

**BUSINESS
IN THE
COMMUNITY**



**THE PRINCE'S
RESPONSIBLE
BUSINESS NETWORK**

Mental health toolkit for employers

In association with



**Public Health
England**

Protecting and improving the nation's health

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Mental health – key numbers

The scale of the problem for employers



Mental health issues in the workforce cost UK employers up to **£45 billion** a year

This includes:



£7 billion in sickness absence



Presenteeism cost **£26.6 billion** to **£29.3 billion**

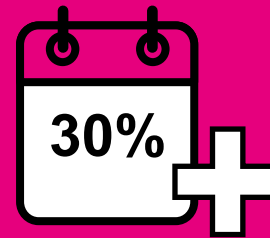


£9 billion in replacing staff who leave their jobs because of their mental health



The scale of the problem for employees

2 in 5 employees report experiencing poor mental health symptoms related to work in the last year



30% of the UK workforce have been formally diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point in their life

Just **13%** feel able to disclose a mental health issue to their line manager



51% of employees feel comfortable talking about mental health issues in the workplace



62% of managers faced situations where they put the interests of their organisation above the wellbeing of colleagues



Actions for employers for good mental health in the workplace



1. Make a commitment to mental health:

- Ensure senior level buy-in
- Be visible to employees (e.g. sign Time to Change or the Mental Health at Work Commitment)
- Have a senior Mental Health Champion
- Engage and consult employees about the approach



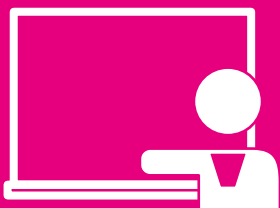
2. Build your approach:

- Understand the legal situation
- Assess employee needs
- Update policies, make plans to improve, and take action
- Co-produce a plan with employees



3. Create a positive culture:

- Support and value employees
- Promote healthy behaviour at work
- Reduce stress linked to work using HSE Stress Standards
- Review (and redesign if necessary) job roles
- Support social activities
- Communicate about wellbeing



4. Provide support and training:

- Share information freely
- Recognise importance of line managers
- Provide line manager training
- Build into induction
- Encourage dialogue at performance reviews



5. Manage mental health:

- Proactively tackle the stigma
- Openly discuss mental health
- Support employees with reducing stress (e.g. adopt HSE management standards)
- Signpost all information



6. Provide the right support:

- Train managers to be confident with sensitive conversations
- Be ready to make reasonable adjustments
- Provide a confidential support service



7. Help people to recover:

- Support employees back to work
- Make adjustments
- Use Fit for Work and Access to Work initiatives



8. Go further:

- Regularly evaluate your approach
- Share best practice with other employers

Mental health is an integral part of how we feel about our jobs, how well we perform and how well we interact with colleagues, customers and clients.

With 1 in 6 employees currently experiencing mental health problems, mental health is an essential business concern. There is a strong relationship between levels of staff wellbeing and motivation and performance. Taking a positive, proactive approach to mental health at work can help you grow your staff and your organisation.

Your journey to a workplace that leads on good mental health starts here.

The ambition of this toolkit is to help your organisation – whether business, public sector or charitable – support the mental health and wellbeing of your employees. It will help you take positive actions to build a culture that champions good mental health and provide a greater understanding for how to help those who need more support.

There has been a lot written about how to tackle mental ill health and promote wellbeing in the workplace. This toolkit will make knowing how to act simple; it will help you pick out the best free resources that are most useful to you and your team, and help you develop an approach that fits the needs of your staff and organisation.

Every organisation has an opportunity to support and develop a mentally healthy workforce and thankfully it doesn't need to be complicated – this toolkit will help you understand and act, step by step.

How to use this toolkit



Hover your cursor over the relevant box below to see more information:



Clare Perkins,
Deputy Director, Priorities
& Programmes Division,
Public Health England



Louise Aston,
Wellbeing Director,
Business in the Community

Many of us will experience common mental health conditions at some point in our lives such as stress, anxiety, low mood or poor sleep. Some of us will experience mental illness.

Government's 2017 Stevenson-Farmer, [Thriving at Work](#) review, highlighted that "the UK is facing a mental health challenge at work". This has a huge impact on individuals who are not able to fulfil their potential at work, but also on society, the economy and government.

All employers have a responsibility to support the health and wellbeing of their staff. Looking after mental health in the workplace is not just a corporate responsibility. Staff who have positive mental health are more productive and businesses who promote a progressive approach to mental health can see a significant impact on business performance.

The business case for employee mental health is now well established with Deloitte's [Mental Health and Employers, Refreshing the Case for Investment](#) report making a positive case for employers investing in mental health, with an average return of £5 for every £1 spent.

The ethical case is also compelling with Business in the Community's [Mental Health at Work 2019](#) report highlighting that 2 in 5 employees experienced poor mental health where work was a contributing factor in the last year. People who come to work do not expect to be physically injured and they should also not expect to experience poor mental health due to work-related issues.

Public Health England (PHE) and Business in the Community (BITC) have teamed up to produce this toolkit to help businesses

of all sizes to support and improve employee mental health. This resource is designed to help businesses navigate all the existing publications and guidance, such as the six standards outlined in the Stevenson-Farmer [review](#).

PHE has also developed resources as part of its national campaign [Every Mind Matters](#), to help people look after their own mental health and get expert advice and practical tips to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

We encourage all organisations across England to consider, use, and share this Toolkit.

- ☑ There is a clear commitment from the senior level of the organisation that mental health matters.
- ☑ A good place to start is the Mental Health at Work Commitment, a simple framework which draws on existing pledges and standards (including the Thriving at Work standards) and uses up-to-date research from UK employers and mental health experts.
- ☑ Employers who sign the commitment will lead the way in implementing each standard for their employees.
- ☑ The senior team understands and acts on all its legal requirements around workplace mental health and risk management – the rights of employees are also communicated to all employees.
- ☑ The organisation has assessed the mental health needs of its employees, understands where improvements are needed and identified clear objectives for development, along with the business case for doing so.
- ☑ Mental health is reflected in all relevant workplace policies and a plan for delivering better mental health is in place, with clear actions that can be achieved and reported back on every six months / year.
- ☑ There are effective management standards in place that ensure employees feel supported and valued.
- ☑ The organisation ensures that the workplace environment is conducive to promoting healthy behaviours and limiting the potential for it to cause ill health.
- ☑ There is a system in place, such as risk assessments, to prevent stress.
- ☑ Job design and roles are reviewed to ensure they are appropriate and conducive to productive work.
- ☑ Social activities, volunteering and out-of-work activities are actively encouraged and supported by the organisation.
- ☑ The organisation provides appropriate avenues and frequency of communication to keep staff at all levels informed of the approach to wellbeing.
- ☑ The structure of the organisation ensures that information is freely shared and every employee knows how to access support and who to discuss their needs with.
- ☑ The organisation has recognised the key role in effective line management in driving good mental health and wellbeing.
- ☑ All line managers receive training in mental health and all employees are educated to increase their mental health literacy and to recognise the signs that they may need support.
- ☑ Build mental health awareness into all induction programmes.
- ☑ Performance reviews allow employees to comment on issues that affect their performance and enables training needs to be identified.






- ☑ The organisation takes a proactive approach to ending mental health stigma in the workplace.
- ☑ Mental health is discussed openly in team and company meetings as well as 1 to 1s and performance reviews.
- ☑ All employees are supported to reduce the potential to experience stress and organisational changes are made when risks are identified that may lead to stress or other mental ill health. Adopt the HSE's management standards for work related stress.
- ☑ Every employee knows how to access information on the company's approach and further information about mental health and wellbeing.
- ☑ Managers are trained and confident in how to handle sensitive conversations around mental health.
- ☑ The organisation is prepared to be able to make adjustments to work patterns and structures for anyone experiencing difficulties, to keep them in work.
- ☑ The organisation provides a confidential support service in-house or externally to individuals who come forward with a problem.
- ☑ Employees who experience ill health and have to take time off work are supported to make a speedy and appropriate return and adjustments are made for their successful return to work, through regular contact with their manager.
- ☑ The organisation is equipped to provide support through such government initiatives as Fit for Work and Access to Work to ensure people who experience mental ill-health can continue to work successfully.
- ☑ Staff consultations/surveys take place that seek information on the mental health and wellbeing of staff and also cover working conditions, communication, work life balance, staff support and work related or other causes of stress, with action plans drawn up to address major issues.
- ☑ The organisation regularly evaluates its approach to mental health and identifies areas it can develop in, reporting back on its progress with all employees.
- ☑ It also shares its approaches with other organisations to share best practice and learn ideas for new approaches.

