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Executive Summary/Introduction

In response to today's increasingly complex/uncertain geo-political/socio-economic climate, management academia has consistently summoned the private sector to collaboratively address a myriad of 'grand challenges' (Ferraro et al 2015: 363), or crosscutting issues (CCIs) such as climate change, political instability, and/or social equality/justice (Landrum 2018; George et al 2016; Gopinath and Mitra 2019). Indeed transcending multiple boundaries and influencing worldwide populations/communities, the impacts of CCIs, while not shared/distributed equally (Bapuji et al 2020; Amis and Mair 2020), have catalysed organisational transformation/revealed new concerns for managers/policymakers alike, including the regard for human wellbeing, a topic no doubt escalated in light of the Covid-19 pandemic (Guest 2017; Johnson et al 2017; Gopinath and Mitra 2019; Campbell and Gavett 2021; BITC 2022; Farley 2022).

However, while organisational literature has widely affirmed wellbeing's influence on business productivity/reputation (La Torre and Goetzel 2016; Guest 2017; Uttula 2021), what has been less thoroughly discerned is how an organization's *de jure* description/communication of wellbeing in company documents/statements differs to the actual, *de facto* state of wellbeing in that workplace, posing the question as to whether any hypocrisy is present when it comes to the 'label' (Uttula 2021:26) organisations place on workplace wellbeing.

In illuminating this research area, and considering airports to be nexuses of diverse human identities (Uttula 2021; Farley 2022), this report will undergo critical analysis of Heathrow International Airport to unpack/demonstrate the complex/contested/crosscutting nature of contemporary pressures/trends like wellbeing/their impacts on organisational management. Hence drawing upon academic/grey literature, the report will contextualize/define workplace wellbeing then introduce the case study/positive and negative documentations of wellbeing at Heathrow before identifying three managerial challenges/recommendations for practice which inform a final conclusion that workplace wellbeing will be unequivocally pivotal for Heathrow's organisational performance now/in years to come.

Contextualising Workplace Wellbeing

Wellbeing as a Contemporary Cross-Cutting Issue

In line with recent management discourse delineating businesses' responsibility to deliver societal value/remedy social/political inequalities (George et al 2016; Bapuji et al 2020), concern over individuals' physical/emotional state has entered corporate discussion of how organisations can best mobilise toward a more inclusive/sustainable future (Gopinath and Mitra 2019; Amis and Mair 2020). Additionally, given the stress social/economic/political inequality may incur on workers' everyday lives (Hessels et al 2017), organisational performance has unsurprisingly been tied to the degree employees are mentally/physically fit/well (Guest 2017; Johnson et al 2017; Akinlade and Nwaodike 2021; Uttula 2021; Farley 2022).

In this regard, wellbeing has been considered nothing short of a 'megatrend' (Heathrow 2023: 40) that regardless of nationality/religion/race, gender/ability, has proven a massive challenge for employers/employees especially in a post-pandemic/health-crisis world (Akinlade and Nwaodike 2021; Campbell and Gavett 2021; Farley 2022).

Yet, this concern has not been immune to conceptual ambiguity. Indeed as terminology on related subjects like 'wellness' (Davis 2019: para 3), or employee 'satisfaction' (Johnson et al 2017: 4) have been widely-dispersed by organisational literature/media, theoretical clarity on wellbeing at work becomes important and thus will be introduced to appropriately frame/set the scope for the analysis provided. Thus given *wellbeing* is the general human experience of being psychologically happy/physically healthy/socially content with one's meaning/purpose in life (Johnson et al 2017; Davis 2019; Gopinath and Mitra 2019; Uttula 2021), it may be divided into three basic components (see Figure 1), and broken up into two additional facets relating to general societal wellbeing and that in specific environments like the workplace (Uttula 2021). Hence, as the analytical focus of this report (see Figure 2), *workplace wellbeing* is characterised as the overall quality/state of an employees' psychological/physical/social experience at work and their ability to pursue happiness through professional engagement/enrichment (Guest 2017; Johnson et al 2017; Davis 2019; ILO 2023).

