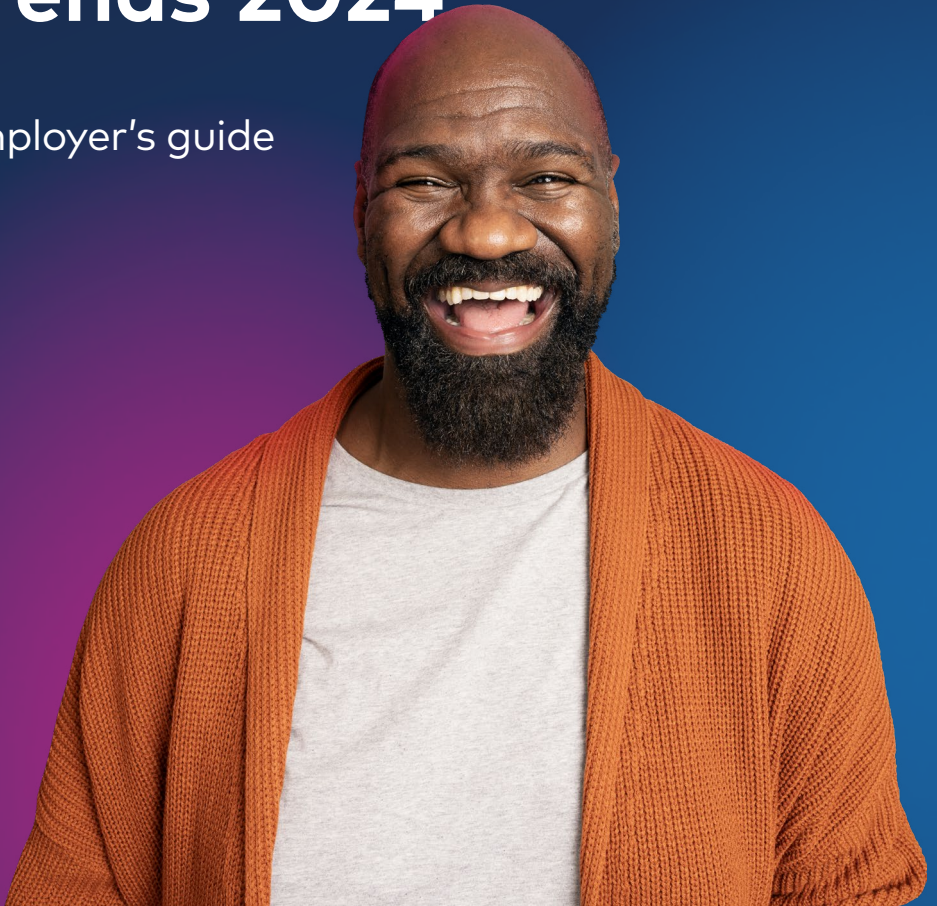


Health and wellbeing trends 2024

Employer's guide



Embracing the health and wellbeing changes set to impact your teams in 2024



Healthcare issues remain at the very top of the news agenda. Innovation continues to rapidly transform the face of health. And we're seeing a strengthening cultural shift towards people taking responsibility for their wellbeing, rather than simply reacting to concerns.

This guide has been designed to put you and your organisation on the front foot when it comes to employee healthcare. We'll help you to understand the health and wellbeing trends likely to take centre stage this year – plus we've added practical advice for your team and their families to promote healthy habits at home and work.

Digital healthcare and the AI revolution

The shift to digital healthcare is already propelling us away from face-to-face appointments and there's more to come. In 2024, all eyes will be on AI and robotics to lead the next big changes in diagnosis, treatment plans and efficiency across the board.



AI in healthcare offers huge benefits by streamlining the appointment, triage, test results and medication processes. Meanwhile, robotics are transforming waiting lists and lead times across operating theatres and providing less invasive procedures, with reduced recovery times.

Benenden Hospital, Kent became the first private hospital in the county to provide robotic-assisted Aquablation to treat prostate enlargement (Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia – BPH) in 2023. This is part of our ongoing commitment to innovation and blazing trails in our sector.

Meanwhile, virtual GP sessions (either on a call or video chat) are well-established and mean we can fit consultations into our busy schedules, essentially putting the management of our health into our own hands. This is increasingly rolling out to all forms of health practitioners, not just GPs.