About mental health



What do we mean by mental health?
Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act.

Staying in positive mental health allows people to:

-  **Realise their full potential**
-  **Cope with the pressures of life**
-  **Work productively**
-  **Have positive relationships**
-  **Make good choices**

Being in good mental health is important to individuals, organisations and society, and adopting approaches that help keep us in good health, and being resilient to the pressures of life, is essential.

Mental health, like physical health, can fluctuate on a spectrum from good to poor. Mental health problems can affect any of us irrespective of age, personality or background. They can appear as a result of experiences in both our personal and working lives – or they can just happen.

Despite the fact that it is very common, some people still find it difficult to talk about. It can seem too personal or complex. There is still a stigma associated with mental health problems, through a lack of understanding. You might feel very happy to tell a colleague about a physical injury you've sustained, but when it comes to changes in your mental health, people can keep this to themselves through fear of being treated differently or judged.

It is important to create a culture in every business that promotes positive mental health and helps prevent people from experiencing mental ill health or helps them better manage mental health problems. As you will see, one of the key ways to do this is to ensure everyone can talk about mental health (see [Step 5](#)) but maintaining good mental health is also assisted by many factors, including having clear job roles, responsive line managers, a healthy approach to diet and exercise, and many other factors.

However, even with the most robust preventative plans, it is likely some people will still experience mental health problems, for a range of factors, so it is also essential for every business to know how to provide support. This might include knowing how to spot the early warning signs, being confident to signpost colleagues to appropriate support, how to make adjustments to someone's work or role, and ensuring there is a process to help people return to work smoothly after a sickness absence, see [Step 6](#) and [Step 7](#).

Understanding key terms

> Mental Health

Mental health is a state of mental and psychological wellbeing in which everyone realises their own potential, and can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.

> Wellbeing

Wellbeing is defined by the Department of Health and Social Care as feeling good and functioning well, and comprises each individual's experience of their life and a comparison of life circumstances with social norms and values. Wellbeing can be both subjective and objective.

> Mental wellbeing

Mental wellbeing, as defined by Mind, describes a dynamic mental state. An individual with good mental wellbeing is able to:

- feel relatively confident in themselves and have positive self-esteem
- feel and express a range of emotions
- build and maintain good relationships with others
- feel engaged with the world in general
- live and work productively
- cope with the stresses of daily life, including work-related stress
- adapt and manage in times of change and uncertainty

> Work-related stress

Work-related stress is the response people may have when presented with demands and pressures that are not matched to their abilities, leading to an inability to cope, especially when employees feel they have little support from supervisors and little control over work processes.

> Presenteeism

Presenteeism is defined as attending work whilst ill and therefore not performing at full ability. Presenteeism can be both positive and negative and be due to a variety of factors.

What different types of mental health problem are there?

One of the biggest challenges we face is the need to make conversations about mental health more common. A good starting point for this is to learn more about mental health, and particularly mental health problems.

There are a number of different types of mental health problem, and they each have a different impact on the individuals who experience them, as well as their friends and families. Problems can range from anxiety and depressive disorders to much more complex and severe mental health illnesses.

Why this is important to you



Bust some myths by hovering your cursor over the statements below:

Organisations that take a positive, proactive approach to mental health can benefit from:

- > **Attracting the best talent**
- > **More engaged and motivated staff**
- > **Retaining staff, less turnover**
- > **Reduction in absence,**
- > **Improved professional reputation**

Under stress or feeling the pressure?

A certain level of pressure in a business environment is desirable. Pressure can help to motivate people and may boost their energy and productivity levels but when pressure exceeds people's ability to cope – and particularly when there is no respite – it can become a negative rather than a positive force – in other words, it can lead to unmanageable stress.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them'. It is important to understand what pressures your employees are under and ensure this doesn't lead to stress.

Useful resources



The mental health charity Mind has a range of useful resources on this issue:



Step 1:
Make a commitment

Lead from the top
Prevention and early intervention are the most effective ways to support workforce mental health, rather than tackling problems after they arise. The steps needed to encourage this cultural shift are, in the majority of cases, simple – but they need to be driven at a senior level to help implement lasting change.

Every business must understand that driving a culture where mental health is prioritised cannot be achieved where it is an add-on but only when it is a fundamental part of how the business is run. Unless leaders within your organisation visibly act to promote good mental health then any efforts to affect an organisational change will be undermined.

By leading from the top and agreeing actions at a senior level, employees who will drive the changes will feel that they have the support and authority to tackle stigma and promote positive mental health. Employees are also more likely to open up about their own mental health if there is a clear signal from the business leader or senior management.

> In this [NHS Employers' podcast](#), listen to Deborah Lee, chief executive of Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, on why it's essential that senior leaders encourage open and honest conversations about mental health.

Action



> Appoint a 'Mental Health Champion' who is responsible for your mental health policy

- If your organisation is large enough, these Champions should be supported by a working group that develops ideas and seeds them through the organisation.
 - The Mental Health Champion can create a Mental Health Plan (See [Step 2](#)) by following all steps in this toolkit and making regular updates on progress.
 - Ensure mental health and is raised as part of each Board meeting or at least every six months with senior team reviewing progress.
 - Ensure mental health is communicated across your company to normalise the topic and promote positive, preventative approaches to good mental health (see more on this in [Step 5](#)).
-

Make a commitment

If you can't talk openly about something, you can't manage it. This is why we need to see more organisations speaking publicly and across the business to help normalise discussions around mental health and end stigma around mental health at work.

Every plan to promote good mental health and tackle mental health problems requires a public facing commitment that people can buy in to and for which organisations can hold themselves responsible for.

39% of employees have experienced poor mental health where work was a contributing factor in the past year

51% of employees feel comfortable talking about mental health issues

About the Mental Health at Work Commitment

The Mental Health at Work Commitment has been developed by the Thriving at Work Leadership Council and the BITC Wellbeing Leadership Team, which are made up of leading employers across the private, public and voluntary sector along with leading industry bodies and experts in mental health. It draws together key activity, which employers have tried and tested, and provides a single way for employers to navigate the complex workplace wellbeing landscape. Ultimately the Commitment is a simple umbrella framework to improve mental health at work.

The 6 standards that underpin the Commitment are drawn from best practice that has shown to make a difference.

Action



- The Mental Health at Work Commitment, and the standards which underpin it, are a roadmap to achieving better mental health outcomes for employees. It's a set of actions that any organisation can follow to improve and support the mental health of their people.
- Revisit your Commitment on a regular basis (at least every 6 months) to ensure you are progressing against the 6 standards.

Time to Change is England's biggest programme to end stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems. The programme is run by the charities **Mind and Rethink Mental Illness**. It aims to empower people to challenge stigma and speak openly about their own mental health experiences, as well as changing the attitudes and behaviours of the wider public.

By signing the Employers Pledge, you will be supporting standard 3 of the Mental Health at Work Commitment 'Promote an open culture around mental health'.

The pledge does not require costly interventions. As we will see, there are plenty of free ways to build on the pledge, from simply sending an email linking to myth-busting videos, to arranging a chat over tea and coffee, or distributing downloadable fact packs.

The role of line managers

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) research consistently identifies good-quality people management, particularly by line managers, as one of the core drivers of employee engagement, wellbeing and good mental health. However, good line management cannot exist in a vacuum.

Only support and strategic leadership from the top will create organisational cultures where management styles based on openness and mutual respect can flourish. The senior management team will influence how managers throughout an organisation see their jobs and the extent to which they place a priority on people management. Learn more about line managers and their training needs in [Step 4](#).



Engage for Success

The leaders of any organisation play a vital role in affecting the culture and helping to ensure everyone can live the values. The way senior leaders behave influences how everyone else does through the organisation.