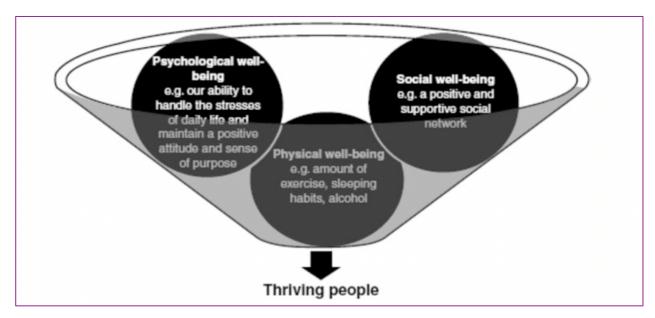


Figure 1. "Three Basic Components of Wellbeing" Johnson et al 2017.



Figure 2. "Five Facets of Wellbeing" Adapted from Uttula 2021.

This context provided, workplace wellbeing has been repeatedly validated to determine business operations/success, as empirical studies confirm that when people are physically/psychologically/socially sound in places of employment, their overall health/longevity/quality of life improves, thus resulting in more positive colleague relationships/greater efficiency for the organisation as a whole (La Torre and Goetzel

2016; Guest 2017; Gopinath and Mitra 2019; ILO 2023). Scientific data has also confirmed this conclusion by connecting workplace relations with critical neuroendocrine functions/levels of the stress hormone which inform overarching mental/physical health (Johnson et al 2017). Indeed human-resource management models (see Appendix 1) have also proposed psychological/physical wellbeing can generate more productive social/work relationships and thus offer 'mutual gains' (Guest 2017: 22) for employees/employers through improved individual/organisational performance.

However, this success depends highly on overall employee engage/support (Johnson et la 2017), which beyond ethical/normative benefits of increased organisational trust/loyalty (Akinlade and Nwaodike 2021; ILO 2023), may also generate economic gains of higher investor return, lower staff turnover rates, decreased absenteeism, and even more satisfied customers (see further Appendix 2). Additionally, studies on workplace wellbeing's profitability have found return on investment to be nearly six times initial investment value (Uttula 2021), thus leaving little doubt wellbeing is 'good for business' (Farley 2022: para 3) and can even save organisations millions too (La Torre and Goetzel 2016).

Conversely, poor employee wellbeing has also been empirically linked to organisational profit-loss, as recent research found work-related anxiety/depression in European workplaces to cost over €600 billion annually from expenses accrued from lower productivity/employee health-care/social welfare payments (Hessels et al 2017). Additionally, massive corporates including Safeway and Morrisons have experienced decreased profits, increased worker layoffs, and general dishonesty/distrust in the workplace resulting from disregarding stakeholder welfare (Gopinath and Mitra 2019).

These impacts considered, understanding *how* to prevent work-related stresses and enhance wellbeing is crucial for the normative reputation/economic status of organisations today (Guest 2017; Hessels et al 2017; Johnson et al 2017; ILO 2023), and may even hold grave implication for progress/delivery on international policy goals - such as SDG 3: good health and well-being of the UN's Agenda 2030 (George et al 2016) - which certainly have even greater significance for minimising societal impacts induced by CCIs.

Yet, approaching wellbeing effectively is no doubt easier said than done. As one of many organisations recognising this, Heathrow Airport has entered transdisciplinary discussion of workplace wellbeing in the attempt to alleviate contemporary megatrends/challenges (Heathrow 2023). However, documented inconsistencies in numerous publications (BITC 2022; Farley 2022; Indeed 2023; Glassdoor 2023; Unite the Union 2023) question the true state of wellbeing at the airport, which the following section now investigates accordingly.

Case Study

Heathrow Airport and Worker Wellbeing

As Britain's busiest commercial aviation hub since 1946, Heathrow International Airport caters to millions of passengers annually and offers 214 flights destinations to 84 countries worldwide (Heathrow 2023). Driven by a purpose of "making every journey better" (see Figure 3), Heathrow's massive workforce of nearly 80,000 individuals, or 'Team Heathrow' (ibid: 5) are credited for much of the airport's perpetual success as they collaboratively build a "values-led service culture" (ibid: 19) with diversity, respect, and sustainability at heart. This said, wellbeing has been considered a prime component of this culture, both in its implication for operational performance (see Appendix 3) and for customer engagement/service (see Appendix 4), especially through the 'tumultuous times' (Farley 2022: para 1) during/post-Covid-19. Thus, positive representation of workplace wellbeing at Heathrow will be addressed first to situate its importance in company ethos/actions.



