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Employers invest in healthcare and wellbeing benefits

5 November 2013 | By [Robert Crawford](#)

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October saw a number of employers invest in health and wellbeing benefits for staff.

[Oxfam](#) launched an employee assistance programme (EAP) for its 1,300 staff, as did [2 Sisters Food Group](#), which introduced the benefit to coincide with an online health assessment programme.

Meanwhile, French kitchenware manufacturer [Le Creuset](#) now offers its UK staff an on-site gym run by Personal Touch Fitness.

James Shillaker, chief executive of gym provider Incorporate, said: “The wellness and wellbeing perk has become an important part of organisations’ healthcare and sickness absence strategies.

“Employers are finally seeing the importance of having engaged staff through healthcare and wellbeing benefits, especially gym membership, which keeps employees healthy and fit.”

Other organisations that have sought to keep staff engaged by involving them in health and wellbeing initiatives include Bank of America Merrill Lynch, which [extended its smoking cessation](#) programme after a successful pilot.

In April 2014, Business in the Community (BITC) will report the findings of its Workwell benchmark questionnaire, which aims to measure employers’ management of [staff wellbeing](#) and engagement in the workplace.

Louise Aston, director of BITC Workwell, said: “We have seen a shift in agenda and progression since we started the Workwell campaign in 2007. Wellbeing was only a bolt-on benefit to have, and it was very rarely seen as a boardroom issue.

“The climate has now changed, and there is a more robust business case for this. Employers have woken up to the benefits of wellbeing schemes, which drive employee performance, engagement and productivity.

“Schemes need to be flexible, no one size fits all, and employers are a lot more creative with how their benefits are presented. They have started to listen to what employees actually want.”

More employers are now publicly disclosing information about their human capital management, of which health and wellbeing is a part.

Duncan Young, member of the BITC Workwell steering group and deputy head of sustainability at RBS Group, said: “As investors begin to see the business case for improved employee engagement, it usually follows that employers will too.

“Many of the UK’s biggest organisations are already acknowledging this by publicly disclosing more information on their human capital management. Good [employee engagement](#) attracts better staff and investment.

“At RBS, signing up to the BITC Workwell benchmark support package will help us improve our public reporting and drive development of employee engagement and wellbeing strategies.”