

**PRESS RELEASE**

**13th November 2018**

**7 IN 10 EMPLOYEES SAY WELLBEING ISN'T TAKEN SERIOUSLY**

70% of employees say they don't believe that employee mental wellbeing and musculoskeletal issues are taken seriously enough in the workplace, according to the results of a poll<sup>1</sup> carried out recently by Health Cash Plan provider Health Shield.

Additional findings include:

- 2 in 3 say that their business does not provide access to tailored support for mental health or musculoskeletal conditions.
- 1 in 3 have access to a 24/7 helpline to help look after their mental and physical wellbeing.
- 36% said that when they suffered from a musculoskeletal problem, it contributed to an increase in anxiety.
- 90% said they'd feel better knowing there was a clear treatment pathway available to help manage a mental health or musculoskeletal issue.



This comes at a time when the UK government is starting to shape policy around the way in which companies could and should be supporting employees with mental health and musculoskeletal issues<sup>2</sup>. It represents part of a much wider government objective to get more disabled people into work. In addition to seeking feedback from employers on what good practice looks like, recommendations were recently published to ensure that companies report on equality of reward and recognition by April 2020<sup>3</sup>.

**Stuart Scullion, Executive Chairman of the Association of Medical Insurance Intermediaries (AMII), commented:** "Research shows that depression is four times as common in people experiencing persistent pain<sup>4</sup>. Clearly there's a link between the two, so it would be wise for employers to consider cost-effective ways to provide integrated support. Having to go via a line manager, HR or the GP to get a referral can sometimes act as a barrier. Self-referral might help ensure that more people get the support they need."

**Jennie Doyle, Head of Product & Marketing at Health Shield, added:** "For all the talk about employee wellbeing, the poll results seem to suggest that many employers are struggling to meet employee needs."

“Tailored mental and musculoskeletal wellbeing doesn’t have to be costly or complicated. It simply involves providing a choice of services that can be freely accessed at the time of need.

“For example, our Tailored Health Cash Plans provide support pathways that employees can access without a referral. These are seamless services that individuals can navigate autonomously, allowing for integrated support - across our mental health app, EAP, virtual GP service, physio triage and more - according to employee need and contact preferences in terms of whether they prefer phone, face-to-face or digital support.”

**Health Shield has launched an online calculator to help employers see how much they could save on mental health and on-demand physio support for employees, plus a free eBook. To access both, go to:**

[https://www.healthshield.co.uk/mskmh/?utm\\_source=People%20Management&utm\\_medium=Daily%20News%20Bulletin%20Advertorial&utm\\_campaign=Care%20Pathways%20MSK%20MH&utm\\_content=9th%20November](https://www.healthshield.co.uk/mskmh/?utm_source=People%20Management&utm_medium=Daily%20News%20Bulletin%20Advertorial&utm_campaign=Care%20Pathways%20MSK%20MH&utm_content=9th%20November)

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**Notes to editors:**

**Photo of Jennie Doyle attached**

<sup>1</sup> Health Shield Insights from Twitter and Facebook Polls, October 2018

<sup>2</sup> *Multi-million pound fund to help tackle the disability employment gap launched*, Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Health and Social Care (July 2018) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-pound-fund-to-help-tackle-the-disability-employment-gap-launched>

<sup>3</sup> *Measuring and reporting on disability and ethnicity pay gaps*, Equality & Human Rights Commission (August 2018) <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/measuring-and-reporting-disability-and-ethnicity-pay-gaps>

<sup>4</sup> *Depression and Pain*, Psychiatry (2005) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3000181/>

**About Health Shield**

Established in 1877 Health Shield is an award-winning and market-leading provider of Health Cash Plans and health and wellbeing benefits. Health Shield is a non-profit making friendly society without shareholders, operating for the benefit of all our members. We are committed to providing competitively-priced products that are sustainable and affordable, and strive to enhance our award-winning reputation in the market.

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