Figure 3. "Heathrow Airport Overview" Heathrow 2023.

Ways Toward Wellbeing

In asserting that "making every journey better" (Heathrow 2023: 15) isn't just for their passengers, "it's for [their] people too" (Glassdoor 2023: para. 1), Heathrow's approach to wellbeing thus far has landed it today amongst Glassdoor's top 50 Best Places to Work 2023. Indeed with a company-wide desire to ensure all colleagues "go home safe and well" (Heathrow 2023: 22), wellbeing is intrinsic to employment benefits at Heathrow (see Appendix 5), where physical/psychological wellbeing at work is addressed such as with provision of online GPs/relaxation rooms (Heathrow Benefits 2023).

In line with its 'people-first strategy' (Farley 2022: para 1), Heathrow has also dedicated senior staff titles/roles to supporting worker wellbeing, as 'Chief People Officer' Paula Stannett has led the charge for equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) to make Heathrow a truly 'great place to work' (Heathrow Benefits 2023: para 2). Named a 'strength' (ibid: para. 1) of its organisational culture, EDI is considered/evaluated in comprehensive internal surveys/reports that promote inclusive decision-making (Farley 2022; Heathrow Benefits 2023) as well as in external company media/activities which support social equity/justice/representation (see Figure 4). Further, company profiles have highly rated Heathrow's EDI (see Figure 5), which confirm the subject's importance and affirm Heathrow's majority 'Positive Business Outlook' (Glassdoor 2023: para 3).



Figure 4. "Pride at Heathrow" Heathrow via Instagram 2022.

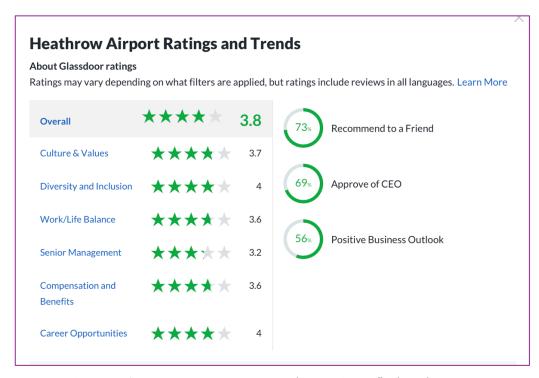


Figure 5. "Company Overview: Heathrow Airport" Glassdoor 2023.

This positivity/people-focus has equally been embedded into Heathrow's management structure/leadership protocols, as by adopting BITC's 'WorkWell Model' (see Figure 5), Heathrow has introduced a 400% increase in one-to-one meetings between line managers and senior staff (BITC 2022) and implementation of weekly calls since the pandemic to update workers/offer a safe space to voice mental/physical health concerns (BITC 2022; Farley 2022). These initiatives are said to have induced better "whole-life balance" (Heathrow 2023: 23), as senior staff/managers validate Heathrow's 'balanced' work-life culture (Glassdoor 2023: para 2) and overall 'friendly' (Indeed 2023: para 4) environment. Yet, despite the airport's "promise to protect and improve [employee] wellbeing," (Heathrow Benefits 2023: para 1), other evidence also points to the contrary, which the following subsection now presents.



Figure 6. "WorkWell Model" BITC 2022.

Ways Away from Wellbeing

While appearing intrinsic to Heathrow's company strategy, the multifaceted/often contested nature of wellbeing (Johnson et al 2017; Uttula 2021) calls into question whether Heathrow's de facto representation of workplace wellbeing may vary to that perpetuated in company briefs/statements. Thus, in hinting at some hypocrisy present, the following subsection illuminates some conflicting opinions regarding wellbeing and working at Heathrow airport.

