

Business leaders warned as apathy towards worker wellbeing takes its toll on productivity

Business leaders were today urged to put the health of the nation's workforce on to boardroom agendas, as almost half of employees claim apathy towards their wellbeing is reducing the country's productivity.

Our research uncovered a catalogue of unhealthy working practices, and saw employees deliver a clear message that investment in health equals business wealth

Alex Gourlay, Business Action on Health Chair and Boots MD

Research commissioned by Business In The Community (BITC) reveals that a third of workers (31%) feel their health is neglected at work, while 6 in 10 (62%) don't believe bosses consider staff as assets worth investing in. Almost half (46%) claim apathy towards employee wellbeing has taken its toll on workplace productivity.

However, with a proven return on employee health and wellbeing investment of 3:1, BITC has launched a national campaign, calling for at least 75% of all FTSE 100 companies to publicly report on employee wellbeing by 2011.

The Business Action on Health campaign provides a suite of tools for UK boards to effectively measure bottom line impact of employee health and wellbeing investment for the first time. Organisations including Boots, RWE npower, National Grid, Standard Life Healthcare, Abbey, Aramark, and Danone Dairies have already made a three-year commitment to support the campaign.

Employees complained that they were:

- Discouraged from taking sick days when unwell (44%)
- Put under pressure to do unpaid overtime (44%)
- Prevented from taking a full lunch hour (40%)
- Suffering stress (55%), depression (38%) and panic attacks (22%)

Stephen Howard, Managing Director of BITC said: "We know substantial investment is already being made in employee wellbeing, however, public reporting in this area is almost non-existent. Our aim is to increase business accountability and competitiveness by helping companies introduce simple health and wellbeing programmes that can be effectively measured against the bottom line".

Lord McKenzie of Luton, Parliamentary Under Secretary (Lords) at the Department for Work and Pensions said, "Our people are our greatest resource. The UK's future profitability is dependent on a healthy and motivated workforce, and individual businesses have much to gain in terms of reduced sick leave and recruitment costs. The importance of this issue cannot be underestimated and I urge business leaders not just to support this campaign but to take real action."

Further information

For further information on this campaign please contact [Iain Harper](#) on 020 7566 8741 or go to the [healthy workplaces section](#) » on the [Business in the Community website](#)