

Press Release

12th October 2020

Key findings

Nearly three quarters (74%) of employees in micro businesses (1-9 employees) trust their employer to look after their wellbeing, reducing to 55% in small companies (10-49) and just 42% in medium sized businesses (50–249).

This comes in spite of the fact that nearly double the percentage of medium sized businesses have a wellbeing strategy in place in comparison with their micro counterparts: 77% vs 39%.

Trust is highest among female employees (62%) than male employees (46%) yet women are the least likely to think the employer’s benefits and wellbeing services are relevant to them. Also, older workers are more trusting than younger workers: 68% (55+) versus 48% (18 – 34 year olds).

This comes at a time when the deepening economic crisis is leading 9 in 10 CEOs to believe that wellbeing initiatives are key to driving long-term changes to their business model.¹

Legal & General’s latest SME research² findings reveal a direct correlation between size of company and employee trust. At the same time, there seems an indirect correlation between wellbeing strategy and trust.

Colin Fitzgerald, Distribution Director, group protection, at Legal & General, commented: “Medium sized companies might have the tools in place – in terms of a wellbeing strategy – but it’s not necessarily translating into trust. So, either their benefit and wellbeing programmes are not considered relevant by all of their employees or they’re being poorly communicated. Either way, ‘talent risk’ is currently top of CEOs’ agendas³ with leaders recognising the need to keep their people safe, but also connected, engaged and productive. So, the business case to get on top of this is very clear.

“So is the people case: 7 in 10 employees said in a recent report that lockdown loneliness was having a negative effect on their wellbeing - for women and younger workers in particular - a quarter adding it was impacting their productivity.⁴

“Our research found that women and younger workers reported the highest levels of trust in employers to look after their wellbeing. What’s key now is for employers to build on this trust by ensuring benefit and wellbeing programme design and communication is flexible enough to meet needs.”

Employer / Employee disconnects

Employer understanding of what employees want seems key. However, Legal & General’s research found disconnects between employer and employee opinions about the relevance of benefits, as highlighted in the table below.

	“Very relevant”	
	Employers	Employees
Health benefits (PMI, Health Cash Plans, Health Screening)	46%	22%
Protection benefits (Income Protection, Critical Illness, Life Insurance)	43%	22%
Added value services (EAP, Virtual GP, Subsidised Gym Membership)	46%	30%
Savings benefits (Pensions,	61%	42%

Savings Scheme / Share Scheme)		
One-off perks / Other (Discount Vouchers, Gift Vouchers, Celebrations)	40%	23%

Usage: men vs women

When asked how relevant these benefit / service categories were to the health, wealth and happiness of individuals, male employees replied in a more positive way than their female counterparts across all categories. In fact, the top response for female employees on the relevance of health benefits was “Not very relevant” (39%) and the same for protection benefits with 45% responding in this way. This lower perceived relevance to women seems to be also born out in the usage statistics, as detailed below.

	“Yes, I have used at least one of these benefits / services”	
	Men	Women
Health benefits (PMI, Health Cash Plans, Health Screening)	89%	75%
Protection benefits (Income Protection, Critical Illness, Life Insurance)	78%	71%
Added value services (EAP, Virtual GP, Subsidised Gym Membership)	76%	55%
Savings benefits (Pensions, Savings Scheme / Share Scheme)	88%	73%
One-off perks / Other (Discount Vouchers, Gift Vouchers, Celebrations)	80%	65%

Colin added: “The pandemic has shone a light on wellbeing and trust like never before, with business recovery now dependent upon having in place a happy, healthy and motivated workforce in place. One-size-fits-all benefit and wellbeing programmes, supported by one-size-fits-all communication simply won’t help employers achieve this. It’s time for the insurance industry to collectively evolve, putting ‘prevention before insurance’ to support the ‘people before profits’ focus of our clients.”

Notes to editors:

¹ PwC CEO Panel Survey 2020 – UK findings, August 2020 <https://www.pwc.co.uk/ceo-survey/ceo-panel-survey.html#purposeful-changes>

² Opinium research, commissioned by Legal & General, August 2020 (sample: 584 workers at SMEs / 513 senior managers and above in SMEs)

³ KPMG 2020 CEO Outlook: Covid-19 Special Edition, September 2020 <https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/08/global-ceo-outlook-2020.html>

⁴ Totaljobs, Lockdown loneliness and the collapse of social life at work, August 2020 <https://www.totaljobs.com/advice/lockdown-loneliness-the-collapse-of-social-life-at-work>

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