Much friction is documented by security officers/lower managers mentioning multiple violations to their mental/physical wellbeing as seen through "lack of understanding/care" for long term illness/sickness (Glassdoor 2023: para 3) as well as frequent 'bullying' (ibid: para 4) by senior staff creating a "divide in the hierarchy in terms of EDI" (ibid: para 5). Indeed the diminutive/disrespectful behaviour by senior employees is a concern fully corroborated by the emergence of strikes/public displays of complaint (see Figure 7) over poor management/pay practices (Unite the Union 2023).



Figure 7. "Strikes at Heathrow" Lakha 2020.

Work-life balance was also noted to steadily decline post-pandemic (see Figure 8) as staff constantly cite "no job security beyond 2019" (Glassdoor: para 6) and that little progress has been made, especially regarding EDI which still is "not well-represented in management" (ibid: para 7). That said, provided Heathrow's Chief People Officer wishes to prioritise EDI, work-home balance, and "representation at senior levels" (Farley 2022: para 4), these employees' claims are in stark contrast to the agenda arguably pursued.

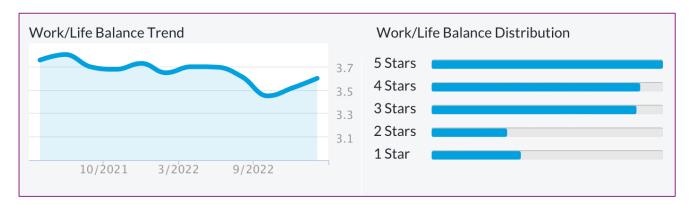


Figure 8. "Heathrow's Work-life Balance Ratings" Glassdoor 2023.

These reviews thus allude Heathrow's wellbeing protocols to be somewhat of a façade as lower line managers have clearly asserted that Heathrow "does not care about your wellbeing, only about making more money" (Indeed 2023: para 3) and that, frankly, "everything is just for show" (Glassdoor 2023: para 5). Hence proclamations by institutional leaders including Sharon Graham, General Secretary of the UK's leading worker union, saying the airport "is guilty of gross hypocrisy" (Unite the Union 2023: para. 8) come as no surprise and suggest there is still much room for Heathrow to improve its approach to wellbeing in the workplace.

Critical Analysis: Hints at Hijacking Hypocrisy?

The aforementioned evidences suggest much inconsistency in the way Heathrow conveys workplace wellbeing and the de facto outcomes of its approaches/protocols. Thus, if they wish to hijack this hypocrisy and prevent serious operational chaos/future implications, Heathrow Airport's managers will need to overcome the challenges presented below.

Challenges for Management

1) Culture of bullying/disrespect between senior and lower management (C1)

Why a challenge at Heathrow? → Employee accounts have persistently documented a bullying/discriminatory culture towards lower management by senior staff (Lakha 2020; Glassdoor 2023; Indeed 2023; Unite the Union 2023).

Implications? → In addition to employee dissatisfaction highly reducing worker wellbeing (Guest 2017; Johnson et al 2017), empirical studies in airports have

linked poor concern for EDI to reduced productivity/reputation (Akinlade and Nwaodike 2021; Uttula 2021) which may endanger Heathrow's overall competitive advantage/performance.

2) Decreased job security/work-life balance exacerbated by Covid-19 pandemic (C2)

Why a challenge at Heathrow? → Many employees, particularly line workers/security officers, felt their jobs in constant jeopardy since 2019 and that fluctuating hours/job demands hindered their work-life balance (Glassdoor 2023; Indeed 2023; Unite the Union 2023).

Implications? → Lack of employment security has been connected to increased mental/physical stress and thus decreased overall wellbeing (Guest 2017; Uttula 2021). Additionally, poor work-life balance may induce higher rates of worker burnout (Campbell and Gavett (2021) which has had serious economic ramifications for aviation organisations by increasing absenteeism/decreasing operational efficiency (Akinlade and Nwaodike; 2021; Uttula 2021).

3) Lack of action on feedback submitted to management (C3)

Why a challenge at Heathrow? → While complaints/concerns are certainly addressed/heard via various mediums (BITC 2022; Farley 2022, Heathrow 2023), there remains a "lack of forward-planning" and action (ibid: para 7) by managers to rectify situations (Glassdoor 2023; Indeed 2023).

