

MAYOR OF LONDON



# Getting ahead: Why mental health at work matters



Perspectives from senior leaders  
across the private, public and  
voluntary sectors



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# Foreword

## Boris Johnson, Mayor of London



Last year my report London Mental Health looked into how much poor mental health is costing our city. I was shocked to see that it costs London's businesses and industry a staggering £10.4

billion each year. Too often, a lack of support and understanding by employers means we do not recognise mental health difficulties in the workplace. This leads to a reduced pool of employees, more time off through sickness and lower productivity.

I am working to ensure London's businesses support the mental health of their workforces. Last year, I established an inquiry to examine how London's health and healthcare services can be improved.

This report highlighted the need to support the health of Londoners via workplace health initiatives, as well as supporting Londoners who are experiencing mental ill health. My London Healthy Workplace Charter offers an accredited framework for employers to support investment in employee health and wellbeing. So far, 52 employers have been accredited, covering over 150,000 employees. And we want even more of you to sign up.

To beat mental ill health, we all need to act together. My officers have been working with the charity Mind to make a start.

For over 65 years, Mind has been offering expert advice and help to organisations and individuals who don't know where to turn.

"Too often, a lack of support and understanding by employers means we do not recognise mental health difficulties in the workplace. This leads to a reduced pool of employees, more time off through sickness and lower productivity."

In the following pages, you will find leaders of London business speaking out about why mental health matters, how they support the mental health of their employees and what more can be done. They don't suggest a revolution in our workplace practices. Rather, as the organisation Anomaly describes so well, what we need are "tiny changes, consistently applied, over time."


I hope you find these essays useful.

Supporting the mental wellbeing of employees is good for business – it is as simple as that.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Boris Johnson'.

Boris Johnson  
Mayor of London



A photograph of a man and a woman in a professional setting. The man, on the left, is seen from the side, wearing a light blue shirt. The woman, on the right, has short brown hair and is wearing a blue cardigan over a black and white patterned top. She is looking towards the man and holding a pen. A white mug is visible in the foreground. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

"Supporting the mental wellbeing  
of employees is good for business  
- it is as simple as that."

Boris Johnson, Mayor of London

# Foreword

Paul Farmer, Chief Executive, Mind



Over the past five years, the issue of workplace mental health has been continually rising up the agenda, not only for HR professionals and line managers, but for senior leadership within organisations. In

workplaces across London, a quiet revolution is taking place around the water cooler as more and more people talk openly about mental health. We are now at a tipping point, with increasing acknowledgement from employers that more needs to be done to help people stay well at work, tackle the root causes of work-related ill health and to support staff who are experiencing a mental health problem.

As this collection shows, a growing number of senior leaders now recognise that organisations are only as strong as their people – they depend on having a healthy and productive workforce and they know that when employees feel their work is meaningful and they are valued and supported, they tend to have higher wellbeing levels, be more committed to the organisation's goals and perform better. Research shows that FTSE 100 companies that prioritise employee engagement and wellbeing outperform the rest of the FTSE 100 by an average of 10 per cent<sup>1</sup>. Good mental health underpins this. By fostering a mentally healthy workplace culture and putting in place the right support, businesses, small and large, find that they are able to achieve peak performance.

The way we are all working is changing. In-demand skills such as teamwork, collaboration, joint problem solving, flexible working and staff development all require employees who are mentally healthy, resilient, motivated and focussed. As indicated in Deloitte's 2014 Millennial Survey, Millennials (those born in the 1980s and 1990s) have shown very different

preferences to their predecessors when it comes to workplace culture, wellbeing and self-development. Millennials prioritise a healthy work-life balance and a positive workplace, and are more likely to turn their back on the business that trained them if these needs are not met<sup>2</sup>. Managers need to be equipped to support staff to manage the increasing blurring between work and life. This is especially true for the London workforce.

"By fostering a mentally healthy workplace culture and putting in place the right support, businesses, small and large, find that they are able to achieve peak performance."

Throughout the course of Mind's awareness raising work on this issue, we have seen an evolution in how employers view workplace wellbeing, with the focus shifting from the reactive management of sickness absence to a more proactive effort around employee engagement and preventative initiatives. This shift towards an upstream approach has given employers the impetus to start looking at the mental health of their staff from a different perspective, and has led to a rapid increase in the number of employers commissioning our training.

A good example of this momentum has been the success of the Time to Change Organisational Pledge. Time to Change, led by Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, is England's biggest programme to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination. The pledge has offered organisations an opportunity to make a public statement of aspiration to tackle mental health stigma in their workplace, and develop an action plan detailing tangible activities to bring this about.

Having initially sought to engage 100 employers in the pledge, we ended up with an incredible 325 organisations signing across the country.

