Health and Well-Being in the UK Workforce

Survey Report 2018

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exec survey   Acknowledgements

The Survey

Today's world of work is a very different picture to that of a decade ago. Digital technology has not just transformed how we conduct work, it has brought with it the emergence of new attitudes and new industries. Yet it has also created an 'always-on' culture, where employees have continuous access to work via mobile technology. As a result, many are working longer hours, with larger workloads, and with little separation between work and personal life.

The impact on the health and well-being of employees is significant, and it is of paramount importance businesses are able to tackle this. Despite this however, research conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personal Directors (CIPD) found that nearly one in five employees do not believe their organisation is doing anything to improve health and well-being[1].

Last year, well-being expert and CIPD president Cary Cooper said: "We're still seeing far too many people doing more work than they can cope with, working long or unsociable hours, suffering from technology overload and unable to switch off. Absenteeism figures have been stable but that is because people are coming into work when they are ill. We are also seeing 'leavism' – where people are so stressed they are using their holiday time to catch up with their work."[2]

Moreover, a review in late 2017 by Stevenson and Farmer of mental health in employment found that "the UK is facing a mental health challenge at work that is much larger than we had thought"[3]. It identified a number of resulting problems, including the human cost, loss of productivity, and the subsequent impact on the economy.

Well-being expert and CIPD president Cary Cooper said: "less than a third of senior leaders encourage a focus on mental well-being through their actions and behaviour or that line managers are trained in supporting people with mental ill health. Unless there is a substantial improvement in both these areas, it's hard to see how organisations will achieve the step change needed to improve people's well-being at work."[4]

In our latest study, Exec Survey teamed up with AXA PPP healthcare to gain an insight into the view of business leaders regarding health and well-being in the UK workforce. In particular, our study explores:
- the types of health and well-being initiatives that are made available to employees in UK businesses;
- the extent to which absenteeism presents an issue for business; and

[1] CIPD (2018) 'Health and Well-Being at Work' [Online]. Available at: https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/health-and-well-being-at-work_tcm18-40863.pdf (Accessed on 10 July 2018)

[2] Stevenson & Farmer (2017) 'Thriving at Work' [Online]. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658145/thriving-at-work-stevenson-farmer-review.pdf (Accessed on 10 July 2018)

[3] Stevenson & Farmer (2017) 'Thriving at Work' [Online]. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658145/thriving-at-work-stevenson-farmer-review.pdf (Accessed on 10 July 2018)

[4] CIPD (2018) 'Health and Well-Being at Work' [Online]. Available at: https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/health-and-well-being-at-work_tcm18-40863.pdf (Accessed on 10 July 2018)

- the level of importance business place on healthcare in the workplace, and the challenges and opportunities that this can present.

About Our Survey Partner

AXA PPP healthcare are part of one of the world's largest insurance families, the AXA Group. They have been helping people to access the medical care they need for over 75 years and paid out £934.6m in healthcare benefits in 2015.

The AXA Group provide a wide range of products and services that meet the insurance, protection, savings and financial planning needs of millions of customers throughout the UK and the rest of the world.

AXA services over 107 million customers throughout the world (individuals and businesses). In total, the AXA Group has approximately 165,000 employees and distributors worldwide, working in around 64 countries.

Survey Methodology and Respondents Profile

This survey was conducted by Exec Survey in collaboration with AXA PPP healthcare. The project ran from Wednesday 6 June to Thursday 28 June 2018.

Survey respondents represented a broad cross-section of job functions across UK businesses. This included:

- Administration
- Business Development
- Business Management
- Chief Executive
- Commercial
- Corporate Services
- Digital
- Engineering
- Facilities and Estates
- Finance Management
- Health and Safety
- Human Resources
- IT Security
- Legal
- Managing Director
- Marketing Communications
- Operations

- Organisational Planning
- Payroll
- Policy
- Procurement
- Project
- Quality
- Recruitment
- Regulatory
- Risk
- Senior Manager
- Service Delivery
- Strategy
- Supply Chain
- Technical Services
- Training
- Transformation and Change

A total of 230 individuals from 213 unique organisations participated in the survey, each of whom will have received a complimentary copy of the findings report. There was no inducement to take part in the survey, and AXA PPP healthcare was not introduced as the survey partner.

