



The Price of Doing Nothing

Why ignoring financial wellbeing is costing employers more than they realise

**my
money**
matters

Contents

Foreword	3
Key findings	5
Deep dive and recommendations	10
Conclusion and next steps	24
Appendix	25
Methodology	25
About My Money Matters	26



Foreword

Jonathan Bruce, Sales Director, My Money Matters

Financial wellbeing has rapidly evolved from a “nice-to-have” into a business imperative. Against a backdrop of rising living costs and continued financial uncertainty, employees are now looking to their employers not only for fair pay, but for meaningful support that enables long-term security, confidence, and resilience.

The findings of our 2025 Financial Wellbeing Survey, conducted with over 100 employers across sectors, make this clear.

- **68% of employers report that financial stress among employees has increased in the past 12 months.**
- **76% believe employers have a role in supporting employee financial wellbeing.**
- **65% of HR leaders agree that financial wellbeing benefits will soon become just as important as traditional benefits like healthcare and pensions.**

These results reveal a growing disconnect between employer intentions and employee needs — and an urgent call for action.

Persistent cost-of-living pressures, rising interest rates, and ongoing economic uncertainty are taking a toll. According to the ONS, inflation has remained above 3.8% since July 2025, while PwC reports that household debt has surpassed £2 trillion. Behind these statistics are real people — employees trying to manage higher household bills, borrowing costs, and shrinking savings, often while worrying about their future security.

And money worries don't stop at the office door. They spill into the workplace, affecting focus, engagement, and performance. For employers, this represents both a challenge and an opportunity: a financially stressed workforce is less resilient and more likely to leave, while those who feel supported are more loyal, productive, and committed.

At My Money Matters, we see this every day. Our mission has always been to make financial wellbeing accessible, practical, and personal — empowering employees to take control of their finances through education, digital tools, and initiatives like Shared Cost AVCs.

Supporting financial wellbeing isn't simply about offering benefits. It's about creating workplaces where people feel secure, valued, and equipped to plan for their future. Through this report, we aim to shine a light on the reality of financial wellbeing today and offer practical recommendations that help employers turn insight into action.

Because when employees are financially well, businesses thrive too.



The aim of this survey was to better understand how employees are experiencing financial wellbeing challenges in 2025, the support they value most, and the actions employers can take to close the gap.

How to use this report

This report is designed to be a practical resource for HR leaders, managers, and decision-makers who want to better understand and support financial wellbeing in the workplace.

- The **foreword** provides a senior-level perspective on why financial wellbeing matters now more than ever.
- The **key findings** section explores the survey results at a glance and highlights the main themes.
- The **deep dive and recommendation** explores the results in more detail and explores implications and recommendations.
- The **conclusion and next steps** outline why organisations need to act now and how to begin the journey.



We encourage readers to use this report both as a reference point for understanding employee needs and as a practical guide for shaping strategy.

Whether you are reviewing benefits provision, building a wellbeing programme, or seeking to engage leadership teams, the insights here are intended to support meaningful, evidence-based action.

Key findings

The following themes emerged most strongly from the research:

1. Financial stress is rising
2. Few employers have a formal wellbeing strategy in place
3. Support offered doesn't match employee needs
4. Barriers to action are more cultural than financial
5. The future of benefits is changing

Financial stress is rising - and it's affecting work

The numbers:

- **68%** of employers told us financial stress among staff has increased over the past 12 months, with **42%** estimating the rise at more than **30%**.
- The top drivers of stress were rising living costs **90%**, low savings **40%** and debt **39%**.
- Crucially, this isn't just a personal issue: **46%** of respondents believe financial stress is negatively impacting productivity and engagement, and 10% say staff have taken time off due to money worries.



Financial stress has become a business problem, not just a personal one. Employers who act on this now stand to protect both wellbeing and performance.

68%

of employers told us financial stress among staff has increased over the past 12 months.

