

Lovewell's logic: How are employees coping during lockdown?

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How are your employees coping with life under lockdown? While the government's extension of lockdown and social distancing measures was not unexpected, it may have evoked mixed emotions for some. While most will undoubtedly understand and appreciate the steps that are being taken to minimise the impact of Covid-19, many will also be experiencing issues either resulting from, or magnified by, the measures.

Mental wellbeing is perhaps the most high profile of these to date. Research published by Qualtrics last week found that just under half (47%) of the UK workforce surveyed has suffered a decline in their mental health while working from home. Of this group, just under a fifth (18%) said that their organisation's actions have had a negative impact on their mental wellbeing, while a quarter (25%) said that nothing their employer or colleagues had done had helped to improve their mental health since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Obviously, those for whom working from home is not an option, may also be suffering from issues such as stress and anxiety for quite different reasons.

But this does not mean that employers are not taking action to support employees. The issue facing organisations is that there are so many variables that can impact mental wellbeing that it can be extremely difficult to pinpoint the most prevalent among a workforce or to target support towards all factors impacting employees. Research by accountancy consultancy Theta Financial Reporting, for example, found that nearly half (45%) of the 2,000 UK workers surveyed believe that work laptops and mobile phones mean they never truly switch off from work, often continuing to work beyond their contracted hours. Meanwhile, a third regularly exceed the European Union's maximum working limit, regularly working in excess of 50 hours a week, and just over half (51%) believe that decision makers in their organisation are out of touch with the processes required by teams to work efficiently and productively.

Personality type may also play a role. A study of more than 2,000 flexible workers by Teleware Group, for example, found that 35% of those who are introverts felt more isolated when working from home than extroverts (23%).

And this is without taking into account factors such as childcare, financial wellbeing, concerns about job security and worries about loved ones, to name but a few.

In these challenging and unprecedented times, ensuring mental wellbeing support reaches, and is accessed by, those who need it is perhaps more difficult than ever. However, it may prove to be a lifeline to those in need.

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