

6.8 million employees not receiving any coaching or awareness-building for gender-specific health and wellbeing issues

10 months ago



One in five employees across the UK, equivalent to 6.8 million employees, are not receiving any coaching or awareness-building for gender specific issues, such as menopause, fertility, and screening programmes for gender-based cancers, according to new research released by [Towergate Employee Benefits](#).

Debra Clark, head of wellbeing at Towergate Employee Benefits, says: “It is essential to raise awareness and provide education regarding gender-specific issues in the workplace. Improvements to understanding can clearly bring a positive impact for everyone in the workforce.”

Inequality of seniority

Nearly a quarter (24%) of employers offer coaching and awareness specifically to line managers, so that they can help to support their staff. While this is a really positive move, only 7% offer it specifically to the C-suite. It’s vital that the C-suite has a good understanding in this area, so they buy in to any support offered, including agreeing any budget that will be needed. It can also be very helpful for employees to see senior members of staff taking up a benefit themselves and/or promoting it: culture often emanates top-down, so C-suite support can have far-reaching effects.

All-encompassing education

Nearly a third (30%) of companies offer gender-specific support purely to those specifically affected by the

issues. Perhaps a better approach is being shown by the 18% of employers who offer coaching and awareness to all staff, irrespective of gender, age, or seniority, enabling the whole workforce to recognise the issues and be supportive of their colleagues.

Debra Clark says: “It is far better to educate all about gender-specific issues than to only provide awareness and coaching for those affected. While some groups may prefer to undertake coaching in smaller groups within specific demographics, also providing overall awareness sessions for all means that employees are better able to understand and support each other.”

Success of strategies

The research went on to ask not only who is supported but what strategies are in use and how successful they are in supporting employees’ health and wellbeing in terms of gender-specific issues. Employers responded:

- Our wellbeing strategies are working to support employees: 39%
- The company is offering enough support: 36%
- Line managers feel able to support staff: 34%
- C-suite feel able to support staff: 24%
- We measure how successful our support is: 29%

The number of employers who feel their gender-specific wellbeing strategies are working and that they are offering enough support are still relatively low. Employers may wish to consider what more they could do. Forward-thinking employers will ensure they are directly asking the employees what support is needed and whether it is working, a personalised approach is likely to be the most effective.

Benefits advisers will be able to provide guidance on strategies and support surrounding gender-specific issues, which can come in the form of webinars, benefits fairs, tailored training courses and so much more. It is important that support comes from every level – so line managers, the C-suite and employees of the opposite gender, all have a good understanding of the issues their colleagues may be facing and how to be supportive.

Though gender-specific support and awareness is growing, only 29% of employers say they measure its success. Measuring the success of any type of support is vital, otherwise, how does an employer know that the benefits they are offering are having any positive impact at all on employees? They could be ploughing precious budget into support that is having no effect.

Debra Clark says: “Gender-specific support is growing and will continue to do so. In our rapidly changing social environment, coaching and awareness-building comprise just one vital part of gender-specific support. Benefits advisers will be able to provide guidance for employers on what is available and how it can help.”