Put it into practice:

Provide employees access to healthcare via resources at work and a quiet, confidential space to take phone calls and video calls during work hours. Does your EAP provision offer virtual appointments to employees alongside a GP service?

With Benenden Health, our members have access to our [24/7 GP helpline](#) to book an appointment to speak to a UK-based GP.

Online workouts: let's get virtual

The popularity of virtual workouts continues to soar and evolve as people enjoy the flexibility and accessibility of exercising anytime and anywhere.

Virtual workouts appeal to the full spectrum of physical ability and confidence too. Anyone can squeeze in an extra session around work and lifestyle commitments, while those wanting to do more exercise can ease themselves into a new routine at their leisure. Virtual workouts are more affordable than gym memberships and often require no special kit or equipment.

Put it into practice:

Look at online platforms and fitness apps that offer discounts for businesses and group bookings. Does your own benefits platform offer discounts for individuals or access to apps? Is there a space at work you can let employees use for workouts? Provide options for remote or hybrid-working employees to virtually connect with each other too, to encourage some healthy competition and team spirit.

The [Benenden Health Wellbeing Hub](#)* offers Benenden Health members wellbeing classes via a weekly timetable, covering a variety of different fitness classes to suit all abilities.

* The Benenden Health Wellbeing Hub is for members only and is accessed via the Benenden Health App.



Wearable devices: self-care in your hands

The technology we can wear on our wrists or elsewhere is also putting our health into our hands.

With smartwatches and biosensors for conditions such as diabetes and blood pressure now commonplace, the next generation of wearables look set to transform healthcare – with fascinating implications for the workplace as employees take a more preventive and proactive approach to their health rather than reactive.



As we all take more control of our own wellbeing, this can benefit the workplace as employees monitor and manage their health data – such as stress levels, sleep and physical factors – aimed at helping them better support their performance and productivity at work.

Put it into practice:

In general, wearable tech further encourages employees to take control, understand their bodies and set parameters for themselves at work and at home. Highlight discounts available on wearable tech through your benefits platform – such as healthcare membership – and if you have awards schemes or prize incentives at work, add some to the draw.

With Benenden Health, our members have access to [rewards and discounts](#), which could help towards the cost of wearable tech.

Alcohol free/caffeine free: clean drinking, clean living

Being 'sober curious' is a trend that's on the rise, particularly among the youngest in our workplaces.

Cutting back on booze can really pay dividends for our health at any age, and knocking alcohol on the head has positive knock-on effects for other trends this year such as sleep hygiene, wellness and self-led fitness, due to increased energy levels, better mood and concentration.

Cutting down on caffeine is another trend gaining traction in recent years. And, with benefits that could include improving sleep, reducing anxiety and weight loss (from the milk, cream and sugar added to hot drinks or the sugar in energy drinks and fizzy pop), retailers are also leaping in with so-called 'clean caffeine' products.

At the same time, we're seeing a rise in mushroom and other 'natural stimulant' products, promising a buzz without the negative side effects. Although it's important to fully understand the nature and safety of these products.

Put it into practice:

Help employees to reduce – or quit – their alcohol and caffeine habits by promoting awareness days, signposting support groups and mental health resources. Make sure you have decaf tea and coffee options if you provide refreshments and think about alcohol free team days for social activities.

Benenden Health's [2024 Health and Wellbeing Calendar](#) gives practical hints and tips on how to incorporate health and wellbeing awareness events into your workplace and include your workforce.



Sleep hygiene: for the whole system

Improving sleep hygiene doesn't just mean better sleep at night, it means a more positive and productive day at home and at work.

Good sleep hygiene means a regular routine, a pleasant atmosphere to sleep in, healthier evening habits and making choices throughout the day to contribute to a good night's sleep.

Lack of sleep is a whole-system issue, affecting us throughout our brains and bodies, raising inflammation markers and contributing to long-term conditions such as cancer, brain disease and obesity – which, in turn, can lead to type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. Not to mention the everyday impact of poor concentration, low mood and irritability.

Put it into practice:

Providing sleep resources at work and signposting employees to apps and sleep trackers can help people to better understand their sleep cycles and stick to the habits that promote better sleep. Remind them of mental health procedures and keep an open door policy for employees to discuss workload and other worries. Look at how you can support those with caring responsibilities through flexible working when obtaining quality sleep can be out of their control.