One of the positive outcomes of this increased awareness has been the creation of collaborative groups and initiatives aimed at addressing workplace mental health. Among these are the City Mental Health Alliance, a London based employer-led collaborative formed in 2013 and championed by senior leaders across almost 30 of London's biggest businesses, which aims to share best practice and increase awareness of mental health with a view to influencing workplace culture. In addition, BITC's Workwell Mental Health Champions Group is doing great work in elevating mental health to a strategic boardroom issue and bringing leading UK businesses together to end the culture of silence around mental health in the workplace. This momentum is wonderful to see. The level of interest in mental health has soared and the challenge now is to ensure that increased awareness is well directed and engagement turned to action.

"There is clearly still work to do when it comes to breaking down stigma and providing the type of open and supportive culture that enables staff to be honest with managers, to access support and to enjoy a healthy working life."

Despite the strides we've made, there's still a long way to go. Mental health problems affect one in six British workers each year<sup>3</sup> and are the leading cause of sickness absence in the UK, accounting for 70 million sick days in 2007<sup>4</sup>. They can affect anyone in any industry and yet mental health is often still a taboo subject. Of those who have had to take time

off due to workplace stress, a staggering 95% did not give their manager the real reason<sup>5</sup>, and as the Time to Change Public Attitudes survey indicated in 2014, 49% of people still feel uncomfortable talking to an employer about their mental health<sup>6</sup>. There is clearly still work to do when it comes to breaking down stigma and providing the type of open and supportive culture that enables staff to be honest with managers, to access support and to enjoy a healthy working life.

So what should the future look like? Given the growing profile of mental health in the past few months, in particular the recent emphasis that has been placed on it in the general election campaign, there is an enormous opportunity to harness the public interest we are seeing and really start to think progressively about what employers can do to push the agenda forward.

Our goal is to mainstream good mental health and make it a core business priority for all employers. To this end, we are delighted to be working with the Greater London Authority, who have done some excellent work to support employer investment in staff health and wellbeing through the London Healthy Workplace Charter. Together we hope to push this agenda forward, showcasing the stories of senior leaders from a wide variety of sectors who are speaking out about mental health as a boardroom issue. As with any campaign or initiative seeking to achieve cultural change, it's a journey. For those organisations who are at the start and are just now beginning to take action, I encourage you to see this as a learning process and a long term commitment to a better way of working – not only for individuals, but for the success and productivity of your business as a whole.



Paul Farmer  
Chief Executive

<sup>1</sup> Business in the Community (2013), Business in the Community Workwell FTSE 100 benchmark

<sup>2</sup> Deloitte (2014), Big Demands and High Expectations: The Deloitte Millennial Survey

<sup>3</sup> CIPD in partnership with SimplyHealth (2012), Absence Management Annual Survey Report 2012

<sup>4</sup> Chief Medical Officer (2013), Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2013, Public Mental Health Priorities: Investing in the Evidence

<sup>5</sup> Mind (2014), YouGov survey of 1,251 workers in Britain

<sup>6</sup> Time to Change (2014), Public Attitudes Survey: Public Attitudes to Mental Illness 2013-14



# Caroline Wayman

## Chief Executive and Chief Ombudsman

### Financial Ombudsman



One in four of us will experience a mental health problem in any given year<sup>1</sup>. That's a lot of people – and so almost all of us are likely to have family, friends and colleagues whose lives have been touched by these often

invisible, but very real, conditions. Stigma and discrimination still exist when it comes to mental health, particularly in the workplace where we spend such a big part of our lives. As chief executive of the ombudsman service – employing nearly 4,000 people – that gives me a big responsibility and with it a real opportunity to make a positive and lasting difference to the lives of people who work here and beyond. And there is of course a strong business case to promote awareness of mental health problems and to provide safe, open and supportive environments. Often people will point to the financial and other benefits – having increased productivity, reduced sick pay or fewer legal claims. But, for me, it's fundamentally about doing the right thing – the moral and societal imperatives come first.

The ombudsman service helps sort out all kinds of money problems – levelling the playing field between financial businesses and their customers. Our decisions often have a huge impact on people's lives and livelihoods and the nature of our work means we can't always give the answer that was hoped for.

"Our "product" is our decision-making, meaning our people and their minds are our most valuable resource."

That in itself can make the job we do quite demanding and even more so when our customers themselves are in difficult situations – like when they're facing losing their home or having to live with a serious illness. So the idea of fairness and putting people first has always been a thread that runs through everything we do – and not only in making the tough decisions on the individual complaints we see, but also when it comes to those who work here – whether it be recruitment, reward or wellbeing. After all, our "product" is our decision-making, meaning our people and their minds are our most valuable resource.

"We recognise that people are individuals and there's not a "one size fits all" approach – it's about making sure people have access to the right support, at the right time, and in a way which suits them."

