

Case study: Aviva - supporting employers to improve wellbeing

The annual cost of sickness absence has been estimated at £554 per employee, to UK employers, and £14 billion to the UK economy as a whole.

Our physical and mental health is dependent on a number of factors, including diet, exercise, life pressures, and personal relationships, to mention a few. It goes without saying, that as work makes up 30–35% of our waking lives, how we feel about our job can have a significant effect on our mental and physical health.

Wellbeing initiatives, then, need to incorporate a number of important facets – corporate and team culture, job design, employee reward, health initiatives, and the reassurance of having access to clinical and financial support at times of ill-health.

UK insurers, like employers, are affected by the costs of ill-health within the UK workforce. It makes sense for insurers to support employers with their wellbeing initiatives. Did you know that alongside Private Medical Insurance and Income Protection for example, many insurers are now offering wellbeing services as ‘added-value’ additions to the core product? This is a change from helping people to get back to work after they’ve been ill to trying to also help people stay fit and healthy.

For example, Aviva now offer a range of wellbeing services including health promotion days, health webinars, manager training on supporting employees with specific health issues, Employee Assistance Programs, App based virtual and telephonic GP consultations, cancer specific clinical services, and return-to-work case support services for sick or injured employees. This is available to over two million employees whose companies have Aviva Private Medical Insurance or Group Income Protection policies in place, as part of their employee benefits package.

The experience of having three colleagues leave work due to cancer, had a profound effect on several teams within one business. The impact on the wellbeing and productivity of the team as whole was

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noticeable. In response to this, we delivered training on how to provide emotional and practical support for colleagues living and working with a diagnosis of cancer. Other clients have been provided with Mental Resilience training, enabling managers to support their teams with strategies for dealing with rapid change and organisational re-structure.

Wellbeing is not a 'medical fix', but a way of living. The things we do to promote workplace enjoyment, engagement and productivity, often have the greatest impact on the health of the nation, as a whole.