

# Wellbeing Trends 2025

Exploring health and wellbeing hot topics and search trends to help businesses get a head start on workplace wellbeing in 2025.



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# Introduction

The past year has seen a change in government, and with it a pledge to tackle key issues like health inequality and long-term sickness. But the impact of these policies — and how businesses adapt — remains to be seen.

For employees, their main concerns still revolve around financial wellbeing and the ability for the NHS to be there when they need it<sup>1</sup>.

Regardless of new guidance and government policies, this serves as a reminder of how important it is to get the basics right. For many businesses, improving employee health starts with these basics — things like promoting healthy lifestyles, exercise and stress reduction.

Implementing new policies can be tricky, but now is the time to prepare for a year where employee wellbeing will no doubt be in the spotlight again — and workers will be expecting leaders to take action.

In this report, we highlight four key trends in workplace wellbeing and their potential impact in 2025. While we can't predict the future, we hope the report gives you food for thought and ignites important conversations around the issues affecting workers today.



# Tackling the long-term sickness crisis



The economic cost of employee sickness is estimated to be £103bn for 2024.



#### Most common reasons for long-term absence<sup>2</sup>:

1. Depression, mental illness or anxiety (27%)
2. Musculoskeletal issues (23%)
3. Other health problems or disabilities (15%)

## Long-term sick hits 20-year high

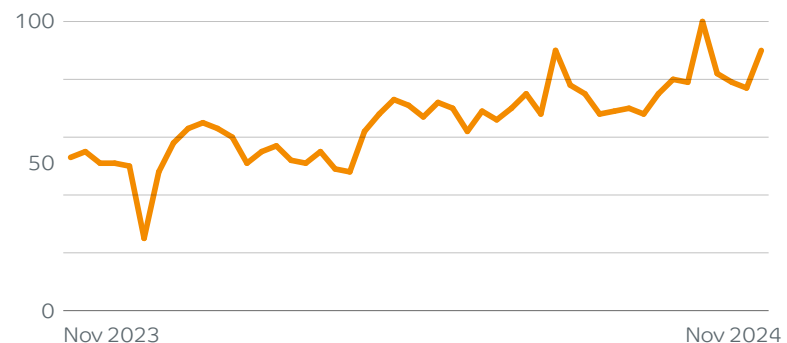
A combination of factors are driving this trend. Long NHS wait times mean people are struggling to access treatment, but preventative healthcare and mental health support can help.

In addition to those out of work, [3.7 million people](#) are in employment but dealing with a work-limiting health condition.

A lack of first-line support means conditions are escalating before people can access treatment. This creates a vicious cycle of workplace absence, [presenteeism](#) and burnout within teams.

While many employers provide stress and mental health support, it's not always effective — [1 in 10 people](#) took more than 10 days off work due to poor mental health in 2023.

#### 'Sick leave' Google search trend over 12 months



# Budget changes risk impacting employee health

Leaders are understandably worried that rising business costs will eat away at their budgets. The increase in the national insurance threshold from 2025 is one area of concern, especially for SMEs.

This could reduce wellbeing spend or affect workers' income due to hiring freezes or fewer pay rises. And with 74% of UK workers still worried about the [cost of living](#), people may cut back on health expenses such as dentist, optician and physio appointments.

We know that working can provide routine, boost confidence and improve recovery<sup>3</sup>, so wellbeing support must be a priority. Businesses can help workers with a health condition — or those who are returning to work — by making reasonable adjustments, providing flexibility and taking an empathetic approach.

“ Wellbeing programmes are a vital investment in your people's long-term resilience, health and productivity. ”

Dave Capper, CEO, Westfield Health



2,830,000

people aged 16–64 are out of the workforce due to long-term health problems.

# Taking action: what businesses need to know

Solving the long-term sickness crisis will require action from across society — the government, the NHS, businesses, and individuals.

Two key areas for leaders are preventative healthcare and healthy lifestyle choices. Support in these areas can help people get back to work sooner and prevent new illnesses from developing.

