miro](#), we'll see an uptake in tools that help employees socialise and reconnect with one another. Otherwise, engagement, wellbeing and productivity, will suffer and employees are unlikely to stick around if a better offer comes along.

3. The choice to work from anywhere

Work from anywhere (WFA) is a type of flexible working that entitles employees to work from any location. WFA policies typically permit employees to work abroad for up to a year, and are already offered by employers like Ocado Group, Spotify, and Salesforce. 2022 saw a [48% increase in 'work from anywhere' vacancies](#), and Spain recently launched a ['Digital Nomad' visa](#) to attract remote workers. With the trend set to expand in the next 12 months, now is the perfect time for your organisation to develop a robust WFA policy that takes care of legal and compliance matters.

With all this to consider, perhaps you'll need to bring in a Chief Remote Officer.

Job search engine [Adzuna](#) reports a 50% increase in CRO vacancies since 2019, as more organisations require a role to sustain high levels of productivity, wellbeing and engagement among their remote workers.

Employee survey questions to measure effective hybrid working

Our hybrid working survey questions* were designed by People Insight's experts to help organisations understand how people feel about hybrid work, and how it is affecting communication, engagement, and wellbeing. Below is a sample, but you can access the [full set of survey questions here](#).

- 1 My line manager keeps in close contact with me
- 2 I have the equipment I need to do my role effectively in the hybrid working environment
- 3 There is good communication and collaboration between different teams here
- 4 People are being treated fairly, irrespective of their working pattern
- 5 Our approach to hybrid working works well for me personally

**Responses to these statements are based on a 5-point scale, ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree".*

4. More targeted support for women in the workplace

The battle for gender equality will ramp up this year as organisations see what's at stake if things don't change. New data from [McKinsey](#) predicts "The Great Breakup" in 2023 as women leave roles in unprecedented numbers due to (amongst other reasons) burnout, poor progression, and a lack of flexibility.

Post-pandemic, women are finding that not all hybrid working is equal and will be looking for more inclusive options. Although hybrid working offers flexibility over where and when to work, it also risks limiting women's opportunities for growth. Plus, hybrid working arrangements [make it harder for women](#) to access mentoring and networking opportunities, limit opportunities for promotions and recognition (physical presence [directly influences](#) perceptions of work ethic), and [reduce how often women speak up](#) in meetings.

To create gender-equal hybrid working cultures, organisations must go beyond allowing people to work from home a few days a week:

- ▶ **Consult your employees about what's working and what could be improved.** Use demographic data to look at how experiences differ between men and women, and what different employee groups may require.
- ▶ **Provide equal access to mentorship and sponsorship, wherever women work from.** This could mean offering virtual programmes, building Employee Resource Groups that encourage connections between women at work, or embedding mentoring into your virtual onboarding processes like law firm [Cooley](#) has done.
- ▶ **The move to hybrid work has brought new pressures and challenges for managers,** so they may need training to navigate these and create a more supportive environment for women. Invest in training for managers around specific issues such as preventing burnout, addressing proximity bias, and managing dispersed teams.

Caring for women's workplace wellbeing

Organisations will also need wellbeing policies that better reflect the needs of women at different life stages.

For instance, although awareness and support for the menopause has improved in recent years, more action will be vital to stop women [leaving work](#) altogether due to symptoms. This support is best based on colleague feedback but reviewing your existing policies to accommodate common symptoms is a good starting point.

For example, night sweats affect 75% of menopausal women and can last for seven years or more. Offering flexible start times and protected breaks can accommodate broken sleep and allow colleagues to rest. Also educate colleagues and line managers about symptoms of the menopause. A [2022 survey](#) revealed that only 14% of women have mentioned symptoms of the menopause at work, despite almost half needing to take time off. Raising awareness of how the menopause affects women normalises conversations and makes it easier for women to ask for help.

Similarly, [more than half of women](#) who have undergone IVF treatment have hidden it from their employer. And one in five women feel that using annual leave for appointments is the most difficult aspect of balancing work and IVF. Forward thinking employers like Co-op are offering [fertility treatment policies](#) which entitle individuals, partners and surrogates to paid time off.

