

Press release
12 June 2017

Caring issues for employees: a top cause of absence for 61% of employers, shows research from GRiD

Employer research* conducted by GRiD shows that caring issues are a main cause of workforce absence. Home and family issues (which are often related to caring issues or the breakdown of care arrangements), plus more specific issues with providing elder and child care are resulting in absence from work and lost productivity.

- For 61% of employers these issues are a main cause of short-term absence (less than 4 weeks)
- For 49% of employers these issues are a main cause of mid-term absence (4 weeks to 6 months)
- For 43% of employers these issues are a main cause of long-term absence (in excess of 6 months)

They can also be a contributory factor in the development of mental illness or the deterioration of mental health. Indeed, mental ill-health is another major cause of absence.

- For 17% of employers it is a main cause of short-term absence (less than 4 weeks) – although this figure may be artificially low because people often give another reason for their absence
- For 36% of employers it is a main cause of mid-term absence (4 weeks to 6 months)
- For 42% of employers it is a main cause of long-term absence (in excess of 6 months)

An increasing number of people are affected by caring responsibilities, be this for children, elderly relatives or other dependents, and it is a problem that's isn't going to go away. It's not just the direct responsibilities that are taking people away from their work, it's the knock-on effects of stress and deteriorating mental health that results in more absence.

In terms of what employers are doing to reduce absence and improve attendance, flexible working comes out as the top-rated solution, with 36% of employers citing this as one of the measures they have put in place.

Katharine Moxham, spokesperson for GRiD said: "Employers know they need to address this issue, and flexible working is a good starting point, but it doesn't go far enough for many. Employers

may be at a loss as to what else they can do, and the solutions are far from simple. The good news is that there is a wealth of support available within group risk products (employer-sponsored life assurance, income protection and critical illness). This can include specific support for carers, access to advice, fast-track access to counselling and signposting to support groups.”

Moxham concluded: “Group risk products are not just about providing financial support, they have been developed to support employees in all aspects of their health and wellbeing. Employers that encourage the use of these support services as they are intended - every day if needed, even if a claim is never made – are the ones that get the best value and who are supporting their caring population most effectively.”

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* Group Risk Annual Employer Research, conducted in September 2015 among 501 UK businesses with between 5 and 1,000 employees. Research was conducted by Lightspeed Research for Group Risk Development (GRiD).

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Notes for editors

About GRiD

Group Risk Development (GRiD) is the industry body for the group risk protection sector, promoting the value to UK businesses of providing financial protection for their staff, enhancing their wellbeing and improving employee engagement. Our membership includes insurers, reinsurers and intermediaries who have a collective wealth of experience built over years of operating in the group risk protection market. Under the chairmanship of Lee Lovett, CEO of Ellipse, GRiD aims to promote group risk through a collective voice to Government, policymakers, stakeholders and employers.

GRiD works with government departments and regulators involved in legislation and regulation affecting group risk benefits, and with other organisations involved in the benefits and financial protection arenas. GRiD also seeks to enhance the industry's standing by encouraging best practice and by participating in industry-wide initiatives such as the professional qualification in group risk managed jointly with the Chartered Insurance Institute.



GRiD's media activity aims to generate a wider awareness and understanding of group risk products and their benefits for employers and employees.

GRiD's dedicated spokesperson, Katharine Moxham, provides expert media comment on a full range of group risk issues.

www.grouprisk.org.uk

Follow Katharine Moxham on Twitter @KMoxham