

Legal & General study finds growing pressure on Line Manager wellbeing

- **More than two in five UK Line Managers are now managing teams of more than 10 people; some managing more than 50 people.**
- **Overall, one in four Line Managers said their team size had grown since before the Covid-19 pandemic.**
- **Line Managers report that their wellbeing could be improved through recognition, direction and employee benefits better tailored to their needs.**

New research from Legal & General Group Protection has found that over two in five (43%) UK Line Managers in businesses with more than 250 employees are managing teams in excess of 10 people; with 5% of those managing 50+ people. Overall, one in four (25%) Line Managers said their team size had grown since before the pandemic.¹

The Legal & General *Wellbeing at Work Barometer*¹ found that, at the other end of the scale, 34% of Line Managers had teams of up to five people and 22% of team sizes fell with the range of six to 10 people.

Line Managers: We need help to live, breathe and better contextualise wellbeing

When Line Managers were asked what would most improve their wellbeing, in first place came 'more flexible working options' (41%), followed by 'recognition of work well done – informal and/or formal' (37%) then 'more flexible employee benefits, suited to my needs' (35%).

Line Manager respondents also said the top way in which they could be helped to improve the wellbeing support they provided to their teams was 'recognition from the top that managers are employees and have wellbeing needs too' (41%) followed by 'clear direction from the top on company purpose and values and how wellbeing fits in' (38%).

Team members: We'd like to see our managers walking the wellbeing talk

Meanwhile, team members said the top three ways in which an employer could help with their wellbeing in the workplace were: 'offer me flexible working arrangements' (35%); 'talk more openly as an organisation about mental health and the need for wellbeing for all' (32%); and 'lead from the top when it comes to positive wellbeing practices' (31%).

The insurance industry can help Line Managers support themselves and their teams

Legal & General says that insurers and intermediaries are well placed to support Line Manager wellbeing. The provider's group income protection programme includes, for example:

- **Support to carry out stress risk assessments:** using either the HSE Management Standards or the ISO45003 and including liaison with Occupational Health and / or Health & Safety if required.
- **The Be Well helpline:** direct phone access for line managers, to vocational clinical specialists, for early intervention advice and support. For example, how to suitably support a team member to remain in work where they might be showing signs of stress and / or struggling to carry out their full range of duties.
- **Personalised care pathway support:** multidisciplinary team support where an individual is absent and claiming on group income protection – anything from Long Covid and musculoskeletal pathways to mental health, work-related stress and cancer.

- **Everyday wellbeing support:** access to various services, whether claiming or not, such as the Employee Assistance Programme and Care Concierge service; the latter providing support to unpaid working carers who need help to investigate care options for a loved one.
- **The Be Well hub:** tools to help employers create or update their wellbeing policies; free wellbeing resources for employees; practical ideas for quick wins and implementation, plus on-demand webinars, a risk audit tool and signposting support.
- **Communication Toolkit:** a step-by-step guide to help make wellbeing communication to teams more tailored and relevant.

“It’s broadly agreed that line managers are the glue that keeps an organisation running. Common-sense dictates that the larger and more fragmented teams become, the harder it is for the Line Manager to monitor and meet everyone’s needs, keep motivating the team, and importantly avoid neglecting their own wellbeing. If this fine balance becomes destabilised, there is a knock-on effect on everyone involved, including across recruitment, retention and productivity.

“Group risk intermediaries and insurers are well placed to support Line Manager wellbeing, in turn helping them give their best to their teams. Achieving this requires looking at group income protection differently, getting into all the aspects of support provided and, in particular, where there is multidisciplinary expertise that can help them work through what can be complex issues in terms of workforce wellbeing.

“This starts with management support in the shape of help to carry out stress risk assessments and it extends to direct access to vocational clinical specialists where managers might have specific concerns about an employee. Also, wellbeing training and toolkits, in addition to personalised care pathways will help. As industry body GRiD² recently said, it would be wise for employers to review their wellbeing provision against GIP embedded services.”

Vanessa Sallows, Claims & Governance Director, Legal & General Group Protection

To find out more, please go to the Legal & General Be Well hub for employers:

<https://www.legalandgeneral.com/employer/group-protection/be-well-get-better-be-supported/be-well-hub/>

Notes to editors

¹ All data points referenced in this press release are taken from Legal & General’s Wellbeing at Work Barometer. The research was conducted by Opinium among 1,000 employees within businesses with over 250 employees, 13 – 27 August 2021.

² <https://grouprisk.org.uk/2022/03/17/remote-working-has-affected-the-way-three-in-five-employers-support-the-health-and-wellbeing-of-staff-grid>

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* at 9 March 2022

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