

Only 41% of employers believe employees have a good understanding of added-value benefits

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New research from [Towergate Employee Benefits](#) reveals that less than half of employers at UK companies believe their managers and employees have a good understanding of added-value benefits.

Many health and wellbeing benefits now come with embedded added-value benefits, such as access to virtual GPs and mental health counselling. But, only 47% of employers believe that their managers have a good understanding of these added-value benefits, and just 41% believe their employees have a good understanding.

Growing range of added-value benefits

Added-value benefits are embedded in many employee benefits, including PMI and group risk: life assurance, income protection and critical illness. The range of these additional benefits is growing all the time and they can be of huge value to employers and employees alike.

Along with some of the most popular benefits – virtual GPs and mental health support – they can also include options such as digital physiotherapy, fitness trackers, rewards and discounts, as well as others that may be less well known, such as support for menopause and fertility, arranging a second medical opinion, organising eldercare, understanding a diagnosis, or navigating the NHS.

Everybody benefits

David Williams, head of group risk at Towergate Employee Benefits, says: "Group risk benefits have

traditionally been sold on their financial benefits, with the added value benefits being just that – added value. But there is an argument to say that it should be the other way round. Whereas only a limited number of employees in a company may ever have to claim on their group risk insurance, every employee in the company can benefit from the embedded benefits.”

This is particularly true for SMEs. In a company of 50 people with a young staff demographic, for example, it is unlikely that anyone will ever need to claim on their life assurance, but everyone can benefit from the embedded support that might be available, such as a virtual GP, mental health support, and fitness advice. And having these employee benefits as added value within other benefits can be a cheaper option for employers than buying them standalone.

Lack of knowledge

The employers in the research have been very honest about the lack of knowledge their managers and employees have regarding added-value benefits. And if managers lack knowledge, then employees are likely to be even more in the dark. Their unfamiliarity with these is not surprising as there are constant developments and new offerings.

Employers have a responsibility to find out more about added-value benefits and to communicate them to their employees. The industry must also take responsibility to ensure clients have a better understanding. Employee benefits advisers can play an important role here, and help companies understand what their employees need, appreciate the detail of their benefits, communicate them, and navigate the best use of them.

David Williams says: “It is time additional benefits were placed front and center when employers purchase the main employee benefit or insurance, as well as when they communicate the benefits. The added-value benefits will often be the entry point for many employees in engaging with their benefits. The majority won’t need to make a claim, but often they can all benefit from the benefits.”