

Are you happy with the “emotional wage” you’re getting at work?

Salary and benefits are one of the main drivers for people not only in their current role, but also when they are looking for a new opportunity. The total compensation question is top of mind for lots of UK workers right now, thanks to a couple of years of tech layoffs and a slow-down in hiring, along with a punishing cost-of-living crisis.

Temps de lecture : minute

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Those nice-to-haves that tech workers in particular so enjoyed pre-pandemic such as free coffees and snacks at work, along with beers in the office fridge and (occasionally) fun team-building activities, now look a little limp in the face of rising bills.

3 jobs to apply for this week

- [London Markets Quality Test Lead, Aviva, London \(£70,000\)](#)
- [Internal Audit, Assistant Vice President, London, Blackstone Group, London](#)
- [Technical Program Manager, Edge Delivery - London, ByteDance, London](#)

In the UK, [prices rose by 2%](#) in the 12 months to April. While this was down from 2.3% in the 12 months to April, and is the lowest the rate has been in almost three years, workers are still feeling the pinch.

As a result, previous perks, such as free dry cleaning or an in-office gym aren't as appealing. Instead, what employees want are benefits that they can actually feel in their pockets.

That's things like a pension contribution matched by their employer, support for parents and caregivers, share schemes, health care, commuting contributions, or learning and development budgets.

Money isn't the sole motivator for workers, however. A recent survey from *Hubspot* found that 50% of UK workers say they'd rather have "great relationships" at work than a 10% pay increase.

Other recent data from *Achievers Workforce Institute* (AWI) on engagement and retention found that 72% of employees would prefer a job where they are supported and valued, instead of feeling under appreciated, even if they earned 30% more.

The emotional wage

Supporting this is a piece of research from 2019 from *Universidad Católica Luis Amigó* in Medellín, Colombia, which studied the concept of the "emotional wage".

"The emotional wage pertains to all those non-monetary reasons for which people work and thus a key element for people to feel at ease, committed, and well-aligned in their respective jobs," the research states.

Defining the term, researchers say that it involves "interpersonal relationships between peers, positive organizational climate, and satisfaction with the activity developed".

Essentially, it's all the bits about work that aren't about money. That's things like the rapport you build with colleagues, the positive interactions you have with leadership, or the quality of the feedback you get from your

manager.

These are often intangible things, but when they are missing, work can feel like a miserable experience. If that's what your job looks like, and it feels like you're currently being paid a big fat zero in emotional terms, can you get a raise?

Improve your emotional wage

For workers who feel undervalued, under-supported and plain old misunderstood, before you throw the baby out with the bath water, consider that there are several ways you can boost your emotional wage at work.

Flexible working is one big element. Having the ability to work from home on some days a week, or to start and finish early in order to accommodate childcare responsibilities, is often a huge help and can solve stress around work-life balance. Essentially, having the rest of your life acknowledged as important can really matter to workers.

3 more jobs that are hiring now

- *Cyber Security Operations Lead, Jisc, London (£60,000)*
- *Data Network Engineer, SSE, Aberdeen (£55,573-£63,643)*
- *Trading Underwriter - London Real Estate, AXA UK, London*

Cultivating an environment of feedback from your manager will also help you to feel valued and motivated. Having the opportunity to develop a career development plan that is supported by training or learning and development opportunities can have a positive impact, in that workers feel like their contributions matter, and they are of long-term value to the company.

Having a welcoming, positive corporate culture also matters. Friendly

teams and approachable leadership can enrich the working environment, making it a nice place to be.

As the way a business behaves tends to come from the top, if your working environment is clinical, then as an individual, there won't be much you can do to change that.

If you'd like to improve your emotional wage in this regard, it could be the right time to make a move to a company where culture really counts.

Want to improve your emotional wage at a new company? Discover thousands of open roles on the Maddyness Job Board today.

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