

**PRESS RELEASE & INFOGRAPHIC (Attached)**

**20th August 2018**

**EMPLOYEES SAY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT WOULD IMPROVE LOYALTY**

Nearly three in five (57%) people say that if their employer proactively supported their mental wellbeing, it would help them to feel more loyal, be more productive and take less time off work, according to a recent poll<sup>1</sup> of employees by Health Shield.

The series of polls carried out via social media also found that: 90% of employees said that struggling with mental health issues stops them from thriving at work and performing to the best of their ability<sup>2</sup>; and half said that they would most appreciate access to face-to-face counselling to help support any mental health issues they are dealing with<sup>1</sup>.

Health Shield recently launched the Thrive mental health app as part of its Tailored Health Cash Plan to help companies better provide integrated care pathways. The app has subsequently received NHS approval<sup>3</sup>.

Thrive helps employees identify, prevent and self-manage common mental health conditions using techniques such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and mindfulness. By completing fun activities, users build resilience to issues such as stress, anxiety and depression.

Thrive can be linked to Health Shield's Employee Assistance Programme, allowing for integrated support. Also, where there are more than 50 active users with the same company on the app, employers can have access to a quarterly analysis report upon request.

Mental health issues in the workforce cost UK employers up to £42 billion<sup>4</sup> a year in terms of the cost of sickness absence and replacing people who leave their jobs because of their mental health. Three in 10 (31%) of the UK workforce have been formally diagnosed with a mental health issue, yet just over one in 10 (13%) feel able to disclose a mental health issue to their line manager<sup>4</sup>.

**Employee users of Health Shield's Thrive app have made the following comments:** "I love how intelligent this app is!" / "It's no coincidence that since I have started using the app I have been calmer, able to deal with stressful situations better and sleeping better." / "Within just a few days it had set me

up with activities related to ‘coping with health problems’ and it gave me daily exercises and tasks to specifically combat the negative thoughts surrounding my health concerns.”

**Jennie Doyle, Head of Product and Marketing at Health Shield said:** “The poll results clearly show that a focus on mental health can have a positive impact on employee loyalty with the right support in place for employers to help them provide integrated mental health services.

“Employers are recognising the need to improve mental health, but anecdotal evidence suggests that few have yet implemented the requisite support. The thing is it needn’t be a costly or time-consuming exercise. Mental health issues can be driven by physical issues as well as psychological problems, and vice versa. It’s likely that many companies already have many of the benefits and services in place to help tackle such issues but the problem is there’s no integrated approach between them.

“It’s with this in mind that Health Shield launched the Thrive app: a cost effective and efficient way to help link some of these services and, in turn, help tackle the enormous – and ever growing – issue of mental health in the workplace.”

**For more information, go to [www.healthshield.co.uk/thrive](http://www.healthshield.co.uk/thrive)**

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**Notes to editors:**

<sup>1</sup> Health Shield Insights Twitter Poll, July 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Health Shield Insights Facebook Poll, July 2018 (small sample size).

<sup>3</sup>The Thrive app meets NHS quality standards for clinical effectiveness, safety, usability and accessibility and has a supportive evidence base.

<sup>4</sup>*Mental Health Toolkit for Employers*, Business in the Community [Accessed August 2018]

<https://wellbeing.bitc.org.uk/all-resources/toolkits/mental-health-employers>

**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. [www.healthshield.co.uk](http://www.healthshield.co.uk)