Implications? → Empirical research from airports show despite administration for feedback, almost half of employees surveyed felt concerns were not addressed with solutions (Uttula 2021), causing a lack of future optimism that not only degrades individual well-being (Guest 2017) but also incurs serious operational malfunction/worker retaliation, as evident through recent strikes making "delays, disruption and cancellations of flights inevitable" (Unite the Union 2023: para 8). at Heathrow.

Indeed while the challenges above are contextualised to Heathrow's organisational practices, much like wider CCIs/grand challenges, their remediation will require

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multistakeholder/collaborative efforts and thus may be addressed by implementing the recommendations below.

Recommendations for Practice

1) Ensure compliance to EDI policy with formal, multidimensional, and compulsory training (R1 addressing C1)

Why this recommendation? → As an essential prerequisite to wellbeing (Johnson et al 2017) Heathrow's current EDI policies (Heathrow 2023) should be backed by formal training help identify/call out cases of bullying/maltreatment identified between senior and lower management (Glassdoor 2023; Indeed 2023). Such training has been empirically successful in airport settings too, proving to enhance EDI compliance/boost employee satisfaction/performance (Akinlade and Nwaodike 2021).

Implementation? → EDI training/courses provided by Equality and Diversity UK for example can be utilised to inform/educate employers of their unique responsibilities to address all forms of discrimination all while fostering more positive/productive relationships at work (Equality and Diversity UK 2023). Such programs may thus assist Heathrow in putting their *de jure* policies to *de facto* practice.

2) Partner with formal wellbeing services to guide internal programs/plans and provide continuous support (R2 addressing C2)

Why this recommendation? → Provided wellbeing approaches/plans which seek support throughout implementation processes are more likely to successfully build a 'culture of health' (La Torre and Goetzel 2016: 6), foster work-life balance (Akinlade and Nwaodike 2021), and reduce work-related stress (Hessels et al 2017) all while protecting key objectives of productivity/profits, services specialising in workplace wellbeing may help Heathrow provide more security to employees/improve their overall wellbeing.

Implementation? → Science-backed wellbeing services/programs like Headspace could be useful to Heathrow, as leading brands like Tesco and Hyatt have utilised

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them to develop better work/life balance and alleviate discomfort caused by job insecurity, particularly during/after Covid-19 (Headspace 2023), all with Headspace's reliable/consistent support systems (see Appendix 6).

3) Focus on conducting 'feedforward' assessments (R3 addressing C3)

Why this recommendation? → Acknowledging that benefits to workplace wellbeing are long-term pursuits (Davis 2019; Uttula 2021), while Heathrow's value for conducting feedback is admirable (Farley 2022; Heathrow 2023), its lack of subsequent solutions/action (Indeed 2023; Glassdoor 2023) call on the need for 'feedforward' (Workhuman 2023: para 1), assessments which, beyond hearing/displaying concerns, will focus on improving situations at Heathrow for the designated future.

Implementation? → Workuman's feedforward guide compares/contrasts feedback vs feedforward approaches (see Appendix 7) and may, as it has for other organisations of similar size/scope (Workhuman 2023), help Heathrow align company practices with comprehensive action critical for long-term operational success.

Conclusion:

The modern world is continually besieged by CCls/challenges which undoubtedly hold serious future implications for organisations/institutions as well as the welfare of individual citizens (Ferraro et al 2015; George et al 2016; Landrum 2018; Gopinath and Mitra 2019; Amis and Mair 2020). As one of these CCls, workplace wellbeing transcends social boundaries by meshing the personal and professional, proving that investment in an organisation's people – or lack thereof – may be the most powerful determinant of business performance/profitability in coming years (Guest 2017; Johnson et al 2017; Akinlade and Nwaodike 2021; Uttula 2021; ILO 2023).

Thus, in analysing the complex, contested, and often contradictory approaches to organisational wellbeing, this report has critically evaluated the incredibly diverse aviation hub of Heathrow International Airport to demonstrate that despite *de jure* accounts to holistically address employee wellbeing, *de facto* outcomes have suggested utter

hypocrisy in the organisation and have illuminated multiple impacts/challenges for management (see C1-C3), remediations for which are presented in three recommendations for practice (see R1-R3). Indeed, while Heathrow, like many organisations tackling CCIs today, is well aware it is "impossible to predict the future" (Heathrow 2023: 40), the airport's management should, if not must, cope with a dynamically-evolving environment, effectively overcome the hurdles presented by workplace wellbeing, and truly practice what they preach if they wish to hijack any hypocrisy and not just make every journey, but every *person*, better.