Engage for Success is a growing movement, promoting employee engagement as a better way to work that benefits individual employees, teams and whole organisations. It has identified four key drivers for engagement:

- having a strong narrative about the organisation from the senior team
- engaged managers
- employees given a voice
- organisational integrity

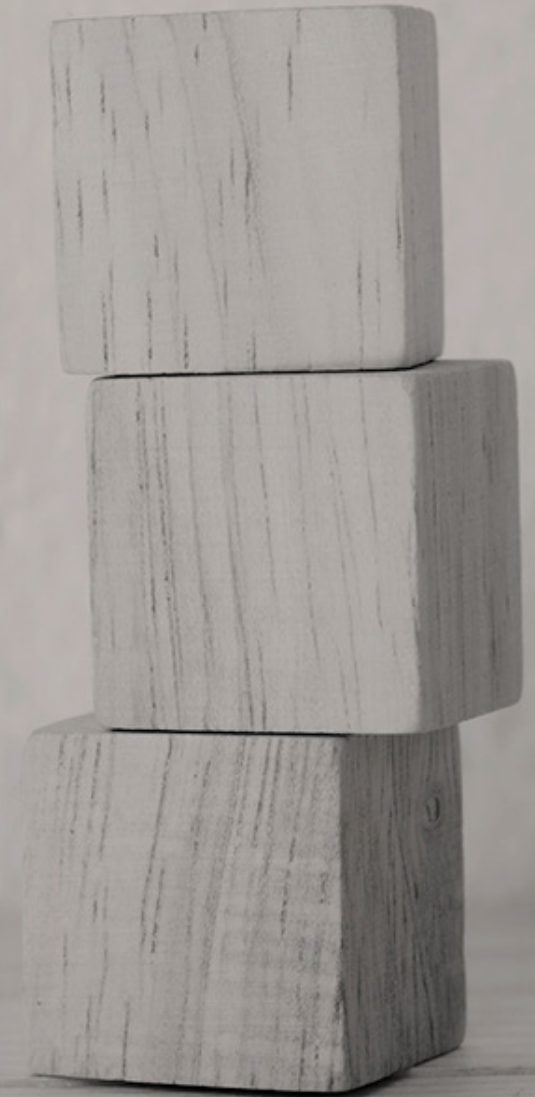
Did you know?



A study by Mind found that fewer than half of employees told their bosses after being diagnosed with a mental health condition. This suggests that most employees fear that admitting a mental health condition will jeopardise their position at work. 1 in 3 employees also reported that they had received support in response to informing their bosses of a mental health condition, but that no further adjustments were made as a result.

Perhaps most significantly, less than half of employees (41%) said they would feel able to talk openly with their line manager if they were experiencing stress. Another Mind poll showed that 1 in 5 workers would not disclose stress or mental health problems to their manager for fear of being placed first in line for redundancy. Making a pledge to end the stigma and take a proactive approach can help overcome this.

Step 2: **Build your approach**



Understand the law

Putting plans in place isn't just a good thing to do; it helps ensure you are following your legal obligations as an employer. It is important to understand the law and ensure you are compliant.

If someone has a mental health problem that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities, they are considered disabled and will be protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

The Act makes it unlawful for an employer to treat a disabled person less favourably for a reason relating to their disability, without a justifiable reason.

It also requires that businesses make reasonable adjustments to ensure that a disabled person is able to carry out their job.

Employers also have duties under health and safety legislation to assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities and to take measures to control that risk.

Action



> Understand your legal obligations as an employer

- Read up on the Equality Act 2010 and make a note of any areas you have concerns about, before developing your understanding further and making changes in your approach.

Useful resources



GOV.UK has more information on the Equality Act 2010:

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has published a range of guides for employers to help them understand their obligations under the Act:

ACAS lists a number of suggested adjustments, from page 21 of the guide below:

Read and understand the **Health and Safety Executive's (HSE)** 'Management Standards for Stress':

Deciding where to start

It is important to understand the requirements within your business so you can set meaningful objectives. The size of your business, along with such factors as the type of industry you work in and the services you provide will all affect the approach you need to take.

It is important to understand your employees and how they can benefit from a better approach to mental health, along with the pressure points you and your employees currently face. It is also worth seeing how much benefit your business could receive from investing in mental health, to help assess the scale of the programme you want to create and help you to prioritise your options.

Actions



> Understand your employees

- Undertake a survey with your employees to understand their pressures and aspirations. For smaller organisations, this might be a simple conversation.
- If you already run a [survey](#) with your employees, build in questions on mental health and general wellbeing.

> Carry out a Health Needs Assessment

A process to determine the health and wellbeing needs of specific groups so that interventions can be planned.

Public Health England's workplace health needs assessment provides a useful model.

> Understand the rewards

- Improve your understanding about the costs of poor employee health and wellbeing to your organisation and create a business case for taking action, along with an understanding on the return you will get from this investment. Use this [government tool](#) to help.

> Assess your approach so far

- If you have already introduced initiatives to promote mental health, assess how far these efforts are going by taking Time to Change's [mini healthcheck](#). This will help you to review your practices and then plan for the next steps.

> Set your goals

- The three steps above will help you to set clear objectives for your mental health programme that you can measure against over time. You can prioritise actions and 'park' less important issues for later.

Tools



Tools to help you understand your employees needs better:

Useful resources



A resource for bosses, line managers and HR professionals:

Audit the mental health risks of your employees as well as the physical ones and develop a plan for minimising them.

Build your programme

Once you have identified and prioritised your objectives, they can be put together into a plan for the year ahead for your business. The remaining sections of this toolkit will help you to build your actions, and they do not need to be complicated. As you will see, there is a lot that doesn't cost money and can be adapted for any business (from free toolkits to piggybacking on national awareness days).

Once you have built the plan, it is important everyone knows about it – the communication of your initiatives is key to their success. If employees are not aware of them or do not participate in them, they have failed.

Thriving at Work: the Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers

Commissioned by the UK Prime Minister, this review looked into how employers can better support all employees, including those with poor mental health or wellbeing, to remain in and thrive at work.

Actions



> Make sure mental health and wellbeing are included in your policies covering areas such as:

- Absence and sickness
- Health and safety
- Working time / TOIL / overtime
- Performance management and personal development
- Recruitment, change management and redundancy
- Equality, diversity, inclusion, bullying, harassment, whistle blowing

(For smaller organisations, it may be that a statement of intent serves the purpose of a specific mental health policy).

> Create a positive mental health plan

- Develop a scheduled programme of activity to promote good mental health and introduce measures to assist those with poor mental health, by analysing the results of your need and assessing your strategic priorities.
- Use elements from the rest of this toolkit to help build this plan and make use of the framework for your approach (or adopt the BITC Workwell model if you are larger business).
- Ensure your senior team is fully bought into the plan and feel confident they can help implement it.

> Communicate this programme to your employees

- Consider 'launching' your programme with an event with employees or by ensuring the approach is communicated in team / company meetings and in line manager catch-ups.
- See more about communicating your programme in [Step 5](#).

Working groups

Some aspects of your plan may need to be taken forward by HR or the senior management team – such as reviewing policies or setting up new systems. Other areas may need staff input, so you could set up a staff working group to explore possible solutions.

Useful resources



The Health and Safety Executive has a range of case studies of businesses that have implemented changes to help improve their approach to mental health:

Did you know?



60% of employees say they'd feel more motivated and more likely to recommend their organisation as a good place to work if their employer took action to support mental health and wellbeing.

(Source: Mind)

The background of the slide is a dark, almost black, space filled with numerous glowing, semi-transparent particles of various sizes. These particles are interconnected by a network of thin, light-colored lines, creating a complex, web-like structure that suggests a network or a dynamic system. The overall effect is one of organic growth and interconnectedness.

Step 3: **Positive culture**

Set up the culture

A workplace environment and working culture that promotes wellbeing can reduce the risk of mental health problems. This is reinforced by cultivating an open, supportive organisation where people understand the importance of wellbeing and feel able to talk about physical and mental health.

Many of the factors that support workplace wellbeing are simply good management practices, including:

- Actively and transparently engaging and communicating with employees
- Preventing bullying and discrimination
- Ensuring your staff are able to use their skills and perform their work to the best of their abilities
- Preventing bullying and discrimination

Work overload, job insecurity, poor career progression, poor quality of work and poor communication all have a strong negative influence on employee mental health. Supportive supervision, whether from managers or co-workers, as well as positive interactions with customers/clients has positive benefits.

Action



➤ **Ensure you have effective and positive management standards in place. This includes:**

- Regular reviews – structured appraisal systems (as well as informal catch-ups) help you see if employees are happy in their job, to discuss any issues and determine what support they might need.
- Setting objectives – having clearly defined goals, roles and responsibilities supports mental health and wellbeing. Employees should be involved in setting their own objectives.
- Work hours – everyone needs a healthy work-life balance. Reasonable hours, agreed deadlines, offline time and flexible working can all reduce stress and boost wellbeing.