So helping keep our people fit, healthy and happy is particularly important. And we see their mental health as just part of their overall wellbeing – we don't treat it any differently to physical health. We put a lot of focus on positive things which encourage healthy lifestyles and help prevent ill health – like our gym which runs all sorts of fitness classes, our cafes which provide fresh and healthy food options or our quiet rooms which allow people space to breathe. We also have strong networks and groups to promote diversity and inclusion – including a mental health network run by staff for staff who have been affected directly or indirectly by a mental health problem.

"Often people will point to the financial and other benefits – having increased productivity, reduced sick pay or fewer legal claims. But, for me, it's fundamentally about doing the right thing – the moral and societal imperatives come first."

And our dedicated HR support team works closely with our occupational health service to provide early intervention – helping to prevent health conditions from becoming more serious.

But when the time comes that someone needs support with their health – physical or mental – it's there. And, most importantly, we recognise that people are individuals and there's not a "one size fits all" approach – it's about making sure people have access to the right support, at the right time, and in a way which suits them. So, for example, in addition to our private medical insurance, we have in place a comprehensive employee assistance programme in the form of a confidential 24-hour counselling service, open to our people and their families to discuss worries – whether they relate to problems at work or at home – with the choice of accessing the service face-to-face, over the phone or online. And for those inevitable cases where someone needs time off from work to get better, we also offer a vocational rehabilitation programme which provides independent, specialist and tailored support for when staff come back to us.

There's still a great deal more we can do when it comes to mental health though and much of this is around normalising it, so that people feel just as able to discuss their mental wellbeing, as they do any other health issue – and we need to work hard to remove the barriers – real and perceived – to accessing the support we have in place. Getting rid of stigma and discrimination around mental health is part of that – and I feel a strong sense of responsibility for this as a leader, and for setting the "tone from the top". So, last year, I was delighted to be signing the Time to Change pledge on behalf of the ombudsman service – an inspiring campaign to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination. And while cultural change can never happen overnight, I am beginning to feel the momentum of the programme pick up.

Just a few months ago, in February 2015, teams across the organisation were celebrating Time to Talk Day, taking five minutes out of the day to chat with each other about mental health – helping to make our wellbeing, and problems like depression, anxiety, psychosis, and other conditions, a part of everyday conversations. This shouldn't be a "one-hit wonder" though, and together with my senior team, I will do what I can to ensure we continue to reference mental health, and show our support to making our commitments here real, tangible and enduring.

The challenge now is to build on what we've achieved so far and keep up that momentum, so we've got lots of things planned for the coming weeks and months – from engaging events as part of our inclusion week, to the roll out of Mental Health First Aid training to all our managers. In other words, we've started a journey – and I'm looking forward to seeing where it takes us.

<sup>1</sup> Goldberg, D. & Huxley, P. 1992, Common mental disorders – a bio-social model, Routledge.



# Brian Heyworth

## Co-Head, Financial Institutions Group

HSBC



In March 2006, I spent two months in hospital having suffered from a “severe psychiatric breakdown”. It turned out that I had unknowingly suffered from depression since being a teenager. With the help of a very

supportive family, outstanding doctors and some supportive bosses (who hired me six months after my breakdown), my life has changed remarkably. The very experience of living over the last nine years has been unrecognisable compared to that of the preceding 40.

I am a 49 year old English banker who has worked in the City since graduating from university in 1987. I have worked at two American investment banks, joined HSBC in 2006 and now co-head HSBC’s Financial Institutions client group globally.

I have no medical expertise nor indeed any training in the broad field that is ‘mental health in the workplace’. But having experienced depression during the early part of my life I have some observations, some of which may be interesting, even helpful. However, they are personal and not everyone will agree with them.

The best metaphor I can come up with to help describe my own experience is this: it is as if I had lived the first half of my life being very short-sighted and then being given 20/20 vision. That is how dramatic the difference has been for me between having depression and being mentally and emotionally healthy.

Politicians on both sides of the Atlantic are belatedly beginning to focus on mental health in general and depression and addiction in particular. ‘Mindfulness’ is becoming very fashionable in HR departments and health clubs. All this is good news. But what are the implications for businesses?

### My observations are as follows:

1. ‘Mental health’ covers a huge variety of psychological and emotional matters. We should be careful not to lump them all together. Mental health should be treated as seriously as all other aspects of health by everyone in society and companies should provide full support for the mental wellbeing of their employees.
2. Senior leaders in society – and especially in business – should speak openly about their experiences and actively encourage an environment in which people are comfortable about speaking out, being themselves and asking for help. The more senior one is, the easier it is to do and the more powerful the impact.
3. All of the most impressive and authentic leaders I have met or worked with have the courage to be themselves rather than just behave in a way that they think their industry, company or boss expects.
4. In the modern corporate world, diversity and health initiatives are vital. The culture of companies will improve only if people feel safe being completely open, communicating freely and being honest with themselves and everybody around them.
5. Businesses will only prosper if everyone is encouraged to be themselves. They are the sum of the individuals within them. For businesses to succeed, these individuals must be functioning as close as possible to their full potential.



