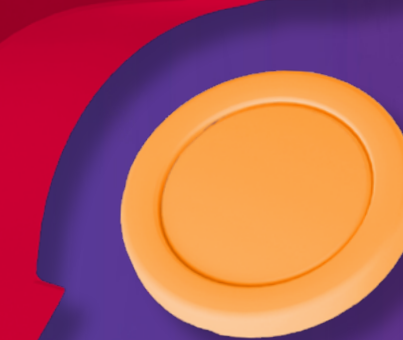




SUPPORTING YOUR EMPLOYEES THROUGH A COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS



INTRODUCTION

First it was Brexit, then the pandemic, then the war in Ukraine that's impacted energy, fuel costs and supply chains to create some of the highest levels of inflation in a generation.

Since 2020, your employees have been dealing with high levels of uncertainty across every aspect of the four pillars of wellbeing: [emotional and social](#), [financial](#), [physical and workplace](#).

It's led to The Great Resignation, radical changes to working expectations, unprecedented levels of hard-to-fill vacancies, and pushed thousands under the poverty line with employees calling in sick just to avoid fuelling up their car! And it's impacting your productivity, engagement and ultimately your growth...

As 2022 becomes infamous for this cost-of-living crisis, and with a potential recession looming, what can employers do to ease the burden on their employees, increase their organisation's resilience and ensure their future?

In this guide, we look at how you can help support your people and your business.



EMOTIONAL, MENTAL AND SOCIAL WELLBEING

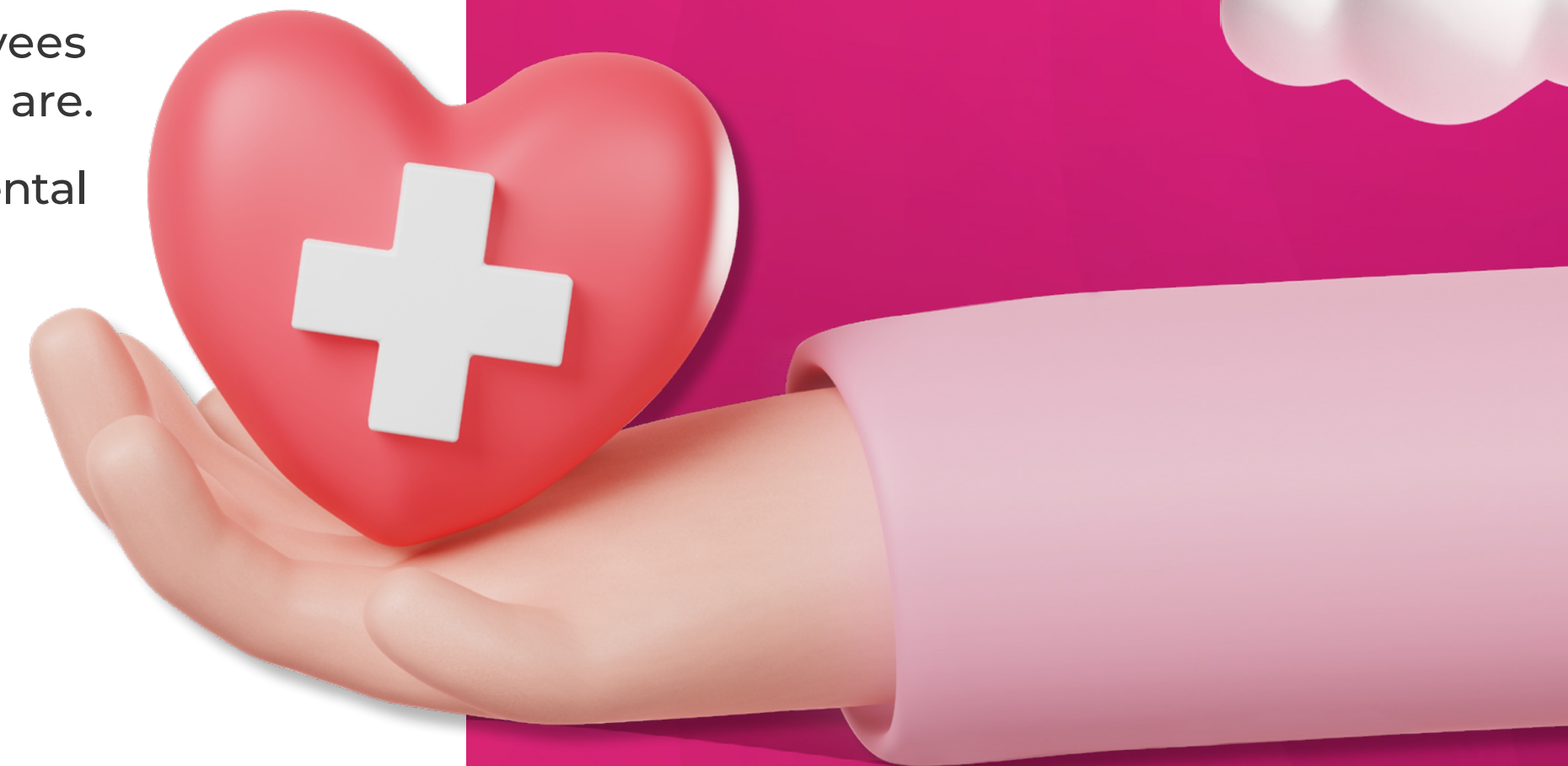
With more remote and hybrid working, the structures of the 9-5 workplace has become blurred. And while there are plenty of positives, it has increased burnout, loneliness and siloed working with our recent research reporting over 40% of employees lacking conversation and people support.