The results displayed throughout this report are based on those who fully completed the questionnaire and are displayed as a percentage of this group, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Key Findings

The vast majority of our participants (85%) believe it is very or significantly important that staff in their organisation are offered health and well-being support initiatives, such as gym memberships, healthy eating schemes or private healthcare cover

It is encouraging to see that many employers across the UK are prioritising the health and well-being of their staff members. When we look at the initiatives put in place to support this, we can see that many are using a wide-variety of areas to provide for their staff, including private healthcare cover (80%), cycle to work schemes (67%) and reduced cost or free gym membership (57%).

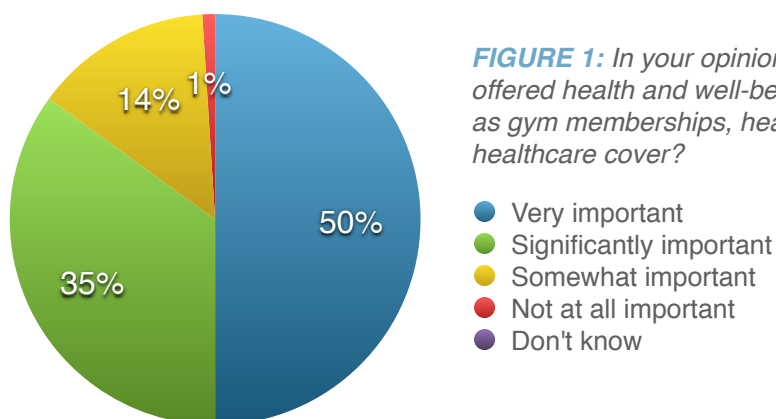**FIGURE 1:** *In your opinion, how important is it that staff are offered health and well-being support and initiatives, such as gym memberships, healthy eating schemes or private healthcare cover?*

- Very important
- Significantly important
- Somewhat important
- Not at all important
- Don't know

FIGURE 2: *Currently, what health and well-being initiatives are available to your staff members? Please tick all that apply.*
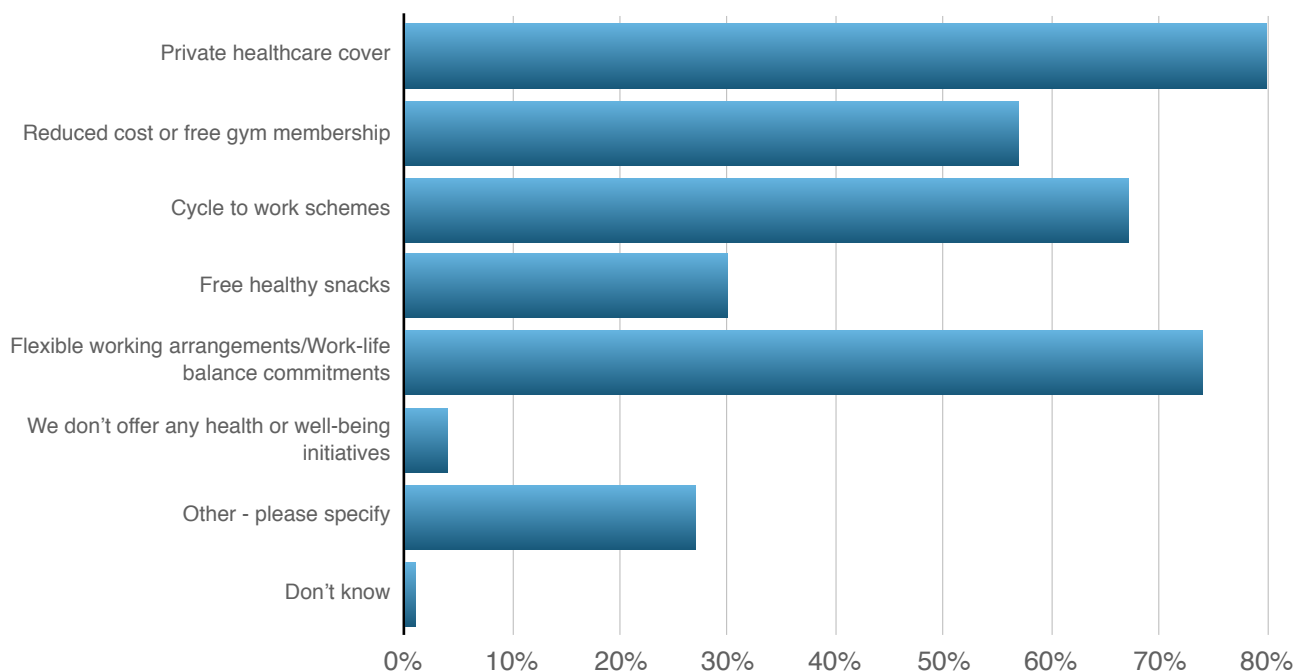
Interestingly, as attitudes toward working patterns shift and flexible working arrangements and work/life balance commitments are promoted, almost three-quarters of our participants (64%) also said that they provide employees with opportunities to embrace these working patterns.