"It's incredibly difficult to navigate through fertility treatment while balancing work and the wider impact it has on your life. The decision to discuss [fertility treatment] with your employer is an incredibly difficult and personal one. However, by creating a supportive environment companies can go a long way in opening the conversation with colleagues and easing the stress that people in this situation often feel."

[Shirine Khoury-Haq](#), Chief Executive of the Co-op.



Read our dedicated article for more ideas to support [women's wellbeing at work](#).

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)



Survey questions to understand women's experiences at work

Filtering survey results by demographic data will be key to exploring how women experience life at work, and how their experiences differ from men in your workplace. Start by looking at responses for these survey questions, taken from People Insight's **PEARL model of engagement**.

- 1 I feel valued and recognised for the work that I do
- 2 I have the right opportunities to learn and grow at work
- 3 My manager treats me fairly and with respect
- 4 I would still like to be working at (Client) in two years' time
- 5 I am able to strike the right balance between my work and home life

**Responses to these statements are based on a 5-point scale, ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree".*

5. Creating a culture of accountability

At People Insight we've spoken about a culture of accountability for a while now. We expect these conversations to ramp up in 2023 as organisations recognise the value of embedding accountability.

An [organisational culture](#) of accountability is one where leaders, line managers, and employees take ownership for delivering results, work together to find solutions, talk openly about issues, and hold themselves and one another to account. Rather than focusing on individual contributions, this approach focuses on outcomes for the organisation.

It results in high productivity, high growth, and high engagement because people feel clear about what they are working on and how it impacts the company's goals. This high-performance culture is also likely to attract new talent, offering a crucial advantage in 2023's competitive market.

To create a culture of accountability, leaders should:

▶ **Role-model from the top**

Leaders have to practice what they preach when it comes to accountability. This includes clearly defining the organisation's purpose, taking ownership for what's happening across the organisation, and showing commitment to their people by investing in their wellbeing.

▶ **Communicate goals very clearly**

Accountability relies on everyone being on the same page about where the organisation is heading, and the part they have to play. Therefore, clarity from leaders and line managers about the organisation's goals and how these translate to individual workloads is essential.

▶ **Build psychological safety into the workplace**

For accountability to thrive all employees, whatever their level, must feel confident to talk honestly about issues, call out poor behaviour, and own up to mistakes. This comes down to feeling psychologically safe. Learn more about [cultivating psychological safety](#) in our article.

Survey questions to understand accountability at work in 2023

A good starting point for improving accountability is to measure the extent to which people feel accountability is currently encouraged and achieved across your organisation.

- 1 I know how the work I do helps [my company] to achieve its aims
- 2 I am clear about what I am expected to achieve at work
- 3 I have the freedom I need to get on with my job
- 4 If I were to make a mistake, my manager would be supportive in helping me learn from it
- 5 It is safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done

**Responses to these statements are based on a 5-point scale, ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree".*

Take control of employee voice with the People Insight Platform

More and more organisations are combining annual and pulse surveys to keep up with change and act on feedback fast. The People Insight Platform gives you rich feedback on the full employee experience at the pace that's right for your organisation.

Choose between fully managed surveys, self-serve platform access or a combination of both for a flexible and fast employee voice programme.

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	Overall	Christian	No religion	Other religion	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Buddhist	Sikh
Able to express my views	85%	84%	90%	94%	89%	94%	90%	89%	81%
Leaders are supportive	80%	82%	83%	94%	89%	94%	90%	80%	90%
I'm treated with...									

Category	Value
9 live surveys	9 live surveys
4 new surveys	4 new surveys
663 organisations	663 organisations
15530 dashboard users	15530 dashboard users

Theme headline	Current	Previous	Change	
Reward	72%	16%	12%	↑ +1
Autonomy	80%	12%	8%	↑ +1
Purpose	82%	12%	6%	0
Engagement	83%	13%	4%	0
Enablement	67%	17%	16%	↓ -2
Leadership	71%	19%	9%	↓ -3

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