With additional concerns about mounting bills, your people may feel higher levels of stress or become overwhelmed. But there are things you can do to boost their mental wellbeing, ensuring a positive and supportive company culture.

Communication and collaboration are key. Using a single tool to provide company-wide updates, share recognitions and build digital communities will help your employees reach out on a more personal level to create a culture of support, wherever they are.

You can also go a step further and train members of your workforce to become mental health first-aiders, providing a lifeline for employees to reach out when they need someone to talk to, and provide essential guidance and support.

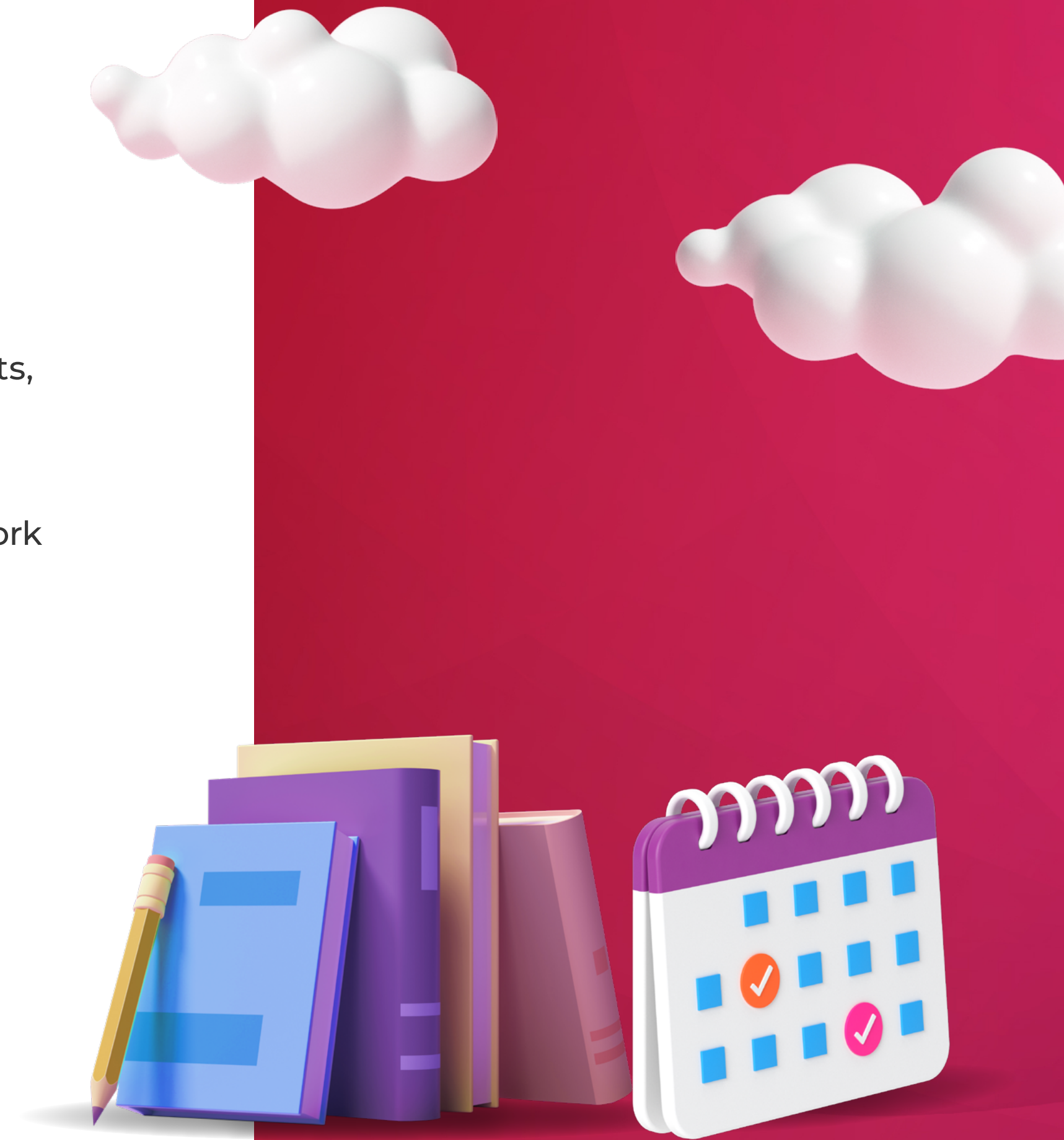
‘FUN’ WAYS TO CREATE ENGAGEMENT COULD EVEN BE SETTING UP AN ONLINE GROUP FOR EMPLOYEES TO SHARE PICTURES OF THEIR PETS, AS OUR FURRY FRIENDS ARE A PROVEN STRESS-RELIEVER