90%

of people said the top driver of stress was the rising living costs.

46%

of people believe financial stress is negatively impacting productivity and engagement costs.

Few employers have a formal financial wellbeing strategy

The numbers:

- Only **16%** of organisations report having a formal strategy in place, while **12%** are “in progress” and **72%** admit they have no strategy at all.
- Investment levels remain modest, with the majority spending less than **£1,250 per month** on dedicated financial wellbeing support.



Most employers are still at an early stage of maturity. Building a structured, measurable approach to financial wellbeing is the next frontier for HR.

72%

of organisations admit to having no formal financial wellbeing strategy in place at all.

Less than £1,250

spent by the majority of organisations on dedicated financial wellbeing support per month.

Support offered doesn't match employee needs

The numbers:

- The most common benefits currently provided are pension contributions **85%** and Employee Assistance Programmes **62%**. Far fewer offer financial education **27%** and none offered emergency savings support.
- By contrast, employers believe their people value budgeting and debt support **62%**, emergency savings/salary advance **36%**, and 1:1 financial guidance **56%** most highly; with **42%** stating their employees would value access to Financial Advisers.



There is a clear gap between what employers provide and what employees want - especially when it comes to short-term financial resilience and personalised support.

27%

of organisations offer financial education and none offered emergency savings support.

62%

of employers asked believe their people value budgeting and debt support.

56%

of employers asked believe their employees value 1:1 financial guidance.

Barriers to action are more cultural than financial

The numbers:

- The top barriers cited to improving support were budget constraints **70%** and competing priorities **52%**.
- Yet **33%** also pointed to lack of awareness or employee engagement as challenges, suggesting culture and education remain key blockers.



Overcoming barriers will require more than budget - it demands leadership buy-in, employee communication, and a stronger business case.

70%

of people said that a main barrier to improving support was budget constraints.

33%

of employers suggesting culture and education were also key blockers.

Deep dive and recommendations

Theme 1: Financial stress is rising

Survey insights

Our survey shows a significant increase in financial stress among employees:

- **68%** of employers reported that financial stress has increased in the past 12 months.
- Of those, **42%** estimated the rise at more than **30%**, and **5%** placed it above **60%**.
- Only **4%** of respondents said financial stress had decreased.

When asked about the biggest financial concerns facing their employees, organisations pointed to:

- Rising living costs (bills, interest rates, essentials) – **90%**
- Debt (loans, mortgages, credit cards) – **39%**
- Low levels of savings – **40%**
- Lack of retirement planning – **27%**

The impact on the workplace is clear:

- **46%** of employers said financial stress has a negative impact on productivity and engagement.
- **10%** reported that staff have taken time off due to financial worries.
- **81%** believe financial wellbeing plays a direct role in retention.

This sharp upward trend highlights that financial pressure is not easing - it is accelerating. Employees are being squeezed at both ends: struggling to manage immediate expenses while also falling behind on longer-term security.

68%

of employers report an increase in financial stress in the past 12 months

42%

of employers that report an increase in financial stress estimate the rise at more than 30%

5%

of employers that report an increase in financial stress estimate the rise at more than 60%

Only 4%

of employers reported a decrease in financial stress

The biggest financial concerns facing employees:

90%

Rising living costs

39%

Debt

40%

Low levels of savings

27%

Lack of retirement planning

46%

of employers said financial stress has a negative impact on productivity and engagement

10%

of employers reported that staff have taken time off due to financial worries

81%

of employers believe financial wellbeing plays a direct role in retention

What this means for employers

Rising financial stress is not just a personal issue for employees - it is a workplace issue that directly affects focus, productivity, engagement, and retention. With nearly seven in ten employers observing an increase, and a significant proportion reporting sharp rises, organisations risk higher levels of presenteeism, absenteeism, and turnover if support is not in place.

The message is clear: doing nothing is not an option. Employers that take proactive steps to ease financial pressure will not only protect employee wellbeing but also strengthen business performance, resilience, and reputation in an increasingly competitive labour market.