Useful resources



Encourage healthy behaviours

Simple steps like taking a lunch break, exercising (including going for a walk), getting enough sleep, taking time out to relax and eating a healthy balanced diet can help our mental health.

Health and wellbeing programmes, events, activities and awareness campaigns can all help make your staff happier and healthier. They can also help to build emotional resilience – which helps people deal with difficult or stressful situations both in and out of work. These initiatives are always most successful when senior management are involved, and act as role models.

Actions

> Get physical:

- Encourage walking and cycling to work
- Organise sports events
- Subsidise gym memberships (you may be able to negotiate something with your local gym so that it doesn't cost your business)
- Provide advice and information on sleep, sensible drinking and how to quit smoking
- Encourage employees to [take the One You quiz – see page 30](#)

> Be sociable:

- Organise company events and activities, with or without a health element, to strengthen relationships between staff.

> Give back:

- There's strong evidence that volunteering and being involved in the community is good for wellbeing and mental health. Encourage staff to volunteer year round, and consider taking part in BITC's Give & Gain Day.

> Provide a healthy environment:

- Wellbeing can be influenced by factors such as:
 - Air quality
 - Noise
 - Lighting
 - Layout
 - Temperature
 - Food offer

> Develop wellbeing activities:

- Healthy eating (and look at food provision for meetings)
- Activity classes
- Talks from mental health professionals about prevention and getting support
- Show videos about mental health
- Organise wellbeing days
- Piggyback on public awareness days – see [Plan Ahead on page 29](#)
- Take part in national physical exercise initiatives, such as [Cycle to Work](#) day

> Improve financial wellbeing

- With financial concerns affecting many of the workforce, employee benefits are an important part of good work. Find out more through this [BITC toolkit](#)

> Develop a knowledge resource for all employees:

- Host all relevant free resources in one, easily accessible place for all employees (including web links to trusted sites) and regularly communicate this resource to your employees.



Five ways to wellbeing

Research by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) has identified five key things we can all do in our everyday lives to improve our wellbeing:



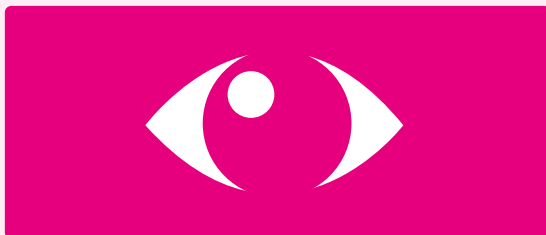
Connect
with other people



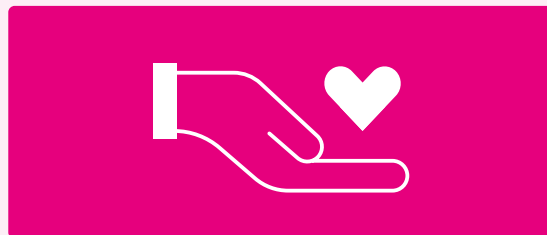
Be active



Keep learning



Take notice of the world around you (some people call this **mindfulness**)



Give – do things for the community and other people

Useful resources



For each of the Five Ways to Wellbeing, Mind has put together a list of simple ideas that you can use in your workplace:

Useful resources



Plan ahead: hook into the FREE calendar

From Mental Health Awareness Week to the International Day of Happiness and Cycle to Work Day, external events and campaigns provide a useful hook to promote health and wellbeing activities in your own organisation.

One You is a NHS campaign to help everyone make simple changes towards a longer and happier life. It provides tools, support and encouragement. Start by taking the **'How Are You' online quiz**, which will assess the person's health.

It will then direct you to a series of online tools and programmes around seven key behaviours:

- > moving more
- > being smoke free
- > drinking less
- > eating well
- > checking ourselves
- > stressing less
- > sleep better

Watch this



Time to Change has produced a series of video workshops, with supporting materials that you can use in the workplace:

- An Introduction to Mindfulness
- Emotional Resilience
- Five Ways to Wellbeing
- Starting the Conversation

Every Mind Matters can help your employees discover simple steps to achieve good mental health in their work and personal lives. It's full of expert advice and practical tips. It also has a free NHS-approved online tool which provides users with an action plan to help them deal with stress, boost their mood, improve their sleep and help them feel more in control.



Things you can do for your employees:

- Ensure your staff are aware of the support available to them by promoting the tool via internal communications and staff briefings. You can use the printed and digital resources available on the **PHE Campaign Resource Centre** to do this.
- Embed the Every Mind Matters tool on your digital intranet (guidelines available on the **PHE Campaign Resource Centre**).
- Include Every Mind Matters messaging in staff training and inductions with information about the tool and simple steps they can take to look after their mental health. Promote your existing staff wellbeing programme alongside Every Mind Matters.



To access the campaign website and online tool
Search Every Mind Matters



Step 4: **Support and training**

A structure that works

To implement your approach to mental health, it is important to have structures in place that allow for information on mental health to be shared with all, for feedback to be passed back up to the top and for everyone to feel there is a structure in place that will promote their health and protect them if they become unwell.

The structure needs to ensure that everyone can access all the organisation's information on mental health, and allow them to easily find what their rights and responsibilities are.

The importance of training

An essential part of making this work is training employees so they have the competence and confidence to bring the mental health policies and programmes to life.

Training for line managers is particularly important as they are the ones who balance the aims of the organisation with staff health and wellbeing. They are critical in driving change and may well be the first point of contact to notice when an employee is experiencing difficulties. They should be equipped with skills in effective leadership, workplace health, stress risk assessment, mental health awareness and the management of sickness absence. Intervention at an early stage may allow adjustments to be made to the workplace to enable the employee to continue with their work.

Training can take many forms: induction processes, staff handbook modules, specialist supervision, intranet hosted or even lunch and learns. Training can be internal but there are also a range of options for bringing in effective external support to deliver training to be better at understanding and responding to their own and others mental health issues. Charities such as Mental Health First Aid, Mind and Rethink Mental Illness have a number of options. (More information can be found in the 'Tools' section on the following page).

Managers also have a vital role in making sure your approach reaches beyond members of the immediate team – it is important to ensure care is also given to remote workers, support staff, volunteers and ancillary workers.

Actions



> Get the right structures in place

- Ensure there is a clear structure within your organisation for sharing of sensitive information on mental health and that everyone is aware of who they can speak to about their own mental health.
- Make sure any new employees are aware of your mental health policies and procedures by making positive references to them during their induction.

> Offer training on mental health

- Train all existing and new managers on mental health, your plans and to build their confidence in supporting staff with mental health problems.
- Ensure that supporting employee mental health is embedded within the line managers' job descriptions at every tier of the organisation and that they are aware it is a central part of their role.
- Ensure training is inclusive – record training sessions to share with remote workers.

Getting it right

Good leadership

Leaders who get it right are confident in communicating about mental health in their workplace. They take responsibility to commit to cultural improvements, participate in training themselves and break stigma about mental health and career progression. Some good senior leaders are even open about their experiences, their coping mechanisms and tips for resilience, which can help to normalise the conversation and reduce stigma.

Good management

Good managers don't try and do too much and do not try to be therapists. They are conscious of the signs of poor mental health, clear on the support available and 'check in' with individuals at appropriate times. They encourage safe disclosure and employee led ideas for adjustments. Managers who show empathy, compassion, fairness and consistency have been found to be respected, and have kept more valued talent at work. This includes undertaking basic manager duties such as 1-to-1s, appraisals and catch-ups.

(Source: Time to Change)

Tools



Training options to help you understand your needs better:

Useful resources



Mental Health at Work 2019 report: time to take ownership

The report includes recommendations on how to create positive, inclusive workplace cultures that help rather than harm the mental health of the people who work in them. These recommendations are proposed by BITC, Mercer Marsh Benefits and nine key national partners.



Step 5:
Managing mental health

End the silence

Making sure everyone can talk about mental health is an important step your business can take to help people manage it.

Much progress has been made in reducing the stigma of mental health, but we still need to do more.

Despite many employees feeling their employer or line manager would be supportive if they shared a mental health issue, a significantly smaller number of people actually do disclose concerns. Some say this is because they fear discrimination.

A progressive approach to mental health encourages employees to be alert to their own health and to flag concerns and to share their concerns and issues before they become serious. This works best when staff feel they can do this without fear of judgment by colleagues. In turn this can have a positive impact on business performance. (See more on developing a statement tackling the stigma in [Step 1](#)).