Over half (52%) believe that absenteeism presents an issue for their organisation, with 15% of surveyed participants stating it is a significant problem

Furthermore, 8% told us that the impact of long-term absenteeism could be significant to their business.
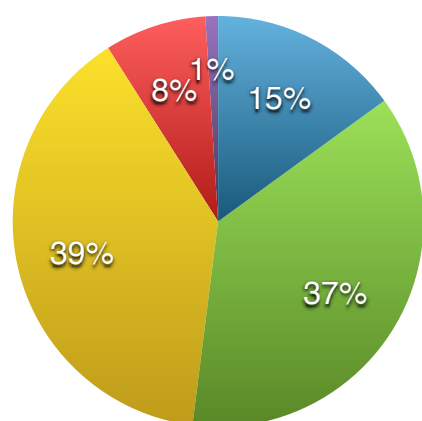

FIGURE 3: *To what extent do you believe your business is affected by absenteeism?*

- ● Absenteeism presents a significant issue within our organisation at present
- ● While absenteeism is an issue for us, it does not have an adverse effect on us day-to-day
- ● We don't believe absenteeism currently presents an issue for our organisation
- ● The impact of long-term absenteeism could be significant to my business
- ● Other – please specify

Despite this, less than half (44%) believe that they are able to effectively and easily measure absenteeism and the impact this has on productivity. Meanwhile, 36% report that while they can measure the level of absenteeism, they have difficulties identifying the causes, and a further 20% told us that thought there is a process in place, it is not very reliable.

FIGURE 4: *Is your business currently able to measure absenteeism and the impact this has on productivity and efficiency?*
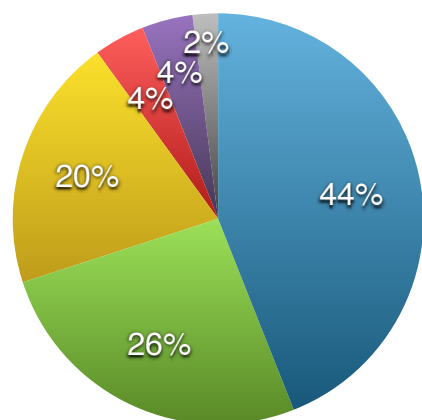
- ● We're able to effectively and easily measure absenteeism and the impact this has on productivity
- ● We can measure absenteeism levels, though we have difficulties identifying the causes
- ● We have a process to record and measure absenteeism, but it is not very reliable
- ● We are not able to measure absenteeism
- ● Other – please specify
- ● Don't know

It is also worth noting that, of those who offered further comments, many participants reported being able to effectively record and measure absenteeism, but experienced difficulties linking absenteeism to its impact on productivity.

Private healthcare cover is much more likely to be offered to senior levels of staff – such as chief executives and deputies (53%), heads (49%) and managers (43%) – or all staff (37%), as opposed to offering team leaders cover independently from lower level employees (13%)

