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EMPLOYEES CALL FOR MORE MENTAL WELLBEING SUPPORT AT WORK POST-PANDEMIC

- **Half of office workers nervous about returning to the workplace.**
- **A third struggled with mental health since the start of the pandemic.**
- **National Day for Staff Networks (12th May) calls for employers to resource networks as they support staff back into the workplace.**

Nearly half (46%) of office workers are nervous about returning to the workplace and a third (36%) have struggled with their mental health since the start of the pandemic.

The research launched today (12th May) marks National Day for Staff Networks and is calling on employers to collaborate with their staff networks supporting colleagues as they return to the workplace. The research revealed that seven out of ten (68%) office workers feel that Staff Networks* are beneficial and a third of members (32%) have had their mental health supported in the last year by their Staff Network.

With the easing of lockdown imminent on 17th May many employers will be looking for employees to return to the workplace but office workers are calling for more support, as half (51%) of office workers not in a network would like one to support their mental health and more than a third (37%) feel it would support them returning to work.

Cherron Inko-Tariah MBE, founder of National Day for Staff Networks and author of *The Incredible Power of Staff Networks*, said:

“Today marks the fifth annual celebration of Staff Networks and after a year like no other there has arguably never been a greater need for the support they provide.

“People have been at home during a crisis trying to work and it’s been tough. Networks were the first responders – acting as a lifeline for many office workers who naturally felt disengaged from their employer and excluded from the work community. No-one should feel that they do not have the support of their employer

in these uncertain times especially when almost all of 50 of the UK's biggest employers questioned by the BBC have said they do not plan to bring staff back to the office full-time.

"Staff Networks provide employees from under-represented groups with a safe space, a voice, support, advice and guidance. With this support from peers and their employer it allows employees to feel a sense of belonging.

"We are calling on employers to refresh investment in their staff networks, think again about how staff networks are resourced so that they are empowered to help staff back into the workplace. A representative staff network offers critical and timely support which makes people feel safe, valued and respected. This encourages improved mental wellbeing which delivers a positive impact on the productivity, potential and progression of people in the organisation."

The benefits of Staff Networks are not only for employees as a third of members (34%) state it makes them want to stay with their employer and think it enhances employee productivity (35%). Staff Networks are giving a third (33%) a sense of belonging and it provides a culture of inclusivity (34%).

The fifth annual National Day for Staff Networks is calling on employers to help established networks to support staff back into the workplace, as more and more employees start returning to the office. The campaign will also celebrate staff networks and their employers who already embrace their contribution.

ENDS

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*A staff network provides employees from under-represented groups with a safe space, valuable support, guidance and timely advice as they navigate their organisation's culture and endeavour to offer their authentic best in the workplace.

About the research

The survey was conducted among 754 office workers in the UK.

The interviews were conducted online by Sapio Research in April 2021 using an email invitation and an online survey.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.6 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

Sample was selected from Online partner panels.

About National Day for Staff Networks

12th May marks the fifth annual National Day for Staff Networks. National Day for Staff Networks is calling on employers to help established networks to support staff back into the workplace, as more and more employees start returning to the office. The campaign will also celebrate staff networks and their employers who already embrace their contribution.