Employees need to feel confident that they can be open about their mental health problems, to know that support is there if they need it and that anything shared would be in confidence.

To help tackle stigma, follow Time to Change's five-point plan for running anti-stigma activities.

Open the conversation

Communication is key when it comes to mental health. Employee perceptions about attitudes towards mental health and available support may be as important as having the support there in the first place.

Address the topic of mental health in team meetings and individual performance reviews. Regular one-to-one meetings are a chance to ask people how they're doing, which helps to build trust and creates an opportunity to address any problems at an early stage.

Manage common problems

Feelings of stress and anxiety can be common but it is possible to manage them without them having an impact on an employee's ability to do their job. There are steps your business can take to provide the support that employees need. These include:



Hover your cursor over the boxes below for more information:

You can also follow the guidance in the HSE's 'Management Standards for managing work related stress' – see [page 40](#)

Actions



> Tackle stigma

- Ensure mental health can be discussed openly and without fear of judgement by following Time to Change's tips on anti stigma activities.

> Open the conversation

- Develop an internal communications approach or campaign to promote the importance of mental health in the organisation.
- National events like Mental Health Awareness Week (in May) can be good opportunities to launch your own events – here are some [dates for your diary](#) from NHS Employers.

> Adopt standards on stress

- Adopt the HSE Management Standards to reduce stress in your workplace. (See [page 40](#)).

> Help manage wellness

- Develop Wellness Action Plans to help ensure employees can stay healthy or manage any mental health concerns that they are experiencing. (See the [information box](#) on the right).

Wellness Action Plans

These are an easy, practical way of helping you to support the mental health of your team members or your own mental health. Everyone can complete a Wellness Action Plan. It means that you already have practical steps in place to ensure you are supported when you start to struggle. Mind has two guides and templates – for individuals and for managers.

Standards on stress

The Health and Safety Executive Management Standards for managing work-related stress define how organisations successfully manage the risks of poor mental health and wellbeing. They cover the six main causes of stress in the workplace:



Hover your cursor over the boxes below for more information:



Did you know?

In a poll by Mind, less than half of people with a diagnosed mental health problem had told their manager about it. And 1 in 5 people felt they couldn't tell their boss if they were stressed at work.

Hear from employees

Time to Change has collected hundreds of personal stories showing just how common mental illness is:

You can also read more about what employees say about their experiences of mental health:

See how individuals have experienced stress at work in these video case studies from the HSE:

You can also find out what other organisations have done to change the way they manage stress:

Watch this



Watch the video of how **Royal Mail** created the programme '**Feeling First Class**' to help promote good mental health throughout the business. Watch staff members of Royal Mail sharing their experiences and talking openly about mental health problems:

Useful resources





Step 6: **Providing the right support**

Provide the right support in work

The steps outlined so far will all help to promote the positive mental health of your employees. But even the most supportive workplaces can't prevent some people from experiencing mental health issues. Just as some people experience physical ill health, some will experience mental ill health.

You can take steps to make sure you are engaged and ready to provide support when it is needed.

Spot the signs

Early intervention is important. You can help by equipping all employees – but especially management and senior staff – with the knowledge to spot the signs that either they themselves or someone they know may be struggling, and to signpost them towards appropriate sources of support.

You should also encourage staff to be open about their mental health, and to seek support when they need it.

Remember, though, that there are often no obvious outward signs that somebody is experiencing a mental health problem. It's vital to maintain close contact and good communication so you know how people are really feeling.

Symptoms will vary, as individual experiences of mental health problems are different, but there are some potential indicators to look out for. Mind has compiled a list of possible signs here:

Handling sensitive conversations

It is important to make sure everyone knows what to do, and what not to do, when an employee or colleague begins to talk about their mental health.

Build the skills and confidence to be able to approach someone who may be experiencing difficulties. Focus on the person, not the problem. Ask if they need any short-term adjustments to their work environment. They are the experts on their mental health, so they are best placed to know what they need.

Actions

> Start by having an informal chat – but if there's a problem, plan a more formal meeting with the employee:

- Find a private place where you won't be interrupted – perhaps a neutral space outside work.
- Switch off your mobile!
- Ask open questions: “How are you doing at the moment?”, “You've seemed a bit withdrawn lately. Is anything the matter?”.
- Give them time to answer, and listen to what they say – don't make assumptions.
- Give advice and support, where appropriate.
- Agree a plan of action and schedule a follow-up meeting.

You may not reach this stage in a single meeting – people may not open up straight away. Don't worry – reassure them that your door is always open, and that the support is there if they need it.

Remember, once a conversation has taken place about someone's mental health, it should be returned to see how the employee is progressing.

Useful resources

Knowing what support to offer If an employee is living with a medical condition, you have a legal responsibility to consider making “reasonable adjustments” to enable them to remain in work.

These might include:

- Flexible hours or home working
- Adjusting their job description and reassigning tasks
- Moving their workplace
- Providing extra training or mentoring

Most reasonable adjustments are simple and inexpensive, and are really just good people management and part of your general duty of care to your employees. But in some cases employees with a mental health condition may need further professional support.

Time to Change has put together some information:

Note that given the changing nature of mental health problems, these adjustments must be reviewed periodically to see if they are still appropriate or indeed necessary any longer.

If you haven't already, it may be appropriate to consider equipping your organisation with an Employee Assistance Programme or EAP. (See [page 47](#) for more information).

If appropriate, encourage them to speak to their GP. They will be able to provide information and referrals to support available on the NHS, such as talking therapy.

Note: much of the advice given in [Step 5](#) will help anyone who has revealed a mental health concern.

Actions



> Spot the signs

- Ensure senior team and all line managers are equipped to spot the signs that someone is experiencing a mental health problem or that they may need help.
- To do this, explore the training options outlined in [Step 4](#).

> Manage sensitive conversations

- Ensure you and all your managers are prepared with the knowledge for how to respond to employees that express concerns for their mental health.
- Also be able to facilitate these conversations when signs of distress are spotted, to open the conversation on what support can be provided.

> Provide the right support

- Ensure you have the support mechanisms in place to help anyone who is experiencing mental health, whether this is making adjustments to their workload, signposting them to your resources or even directing them to professional support.

Spotting signs

Here are some useful questions to help you assess if an employee or colleague is experiencing mental distress:

- > Does the individual appear overly stressed, disturbed or distracted?
- > Do they appear dazed, withdrawn or shutdown?
- > Are they fidgety, restless or jumpy?
- > Are they talking incoherently or laughing incongruously?
- > Do they seem over-excited, euphoric, irritable or aggressive?
- > Do they appear to be having illogical or irrational thought processes?
- > Do they keep repeating themselves or obsessing?
- > Do they appear to be taking information in?
- > Do they seem to be responding to experiences, sensations or people not observable by others?

(Source: Mind/FSB)

However, if one or more of these signs is observed, this does not automatically mean the employee has a mental health problem – it could be a sign of another health issue or something else entirely. Always take care not to make assumptions or listen to third party gossip and to talk to the person directly.

Support staff experiencing a mental health problem

Mind has produced an in-depth resource for line managers and HR professionals, setting out practical steps employers can take to support at every stage of the mental health spectrum – whether they're stressed or have a diagnosed mental health condition.

Employee Assistance Programmes or EAPs

An EAP is a benefit programme intended to help employees deal with personal problems that might adversely impact their job performance, health, and wellbeing. This includes issues such as relationship problems, money worries and other pressures.

Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by telephone, although increasingly EAP providers are also providing their services through the internet. They also generally include short-term counselling and referral services for employees and their household members.

The Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) is the professional body for EAPs. Its website contains details of providers and consultants as well as news and information on employee wellbeing. You may also find that your insurance provider can provide an EAP as part of your package.

Watch this



Royal Mail worked in partnership with the Mental Health Foundation to produce the below videos to help workplace mental health. They include Royal Mail staff sharing stories about their mental health. Share them with your employees:

Useful resources



Step 7: **Helping people recover**



Absence and return to work. Sometimes employees who experience mental health problems will need to take time off work to get better. Employers should provide the support people need while they're off sick and on their return to work. Adopting supportive policies will help you to reduce sick leave, retain valued employees and also meet your legal obligations.

Your approach will be informed by the nature of the problem and the number of days spent away from work recovering.