There is much focus on the banking industry at the moment. A change in the way mental health is viewed must be a key component in the conduct and cultural changes that are necessary. At HSBC, we are spending a huge amount of time trying to improve the working environment for our colleagues. The principle is simple. The better people feel about their worth at work and the more they are encouraged to be themselves, the better they will perform and the more their productivity improves. That has certainly been my personal experience.

I am always happy to talk about my experiences. I am not ashamed of them. Mental health problems could affect anyone. The more that people are aware of the issues, the more effectively they can be anticipated and managed. There is no doubt business at large is getting better at recognising, supporting and

accommodating employees with mental health problems. But in order for modern companies to survive and thrive, they could and should do much more.

"I am always happy to talk about my experiences. I am not ashamed of them. Mental health problems could affect anyone. The more that people are aware of the issues, the more effectively they can be anticipated and managed."

# Tony Cates

## Partner, EMA and UK Head of Audit

KPMG



Whichever way you look at it, the facts around mental health are startling – one in six workers experience stress, anxiety or depression at any one time<sup>1</sup>, 50% of long term absences in non-manual

workers is accounted for by stress<sup>2</sup>, and 95% of people taking time off due to stress cited a different reason to their employer for their absence<sup>3</sup>. Within a professional services environment these facts resonate deeply, as we often find that very driven people who see huge opportunities for personal development will struggle to talk openly about their mental health.

The stigma around this topic still exists, and that means that when people come to work, many don't feel able to be their 'whole selves'. They're leaving something of their individuality and humanity at the front entrance. For the sake of business, individuals and society we need to build an environment where we all feel comfortable to be ourselves at all times.

A cornerstone of the firm's Inclusive Leadership strategy is specifically about supporting a safe and accepting culture. We know that if people feel safe and enabled to speak openly about mental health problems, this creates a workplace culture that is genuinely capable of handling different challenges and having honest conversations. Of critical importance to this is the ability to identify role models, in particular at senior levels, who embody this authentic and inclusive leadership style and are able to draw on their own lived experience to communicate effectively with their colleagues.

I'm proud to say that there are now a number of people at all levels across the firm, including several partners and directors, who are talking about their mental health, both inside and outside of the firm.

One such Director is Nick Baber, who decided to speak out about his own struggles with depression. Having experienced this for over 20 years, he now talks openly about the support he's received from the firm and how this has allowed him to enjoy a successful career within our Advisory business. In turn, this has prompted others to come out and tell their own stories – and importantly to reach out and seek the support they need from those around them.

Vincent Neate, a partner and 'straight ally' to our LGBT community who has himself experienced depression, has gone even further by declaring that "I don't want to have a firm where anybody – black, white, gay, straight – comes to work and can't be themselves. So let's include people who are experiencing mental health problems in that too. I can't stand up for the rights of the LGBT community if I'm being dishonest about my mental health". I couldn't agree more – for some, mental health problems are not only experienced as an illness in the medical sense, but also as a part of who they are, inextricably linked with their identity. Hiding this from others only serves to increase the sense of isolation and stigma that many people with a mental health problem experience in their day to day and working lives.

However, breaking down the stigma around mental ill health is not just the right thing to do, it is also critical to the success of our business. We are a knowledge based, high performance business and our professionals drive themselves to do the best for their clients.

Good mental health forms a key part of this, ensuring optimum performance, as well as being a vitally important factor in enjoying a rich and fulfilling life both in and out of work.

One of the approaches we pride ourselves on is Inclusive Leadership, which involves taking personal responsibility for building diverse teams and strong relationships to succeed in a complex and rapidly changing world. The drive for Inclusive Leadership is a large part of why KPMG is a proud and founding member of the City Mental Health Alliance, which provides business leaders with the opportunity to come together and support necessary changes across the City. We are tremendously pleased that many of the UK's, and the world's, largest and most successful businesses are now part of the Alliance.

Another key part of our approach to mental health is ensuring that there is sufficient information available to people in the firm about mental health. In fact, we believe that building awareness around mental health aids in developing the positive benefits of resilience and productivity.

To this end, we have taken a number of initiatives across the firm over the last year. This includes offering the whole partner group a two day performance optimisation programme focussed on areas such as the science of mental health and effective tools for managing resilience. We've published a four page article in our internal magazine covering two personal stories from a partner and director on their mental health experiences. At our Inclusion Week in October 2014 we had several high profile speakers, such as Alastair Campbell, speak about mental health in the workplace, whilst the "Be Mindful" area on our internal social media platform allows

information sharing and debate and now has a significant following.

We are also planning to integrate mental health training into key points within individuals' careers (such as, for example, new graduates, people managers and leadership), and by specifically including mental health awareness in our Leadership Development Programme we're ensuring that our next generation of business leaders are fully equipped to support the mental health of their teams.