Recommendations for employers

To reduce the impact of rising financial stress, organisations should:

- **Acknowledge financial wellbeing as strategic, not optional**
Elevate financial wellbeing to the same level as physical and mental health, with senior leadership accountability.
- **Start with the basics**
Clearly communicate existing benefits and provide simple resources such as budgeting tools, emergency savings schemes, and debt support.
- **Invest in education and awareness**
Run workshops, webinars, or coaching sessions tailored to real employee challenges, while normalising money conversations in the workplace.
- **Offer personalised, flexible support**
Recognise that needs differ by age, role, and circumstance; consider partnering with third-party providers to deliver tailored, digital-first solutions.
- **Balance short-term resilience with long-term planning**
Provide access to salary advance and savings schemes alongside pension guidance and financial coaching.
- **Build the business case**
Track absence, turnover, and engagement alongside initiatives to demonstrate ROI and secure ongoing investment.
- **Future-proof your benefits package**
Monitor employee feedback regularly and be ready to adapt as financial wellbeing becomes as essential as healthcare and pensions.

Looking ahead

If current trends continue, financial stress will remain a top challenge into 2026 and beyond. Employees will expect employers not only to provide fair pay, but also to offer meaningful support around financial health. Forward-thinking organisations are already embedding financial wellbeing as a core pillar of their people strategy. Those who follow will be better placed to weather economic uncertainty while keeping their workforce engaged, productive, and loyal.



Theme 2: Few employers have a formal strategy

Survey insights

- Only **16%** of organisations currently have a formal financial wellbeing strategy.
- **12%** are “in progress,” while **67%** admit they have no strategy at all.
- Investment levels are modest: the majority spend **less than £1,250/month** on financial wellbeing support.

This demonstrates a lack of maturity across most employers. While awareness of financial wellbeing has grown, action is lagging. The majority are still at the “early adoption” stage - recognising the issue but not yet investing in a robust, measurable framework.

What this means for employers

Without a formal strategy, efforts risk being piecemeal and ineffective, often resulting in scattered initiatives that fail to deliver meaningful impact. Employees are quick to recognise when support feels inconsistent or ad-hoc, and this can undermine trust rather than build it.

Weak or fragmented provision doesn't just miss the mark - it can actively harm perceptions of employer commitment, leaving staff feeling that financial wellbeing is treated as an afterthought rather than a priority. Over time, this disconnect can erode engagement, reduce uptake of existing benefits, and limit the organisation's ability to attract and retain talent in an increasingly competitive labour market. By contrast, a structured and visible approach signals genuine investment in people and creates the foundations for lasting cultural change.

16%

of organisations currently have a formal financial wellbeing strategy

12%

of employers say their financial wellbeing strategy is “in progress”

67%

of employers admit to having no financial wellbeing strategy

**Less than
£1,200**

spent by the majority of organisations on dedicated financial wellbeing support per month

Recommendations for employers

- **Move from ad-hoc initiatives to a formalised, written strategy**

Many organisations currently rely on one-off or fragmented activities, such as offering financial education sessions without linking them to broader wellbeing goals. While these may provide temporary benefits, they lack consistency and long-term impact. A written strategy ensures that financial wellbeing is recognised as a core priority, aligned with organisational values, and embedded within the overall people and wellbeing agenda. This gives employees confidence that support is not simply reactive, but a genuine and sustained commitment.

- **Set clear objectives**

A strategy is only effective if it has measurable outcomes. Employers should define specific goals – such as reducing absenteeism linked to financial stress, improving employee engagement or wellbeing scores, increasing retention, or boosting awareness and uptake of existing benefits. Clear objectives not only help to track success but also demonstrate the business case for financial wellbeing, making it easier to secure leadership buy-in and ongoing investment.