FIGURE 5: *To which employees do you currently offer private healthcare cover? Please tick all that apply.*
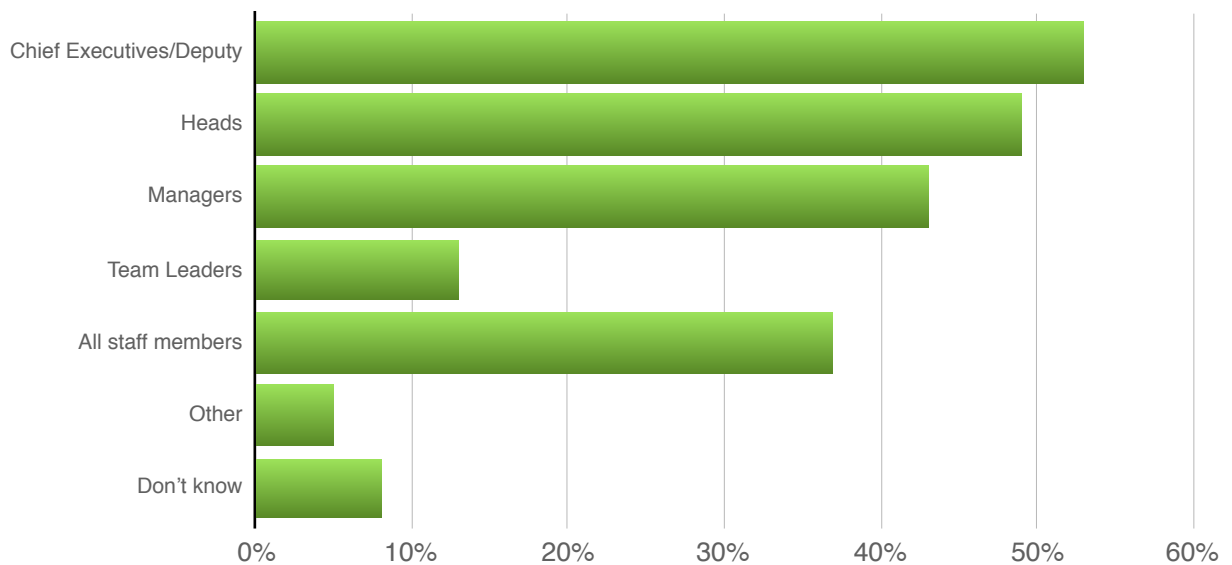
61% also report that their UK cover is part of a regional scheme, as opposed to a larger internationally provided plan (18%).
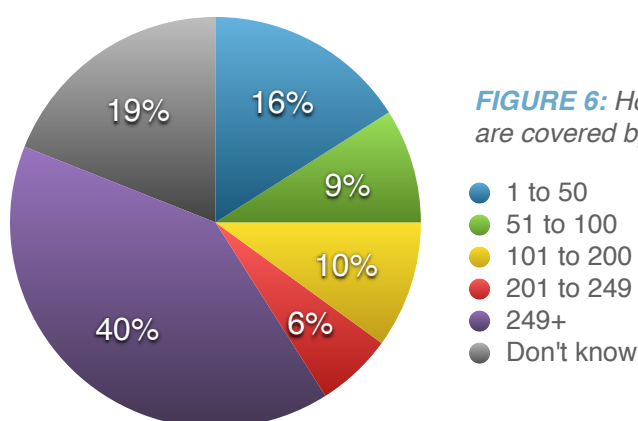
FIGURE 6: *How many UK-based employees in your organisation are covered by your private healthcare cover?*

- ● 1 to 50
- ● 51 to 100
- ● 101 to 200
- ● 201 to 249
- ● 249+
- ● Don't know

Interestingly, the majority (41%) offer cover to less than 250 UK employees across their business, with a further 19% unsure of how many employees are covered. Furthermore, 59% stated they have no plans to expand the number of employees their cover is currently offered to.

Occupational health services are the most frequently provided area within healthcare plans (72%)

Crucially, and particularly given the campaigns to promote mental health well-being and its importance, the majority of participants also offer mental health services (60%), which is now provided more frequently than dental health services (35%).