"Breaking down the stigma around mental ill health is not just the right thing to do, it is also critical to the success of our business."

So to conclude, it does feel like we are at a tipping point when it comes to mental health in the workplace. We have seen a tremendous interest in the subject over the last 12 months, with, among others, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Confederation of British Industry releasing reports on mental health for UK business. KPMG wants to play its part in helping to bring parity of esteem to mental and physical health, both within its own business and within the wider community. We believe it will be this generation that will inspire change. If those with lived experience feel able to speak up about their experiences, and those of us in leadership positions commit to fostering a culture that values openness, we can break the taboo.

<sup>1</sup> CIPD in partnership with SimplyHealth (2012), Absence Management Annual Survey Report

<sup>2</sup> CIPD (2011), Absence Management Annual Survey Report

<sup>3</sup> Mind (2014), YouGov Poll of 2,050 adults in England and Wales in employment



# Robert Elliott

## Senior Partner and Chairman

### Linklaters



It is self-evident that in a leading global law firm like Linklaters our people have to be our greatest asset. Their talent, hard work and commitment to quality are what make our firm stand out and make it a privilege for me to

lead the firm as Senior Partner and Chairman. Across the firm globally we place strong emphasis on the health and wellbeing of our people. This forms an important part of 'Our Deal', the mutual support offered by the firm and by each of us to our colleagues.

We now measure how well we support health and wellbeing in our global engagement survey and from the results we know that we don't get everything right all the time; acknowledging this is part of the journey and a valuable step in the right direction. Given our commitment to providing outstanding service to our clients, this can often mean hard work and long hours. The pace of work can, at times, be pressurised. We know that in some cases, pressure can lead to stress if it is not managed effectively and we don't provide the right support. For this reason, we have had a global stress management policy in place since 2010. We have recently added more emphasis around resilience, as we understand the importance of supporting people to develop effective ways of managing their health in a fast-paced environment such as ours. Achieving a healthy work-life balance is not always easy and that's why we have actively promoted working from home as a way to ease these pressures and offer greater flexibility to our people. Moreover, over the last two years, we have tried to be more open about mental health, trying to displace the taboo that has existed for too long.

Our approach isn't prescriptive. We recognise and appreciate that everyone's needs are different. We encourage our people to learn how best to promote and manage their own physical health and mental wellbeing and to adopt healthy behaviour. In the UK, we have a comprehensive health and wellbeing programme on offer to all our people which includes activities and information about nutrition, physical exercise, sleep, resilience building and mental health, as well as the provision of excellent benefits such as our Employee Assistance Programme.

In addition, we offer support and training to our people managers and HR teams so they are better equipped to deal with health and wellbeing issues in the workplace. This has included piloting Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training, and sessions on managing members of their team who are being treated for cancer or are carers for those with cancer. Feedback on the sessions has been really positive, with many now saying they are trying to adopt a more healthy way of life.

"We know that we don't get everything right all the time; acknowledging this is part of the journey and a valuable step in the right direction."

Underpinning all this has been our work with the City Mental Health Alliance (CMHA), which aims to foster open dialogue and facilitate the sharing of best practice amongst financial and professional services firms in the City.

I have been fortunate enough to attend various CMHA events and host the Chairman's breakfast in March last year and what was clear is that mental health problems can affect everyone. They do not discriminate between junior and senior staff, our lawyers, business services people or secretaries. I have heard the powerful and personal stories of some senior City leaders who have experienced mental health problems and their stories all had a common theme – their mental health deteriorated slowly over a long period of time and they papered over the cracks, carrying on as if everything was 'normal', unwilling and unable to ask for help until things reached a crisis point.

"As senior business leaders, we have a responsibility to create a culture in our organisations which encourages our people to ask for support and talk openly about their physical and mental health without judgement."

Fortunately, they received the clinical help and organisational support they needed to recover and return to work. What I've learnt from the statistics is that one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year,<sup>1</sup> and that many people don't get the help they need because of the fear and stigma associated with such problems.

As senior business leaders, we have a responsibility to create a culture in our organisations which encourages our people

to ask for support and talk openly about their physical and mental health without judgement. Everyone has mental health in the same way that they have physical health, but culturally it's still much easier to talk about our physical health and to take time off work because of a physical illness, than to talk about stress, anxiety or depression. It's time to change this.

At Linklaters, we have taken the opportunity globally to mark World Mental Health Day in October each year and to stress the importance of good mental health to all our people. A number of our offices have organised events to raise awareness and in the UK we've had a specific 'mental health week' for the last two years featuring practical sessions to build resilience, maintain energy and effectiveness, as well as offering massage and mindfulness sessions. In addition, over 300 of our global Partners have attended sessions with Dr Bill Mitchell, a leading clinical psychologist, who has focused on building personal resilience and the role of leaders in supporting the mental wellbeing of their teams. This is part of our strategy to guide our partners and leaders to recognise and address the signs of ill health (mental and physical) at an earlier stage, and refer people for help and support in good time before problems escalate.