Business leaders can play their part by:

- Taking responsibility for employee health
- Putting wellbeing-first policies in place
- Providing accessible preventative support



Health leadership training can give leaders and managers the confidence to prioritise and invest in wellbeing, which in turn drives better performance.

Dave Capper, CEO, Westfield Health



“Employers must be actively encouraged to create positive, health-centric working environments that promote employer-led intervention. Three key pillars to consider are:

## 1. Prevent harm

Improve working environments and practices to bolster inclusivity and reduce burnout, bullying, stigma, psychosocial risk and sedentary behaviour. Given the role of leaders as role models, leadership and management training should be a priority.

## 2. Promote the positive

Employee-level wellbeing interventions that seek to improve physical and mental health and resilience should be promoted regularly throughout the business hierarchy.

## 3. Respond to problems

Create, provide, and adequately communicate support pathways for those suffering from or vulnerable to health problems. All workplaces should be fully equipped with the knowledge and skills to support mental health at work.

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# Hyper-personalisation and biohacking



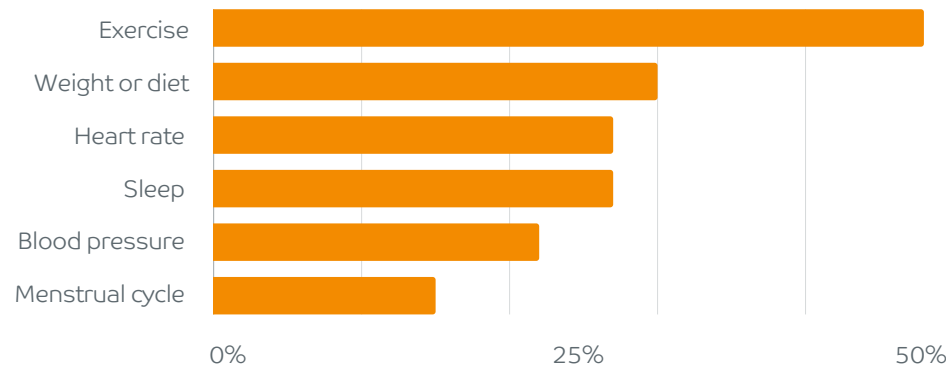
# Health tracking: education and anxiety

The [WHO](#) defines health as ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’. Over 67% of people in the UK self-monitor at least one element of their health in search of this optimal state of wellbeing.

But is this approach helping us form healthy habits, or is it a rigid box-ticking exercise driven by health anxiety? With each person having different physical health needs, lifestyle patterns and diets, hyper-personalised health is booming in the UK.

While data tracking can be helpful to monitor health, it's important to recognise its purpose. Tracking progress on a ‘couch to 5k’ app might be one healthy example. But there's a risk to more rigid or obsessive monitoring that prioritises data over feeling human.

## The most tracked aspects of health in the UK



Source: [YouGov](#)



### biohacking noun.

Biohacking is a ‘do-it-yourself’ approach to biology. It can include making incremental changes to the body, diet, and lifestyle to improve health and wellbeing.



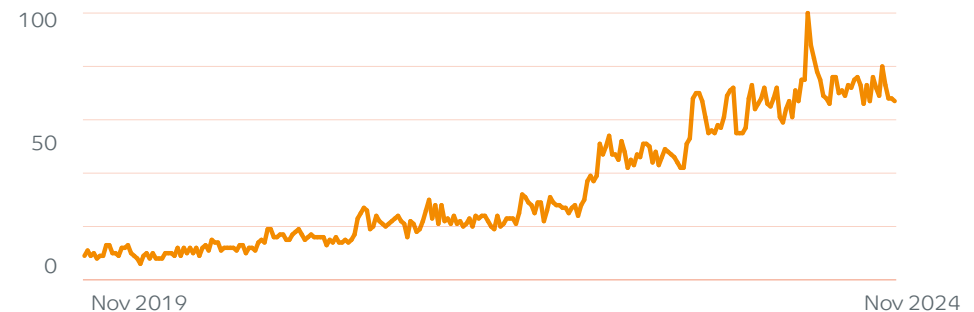
Users of symptom-checker apps are more likely to be further unsettled by feelings of uncertainty and unlikely (but serious) diagnosis suggestions<sup>4</sup>.

