**Press release**

**16 March 2020**

**Mind the gap between employer and employee wellbeing support expectations: new GRiD research**

Changes in the welfare system have meant that the responsibility for supporting people is increasingly falling to the workplace with the onus on employers to do more to support their employees. GRiD, the industry body for the group risk protection sector, has conducted research\* from among both employers and employees, and it shows that although employers and employees agree that mental health is a top priority for support, their priorities don’t tally across all areas of health and wellbeing, and organisations may be missing the mark in other areas:

Mental wellbeing

* 75 per cent of employers feel it is their responsibility to support staff with mental health wellbeing (such as access to counselling & mental health first aiders), and 49 per cent of employees concur. Employers perceive this to be the *number one* priority for employees and their judgement is accurate as staff also prioritised this over other wellbeing concerns.

Physical wellbeing

* However, 70 per cent of employers believe it is also their responsibility to support staff with their physical wellbeing (for instance with access to physio and rehabilitation) but only 32 per cent of employees felt this is the responsibility of their employer.

Financial wellbeing

* Employees rank financial wellbeing support from their employer as more important than physical wellbeing support (36 per cent as against 32 per cent), but 46 per cent of employers don’t believe the financial wellbeing of their staff to be their responsibility at all. Financial support is second, only to mental health, in terms of employees’ *top* priorities for wellbeing support.

Social wellbeing

* Interestingly, just under two-thirds (61 per cent) of employers think it is their responsibility to ensure the social wellbeing of staff (i.e. encouraging social connections and supporting their sense of belonging) but employees don’t agree: only 27 per cent of staff think this is an area for employer support and it was the *least-prioritised* area of wellbeing by employees.

Thankfully, only six per cent of employers believe they have no responsibility *at all* for the wellbeing of their staff but remarkably, a third (30 per cent) of employees also believe that their employer has no duty of care for the areas of mental health, financial, physical or social wellbeing.

**Katharine Moxham, spokesperson for GRiD, said**: “Wellness and wellbeing are terms that have been around for centuries and nowadays have become fully mainstream in the workplace lexicon. With that comes an expectation from employers that employees will want support, and vice versa that employers will provide that support for employees. Employees have clearly highlighted that their priorities are mental wellbeing and financial wellbeing and it’s important that employers respond to this.

“There’s a lot more support today that employers can access to offer their staff which helps them fulfil their duty of care. Group risk products (employer-sponsored life assurance, income protection and crucial illness) are one such way of providing this support, and the embedded extra services within group risk products can ensure all areas of wellbeing are covered – those that employees prioritise but also the needs they don’t yet know they have, through unexpected sickness or injury. Whichever way employers decide to offer support, it’s important that they regularly review what’s available and put in place support that’s fit for purpose, and that their staff value and know how to utilise.”

* Ends –

\*Research undertaken by Opinium on behalf of GRiD amongst 1,165 employees between 24-28 January 2020, and amongst 500 HR Decision makers between 27-31 January 2020.

**Employee research:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Which, if any, of the following, do you feel it’s the responsibility of your employer to provide support for? Please select all that apply.** |  |
| Total |
| Base Size: All Workers | 1165 |
| Social wellbeing, for instance, encouraging social connections, supporting my sense of belonging, giving me the flexibility to do things I enjoy as well as working | 27 % |
| 313 |
| Physical wellbeing, for instance, access to physio and rehabilitation | 32 % |
| 373 |
| Financial wellbeing, for instance financial support if I’m unable to work long-term through ill-health, disability or injury | 36 % |
| 424 |
| Mental wellbeing, for instance with access to counselling, mental health first aiders within your company | 49 % |
| 565 |
| None of these | 30 % |
| 351 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What is your top priority of what you would like to be supported with, from your employer?** |  |
| Total |
| Base Size: All Workers | 1165 |
| My mental wellbeing | 34 % |
| 392 |
| My financial wellbeing | 29 % |
| 336 |
| My physical wellbeing | 22 % |
| 254 |
| My social wellbeing (e.g. encouraging social connections, supporting your sense of belonging, giving you time to do things you want to do) | 16 % |
| 184 |

**Employer research - HR Decision makers:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Which, if any, of the following do you feel it’s your responsibility as an employer to look after?** |  |
| Total |
| Base Size: All Participants | 500 |
| Mental wellbeing of your staff | 75 % |
| 377 |
| Physical wellbeing of your staff | 70 % |
| 352 |
| Social wellbeing of your staff (e.g., encouraging social connections, supporting their sense of belonging, giving them time to do things they want to do) | 61 % |
| 304 |
| Financial wellbeing of your staff | 54 % |
| 271 |
| None of these | 6 % |
| 31 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What do you think, according to your staff, is the top priority for you to support them with?** |  |
| Total |
| Base Size: All Participants | 500 |
| Their mental wellbeing | 37 % |
| 183 |
| Their financial wellbeing | 28 % |
| 138 |
| Their physical wellbeing | 20 % |
| 99 |
| Their social wellbeing (e.g. encouraging social connections, supporting their sense of belonging, giving them time to do things they want to do) | 16 % |
| 80 |

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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 Steve Bridger (MD Group Protection, Corporate, Aviva UK Insurance) 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](http://www.grouprisk.org.uk)

Follow Katharine Moxham on Twitter @KMoxham