FIGURE 6: As part of your healthcare cover, which of the following areas are covered? Please tick all that apply.
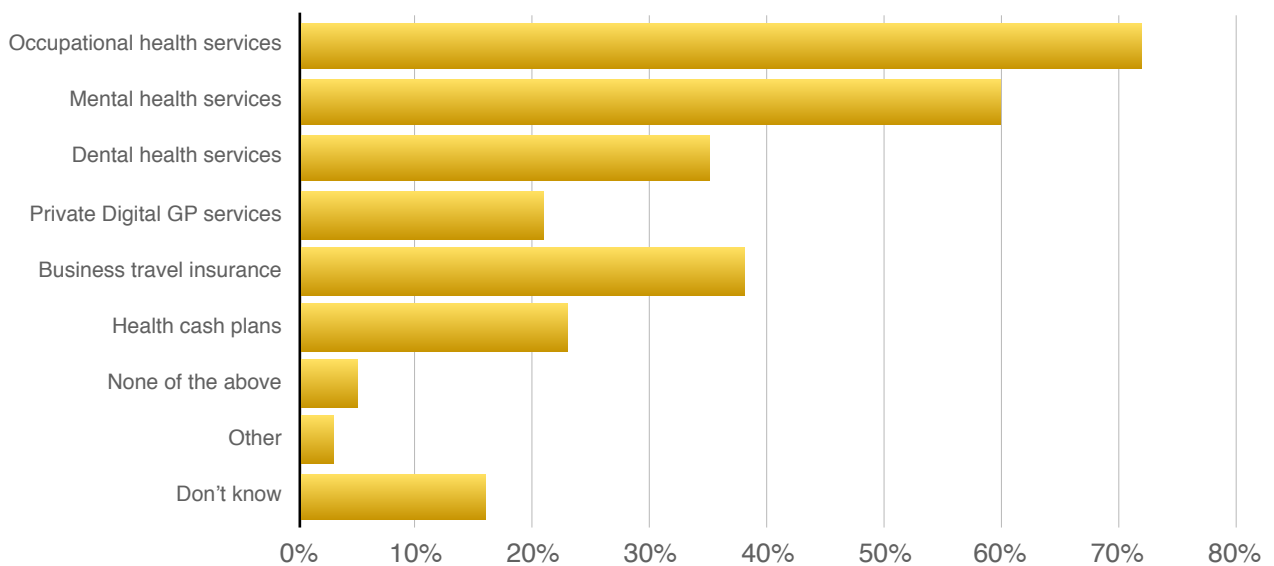
When we look at the challenges organisations face in relation to their private healthcare cover, over a quarter (26%) are concerned about ensuring their plan offers the appropriate level of cover for all employees. 28% also stated that they are worried about the costs of implementing healthcare cover.

FIGURE 7: Which of the following presents the greatest challenge to your organisation regarding employee private healthcare cover?
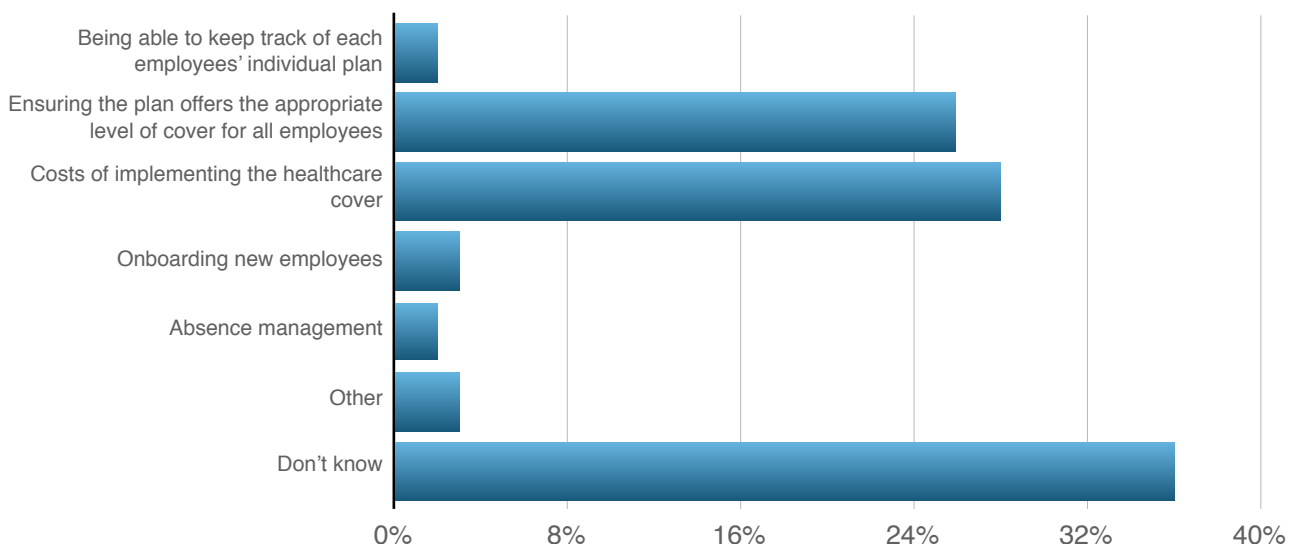
Conclusion

by Mike Davis, Head of Direct Acquisition at AXA PPP healthcare

The consequences of ill health can be significant for a business, from providing adequate cover for the absentee through to lost productivity.