Sound bathing: wave goodbye to worry

A sound bath uses noise and vibration for guided meditation to wash away worry, stress and anxiety, clear the mind, relax and to help improve sleep. The 'bathing' describes the sound itself so no water will be involved!

Wellbeing, self care and mental health will be just as important as physical health and fitness in 2024. Prioritising the wellbeing of your employees – and understanding the different ways they can improve their own – can be integral in the retention and recruitment of new team members too, as candidates look for employers that add more value to their offering, beyond a pay packet.

Put it into practice:

Organise a team trip to your nearest sound bathing centre, and see if you can arrange a group discount for your employees going forward. Practitioners can adapt for differing levels of hearing ability. For more wellness at work, can you provide a quiet room where employees can meditate using their own soundscapes, or virtual classes during break times or before and after shifts?

Prebiotics/probiotics: gut feeling

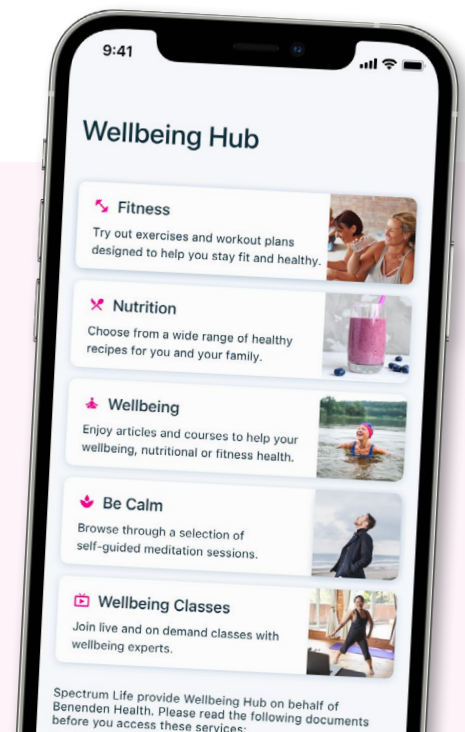
Our gut needs probiotics – otherwise known as 'good bacteria' – to control the 'bad bacteria' in our bodies, while prebiotics are carbohydrates that fuel the probiotics.

When it comes to food, fermented products such as pickled cabbage (kimchi, sauerkraut), sourdough bread and live-cultured yogurt and Kefir; are all forms of probiotics while prebiotics can be found in legumes (lentils, chickpeas, soybeans), oats and certain vegetables (Jerusalem artichoke, asparagus).

But why do we need them? Keeping a healthy balance of bacteria in our body – our gut microflora – keeps our digestive system running smoothly which is key to getting the best out of the food we use to fuel our bodies too; especially when it comes to concentration, hormone levels, energy and general wellbeing (think post-lunch slug!)

Put it into practice:

Employee healthcare provision within benefits packages are more expansive than ever, look into and promote the add-ons such as apps that can include a wide range of recipes specially designed to support good gut health. With Benenden Health, our members have access to our App with a wide range of healthy recipes available.



A healthy future



Keeping your finger on the pulse, when it comes to this year's trends, means you can help support your team with their 2024 health priorities and progress. The evolution of healthcare through digital technology and the developments in preventative medicine combined with food and drink habits, wellness and lifestyle choices all combine to make for some really interesting and inspiring trends.

Benenden Health allows you and your team to access services that can support these health habits at the touch of a button, through our **Benenden Health App** which includes access to **24/7 GP** and **Mental Health helplines**, along with access to our **Wellbeing Hub** and **free online health and wellbeing classes**.

Benenden Healthcare for Business can give everyone access to health and wellbeing services and support. **Join us today and help your employees thrive.**

Benenden Healthcare for Business

We offer employees access to the following benefits from day one of membership:



24/7 GP Helpline



Benenden Health App



24/7 Mental Health Helpline



Rewards and Discounts



Care Planning and Social Care Advice



Mental Health Support



Private Medical Diagnostics



Cancer Support



Private Medical Treatment



TB Treatment



Physiotherapy

Limits and exclusions apply.

Speak to our friendly team today and find out more about our products and how we could help you to support your employees' health and wellbeing.



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