# Filling in the blanks with vitamins, minerals and supplements (VMS)

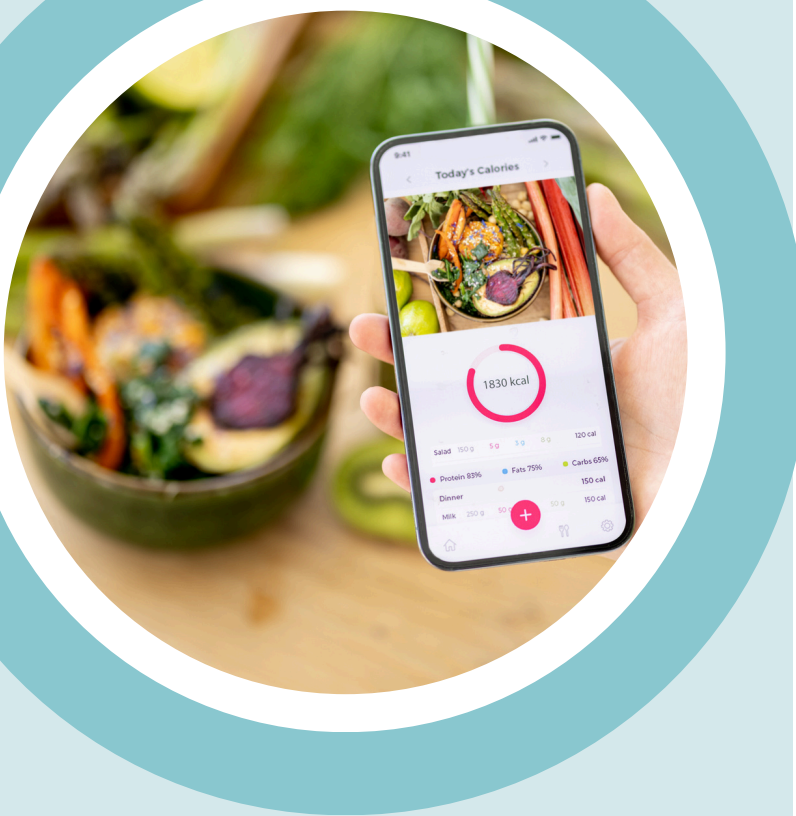
Close tracking of health helps people see the ‘missing’ nutritional values in their diets and lifestyles, leading them to try additional dietary supplements such as vitamins, minerals and nootropics.

With 45% of [UK employees](#) saying their mental health has affected their productivity in the past year, there is a rise in people looking to supplements to improve mental energy. People are seeking mental health and cognitive benefits through the use of nootropics, which are promoted as natural, non-prescription supplements to boost focus, memory and mental clarity.

## ‘Lion’s mane benefits’ — a trending supplement Google search trend over the past 5 years



Vitamins may be seen as an ‘easy fix’ that doesn’t require a prescription or health appointment, but over-consumption can cause health issues too. New dietary supplements should be discussed with a health professional to ensure they’re suitable, monitor their effect and prevent drug interactions.



The VMS market in the UK was £1.5 billion in 2023 and has grown at an average of 13.3% annually since 2018.



In 2022, over 16 million people in the UK consumed vitamins and minerals.



The global brain health supplements market was valued at \$8.63 billion in 2022.

