

# **HR Sees the Benefits of Financial Wellness but Struggling to Act**

What can employers do to help boost their workers' financial well-being? Many are still trying to figure that out.

An employee benefits insurer surveyed 200 HR professionals and found that a majority (61 percent) say that employee mental health and work performance is being increasingly impacted by financial well-being issues.

Financial well-being entails being in control of one's finances; having the capacity to withstand financial shocks; having confidence in the future; and having choices on how to spend and save, according to the insurer.

While 64 percent of the HR professionals who responded to the survey agree that tackling such issues would boost productivity and engagement and 58 percent say momentum is growing to provide support, many admit they simply do not currently understand how their organization's help could make a difference.

Two-thirds (67 percent) of the respondents say they need to know more about the link between financial well-being and mental health issues, and a similar percentage (66 percent) say there needs to be more clarity on best practices on tackling financial well-being at work.

“Financial well-being in the workplace is a growing issue for businesses, with organizations reporting a rise in concerns about the impact on mental health and company performance,” says Adrian Matthews, employee benefits director. “Companies appreciate they need to understand more about the issue so they can provide support for employees, but at the same time there is concern that there are no agreed best practice standards on how to implement financial well-being programs.”

A good way to start would be to include financial well-being advice within employee assistance programs that address mental health issues, say 61 percent of the respondents.

The insurer also recommends broader financial well-being programs that increase general financial literacy and improve financial behavior.

Employers should also consider offerings employee benefits such as group life and group income protection, which can support financial well-being by helping families and supporting staff who are unable to work due to illness.

“There is no magic solution to improving financial well-being in the workplace, but a well-designed employee benefits program is a good place to start,” Matthews says. “The potential business benefits in terms of more productive employees are clear.”

By Katie Kuehner-Herbert