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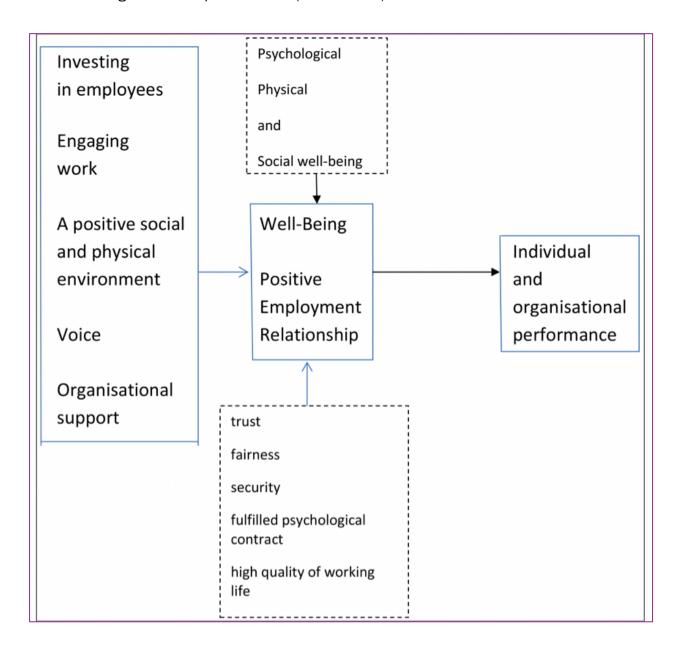
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Appendices

Appendix 1:

HRM model delineating the connection between workplace wellbeing, employee relations, and overall organisational performance (Guest 2017)



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Appendix 2:

Chart of organisational benefits and evidences from having more engaged employees as a result of higher worker wellbeing (Johnson et al 2017).

Key benefit to organization	Evidence
Better return for investors	Results from Fortune magazine's 100 Best companies to work for showed that these companies returned five times as much to investors as the market in gen- eral. (Russell Investment Group 2007)
Increase in operating income	Companies with high levels of employee engagement had a 19% increase in operating income over a three-year period. Those with low levels of employee engagement had declines of 33%. (Towers Perrin 2008)
Lower levels of sickness-absence	Actively disengaged employees miss more than 6 days of work per year. Engaged employees miss fewer than three days on average. (Flade 2003) As engagement increases sickness absence duration and frequency decrease. (Schaufeli et al. 2009)
Advocacy of organization as a good place to work	Sixty seven percent of engaged employees actively advocate their organization as a place to work compared with only 19% of not-engaged employees. (Flade 2003)
Customer satisfaction/loyalty	Customer data collected across 24 different studies and 20 different organizations showed positive relationships between employee engagement scores and customer perceptions. (Harter et al. 2002). Similarly engagement has been linked to good customer service. (Viljevac et al. 2012)
Productivity	Engaged employees are more productive (e.g. revenue generated per person). (Harter et al. 2002). The more engaged an employee is the more they will display in and extra-role performance. (Reijseger et al. 2016)
Potential impact on organization's prod- ucts and services	Eighty-eight percent of fully engaged employees believe they can positively impact the quality of their organization's products and services—only 38% of disengaged employees feel the same way. (Towers Perrin 2007)
Better use of resources and fewer errors	Engaged workers make better use of resources, and as such make fewer errors. (Viljevac et al. 2012)

Appendix 3:

Heathrow's description of the importance of wellbeing in its workplace (Heathrow 2023).



The health, wellbeing and safety of our colleagues will improve. This will lead to a healthier, more mindful workforce with reduced absenteeism, greater agility and a positive whole-life balance.

Colleagues will choose to start, build and maintain their careers at Heathrow, demonstrating both loyalty and discretionary effort.

The capability, productivity and motivation of our workforce will increase.