- **Allocate budget and assign leadership accountability**

Financial wellbeing cannot thrive on good intentions alone. A dedicated budget signals that the organisation is serious about addressing the issue and allows for investment in effective tools, resources, and partnerships. Equally important is leadership accountability: appointing a senior sponsor or steering group ensures ownership and integration at the highest level. This avoids financial wellbeing being treated as a “side project” and embeds it into everyday decision-making.

- **Measure and track progress**

To prove impact and continuously improve, employers must track both quantitative and qualitative data. This could include uptake of financial wellbeing initiatives, engagement with tools and resources, changes in employee satisfaction, reductions in absenteeism, or retention trends. Surveys and feedback loops are essential to capture employee experiences and adjust support where it’s not landing effectively. Regular reporting also provides evidence of return on investment, helping to sustain momentum and funding over time.

Looking ahead

As financial wellbeing becomes mainstream, the gap between leaders and laggards will widen. Organisations without a strategy risk falling behind competitors in both attraction and retention.

Theme 3: Support offered doesn't match employee needs

Survey insights

- The most common benefits offered are pension contributions **85%** and EAPs **32%**.
- Far fewer employers provide financial education **27%** or emergency savings/salary advance schemes **32%**.

When asked what employees value most, respondents said:

- Budgeting and debt support **57%**
- Emergency savings/salary advance **36%**
- 1:1 financial guidance **42%**
- Pension Coaching/Retirement Planning **57%**

There is a misalignment between the support currently offered and what employees are asking for. Long-term benefits (like pensions) are important but do not address the immediate pressures of rising costs and debt.

85%

of employers offer pension contribution benefits

32%

of employers offer EAP benefits

27%

of employers provide financial education services

32%

of employers provide emergency savings/salary advance schemes

What do employees value most?

57%

Budgeting and
debt support

36%

Emergency savings /
salary advance

42%

1:1 financial
guidance

57%

Pension coaching /
Retirement planning

What this means for employers

This misalignment risks undermining the very investments organisations are making. Employers may be directing significant resources toward long-term provisions such as pensions, which, while valuable, do little to ease the day-to-day pressures many employees are facing right now.

As a result, benefits may go underutilised, leaving staff feeling that their most pressing concerns - such as managing rising living costs, coping with debt, or building short-term savings - are being overlooked. Over time, this disconnect can reduce trust in the employer, lower engagement with wellbeing initiatives more broadly, and even contribute to retention challenges as employees seek workplaces that better understand and respond to their financial realities.

By continuing to invest in areas misaligned with employee needs, organisations risk both wasted expenditure and missed opportunities to deliver meaningful impact where it matters most.

Recommendations for employers

- **Conduct employee surveys to understand their financial priorities**
Go beyond generic engagement surveys - use pulse checks, focus groups, or confidential feedback channels to capture specific financial pressures across different employee groups.
- **Rebalance provision to include short-term resilience support**
Introduce tools for budgeting, access to affordable credit, emergency savings schemes, or salary advance options that help employees cope with rising day-to-day costs.
- **Complement pensions with accessible, bite-sized financial education**
Offer workshops, webinars, and digital learning modules that make complex topics like pensions, debt management, or investing easier to understand and act on.
- **Offer personalised options - one-size-fits-all no longer works**
Segment support based on employee demographics, life stage, or career stage. For example, younger staff may prioritise debt repayment and savings, while older employees may want retirement planning guidance.
- **Improve communication and visibility of existing benefits**
Many employees are unaware of what's available. Use targeted campaigns, benefit portals, and simple guides to highlight support in a clear and engaging way.
- **Provide access to financial coaching or one-to-one guidance**
Sometimes employees need personalised guidance to make confident decisions - money coaches or financial advisers can fill this gap.
- **Leverage technology to increase engagement**
Use apps and digital platforms to deliver on-demand resources, reminders, and tools that fit seamlessly into employees' daily lives.
- **Track usage and impact to continually refine support**
Monitor uptake, satisfaction, and employee outcomes to ensure benefits remain relevant and adapt to shifting needs.
- **Align financial wellbeing with other wellbeing pillars**
Integrate financial support into your wider wellbeing strategy, connecting it with mental health, physical health, and social wellbeing initiatives.
- **Demonstrate leadership support**
Encourage senior leaders to champion financial wellbeing, showing employees that it's a strategic priority rather than a nice-to-have.