I am committed to pushing forward the agenda and I urge other senior business leaders to recognise health and wellbeing and, in particular, mental health as a key boardroom issue. Given the estimated cost of mental ill health to UK employers (£26 billion per year<sup>2</sup>), the case for paying close attention to mental health is clear: senior business leaders can't afford to ignore it. For me, supporting our people to get the best out of themselves is essential in both human and business terms.

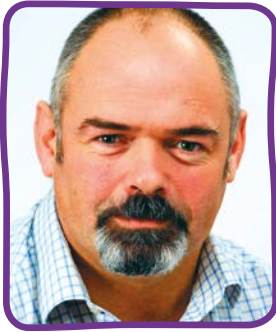
<sup>1</sup> Goldberg, D. & Huxley, P. (1992), Common mental disorders – a bio-social model, Routledge

<sup>2</sup> Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health (2007), Mental Health at Work: Developing the Business Case

# Martin Cloyd OBE

## Head of Environment, Health & Safety for Europe

### Lend Lease Europe



My personal journey began the day that Terry Newton, the international Rugby League player ended his own life. With hundreds of thousands of others, I was watching the Championship Grand Finals on satellite TV when the world seemed

to stop and Eddie Hemmings announced the news. He and the pundits, friends of Terry's, appeared lost, bewildered, and unable to process the information.

The whole of rugby felt the same way and the response was swift and robust. Befitting the culture and what makes the game great, really. Leading players and administrators quickly sought help, set up State of Mind Rugby (a programme aiming to improve the mental health, wellbeing and working life of rugby league players), and reached out to Mind and Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). I was one of the first through the training programme as a coach of junior players on the performance pathway in London.

Varying between mildly curious and indifferent about mental health in the days leading up to the MHFA Youth Course, my life changed within the first hour. It dawned on me that we were not just talking about the mental health of young men who played Rugby League. We were talking about everyone. About life. How come this stuff was never, ever discussed in my workplace?

I returned to work with a different point of view. Eighteen years in the Royal Engineers and a further twelve on the biggest, toughest construction projects in Europe and nobody had ever mentioned mental health. Why? Questioning myself, I began to think differently about the judgements and responses to situations that I had made. And so moving on to a new job, the CEO was intrigued when, in response to the question 'What difference would you make here?' during

the interview process, I shared my learning and growing awareness of the benefits of positive mental health.

On arrival at Lend Lease as Head of Environment, Health and Safety for Europe, I began the usual routine of familiarisation with process, people, and places, and began to listen. On occasion, I raised this unfamiliar subject. The door, if not already open, invariably was soon afterwards. I first addressed the finance people, one hundred and twenty of them. Their response was overwhelmingly positive, asking: 'How can we learn? How can we improve what we do? How can I contribute?' This was a good sign and an attitude replicated everywhere I went.

The Construction and Property industries are a huge part of the fabric of our country, a barometer for the economy and one that has led the world for centuries. It is also a tough, uncompromising and typically male-dominated environment and one where there is an unspoken expectation to work hard, for long hours. Believe me, in this type of environment discussing how you might be feeling is not traditionally a common conversation. The industry is awakening though, following a similar pattern to the rest of our nation, if a little behind. The conversations are beginning, recognition is starting to come. Construction is a very collaborative industry, bordering on family, and we all move around. We share the same supply chain and there are many communication strands. People are curious and I'm starting to see an appetite for change throughout our sites and offices.

The Public Health Responsibility Deal has become a game-changer for the Construction Industry. It includes a section on Mental Health – creating an environment where anyone with past or present experience of mental health problems is valued, respected and able to flourish – which has led to a sector specific Construction Pledge, H10, coming into being.

Created by a wide group, H10 is representative of the whole industry and includes a specific reference to the Mental Health Pledge. At the time of writing, 111 organisations have signed up and are touching 400,000 people.

Lend Lease was a founding member of the City Mental Health Alliance (CMHA) and we have benefitted enormously from membership, learning, sharing and belonging to a collective of companies and organisations who strive to raise the bar. The opportunities to embrace best practice are many and the network relationships are key to the success of the CMHA.

Through our own Lend Lease Foundation, we have educated over one hundred Mental Health First Aiders across the UK and Europe, broadcasting their accessibility via many mediums. This includes a poster that now features prominently alongside the usual notifications of Fire Marshals and (physical) First Aiders. The network is promoted at our monthly Safety, Health and Environment Leadership Team (SHELT) meetings and the great work carried out by the MHFA network generates a huge amount of 'word of mouth'. We will train a further sixty Mental Health First Aiders this year. All of our managers, supervisors and leaders are encouraged to complete the 3-hour MHFA Lite course which provides a good introduction to the subject and enables us to ensure a consistent level of literacy, which is beginning to reduce the stigma.

