

“Employers must provide equity of support to employees”

1 year ago



As the [theme](#) of this year's International Women's Day (this Friday 8th March 2024) is to 'inspire inclusion', [Towergate Health & Protection](#) is reminding employers of the importance of providing female employees with equal, adequate, and appropriate support.

Three of Towergate Health & Protection's inspirational women have provided their thoughts regarding changes needed relating to health and wellbeing support in the workplace.

Research shows that companies that have more than 30% female executives are more likely to outperform companies that do not.¹ Therefore, it makes good business sense to support women in the workplace, and this includes giving them the health and wellbeing support appropriate to them:

Zanele Sibanda, head of business development at Towergate Health & Protection says: “Despite female-led businesses contributing a total of £221bn GVA to the UK economy², women still make up a very small percentage of insured key individuals for business continuity planning, so there is a lot of work to be done to support female business owners and female key people.

“With one in three small business owners reporting that they are working longer than 46 hours a week³ the unwelcome by-product of this is likely to be poor physical and mental health. Within the same group of survey respondents, 41% said that financial worries are having the single biggest impact on their mental health. And 81% of female business owners reported experiencing gender bias in the workplace³. The combination of these factors is a melting pot of scenarios that could lead to a business failing because of the unexpected absence of a key individual. So it is vital to raise awareness in the female business

community of the financial planning solutions available that will help ensure the issues highlighted here don't have a permanent and negative impact on their businesses."

Sarah Dennis, head of international at Townergate Health & Protection, says: "I have been lucky to have had so much support from my employer as I've developed in my career. Now, in my leadership role, I want to support women who may not have had the same backing. When I started my career there were very few women taking the lead in business, more often they were in administration or secretarial roles. Women were expected to take the lead in childcare so businesses were not keen to invest time and money in short-lived careers. As part of the changing landscape of employment, with women taking more leadership roles and building their careers as well as having families, it's important that employers provide the necessary support to help women realise their potential. This includes providing access to health and wellbeing benefits that not only supports the health and wellbeing of women but also enables them to flourish."

Debra Clark, head of wellbeing at Townergate Health & Protection, says: "We must make it easier to help women to stay in work, and to return to work at all stages of their life, facing the specific issues they do – be that as carers or after having a family – otherwise too much talent is simply being lost. We need to help women thrive, as well as the businesses in which they work. We have raised the profile of women in business and the scales are beginning to balance, but for businesses to really fly, it is important that employers looking at the health and wellbeing of their employees take gender-specific issues into consideration. There are plenty of options available, such as screening for breast and cervical cancer, and support for menstrual, fertility, and menopause issues. It is vital that employers make themselves aware of the support available, appreciate the value it represents to the business, as well as to employees, and offer it to their staff."

1. [How diversity, equity, and inclusion \(DE&I\) matter | McKinsey](#)
2. <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/3065/pdf/>
3. Simply Business SME Insights Report 2023