Looking ahead

The most competitive employers will adapt to changing employee needs. Expect demand for flexible, digital-first, and on-demand support to accelerate.



Theme 4: Barriers to action are cultural as well as financial

Survey insights

- **70%** of employers cited budget constraints as the biggest barrier.
- **52%** highlighted competing priorities.
- **33%** pointed to lack of awareness or employee engagement.

This shows that many employers are not only resource-constrained but also struggle to embed financial wellbeing into the wider culture. Employees may feel uncomfortable talking about money, and leaders may underestimate demand.

70%

of employers cited budget constraints as the biggest barrier

52%

of employers highlighted competing priorities

33%

of employers pointed to lack of awareness or employee engagement

What this means for employers

Solving the budget challenge alone is not enough – financial wellbeing cannot simply be “bought in” with a bigger spend. For initiatives to succeed, organisations need to embed them into everyday workplace culture by normalising conversations about money and making support visible, accessible, and stigma-free. Too often, employees are reluctant to raise financial concerns for fear of judgment, or they may assume that their employer has little interest in this area.

At the same time, leaders may underestimate the scale of demand, viewing financial wellbeing as a peripheral issue rather than a core business concern. Breaking this cycle requires proactive communication, visible leadership endorsement, and regular opportunities for employees to engage with the resources available.

Only by fostering openness and awareness can financial wellbeing move from being a series of isolated interventions to becoming a trusted, integral part of organisational life.

Recommendations for employers

- **Leadership buy-in**
Position financial wellbeing as a strategic priority.
- **Awareness campaigns**
Communicate benefits clearly and frequently.
- **Employee engagement**
Use champions, workshops, and surveys to spark conversations.
- **Measure demand**
Track uptake and feedback to demonstrate ROI.

Looking ahead

As awareness grows, cultural barriers will be reduced – but only if employers are proactive in creating a safe, open environment where financial wellbeing is part of everyday conversation.

Theme 5: The future of benefits is changing

Survey insights

- **76%** of employers believe they have a role in supporting financial wellbeing.
- **65%** think financial wellbeing benefits will become as important as healthcare and pensions.

The most in-demand future initiatives include:

- Pension guidance sessions
- Budgeting tools
- Salary sacrifice schemes

This signals a shift in how employers view benefits: moving from “traditional core” (pay + pension + healthcare) to a broader model where financial wellbeing sits alongside physical and mental health.

What this means for employers

Organisations that move early to expand their financial wellbeing offering will set themselves apart in an increasingly competitive talent market. Employees are no longer viewing pay alone as the measure of a supportive employer; they want to know that their organisation understands the real financial pressures they face and is willing to provide practical help.

Financial wellbeing is becoming a key factor in employer brand and employee loyalty, influencing not only whether people join an organisation but also whether they choose to stay. Employers who treat financial wellbeing as a strategic necessity - rather than a secondary benefit - will be better positioned to attract talent, strengthen engagement, and build a resilient workforce. In contrast, those who delay risk being perceived as out of touch with employee needs and may struggle with retention as competitors step up their support.

70%

of employers believe they have a role in supporting financial wellbeing

65%

of employers think financial wellbeing benefits will become as important as healthcare and pensions

Recommendations for employers

- **Invest in flexible, digital-first financial wellbeing platforms**

Employees expect support that is accessible, intuitive, and tailored to their needs. Digital platforms allow for on-demand learning, personalised tools, and scalable support across diverse workforces, ensuring employees can engage at a time and place that works for them.

