

DWP Employer Survey 2022

Summary

Overview

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) commissioned IFF Research to conduct the 2022 Employer Survey. The research report presents findings from this survey, conducted with 8,002 employers in Great Britain.

The data tables for each survey question are published alongside the final survey research report.

Research context

The research was commissioned by DWP in 2021, with fieldwork taking place in February to April 2022.

The aim of the survey was to understand employer attitudes and behaviours in relation to a range of topics of interest to DWP, including recruitment, retention, progression, pensions, specific groups who may be disadvantaged in the labour market, health and disability at work, and employer engagement with DWP. In doing so, the survey updates information last collected in 2018, as well as provides new information on topics of interest to inform policy development.

Main findings

Health and disability at work

Most employers take action to support employee health and wellbeing at work across a range of measures. Seven in ten employers (72%) said they take steps to identify and address employee health and wellbeing at the earliest opportunity, while one in four (25%) address it when it becomes a problem.

Nearly nine in ten employers (87%) provide some form of support to prevent employee ill-health or improve the health and wellbeing of their workforce. In addition, nearly three in ten employers (28%) said that they provide some form of Occupational Health (OH) or Vocational Rehabilitation services for their staff, while two in three (65%) said they do not. The most common way employers accessed OH was to use an external provider on an 'as required' basis (13%).

Employers reported a range of barriers to supporting staff on long-term sickness absence to return to work. While the most common response was that employers do not face any barriers to supporting these staff (38%), the most common barriers mentioned by employers included a lack of capital to invest in support (33%), lack of time or staff resource (29%), and a lack of expertise or specialist support (23%).

Three in four employers (73%) thought that workplaces should provide mental health support for their employees. When asked what they offer to employees with a mental health condition over a third of all employers (35%) said they do not provide anything for employees with a mental health condition.

Older workers

The survey asked employers who employ staff over the age of 50 about the benefits and challenges of having these staff in their organisation. The most common perceived benefit of staff over 50 was their experience (80%), followed by reliability (55%), and loyalty to the company (39%). One in twenty of these employers (6%) said there were no particular benefits of having older workers in their organisation.

Employers reported a range of challenges to having employees aged over 50, although more than four in ten (43%) reported no challenges. The most common challenges reported were that staff might retire soon (20%), difficulty with the physical aspects of their jobs (20%), and health-related absences (19%).

Recruitment, retention and progression of staff

Of the employers who had either recruited or tried to recruit in the last 12 months, over one in ten (14%) had recruited or tried to recruit new staff using Jobcentre Plus, and nearly one in five (18%) employers had recruited someone who is a benefit claimant. Employers who had recruited benefit claimants were asked how well prepared they have been for work, with three in four (75%) saying they had been well prepared.

Engagement with government employment schemes and wider engagement with DWP

The majority of employers (72%) had not made any contact with DWP in the last year. When employers had contacted DWP, they were more likely to be satisfied with how their last query was dealt with than dissatisfied, with four in ten (44%) satisfied compared to one in ten (13%) dissatisfied.

Pensions

When asked what pension schemes they offer, four in ten (42%) employers said they offered a Defined Contribution pension scheme (money purchase scheme) to new employees, while very few (4%) offered a Defined Benefit pension scheme. Around one in five (18%) employers said they do not offer any pension scheme to new employees and three in ten (30%) didn't know.

Employers mentioned a range of factors they take into consideration when choosing a pension provider for their employees. The most common factor was the ease or convenience of the provider or scheme(s), reported by nearly half of employers (48%). When asked about switching pension provider, over three in four employers (77%) said they hadn't switched pension provider or thought about switching, while almost one in ten (9%) had switched or thought about switching. Employers who had switched pension provider cited a range of reasons for this, the most common were advice from a professional body, colleagues or fellow employers (36%), value for members/employees (35%), value for money for the employer (33%), and the fees or costs on the employer (31%).

Disadvantaged groups

Around one in five employers (21%) said that they employ people from the specified groups who may be disadvantaged in the labour market (for the purposes of this survey, these groups were specified as those who are homeless, prison leavers, people with drug and/or alcohol issues, care leavers as well as veterans).

Employers who said they do not currently employ people from these groups were asked what would encourage them to consider doing so from a list of options. Just over one in three employers (34%) said a financial subsidy would encourage them, however nearly one in three (32%) said none of the options presented to them would encourage them to consider employing people from these groups.

Diversity of the workforce

Half of employers (50%) said that they monitor the diversity of their workforce, although when asked whether this monitoring is broken down by grade or level of seniority, less than a third (28%) said that it was.

Methodology

The survey used a mixed mode design (online and telephone) and involved a sample of employers in Great Britain (GB) from a range of size bands, regions and sectors. Following initial piloting of the survey, the mainstage fieldwork was carried

out between February 8th and April 6th 2022. In total, 8,002 interviews were achieved (4,794 Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews and 3,208 online surveys).

To cover a wide range of topics the sample was split into modules which meant that the majority of questions were asked of a sub-sample only. This means that the base sizes for some questions will vary, despite being asked of all eligible employers.

The survey sampled at the organisational level, meaning the survey sought to speak to the most senior person in the organisation responsible for people management and/or HR. This was often the managing director or the proprietor.

Concluding remarks

This research provides evidence of employer attitudes and behaviour in relation to key issues of interest to the Department for Work and Pensions. It will be used to support policy development across a number of areas, including recruitment, retention, progression, skills, pensions, as well as health and disability at work.