It is important to maintain close contact with anyone off sick, but not to put pressure on them to return before they are ready.

Tell your employees what they can expect from you to help them return to work. Make sure they understand their own contractual duties to you, including what procedures you require for absences from work. It is important to have a fair and consistent approach to return to work. The sooner you take positive action, the more likely it is that your employees can return to work successfully.

There are a number of free resources out there to help you manage absence but many organisations will benefit from the government's **Fit for Work** service, which provides free occupational health advice to employers and employees. (See [page 50](#) for more info).

Another useful resource is the **Access to Work programme**, which provides grants to employees who are in work or accessing work, to ensure their illness does not stop them from being able to work. (See [page 51](#)).

It's worth knowing now what resources are available so you are prepared for any mental health sickness absence, if it occurs.

Actions



> Understand your obligations as an employer

- Ensure you are familiar with all your legal obligations under the Equality Act (see [Step 2](#)).

> Understand what resources are out there to help

- Ensure you are aware of the range of support that Fit for Work and Access to Work provide.
- Turn to these support frameworks when an employee is off sick.

> Follow the recommended support protocols

- Follow the tips on the following page, developed by the HSE.
- Use the Fit for Work programme to support employees.

> Record sickness absences

- It is important to know the cause of sickness absence, in case it is work-related.
- If it is, you can put in place organisational measures, i.e. modified work, including reasonable adjustments that will help them and those who are sick in the future to return to work.

Managing sickness absence



Hover your cursor over the boxes below for some general rules that you should follow:

Source: HSE

Fit for Work

This service, commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), provides occupational health advice and assessment to employers and employees. It is of particular value to SMEs that do not have their own occupational health provision. There is a telephone and online support service for employers, and an assessment and support service for employees.

An employee can be referred to the Fit for Work service if they have been on sickness absence for four weeks. GPs can refer sooner if they feel that their patient is unlikely to return to work

within the four weeks. The employee will receive an occupational health assessment over the phone and will be provided with a specially tailored return to work plan with recommendations on workplace adjustments. This will be sent to the employer after employee consent has been granted.

Employers adopting treatment plans recommended by Fit to Work can claim a £500 tax rebate per employee, per year, on the cost of treatment.

Access to Work provides support to employees with disabilities or long term health conditions who are already in work or about to start work.

There are grants to help cover the cost of workplace adaptations that can help the employee to carry out their job. Grants can be used to pay for:

- Adaptations to equipment used by the employee
- Special equipment
- Fares to work if the employee cannot use public transport
- A support worker or job coach to help in the workplace
- Disability awareness training for colleagues
- A communicator at a job interview

Is there any other available support?

- Local authority public health teams can offer advice and support to employers looking to take the first steps on implementing workplace health programmes.
- Engagement with the local Jobcentre Plus will enable local employers to take part in schemes to find work for people with health issues or disabilities.
- Organisations like the local Chamber of Commerce or the Federation of Small Businesses may be able to offer advice and support. Some trade associations and professional bodies, such as CIPD, also have advice and support on workplace health.
- If you work as a supplier for a large business then talk to them about the potential to access their staff health and wellbeing support.
- Remploy runs a free and confidential **'Workplace mental health support service'**, delivered in partnership with Access to Work.

Useful resources





Step 8: **Going further**

To achieve excellence in mental health, it may take time, but investing time in ongoing development of your approach will produce a number of rewards. Excellence means happier, healthier staff with greater productivity, morale and staff retention, and reduced absence. It means mental health and physical health being managed effectively and positively, as equals.

To keep building momentum, it is important to measure success, refine your approach to make it even more effective and regularly share progress and activities with employees. If you involve your employees in your programme, there is a collective sense of responsibility and a collective momentum to achieve the ambitions.

The importance of getting this right is increasing – it is likely that larger businesses will actively seek to partner more closely with organisations in their network or supply chain that take a proactive approach to promoting and improving mental health, as it shows they are committed to the long term success of their business.

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY

Learn from what works

As well as the stories in this toolkit you will find a range of ideas, resources and examples of programmes implemented by business in the workplace reports developed by Business in the Community.

Actions



> Measure success

- Note any differences in company approach to issues since implementation of the programme.
- Develop mechanisms for feedback and use existing wellbeing data through staff surveys, turnover and absence data, as well as participation rates in wellbeing activities.
- Assess whether you have a physically and mentally more robust workforce with a healthier lifestyle.
- Ensure that talking about and supporting mental health becomes a normal way of working by reviewing whether mental health conversation and management are part of everyday working practices.
- Make use of the Workplace Charter Standards to see how you have progressed against the plan you established in [Step 2](#).

> Refine your approach

- Adjust programmes as needed: Do you need more training for staff, more frequent communication, more regular initiatives such as wellbeing days?
- Include everyone: ensure your approach to mental health is inclusive of remote, temporary and contract workers.
- Ensure that everyone is empowered to contribute and feel that their views are listened to and acted on.
- Ensure commitment from all parties (senior management, employees and their representatives).
- Ensure there are arrangements to identify those aspects of the work, organisation or environment that are known to be risk factors for work related stress, and place initiatives alongside these to protect your employees.

> Celebrate achievements

- Share the success with your employees. This will give them a feeling of collective responsibility for the programme and will add to staff morale and retention.
- Include your mental health programme when recruiting new staff. It could give you the edge over the competition to attract the best candidates and presents your company as a caring and progressive employer.
- **Ask employees to share their experiences and make suggestions for the future. This will allow the programme to grow and develop with your company.**

This is the final step in the toolkit, the following section contains case studies from some of the organisations which helped contribute to the development of this toolkit.



Case studies

Anglian Water Group

Organisation type: Water and water recycling services

Creating and implementing an award-winning approach

Our mental health strategy was created to ensure all employees feel informed and supported, which in turn will breed a positive wellbeing culture where they feel happier, healthier and safer.

Our Wellbeing Team brings together Occupational Health, Human Resources, Health and Safety, Communications and other business representatives. Collectively, we commissioned independent research to determine what employees thought were key issues affecting their mental health at work.

We conducted an online wellbeing survey (with an 80% completion rate) and more than 100 phone interviews. The insights were used alongside reason for absence statistics to help our Wellbeing Team draw up a strategy. Following this work, our mental health strategy was developed with three key elements:

- Increasing awareness of mental health and **breaking the stigma**
- Providing a range of **resources and tools** to support employees' mental health
- Completing **mental health training**

To help tackle the stigma and normalise conversations around mental health, we emphasise that everyone has mental health, in the same way that we all have physical health. We encourage colleagues to look out for one another and ask how they are doing, and our work in this area has strong support from senior leadership.

One of our most powerful initiatives was an internal video featuring five of our employees telling their own stories and mental health challenges. The video, which also included a foreword from our CEO Peter Simpson, was extremely impactful and relatable for other employees.

The second element of our strategy involved providing wide ranging resources for employees, from self-help to expert support. We also encourage employees to spend some time during the day to focus on their own mental health. This may include mindfulness exercises through an online app, or engaging in things like bibliotherapy – a therapeutic approach that uses literature and novels to support good mental health.

Defra (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs)

Organisation type: Government department

We are a large organisation but are spread across the country, sometimes in small teams. We also have a lot of people who work from home or in remote locations so it is important to have a very proactive and open approach to mental health.

We have long tried to support mental health issues and have an Employee Assistance Programme, which ensures everyone has somewhere to go for advice and resources when they need them. We have also been running resilience training for some time.

We took a step forward in our approach when we had someone return from a sickness absence for depression. He felt we had supported him well and he wanted to give something back – so he helped us to create a ‘Break the Stigma’ network. It’s a community of buddies that offer an at-work support mechanism for people who are suffering from mental health problems and want to talk about what they are going through. The buddies are all people who have some experience of mental ill health, either personally or through

someone close to them. The network allows people to chat and then they can signpost people off to the right support that is needed, such as through the Employee Assistance Programme.

That employee who helped create the network shared his story on our intranet. This had a really powerful and positive reaction – it led to others sharing their experiences of mental ill health. This in turn has led to people feeling much more confident to be open about mental health generally and to talking about how to maintain good mental health.

We continue to provide resilience training and mindfulness sessions. We have also started providing ‘managing mental health’ sessions for line managers in recognition of the role they have in managing people to be in good health. We are now sharing what we have learned with other departments and are learning from others. We look forward to building on this success.

