

Health and wellbeing benefits used to prevent absence by 59% of companies

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Health and wellbeing benefits are used to prevent absence by 59% of companies, according to new research from [Towergate Employee Benefits](#).

The majority of employers are looking at prevention rather than cure and this forward-thinking approach means that health and wellbeing support is put in place to help employees to stay healthy and happy at work, reducing absenteeism.

The size of the problem

Absence rates cause problems for nearly a quarter (23%) of businesses. And the bigger the business, the bigger the problem:

Business size	Percentage stating absence rates cause problems
2-20 employees	16%
21-249 employees	22%
250+ employees	36%

Health and wellbeing as a preventative measure

Historically, companies offered private health care as a perk to senior staff, to fast track treatment if required. Things have moved on, and health and wellbeing benefits now encompass much wider support, which companies are using to prevent ill health and, therefore, absence, in the first place.

Preventative support now comes in many forms, to suit a wide spectrum of approaches, needs and budgets. Employers may choose to look at standalone support, or they may focus on selecting benefits with built-in additional support.

David Williams, head of group risk at Towergate Employee Benefits explains: “There is now a lot more additional preventative care within employee benefits. Preventative support works, and employee benefits providers know that preventing illness is cheaper than treating illness.”

Preventative care can encompass things like screening, access to a virtual GP, support to help improve lifestyle, fitness and general health and wellbeing, discounted gym membership, fitness trackers, nutrition advice, smoking cessation and much more. All of these are focussed on preventing illness in the first place and can be found within a range of benefits including PMI and income protection cover.

David Williams comments, “With so many possibilities available for preventative health, and the list ever-changing and growing, it is important that employers take time to discover the options and take advice if needed, to ensure they incorporate the right support for their staff demographic.”

Health and wellbeing supporting return to work

The research also showed that 46% of employers use health and wellbeing benefits to get people back to work sooner. It’s crucial to tackle health issues early, to mitigate against them escalating and then potentially becoming a long-term absence. Whilst prevention is vital, supporting returns to work is still very much on the agenda, and health and wellbeing benefits are being used to support this important aspect too.

David Williams concludes: “Preventative care brings advantages to every size of business. The health and wellbeing industry recognises the importance of preventative healthcare so is making developments all the time, and options are available that will provide solutions for all employers and their employees.”