A FEW TIPS TO REMEMBER FOR EMOTIONAL, MENTAL AND SOCIAL WELLBEING

To support emotional, mental and social wellbeing, encourage:

- Regular breaks and clear switch-off periods to maintain work-life balance as well as ensuring employees use all their holiday days
- Regular two-way check-ins between managers and their teams which discuss projects, workloads, priorities, and development
- Public recognitions for the hard work of colleagues from peers, not just managers
- The creation of 'communities' for employees to share common interests outside of work and even support internal activities like a running team or book-sharing club



FINANCIAL WELLBEING

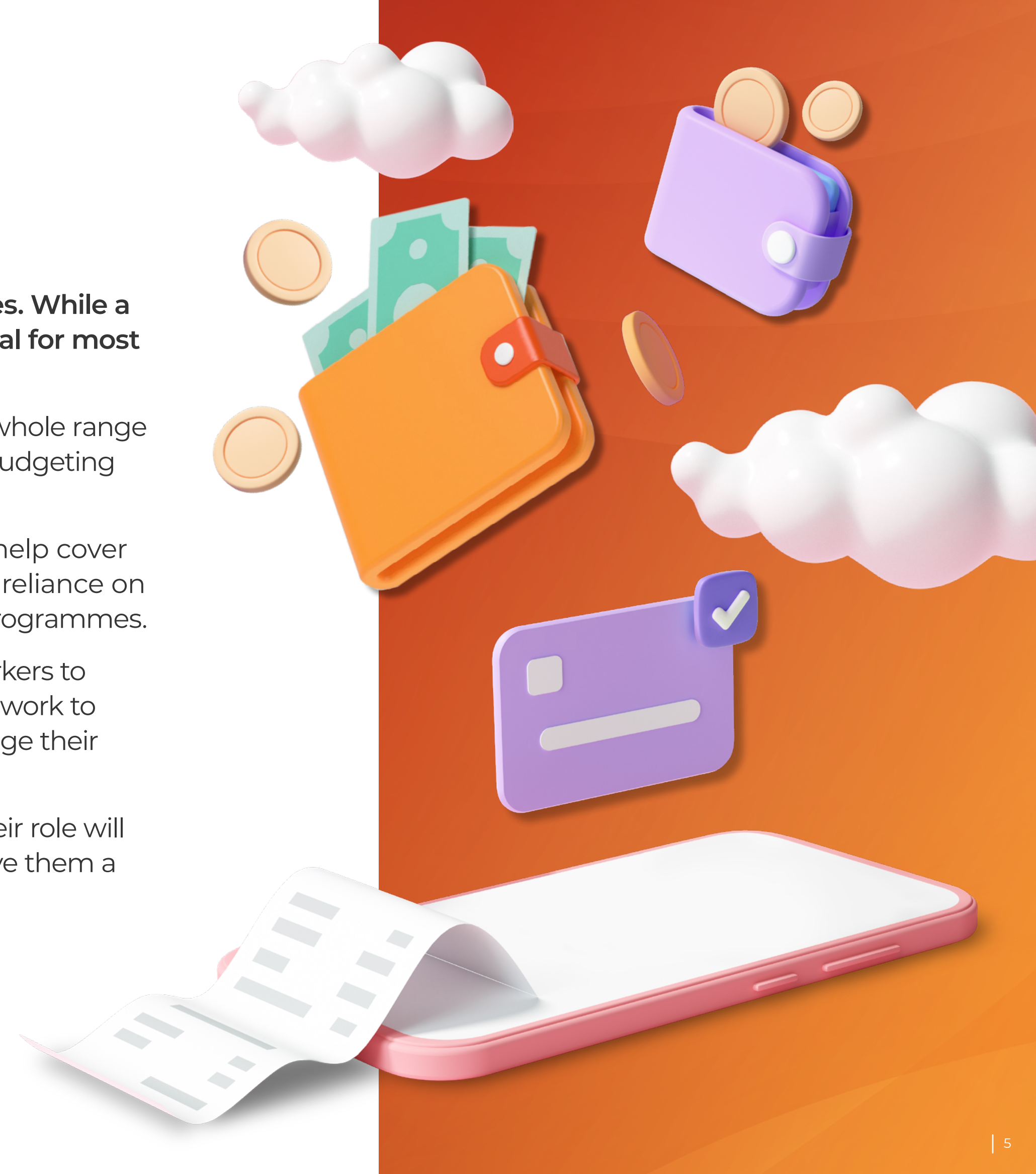
As costs soar, employees are looking for ways to cover their bills and expenses. While a pay rise is always a welcome solution, costs are rising so rapidly it's impractical for most organisations to be able to offer them.