We are now building a great story, people are talking more openly and leaders are asking the right questions - wanting to understand their people better. Our industry has made progress in reducing fatal accidents by raising standards and working together. Forty deaths a year across construction in the UK is still wrong. Only zero harm is acceptable and we put a huge amount of effort and resources into achieving it. However, what any industrial deaths statistic fails to highlight is the prevalence of deaths of construction workers to other causes, such as suicide. In some regions of the UK construction workers accounted for 10% of all suicides.<sup>1</sup> This is something that has to end and setting mental health at the top of the agenda is one of the best ways to target this statistic directly and effectively.

This is something that has to end and setting mental health at the top of the agenda is one of the best ways to target this statistic directly and effectively.

Lend Lease works across four continents with its global Headquarters in Sydney. We have a Global Health Network and we share all of our practice and learnings together. Mental health has a high prominence. At the last Lend Lease Global Leaders Conference, the high point was an hour-long mental health panel where our best practice was shared with all of our top one hundred and fifty leaders. And I'm delighted that we are also taking our knowledge out to our supply chain, rolling out our MHFA Lite sessions to our tower crane companies. Here we will start the important work of breaking down the barriers and sharing what we know. Again, the door is open and the kettle will be on as we come together for common gain and common good.

"We are now building a great story, people are talking more openly and leaders are asking questions."

We are learning that by creating the best places to work, taking the time to listen, relentlessly pursuing excellence and engaging with our partners, clients, workforce and communities to simply raise the question 'what can we do to improve wellbeing and mental health?', we will secure a safer and brighter future within and beyond our industry. I would encourage everyone to educate leaders and decision makers, train and continually develop a network of people who can listen and support, and give them authority and space to operate.

Personally, I have never opened up the conversation without getting a response. There are different responses, some are tough, but you always get an opportunity to make a difference somewhere, whether by giving someone the opportunity to open up or by prompting someone to rethink their assumptions. Just asking 'How are you?', the simplest question, shows that you care.

<sup>1</sup> Brian Rye, UCATT (2002), Suicide accounts for 10% of all construction worker deaths, The Contract Journal.



# Clare Francis, Editor-in-Chief

## MoneySuperMarket



In March 2011 my husband Mark took his life after battling with depression and anxiety for years. My life was obviously totally shattered but Mark's death also had a huge impact on those around me,

including colleagues at work. And it was his death that prompted the beginning of MoneySuperMarket's relationship with Mind.

Like so many others who experience depression, Mark didn't want to tell people about his illness. I knew about it and he sought professional help but he was adamant that he didn't want to tell his best friends, let alone people he worked with. After he died, I wanted to make sure that people knew about his illness, partly in the hope that they'd have some understanding as to why he made the decision he made, but also because, to me, his death seemed so avoidable and I wanted to do what I could to reduce the chance of other families finding themselves in the same position as ours.

I chose Mind as one of the charities for people to donate to after Mark's death and my team at work wanted to do something to raise money for it. A team of us ran The Royal Parks Half Marathon in 2011 and 2012 and we signed up to Mind's Taking Care of Business campaign, which was aimed at raising awareness of mental health in the workplace. We then voted for Mind to be our company charity for 2013 and 2014.

The two-year partnership has recently ended and during that time we raised £152,000 for Mind – four times more than any of the other charities we've supported, which reflects the extent to which mental health resonates with so many people. The amount of money we

raised is also testament to the fact that so many of my colleagues have been directly affected by mental health problems, either because they themselves have personal experience or because they know someone who has. As a result, they wanted to get involved. Engagement in fundraising activities has been much higher than I've seen before in my time at MoneySuperMarket and it helped create a buzz and improve morale around the business. We had a team that climbed Kilimanjaro, and among the other events people took part in were Tough Mudder, the Royal Parks Half Marathon and The Chester Dragon Boat race, with new friendships formed as a result of these events.

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But it's more than just about the fundraising. I feel very strongly that those experiencing mental health problems shouldn't have to battle with their ill health on their own out of fear about what others will think. However, the only way we can help give many the confidence to talk about it is by breaking down the stigma that exists.



This is a huge challenge and not something that can be achieved easily, but I think the partnership with Mind has helped reduce any stigma that existed among staff at MoneySuperMarket by opening up the conversation around mental health.

The thing with mental ill health is that the number of people touched by it is huge. One in four will be affected by mental health problems at some point, which means that every business in the country will have staff whose lives have been touched in some way. Yet all too often colleagues won't know and there are a number of reasons for this. Those relevant to the workplace include people not getting the support and understanding they need, not feeling able to speak to their manager, and in the longer term fearing that opening up will have a negative impact on their career prospects.