# Managing our energy

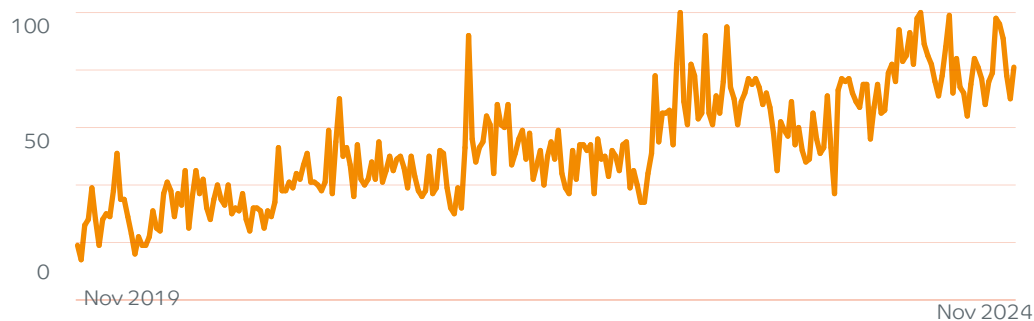
Another biohacking trend sees people turning to social media for advice to improve their energy levels throughout the work day by personalising their nutrition, lifestyle and working conditions to boost their energy.

Nutrition has been taking social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok by storm. [56% of people](#) in the UK who use social media for information on health said they would be likely to make changes to their diet influenced by posts they've seen.

For example, people may try a specific diet based around anti-inflammatory foods to try and manage their energy levels and battle inflammation. This advice may be suggested by their GP, or simply picked up from social media recommendations and self-prescribed.

## 'Anti inflammatory diet'

Google search trend over the past 5 years



Over

4 in 10

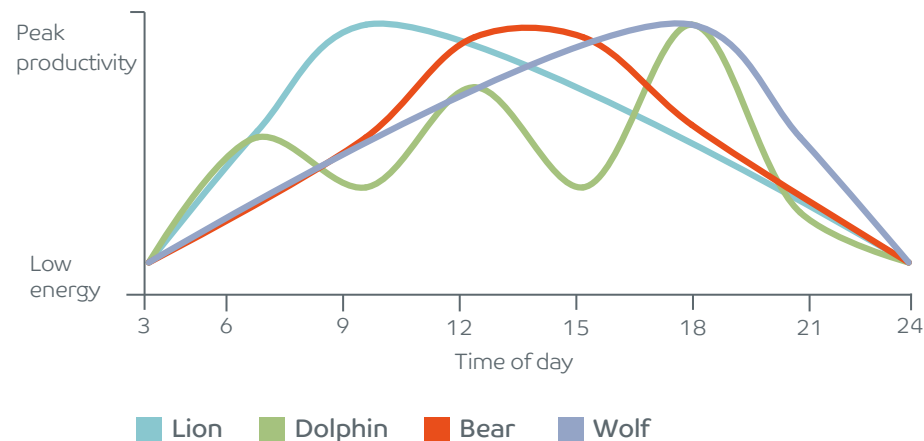
UK consumers claim they often select a specific food because of its health properties.



# Can chronotypes help us plan our time?

It's common to experience productivity and energy peaks throughout the day. To make the most of this, people are looking to their chronotype as a 'natural hack' to improve performance and restructure their daily lives.

Each person's chronotype is dependent on their sleeping preferences, meal times, energy levels throughout the day, and peak times for productivity. This might be traditionally known as being a 'night owl' or a 'morning person'. It's now common for chronotypes to be likened to four particular animals' sleeping habits, which people are using to adapt their daily routine.

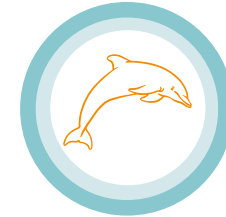


Lion



Early risers who have a natural tendency for routine. They are most productive before noon.

Dolphin



Dolphins are characterised by inconsistent sleep schedules. They tend to have bursts of productivity.

Bear



Energy levels follow the sun – rising with sunrise and retiring in the darkness. Their peak hours are 10am – 2pm.

Wolf



Wake up later and have a burst of evening energy. They are most productive between 1pm – 5pm.

# How can businesses encourage healthy lifestyle changes?

Healthy lifestyle changes can make a big impact — not just on personal health, but on business metrics too. A preventative approach helps reduce time off and increase productivity.

## ✓ Give your people the power to adapt

Try to allow employees scope to adapt how they work to align with their personal productivity strengths and timings. This could mean allowing flexible start times, staggered breaks or restricting meetings to core hours.