Through vital new apprenticeships, a future Heathrow will give thousands of children growing up today the skills and training they need to access the jobs of the future. We will leave a legacy of skills for the long term.

Heathrow expansion has the potential to end youth unemployment in the five local boroughs.

Colleagues will be attracted to Heathrow as we will clearly demonstrate our culture of sustainability.

Heathrow will be known as an inclusive employer. Diversity will drive greater creativity, guard against groupthink and attract talent from all walks of life. It will allow us to reflect and better serve our diverse passenger base and local community.

It will be easier to work at, and to get to Heathrow for all colleagues, while being respectful of their life stage and personal needs.

Appendix 4:

Heathrow's description of addressing wellbeing as a megatrend in its consumer engagement strategy (Heathrow 2023).



Appendix 5:

Components of the 'DEAL,' Heathrow's benefits summary for current employees (Heathrow Benefits 2023).

The Deal includes

1

Remuneration

We are proud to be the first airport to be officially accredited as a Living Wage employer. This means that all our Heathrow colleagues are paid at least London Living Wage and our Glasgow colleagues are paid at least National Living Wage.

2

Bonus

Our discretionary bonus plans look to reward colleagues for their hard work, talent and commitment to Heathrow achieving excellent results.

3

Pension

We offer a defined contribution pension (DC) plan with the flexibility to select your monthly contribution. Membership of our DC pension plan also includes life assurance and income protection cover in the event that you are not able to work due to illness or accident. Even if you don't join our pension plan, life assurance will continue to be provided at a reduced level.

4

Wellbeing

Our health and wellbeing programme incorporates a variety of activities throughout the year. Some of the wellbeing benefits we offer are: online GP, relaxation rooms, occupational health and more.

5

Agile working

We have created an environment and culture where our colleagues are empowered to have more choice over where they work and the way in which they work.

6

Shopping and travel

You'll have access to a variety of discounts including some of the major retailers Heathrow has to offer. You can also use discounts available from a wide range of UK retailers, restaurants and other leisure companies (gyms, cinemas, etc.) through an online service that you can access at any time. You will also qualify for free travel on the Heathrow Express train service at any time. Heathrow also offers interest free travel loans (to a maximum level), free long-term parking at the airport (to a maximum of 31 days annually) and access to purchasing a bicycle in a tax efficient way.

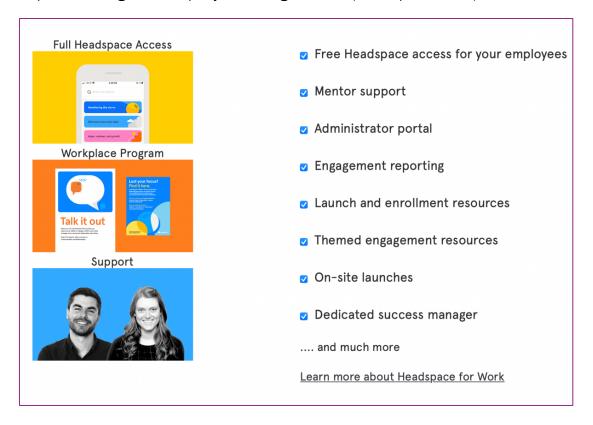
7

Employee assistance programme

You will have 24-hour access to an online and over the phone free and confidential advice service, covering everything from financial and legal issues to relationship and work matters.

Appendix 6:

Headspace offerings for company wellbeing services (Headspace 2023).



Appendix 7:

Chart comparing and contrasting feedback vs. feedforward approaches (Workhuman 2023).

Feedback method	Feedforward method
Reiterates what the employee already knows from the past.	Regenerates the employee's talent by encouraging them to help others.
Focuses on and points out problems.	Expands growth possibilities by looking at newer and better ways to do things.
It is a dump of information from the past.	It is an ongoing instruction that focuses on one aspect of the work only.
It is often inauthentic, where the manager or employee 'tries' to be positive.	It is authentic, defines a problem and its impact, and supports a person in finding the solution.
Feedback does not always offer a better plan of action.	Feedforward aims to create a step-by-step improvement plan.
It flows top-to-bottom and follows a strict hierarchy.	It involves the team and other departments for rich and varied input with different viewpoints and skills.