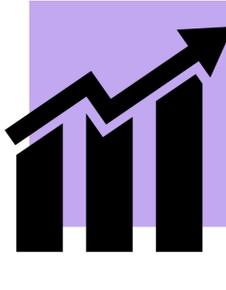
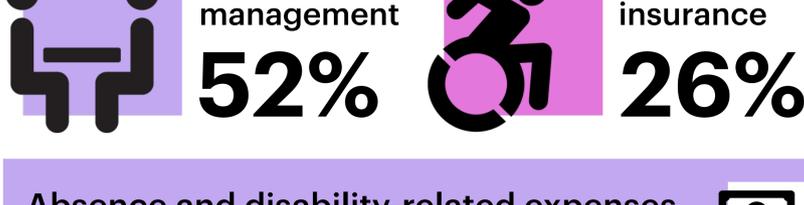


# Key trends driving workplace absence in 2026 in the UK



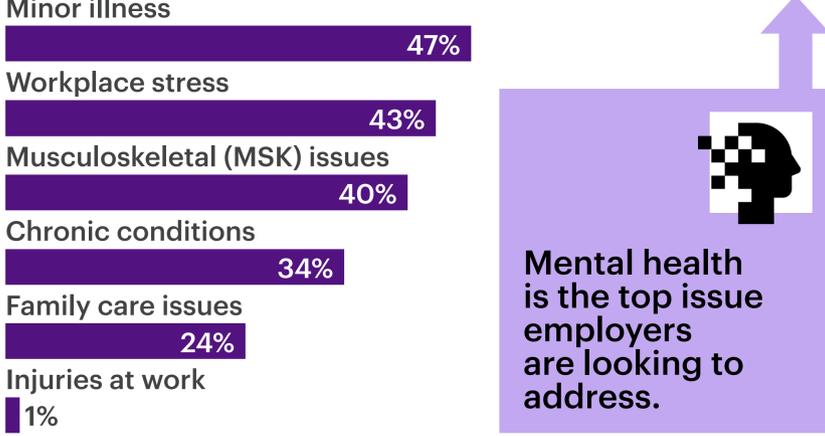
## Challenges with rising costs of absence and disability



Absence and disability-related expenses are becoming major financial pressures.

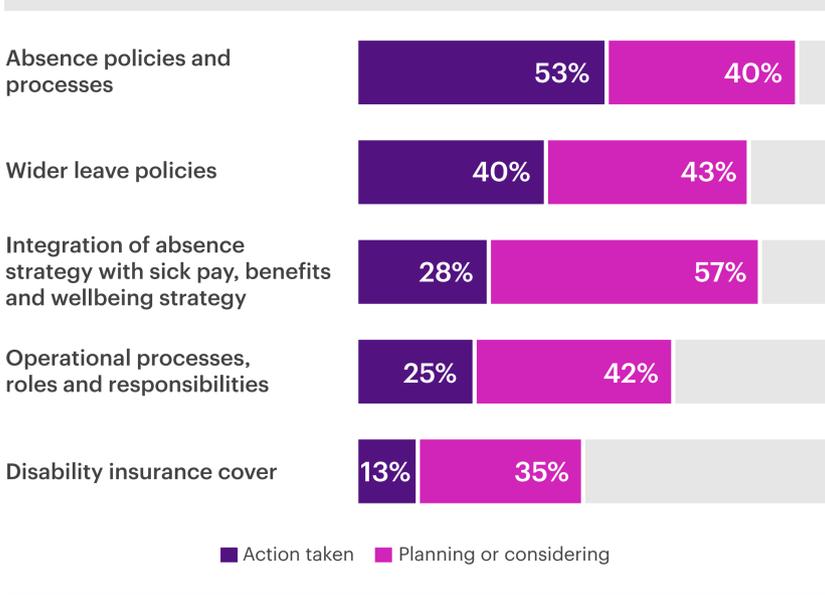


## Top issues employers are looking to address



## Employers are looking to better integrate absence with wider HR strategy

Actions to review the following:



UK employers are rethinking their absence management strategies, with a clear shift toward a more integrated approach.



## Actions to manage provider relationships

	Action taken	Planning or considering
Review provider performance	29%	46%
Renegotiate terms or switch to better value providers	20%	55%
Review service capabilities	20%	54%
Assess employee views on provider services	13%	42%
Add performance standards as part of contracts	7%	32%

Many employers are taking steps to bring costs down by taking a more active approach to managing their provider relationships.



## Actions on occupational health management

	Action taken	Planning or considering
<b>Risk management</b>		
Health and safety and risk assessments	80%	8%
Pre-employment employee questionnaire	58%	10%
Offer health risk screenings or assessments	50%	22%
<b>Case management</b>		
Return to work assessments	83%	13%
Counselling support during illness or disability	78%	15%
Use condition specific care pathways	43%	35%
Specialist case managers	26%	14%

Employers are looking to reduce spend by directing support for high cost cases through defined care pathways



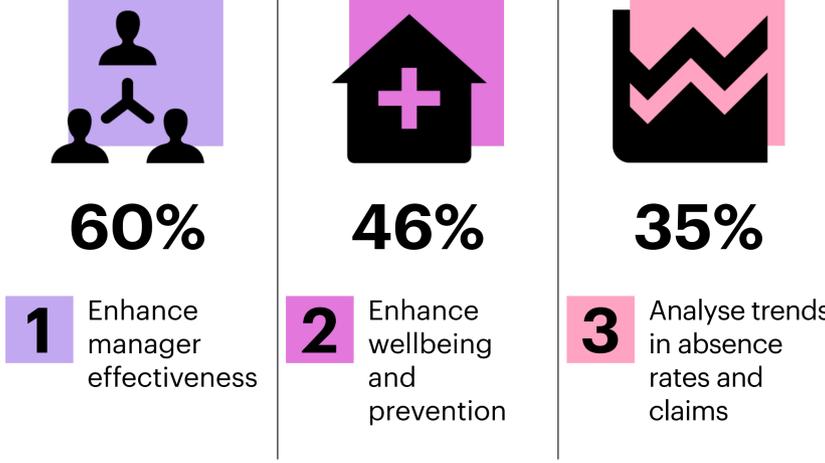
## Utilising analytics to improve absence management



Stronger insights into absence drivers help employers take smarter, more effective action.



## Top 3 priorities for the next 2 years



Effective absence management relies on robust organisational policies and managers who are confident and capable in applying them. Increasingly, employers are investing in training and support to boost effectiveness.



## Next steps for employers

- 1** **Audit your current absence processes**  
Review policies, sick pay arrangements and communication strategies
- 2** **Engage in an absence strategy workshop**  
Identify gaps and refine internal pathways to align benefits and best practices.
- 3** **Leverage data and maximise vendor relationships**  
Monitor provider metrics, renegotiate terms and explore condition-specific pathways.