Forster Communications

Organisation type: PR and communications business

Forster Communications is committed to driving positive approaches to life and work, and we do this through communications. Ensuring the mental and physical wellbeing of everyone who works for us is a long-established commitment and an essential part of our business success.

We have had a range of policies in place since we started the company over 20 years ago. Signing the Time to Change organisational pledge in 2012 helped us to gather this together in an updated plan and show all our employees that we take their mental health seriously.

We have an open and supportive culture, where everyone knows who they can turn to if they need to discuss anything, and they know what support is available to them. It is important to put structures such as our Employee Assistance Programme in place but this means nothing if individuals don't know what they are or how to access them.

We have run training sessions on how to keep in good mental health, how to handle sensitive conversations with people who need help and general understanding of mental health issues.

Since signing the pledge we have set up a mental wellbeing committee which is formed of staff from across all levels of the business and has been important for peer to peer communications. They have developed and implemented new initiatives with ideas including access to mindfulness apps, free yoga classes, offsite coffee catch-ups to bring together colleagues from different teams, and company breakfasts where everyone can come together, eat healthily and chat.

We make use of the best free resources available and on Time to Talk day we use the free kits from Time to Change to get conversations going on mental health and break the stigma. We also share videos and content more widely through our social media channels.

Our employees know this is an important issue and know it is not a taboo subject. This is essential to make sure we can be in good health, and be an innovative and successful business. Our initiatives contributed to us to being awarded PR Week 'Best Place to Work' in 2015 which is great recognition for the benefits of this approach. We were also Named 'Britain's Healthiest Workplace' for two years in a row by VitalityHealth.

Heathrow

Organisation type: Aviation industry

Training and practical tools that aid employee-led support

Heathrow Airport had been experiencing a very high number of work-related stress cases. In the summer of 2016, the newly established health and wellbeing team worked to investigate the reasons. Heathrow Airport found that whilst managers acknowledged their responsibility to support their colleagues' wellbeing, they weren't fully confident in helping someone who was struggling with mental ill-health.

The first key intervention was a new training programme. Heathrow combined best practice from Health and Safety Executive, Mental Health First Aid and MIND with their own organisational learning and coaching techniques as well as Heathrow's purpose and values to create a one-day, off-site education course for managers – 'Your Mind Matters for Line Managers'. The course focused on three topics; 1) the importance of creating a positive psychological environment, 2) how to catch someone before they fall and 3) helping them return to work.

Managers also requested practical tools to help provide support. This led to two simple tools for managers being created:

- 1. A personal plan** (for non work-related issues) comprising of three simple prompts for the manager to shape a conversation with their colleagues.
- 2. Workplace pressures assessment tool** based on the HSE Stress Risk Assessment model but developed to be more business-friendly and suitable for Heathrow and its colleagues.

The process of using these tools underpins their success. Occupational Health no longer completes or owns the form. Instead the line manager supports the process and the form is owned by the colleague who completes the form outside of work. This gives them a greater sense of ownership and time to reflect. The improved quality of the form content means that the manager is able to have a far more meaningful conversation about adjustments and return to work.

Through colleague education and the introduction of the manager framework, conversations regarding stressors are now more open and focused. This means managers and Heathrow are able to support and sign-post to appropriate care pathways, which speeds up recovery. The true indication of Heathrow's success is the impressive 80% decline in work-related stress absences in 2018.

HM Revenue and Customs

Organisation type: Government department

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is committed to reducing discrimination and stigma around mental health. Our Mental Health Strategy sets out what we're doing to encourage a culture where staff can seek support on any mental health issues by talking openly and in confidence, including with their manager, and for these to be acted on.

The Strategy targets five key areas:

- Improving people's understanding of mental health issues and the impact in the workplace
- Taking steps to reduce the stigma associated with mental health and foster a culture where people can talk openly and seek support
- Providing people with the tools and the support needed to improve their mental health
- Building manager capability and confidence to effectively manage mental health issues in the workplace and support their staff
- Tackling work related stress

To support the strategy, HMRC introduced a mental health policy/guidance and provide access to mental health awareness training for staff and managers. Guidance and further sources of information to facilitate effective management of mental health issues in the workplace can be viewed by all employees on the department's intranet.

We also introduced a Mental Health Advocacy (MHA) service which provides a confidential support service for people with mental health conditions and their managers. Our network of 62 MHAs can help by listening and encouraging the individual to take positive steps towards accessing professional help and signposting to the appropriate services, including the department's Reasonable Adjustment Support Team, HR and comprehensive support from our Occupational Health Provider (OHP) and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

We work closely with our OHP and EAP to develop interventions including broadcast dial-in sessions for large groups of managers, as well as new service lines to help OH

practitioners work more closely with our managers. Our employees also have access to a free, confidential online Health and Wellbeing Assessment to measure and monitor their wellbeing and are provided with a report which includes tips on how to make a positive difference through small changes that are achievable and practical.

Our people are encouraged to talk about mental health and we facilitate this through a Diversity Network and mental health support groups on Yammer.

HMRC is a partner of the Public Health Responsibility Deal and we have signed up to the Mental Health and Wellbeing pledge; our delivery plans and updates are published on The Deal's website. We have also pledged to support Time to Change and other similar mental health campaigns in the rest of the UK. We continue to embed Time to Change activity throughout the department marking the recent Time to Talk day with communications and local activity to raise awareness.

Mercer Marsh Benefits

Organisation type: Benefits Professionals

Tailoring approaches for different groups

Our mission at Mercer Marsh Benefits is to help each and every employee be the best they can be at work. We recognise that experiences of mental health problems vary across different groups and communities and are challenging ourselves to do more to break down stigma and create a safe, open environment for all employees. Here we highlight three areas of focus: LGBT+, BAME and male colleagues.

This year's Working With Pride report highlighted the prevalence of mental health issues in the LGBT+ community. Our LGBTA+ Group – Pride – champions days such as International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, and holds regular events to help engage colleagues on topics including LGBTA+ ageing, bisexuality, transsexuality and LGBT+ and mental health. We extend our impact beyond the workplace by working with Opening Doors London, a charity supporting LGBT+ people over 50, to offer colleagues opportunities to volunteer.

According to the Mental Health Foundation, people from black and minority ethnic groups living in the UK are more likely to be diagnosed with mental health problems and are more likely to disengage from mainstream mental health services, leading to social exclusion and a deterioration in their mental health. Our Race and Ethnicity taskforce is campaigning to raise awareness of isolation and loneliness as triggers of mental health issues by sharing colleague stories. Our reverse mentoring scheme helps colleagues create connections and share experiences, including how to navigate the workplace as a BAME employee. Quiet spaces in each of our local offices double up as prayer and meditation rooms and also “mental health safe spaces” for colleagues looking to take time out.

Samaritans has highlighted suicide as the single biggest cause of death in males under 45 and, in the UK, men are three times more likely to take their own lives than women. We are very aware that greater efforts need to be made to engage male colleagues who are reluctant to discuss mental health and as a first step are working to have an equal balance of male and female front-line mental health first aiders in our 70-strong nationwide team.

“Our focus is on removing the stigma attached to mental health and, particularly, male mental health. We want to create a culture in which colleagues feel able to talk about their mental health in the same way we do about our physical health. You won't think twice about telling a colleague if your physical health isn't 100%, why should it be any different when it comes to talking about our mental health?”

Phill Beecroft, Sponsor of the Mental Health @ Mercer business resource group.

Porchlight

Organisation type: Charity helping the homeless and those with mental health issues

Porchlight has made a specific commitment towards the mental health and wellbeing of our employees. We go beyond – for instance, we embrace flexible working and we offer more maternity, sickness pay and annual leave than the legal requirement.

I am the HR Director, we also have an HR Advisor and an Assistant. All staff have a line manager who is seen more as a coach. Our plan revolves around having a good standard of HR practices, such as an absence policy, knowing our staff and making reasonable adjustments where needed.

We believe we have created a positive culture. We encourage a healthy lifestyle physically and mentally, with access to information on healthy living, eating and drinking.

Each person has an Annual Training Plan of both internal and external training. Within this, all staff learn about managing stress and resilience in the workplace, as well as understanding mental health issues more broadly. We are also training some of our staff as Mental Health First Aiders.

We believe in keeping the lines of communication open. Everyone has a regular 1-to-1 line manager meeting and when someone is returning after an absence the HR department encourages them to declare the reason why they have been off sick, so we can best support. All employees also have access to an Employee Assistance Programme.