And, while it may be the case that average days lost per employee per year due to absence is reportedly less for smaller firms than for their larger counterparts (5.3 days for businesses with under 250 employees compared with 9.8 days for those with 5,000+[5]) the consequences are arguably more acute for SMEs, who may not have the resource to readily absorb an absentee's workload.

Indeed, more than half (52%) of those responding to the Health and Well-Being in the UK Workforce survey said they believe that absenteeism is an issue for their organisation, with fifteen percent saying it's a 'significant problem' for them.

But the effects of ill health on business are not limited to absence alone. Presenteeism – where employees attend work when physically or psychologically unwell and perform below par – is a burden on business too.

Taking a proactive approach to safeguarding employees' physical and psychological health and well-being can, however, make a significant difference to business productivity. A good place to start is building and sustaining a positive, supportive workplace culture where employees are encouraged to lead healthy, active lives and have a good work/life balance.

It's encouraging, therefore that the majority (85%) of participants in this survey acknowledge the importance of health and well-being in their workplace – and the breadth of health-related services and support that's available. From private healthcare cover, cycle-to-work schemes, free or discounted gym membership to flexible working, this survey highlights a healthy and holistic mix.

Of course, despite best efforts to promote wellness, illness and injury will inevitably affect employees from time to time. By providing fast access to medical treatment and care, business health insurance means employees can get back to health and work quickly.

While this survey reveals that private healthcare cover is much more likely to be offered to senior levels of staff, it's worth remembering that cover doesn't have to be exclusive to senior managers alone. Benefits can be tailored to meet a business' health needs and budget – and, not forgetting, cover can extend to access to telephone counsellors and private GP digital services too.

Prevention, early intervention and allowing employees sufficient time to recover from

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[5] CIPD (2018) 'Health and well-being at work survey report May 2018' (p29) [Online]. Available at: https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/health-and-well-being-at-work_tcm18-40863.pdf (Accessed on 9 July 2018)

illness or injury are all key to positive attendance management and employee well-being. An actively engaged workforce will go a long way to creating a workplace culture that optimises performance and productivity.

Appendix 1: Full Survey Questions

Question: In your opinion, how important is it that staff are offered health and well-being support and initiatives, such as gym memberships, healthy eating schemes or private healthcare cover?

Answer	Percent
Very important	50%
Significantly important	35%
Somewhat important	14%
Not at all important	1%
Don't know	0%

Question: Currently, what health and well-being initiatives are available to your staff members? Please tick all that apply.

Answer	Percent
Private healthcare cover	80%
Reduced cost or free gym membership	57%
Cycle to work schemes	67%
Free healthy snacks	30%
Flexible working arrangements/Work-life balance commitments	74%
We don't offer any health or well-being initiatives to our staff	4%
Other - please specify	27%
Don't know	1%

Question: To what extent do you believe your business is affected by absenteeism?

Answer	Percent
Absenteeism presents a significant issue within our organisation at present	15%
While absenteeism is an issue for us, it does not have an adverse effect on us day-to-day	37%
We don't believe absenteeism currently presents an issue for our organisation	39%
The impact of long-term absenteeism could be significant to my business	8%
Other - please specify	1%

Question: Is your business currently able to measure absenteeism and the impact this has on productivity and efficiency?

Answer	Percent
We're able to effectively and easily measure absenteeism and the impact this has on productivity	44%
We can measure absenteeism levels, though we have difficulties identifying the causes	26%
We have a process to record and measure absenteeism, but it is not very reliable	20%
We are not able to measure absenteeism	4%
Other - please specify	4%
Don't know	2%

Question: Does your organisation offer employees an employee benefits package and, if so, which of the following areas are covered? Please tick all that apply.

Answer	Percent
Company paid healthcare cover	47%
Private healthcare cover	55%
Voluntary healthcare cover	27%
Car or travel allowances	59%
Retail discounts and offers	59%
We don't currently offer an employee benefits package	7%
Other - please specify	11%
Don't know	2%

Question: Roughly, what percentage of your staff accessed their employees' benefits package in the last 12 months?