## ✓ Book an Employee Health and Lifestyle Screening

Health screening programmes can suit businesses of all sizes, from MOT-style health checks to longer 20-minute lifestyle screenings. With the rise in personal responsibility for health, help guide your employees to focus on the right things by booking an on-site [health and lifestyle screening](#).

## ✓ Encourage healthy eating in the workplace

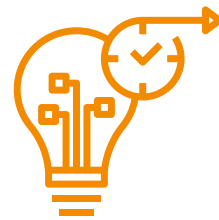
It can be easy to opt for unhealthy snacks when we're busy. Consider switching to healthy vending machines or providing free fruit as an alternative. You can include [health training and webinars](#) in your training plan to encourage employees to take charge of their lifestyle.



“ Small changes in behaviour can have a big impact. Healthy eating can help employees maintain their energy levels throughout the day, increasing focus and concentration. ”

**Mark Pinches, Head of Coaching at Westfield Health**

# Future-proof wellbeing policies





## Are we playing wellbeing whack-a-mole?

Workers are increasingly aware of their health, and they expect their employer to be well-informed and supportive of their individual needs.

Health awareness campaigns are an important educational tool, with celebs shining a light on everything from endometriosis, to autism, to menopause.

But with many struggling to access the NHS or get a formal diagnosis, it's vital that workplaces get their support (and their policies) right.

If HR teams react to employee wellbeing issues on a per-case basis, they'll struggle to keep up with the influx of changes required to provide support.



People are anxious about access to healthcare, with **1 in 3** struggling to book time with their GP.



Employers need to be up-to-date on neurodiversity — Google searches for ADHD have trebled since 2021.



While attitudes to menopause are changing, last year saw an **87% rise** in menopause-related employment tribunals.



## The new employment rights bill: an opportunity to get ahead

In October 2024, the government announced upcoming reform for employers, with a new bill that reflects the societal shift towards supporting health, mental illness and disabilities in the workplace.

These changes shouldn't be seen as something to be afraid of, but an opportunity to create impactful policies. And while the proposed bill won't come into effect immediately, a proactive approach will help leaders and HR teams get ahead.

Working towards a supportive and inclusive workplace culture is the best way to future-proof your wellbeing strategy. This should help you align with the new legislation by default.

Now's a great time to start [building your strategy](#) and reading up on [what's proposed in the new bill](#).



“

Leadership teams can ask difficult questions of themselves, be reflective and honest about their needs and drivers, and patient enough to gather useful data to underpin effective decision-making.

Kate Platts, Head of Research and Innovation at Westfield Health. [Read the full blog](#)

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# Four best-practice tips for employers

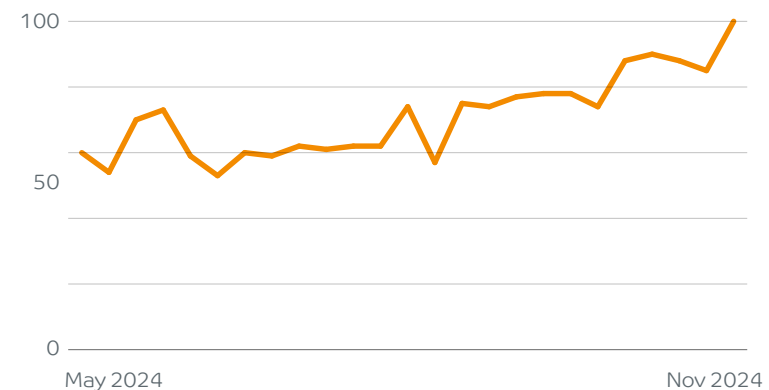
These four key areas can help you identify gaps in your wellbeing strategy and create a targeted approach.

Success relies on leaders getting to know their workforce and consistently asking them for feedback, so they can make informed decisions in the areas below.