Porchlight is very pro-active in supporting those who need it. Line managers regularly refer to the capability policy and make reasonable adjustments for each individual. They can also refer staff to an Occupational Health service or staff can self-refer. Staff are also able to access six sessions of face to face counselling or sign up for sessions of cognitive behavioural therapy.

We have a legal and moral requirement to support colleagues with mental health issues better, and we need to ensure that other colleagues understand why someone may be getting more help. Mental health issues come and go and with the right support the staff member can be very productive. However, it is important to ensure that it is not the nature of the work that is causing the problems.

Public Health England

Organisation type: Government department

Public Health England (PHE) supports and actively encourages the provision of reasonable adjustments to support staff remaining in work. Flexible working can be mutually beneficial to an organisation and its staff by improving work-life balance and wellbeing, whilst helping to attract and retain staff, particularly those with caring responsibilities, increasing productivity and reducing costs. In 2019 PHE won the Working Families Best Practice Award for its flexible working policy.

An employee at PHE suffered a life-changing medical condition, which caused severe depression and anxiety. Their condition significantly affected their ability to concentrate due to hypersensitivity to noise, and they struggled with dark, depressive thoughts in the morning and at night.

The individual also experienced anxiety about arriving late to work and felt unable to concentrate while in the office, resulting in fear this would inhibit their performance and attract criticism. Despite the employee's fear

of poor performance, which contributed to their depression, their performance at work was in fact not significantly altered.

PHE was determined to support this employee in the best way possible. In consultation with Occupational Health, PHE was able to understand the individual's specific physical and mental health challenges, working with the employee to see what they felt would be beneficial.

PHE was able to support the individual to feel comfortable in their role using specific workplace adjustments. In consultation with the employee, key decisions were made to ensure the employee's strengths were being optimised, which helped maintain their self-esteem and performance.

Simple measures were introduced to help manage their medical condition and encourage good productivity, for example, the use of a small, private office to improve concentration if the open plan office was too noisy.

However, the most beneficial change was introducing flexitime, a flexible schedule that allows employees to alter workday start and finish times around certain core hours, enabling the employee to take greater control of their working day. Flexitime was already taking place in both the department and the wider organisation. As well as giving the employee greater freedom it also enabled PHE to check they were not working over their contracted weekly hours, which would have a detrimental effect on their physical and mental health.

The results of these adjustments were positive, as the employee continues to be a dedicated, passionate and valued member of staff as a direct result of good management and timely Occupational Health support.

Tesco

Organisation type: Major supermarket



One of the world's largest retailers shares their strategy to support the wellbeing of over 450,000 employees.

To help colleagues be their best at work and home, Tesco's offer a range of resources to support their mental wellbeing. At the heart of this is the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which offers a 24/7 counselling and advice service to all colleagues.

In 2018, insight from the organisation's colleague health survey and external partner data showed low colleague awareness and use of the EAP service. In order to raise awareness across all stores, distribution and offices in the UK Tesco developed new ways to promote the EAP to colleagues. This included a new information booklet, stickers for toilets, promotion in pay day booklets and posters.

In 2019 the organisation built on this by focusing on their drivers working in distribution and dotcom. These two areas were identified as key areas of focus as these employees spend long periods of time in isolation on the roads, work remotely and are predominantly male and may be less likely to open up about their mental health.

As part of the month-long colleague health events, Tesco ran a specific campaign targeting drivers to raise awareness of the EAP, the services provided and examples of how the EAP could support them. During these campaigns, all distribution centres and stores with a dotcom operation received EAP colleague guide booklets and posters to display in driver designated areas in the centres and stores, Key fobs, EAP tabletop leaflets and contact cards, as well as briefing documents for senior managers.

The campaign focused on ensuring this population know how to access the EAP, always have the contact details accessible to them and were aware of the range of services that the EAP provides. The campaign was also used as an opportunity to promote services the EAP can offer colleagues outside of counselling, including self-help online resources and the advice line which includes support for legal, family and financial issues.

Tesco EAP data from January to March 2019 showed the percentage of males using EAP has increased from 39 per cent to 42 per cent since December 2018, counselling calls increased 82 per cent from 2018 to 2019 and the first three months of 2018 saw a 373 per cent increase on last year.

Pukka Herbs

Organisation type: Retailer of herbal teas and supplements

We have made a commitment to the wellbeing of our staff as an integral part of our business. Our approach to taking positive, preventative approaches, especially to mental health, means we have an exceptionally low sickness rate in comparison with other businesses and staff report feeling engaged and motivated.

Our HR is covered by the 'People Manager', a part time assistant, and all employees have a dedicated line manager. We believe that communication is key. We conduct a regular employee survey, where anyone can say what they would like to change about the workplace environment. All line managers have an open door policy and are encouraged to have weekly meetings. We make it clear that anyone can discuss their personal circumstances with their line manager or the People Manager. Finally, individuals can make suggestions, ask questions, etc via our Suggestion Boxes or put things forward directly to our employee body (Pukka Pulse).

We believe that prevention is the best attack. Where employees have an issue we can provide support by making work adjustments where required. We also try to deflect stress from outside the workplace – for example, we realise some people may need the possibility of flexible working to balance work with care responsibilities.

We have introduced an employee education programme called the 'Pukka Life Academy', which not only covers how wellbeing relates to herbs – to link to our core business – but also other wellbeing activities such as yoga, or meditation techniques and we are expanding this. New team members also undertake a full induction programme, which covers our values, policies, our approach to sustainability and such things as our commitment to supporting work-life balance.

We have established a Wellbeing Fund and a Development Fund. This allows up to £300 for each employee (£150 for each fund) by covering 50% of the cost of an opportunity or activity that they have always wanted to do. Employees have used the money for a variety of uses including massage, yoga, gym membership and cookery lessons.

This approach ensures we live our values and can continue to thrive as a business. As we grow, we are looking to build on this success.

Rowlinson Knitwear

Organisation type: Clothing manufacturer

Our core values are trust, care and striving to be better. We look for people that hold these values and it's important to us that everyone is open and honest about all issues they have, good or bad.

We live and breathe the open door policy. Our philosophy is that you should be able to talk to anyone and share feedback honestly and we don't wait for appraisals.

For about a year we have been working on the listening skills of our management when it comes to discussing issues and we have had great feedback from our staff on this.

We also formalised our values in writing four years ago, which helps guide our approach.

We want to be a great employer and a great company to work with. We have a lot of benefits in place to achieve this. Everyone has access to a cycle to work scheme and we've put in place rewards for achievements with customer satisfaction – for example, we all had 3 extra days of holiday last year!

There's a profit sharing scheme in place and as we are now employee owned this was tax free – this meant that everyone, irrespective of job title, received around £1,950 which was paid just before Christmas. Childcare vouchers are also available for parents. We are flexible on working hours, and have interest free loans for crises – such as a boiler breaking. We also fully contribute to auto enrolled pensions meaning that our employees need not contribute anything.

As part of the Employee Assistance Programme, there's a telephone helpline employees can use and we have access to 6 free face to face counselling sessions depending on the nature of the issue.

Mental health is important to us. Eighteen months ago we achieved the Workplace Wellbeing Charter, the first employer in our town to do so, which was free of charge and made such a positive difference to us. Consequently we have trained a section of our managers on mental health wellbeing

strategies. We want them to be comfortable in talking about it and signposting people to relevant services.

In the past people have had to take time out of work because of their mental health, and we try to support them in a tailored way so they can return to work more easily. The impact of stress is obvious to us, and we bring in extra resources to support staff through our peak times.

Overall, you get back commitment in spades what you give if you support your staff. Our people are so dedicated to us because we support them, and as a result we have a really low turnover. In our annual employee satisfaction survey every single person said they were proud to work at Rowlinson. For us there is a real link between caring for people and their wellbeing, customer satisfaction and profit.

Thanks to the following organisations for contributing to the development of this toolkit:

- [Anglian Water](#)
- [Defra](#)
- [Forster Communications](#)
- [Heathrow](#)
- [HMRC](#)
- [Mercer](#)
- [Porchlight](#)
- [Public Health England](#)
- [Pukka Herbs](#)
- [Rowlinson Knitwear](#)
- [Tesco](#)

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Resources for employers

Business in the Community and Public Health England have developed a range of toolkits to support employers with employee health and wellbeing:



Mental Health Toolkit

This report was written, designed and produced by Forster Communications.

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