

# How much do employers understand the health and wellbeing needs of their employees?

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Recent research by [Towergate Health & Protection](#) shows that the majority (58%) of employers do not have a good understanding of employees' health and wellbeing needs.

Debra Clark, head of wellbeing at Towergate Health & Protection explains that just 44% of employers strongly agree they have a good understanding of employees' financial needs, followed by 43% who strongly agree they have a good understanding of their employees' mental health needs, 42% their physical health and wellbeing needs and 40% their social wellbeing needs.

She says: "Recognition of the challenges with which employees may be struggling could be better across all four pillars of health and wellbeing. It is vital that employers obtain a better insight into the needs of their workforce, so they are able to better support them."

## Discovering needs

The survey went on to ask about how employers find out what health and wellbeing support their employees would find beneficial:

- Feedback through line managers or directly 45%
- Staff surveys 43%
- Employee forums and/or focus groups 41%

- Formal reviews 41%
- Informal anecdotal feedback 38%

Debra explains that employers are using a number of methods to find out what support their employees require in terms of their health and wellbeing, but it is clear that more could be done to ensure that the right assistance is being given.

It is vital that employees are asked how they are and what support they need, and that employers do not just second-guess. Utilising both formal and informal feedback is a good idea; indeed, a spread of methods is the best option for capturing the most information. It is also important to ensure that employees are regularly asked about their health and wellbeing support needs, as requirements can change quite often and quickly.

The support that is available also constantly evolves and there is an ever-wider array of areas in which employees can be assisted to keep them healthy and productive. For this reason, it is sensible for employers to talk to experts about what is available in terms of support, and how best it can be implemented. Tailoring the support towards the specific workforce is important too as different demographics will have different needs. And, of course, communication of what is available and how it can be accessed is always vital.

“Our research shows that employers do not have a great understanding of the health and wellbeing needs of their employees, but they are making efforts to change this. With a little guidance on what support is available and how best to ensure this fits the needs of their workforce, employers will be able to benefit from healthier, happier and more engaged and productive employees,” Debra concludes.