- ✓ Find out what matters to your people. Each business will need to adapt to the specific needs of its workforce, so try to avoid box-ticking.
- ✓ Look at the bigger picture — accessible facilities, mental health support and neurodiversity awareness benefit everyone in the workplace.
- ✓ Managers can bridge the gap between policy-makers and colleagues, so focus on manager training in mental health conversations and unconscious bias.
- ✓ Don't make diagnosis the focus of the discussion — focus on actionable steps and reasonable adjustments that can help provide support for workers.



‘Diagnosis’  
Google search trend throughout late 2024



# Physical wellbeing: nature and nurture





## Nature holidays take priority over boozy breaks

There is an increase in nature-focused holidays, with boozy breaks taking a back seat to the great outdoors and physical activity.

Following the pandemic, 45% of adults in the UK report spending [more time outdoors](#). Nature has been a big influence on mental health too, with 39% of people claiming that being in the outdoors is important for their personal wellbeing.



40% of Brits say proximity to nature is important to them when choosing a holiday.



The average monthly Google searches for 'walking shoes' is 60,800.

34%

of Brits are planning to include [hiking](#) in their upcoming holidays.

According to research from [Intel](#), 23% of people in the UK consider themselves to be hikers or ramblers. They also found that 30% of 55-64 year olds are ramblers, followed by 24% of 16-24 year olds. This trend is not just a part of healthier lifestyles, but also a key factor in deciding for social activities and holiday destinations.

# Social fitness on the rise

The UK health and fitness sector continues to grow with 4.1% more gym memberships being purchased in 2024.

The health sector is beginning a cultural shift in physical health with exercise becoming more community-focused. When choosing a gym, 22% of gym members did so because their friends attend.

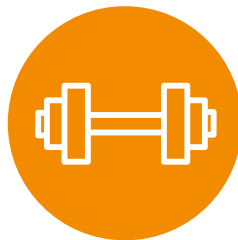


1 in 6 Brits now attend the gym as a way to socialise.

The social aspect of exercise extends to using classes and groups as a way to form new friendships and use positive social pressure to motivate personal fitness goals.



'Local walking groups' has a 300% increase in Google searches in the past 12 months.



'Group gym classes' has a 41% increase in Google searches in the past 12 months



The main reason people combine socialising with exercise is to increase commitment and personal responsibility<sup>5</sup>.



## How workplaces can embrace this trend

### ✓ Encourage exercise during the workday

Time spent during the work week prioritising physical wellbeing has a direct correlation with increased productivity. A [study](#) by Stanford University showed that regardless of age, people experience ‘immediate benefits’ for cognition following ‘a single bout of moderate exercise’, such as 15 minutes of moderately intense cycling on a stationary bike.

### ✓ Include an active space in your workplace

Do you have a 3m x 3m space in your workplace? An [active space](#) is flexible space away from employee workspace that can host group classes, incorporate physical activity and support mental wellbeing. It could even be set up outdoors.

### ✓ Rethink the link between socialising and alcohol

For office parties, social gatherings and Christmas celebrations, culture is changing to favour activities that aren’t alcohol-fuelled. A study by Team Tactics found that [40% of respondents](#) said they’d rather do activity-based socialising or something different with their colleagues.



## Further reading

### [Acas — free, impartial advice for workers and employers](#)

Acas gives employees and employers free, impartial advice on workplace rights, rules and best practice.

### [HBR — Manage your energy, not your time](#)

This HBR article shows that managing our energy is nothing new, yet is something many still struggle with.

### [HR Grapevine — Get Britain Working report overview](#)

An in-depth article which outlines the potential impact for businesses from the latest government policy changes.

### [Sport England — Active Employee Toolkit](#)

A range of tips and tools employers can use to support their employees through physical activity.

## Our resources

### [Wellbeing Strategy Free CPD course](#)

This free CPD-accredited course is all about how employee wellbeing can deliver value for your business.

### [Health Leadership Training](#)

Health leadership training helps leaders build resilience and improve personal and team performance.

### [Active Spaces](#)

Bespoke, scalable and flexible corporate fitness services to get your whole workforce moving.





## Get in touch

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[Request a call back](#)

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