Answer	Percent
0%	1%
1 to 25%	14%
26 to 50%	12%
51 to 75%	12%
More than 75%	18%
We don't offer an employees' benefits package	7%
Don't know	36%

Question: **Which of the following organisations currently provides the private healthcare cover within your business?**

Answer	Percent
Bupa	35%
AXA PPP Healthcare	25%
Aviva	12%
Vitality	4%
WPA	3%
We don't offer private healthcare	9%
Other - please specify	6%
Don't know	6%

Question: **Are there plans within your organisation to introduce private healthcare cover in the future?**

Answer	Percent
Yes, within three months	0%
Yes, within six months	0%
Yes, within twelve months	0%
Yes, within eighteen months	0%
Yes, post eighteen months	0%
No	62%
Don't know	38%

Question: **What are the primary reasons your organisation has no plans to introduce private healthcare cover in your organisation? Please tick all that apply.**

Answer	Percent
Not enough time	0%
Difficult to manage and co-ordinate	15%
Costs too much	69%
Complex product	0%
Unsure of what cover we need	8%
Not ready to commit to a big decision	23%
Other - please specify	8%
Would rather not say	0%
Don't know	15%

Question: **With regard to the provision of your private healthcare cover in the UK, is this part of an internationally or regionally provided healthcare scheme?**

Answer	Percent
Regionally provided	61%
Internationally provided	18%
Other - please specify	4%
Don't know	17%

Question: **How many UK-based employees in your organisation are covered by your private healthcare cover?**

Answer	Percent
1 to 50	16%
51 to 100	9%
101 to 200	10%
201 to 249	6%
249+	40%
Don't know	19%

Question: **To which employees do you currently offer private healthcare cover? Please tick all that apply.**

Answer	Percent
Chief Executives/Deputy	53%
Heads	49%
Managers	43%
Team Leaders	13%
All staff members	37%
Other - please specify	5%
Don't know	8%

Question: **Are there any plans to expand the number of employees your cover is currently offered to?**

Answer	Percent
Yes, in three months	2%
Yes, in six months	1%
Yes, in twelve months	2%
Yes, post twelve months	2%
No	59%
Don't know	34%

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Question: As part of your healthcare cover, which of the following areas are covered? Please tick all that apply.

Answer	Percent
Occupational health services	72%
Mental health services	60%
Dental health services	35%
Private Digital GP services	21%
Business travel insurance	38%
Health cashplans	23%
None of the above	5%
Other - please specify	3%
Don't know	16%

Question: When selecting a private healthcare cover provider, what does your organisation look for? Please tick all that apply.

Answer	Percent
Value for money	64%
Range of services	57%
Experience of provider	43%
Customer service	46%
Scalability	18%
Flexibility of cover	34%
Other - please specify	2%
Don't know	27%

Question: What is the primary reason within your organisation for offering private healthcare cover?

Answer	Percent
Employee welfare	57%
Recruitment and retention initiatives	26%
Increasing productivity	1%
Reducing absenteeism	4%
Other - please specify	2%
Don't know	10%

Question: Which of the following presents the greatest challenge to your organisation regarding employee private healthcare cover?

Answer	Percent
Being able to keep track of each employees' individual plan	2%
Ensuring the plan offers appropriate level of cover for all employees	26%
Costs of implementing the healthcare cover	28%
Onboarding new employees	3%
Absence management	2%
Other - please specify	3%
Don't know	36%

Question: Of the following list, which healthcare providers are you aware of? Please tick all that apply.

Answer	Percent
Bupa	95%
AXA PPP Healthcare	89%
Aviva	77%
Saga	32%
Vitality	48%
SimplyHealth	49%
Secure Health	2%
Health Online	2%
Drewberry	1%
Beneden	9%
WPA	18%
Other - please specify	3%
Don't know	1%

Appendix 2: Participating Organisations

Abellio Greater Anglia
Admin Re
Asda
Barbon Insurance
Bird & Bird
BooHoo.com
Braemar Shipping Services
Brewin Dolphin
Briggs
Burges Salmon
CallCredit
Capita
Capsticks Solicitors
Clarke Willmott
Clyde & Co
Culina
DHL
Foot Anstey
Grattan
Innserve
John Menzies
Learndirect
Liberata
Luxottica Retail

Miller Insurance Services
MSX
My Home Move
Owens Road Services
PHS
Pirtek
Restore
Ringway
Royal Mail
Russell-Cooke
Screwfix Direct
Shawbrook Bank
Shop Direct Home Shopping
Simmons & Simmons
Stock Spirits
SuperGroup
SuperGroup
The Clinkard Group
TNT
tp Bennett
TRL
White Company
Willis
Wm Armstrong (Longtown)