But there are others ways you can help. Tools like Earned Wage Access offers a whole range of financial support to employees. They often provide advice and guidance on budgeting and can help set up sustainable savings goals.

They also allow employees to access pay they have earned before payday to help cover unexpected costs like the boiler breaking or a trip to the vets – removing the reliance on pay day loans. Your organisation can set limits to control the flexibility of these programmes.

Earned Wage Access and other finance tools aid transparency, helping your workers to understand exactly how much they earn daily, and for over-time or out-of-hours work to improve budgeting. This knowledge provides more control over how they manage their working life to limit stress.

With finances one of the biggest concerns, making employees feel secure in their role will go a long way, as well as communicating regularly about their progression to give them a future view.



A FEW TIPS TO REMEMBER FOR FINANCIAL WELLBEING

To support financial wellbeing, encourage:

- Transparency and honesty from employees who are struggling to reach out to managers or colleagues for support
- Greater flexibility around working hours or location to help ease childcare or travel costs
- Regular two-way check-ins between managers and their teams which discuss potential requirements for more flexibility, additional work opportunities and career progression
- Talks from financial experts on ways to save money



PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Discounted gym members or the occasional yoga sessions are common company benefits. But physical wellbeing goes beyond this and needs to look holistically across an employee's overall health including available food and drink, ability to exercise and rest.

For remote workers, this can be harder to address as you have no ability to influence eating or exercise habits and often a lack of visibility over these.

However, it's key to look out for warning signs around stress and the ability to switch off, such as signs of tiredness, less patience or 'snapping' at their colleagues – or it could be even more subtle! That's where regular check-ins become invaluable, ensuring managers and other team members are having meaningful conversations to look for any red flags.



A FEW TIPS TO REMEMBER FOR PHYSICAL WELLBEING

To support physical wellbeing, encourage:

- Company-wide communications around internal sporting or exercise opportunities such as a running or football club for employees to join
- Company messages with links to healthy eating and 'quick cook' recipes
- Healthy food and drink options available on site
- Training for managers and employees on the signs of stress, fatigue and other wellbeing red flags



WORKPLACE WELLBEING

Are you providing a culture where employees feel safe? Do they feel comfortable raising concerns?

Workplace wellbeing should be a key part of your organisation's culture. It means ensuring your employees feel comfortable in their working environment both physically and mentally. Many organisations may have basic initiatives like free eye test vouchers but workplace wellbeing needs to address all areas of an employee's working environment.

To be successful in their role, employees need to have the right equipment, that gives them the access they need to complete tasks easily, and that performs at the right level with any reasonable adjustments made for individuals where necessary.

If they're working in the office, are chairs and desks provided with ergonomic benefits at the right distance from screens? With the increase in remote working, has your organisation provided support to ensure home working conditions are met and employees aren't simply sat slouched on the sofa? And if they're on site, is all health and safety training up to date?

With the increase in remote working, organisations need to consider updating their systems and processes to create more efficient remote access or provide mobile-friendly access to key systems to avoid unnecessary travel to the office.



A FEW TIPS TO REMEMBER FOR WORKPLACE WELLBEING

To support workplace wellbeing, encourage:

- Company-wide communications about safe working conditions, whether that's remote working or onsite
- Health and safety training to be kept fully up to date in line with compliance
- Easy ways for employees to flag any equipment that is not performing as required
- Sharing ideas for new technologies that make working easier such as mobile apps and automation



INDEPENDENT ADVICE

Finally, you can cover all four wellbeing pillars by offering an Employee Assistance Programme so your employees can access independent advice too. These programmes are usually easy to access, and can be advertised through your internal channels, encouraging employees to reach out for advice when they need it without feeling embarrassed or fearful of any consequences.

Supporting employees through this difficult period will do wonders for your retention, making your employees feel valued and keeping productivity levels high.

Not sure where to start? We offer a range of solutions to help employees feel more in control of their working life to aid wellbeing. Talk to us and find out how we can help you.





ABOUT MHR

MHR International Group is a global software and consultancy company specialising in HR, payroll, finance, employee engagement, learning and analytics, and artificial intelligence services. We maximise employee engagement, generate better data insights and improve efficiencies for over 1,300 companies, ranging from SMEs to large multinational corporates across both the public and private sectors.



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