- **Prioritise initiatives with high demand and high impact**

Focus resources where they will make the biggest difference. Short-term resilience tools such as budgeting support, emergency savings schemes, and salary advance options address immediate employee concerns, while pensions guidance and long-term planning resources help build financial confidence for the future. A balanced approach ensures both urgent and strategic needs are met.

- **Position financial wellbeing as a strategic pillar of benefits, not an optional add-on**

To be effective, financial wellbeing should sit alongside health, mental wellbeing, and professional development as a core component of the employee value proposition. This means embedding it into wider wellbeing strategies, assigning leadership ownership, and communicating it consistently across the organisation. By doing so, employers signal genuine commitment, build trust, and create a culture where financial wellbeing is seen as central to overall employee experience.

Looking ahead

Over the next 3 - 5 years, expect financial wellbeing to become a standard part of every benefits package - as fundamental as healthcare. Employers that fail to adapt risk being left behind.

Conclusion and next steps

The findings from our survey highlight a simple but urgent truth: financial wellbeing is no longer a peripheral issue – it is central to employee engagement, productivity, and retention.

Employees are telling us clearly that financial stress affects their performance, their health, and their future confidence. At the same time, employers recognise the importance of support but often underestimate the scale of the challenge.

The key takeaways are clear:

- Financial wellbeing impacts business outcomes just as much as employee experience.
- Support must go beyond pay alone – benefits, education, and open dialogue all play a role.
- Closing the gap between employee needs and employer action is critical to building resilient, future-ready organisations.

Now is the moment for employers to act. In a competitive labour market, those who take meaningful steps to improve financial wellbeing will not only strengthen loyalty and productivity but also position themselves as employers of choice.

This report is intended as a starting point. We invite you to continue the conversation with us – whether that’s exploring the data in more depth, accessing practical tools and resources, or partnering with us to build a tailored financial wellbeing strategy for your people.

Together, we can help ensure that financial wellbeing becomes a driver of both personal resilience and organisational success.

Appendix

About My Money Matters

At My Money Matters, we work in partnership with employers across the NHS, local government, and private sector to deliver tailored financial wellbeing support that meets the needs of diverse workforces.

We understand that each sector faces unique challenges, whether it's supporting NHS employees navigating complex pension schemes, helping local authority staff prepare for retirement, or equipping private sector teams with flexible, modern financial tools.

Our mission is simple: to ensure that every employee has access to the tools, education, and support they need to feel financially confident and secure. We believe that financial wellbeing is not just about numbers - it is about creating workplaces where people can thrive both personally and professionally.

For more information on how we can support your financial wellbeing strategy, please contact us:

Email: info@my-money-matters.co.uk

Phone: 01252 959 779

Website: www.my-money-matters.co.uk

Methodology

This survey was designed and conducted by My Money Matters, with distribution support from Personnel Today, who shared it with their readership to ensure wide participation across sectors.

Survey design

The survey was carried out online between 19/07/2025 and 20/08/2025. Respondents were asked a series of questions covering topics including:

- Current benefits and financial wellbeing strategies
- Barriers and triggers to adopting a financial wellbeing strategy
- Employee needs and preferences
- Future outlook of financial wellbeing in the workplace

Sample size and audience

A total of 111 individuals participated in the survey. Respondents were drawn across HR, finance, people and culture, and employee benefits and wellbeing, spanning all industries and organisations ranging in size from 1 to 5,000 employees.

Limitations

While the survey provides robust insights into employee perceptions of financial wellbeing, the findings should be interpreted in light of certain limitations:

- The data reflects the views of employers who participated in the survey and may not be representative of all industries or geographies.
- As the survey was conducted online, responses may be influenced by self-selection.

Despite these considerations, the survey results offer a valuable snapshot of current employee experiences and highlight important trends for organisations to consider.

**my
money**
matters

my-money-matters.co.uk