This situation has definitely improved at MoneySuperMarket. A number of people have personally thanked me for helping to raise awareness of mental health problems, as it has given them the confidence to open up and tell people that they are dealing with depression. That's not to say they've necessarily told people at work, but some have, and I think as a result of the partnership with Mind managers are also now better at supporting those who

are experiencing problems such as stress, depression and anxiety. There are probably some people who are still dealing with a mental health problem behind closed doors, but I think MoneySuperMarket has taken a big step forward over the past few years in terms of improving understanding and awareness of mental health.

"A number of people have personally thanked me for helping to raise awareness of mental health problems, as it has given them the confidence to open up and tell people that they are dealing with depression."

The challenge for us now is to ensure that, the formal partnership with Mind having ended, we don't slip backwards. We need to at least maintain, and indeed build further, on what we've achieved over the last few years in terms of promoting a culture of openness. Talking is key to achieving this and it is the company's leaders and managers who need to make sure that staff feel there is support there if they need it.

<sup>1</sup> Goldberg, D. & Huxley, P. (1992), Common mental disorders – a bio-social model, Routledge

# Camilla Harrison, Chief Executive

## Anomaly



Talent. Resource. Staff. Colleagues. Partners. Workforce. Call them what you like, they're people. People who are employed to help your business succeed. People who if happy, motivated, rewarded and

(critically) healthy are often the difference between failure and success.

When it comes to the creative industries, London has the best talent in the world. So the fight to attract and retain that talent is fierce. In recent years, the focus of that fight has shifted from financial packages and shiny perks to company culture and working philosophy (such as flexible working, sabbaticals, approaches to maternity, paternity, etc). All of which make Mind's statistics more shocking and concerning: one in ten people have resigned due to stress, and one in four have considered it<sup>1</sup>. Because, for all the flexibility and understanding that companies are baking into their cultures, they're omitting to address, or even acknowledge, the elephant in the room – the mental health of their people.

Right now one in six workers is experiencing depression, anxiety or stress<sup>2</sup>. Inevitably, this ill health leads to absence. Yet 95% of those who take time off due to stress tell their boss it's something different<sup>3</sup>. What does this tell us? Firstly, we have a major societal problem on our hands. Secondly, the prevalence of mental ill health is a significant threat to success for any business. And thirdly, we are not even close to tackling this on the basis that our working cultures – for the most part – do not even recognise poor mental health, let alone support our people to have good mental health, no matter where they are on the spectrum.

I work in an industry that's all about communicating. And about shaping perceptions – whether on behalf of brands or issues. So you might imagine we are at the forefront of the issue and driving change at pace. But you'd be wrong. Like other industries we have pockets of excellence but it's simply not deemed a priority for most businesses.

"Truth is, it's a journey. Stigma doesn't disappear overnight. And the goal – to make good mental health a mainstream issue for business – feels a long way off. But I'm certain that – if that goal is consistently manifest in the body language of leadership – we can set the template for achieving it."

Truth is, it's a journey. Stigma doesn't disappear overnight. And the goal – to make good mental health a mainstream issue for business – feels a long way off. But I'm certain that – if that goal is consistently manifest in the body language of leadership – we can set the template for achieving it.

It's my belief that the theory of marginal gains (as deployed by Dave Brailsford for British Cycling) can work equally well when applied to the issue of mental health. Tiny changes, consistently applied over time, can have a significant effect. And with this issue in particular, where so much of the challenge is around normalising the issue, we must bring it into the everyday.



"As leaders we should - every day, in small ways - embody the behaviour we want to promote and be open, honest, understanding, active and supportive around the issue."

So as leaders we should – every day, in small ways – embody the behaviour we want to promote and be open, honest, understanding, active and supportive around the issue. That could be as simple as talking (or even referencing) mental health with one's colleagues. Bringing the language into the boardroom and into meetings with all staff. Ensuring that absenteeism for illness is always referred to as absence for physical or mental ill health. And myriad other behaviours that are simple to adopt and, over time, normalise the issue within workplace culture.

Of course that's not enough. But with an issue that's so far from the mainstream, it's a simple way to start tackling it. And something there's simply no excuse not to do. Today. And then again tomorrow. And the day after that.

There are other more significant and totemic things we can do. I'm on a mission to ensure that, within my industry, all companies have a mental health policy. And that candidates and partner businesses actively ask to see it before joining or doing business with a company. That this becomes as fundamental to their ability to practice as a disability or environmental policy.

But for now, if every leader committed to make a bunch of tiny changes that will cost them nothing (in fact, the reverse), and if they committed to stick with those changes, we could start to build a healthier workforce across our city and, critically, more successful business.

<sup>1</sup> Mind (2013), Populus poll of 2,060 adults in England and Wales in employment

<sup>2</sup> CIPD in partnership with SimplyHealth (2012), Absence Management Annual Survey Report

<sup>3</sup> Mind (2014), YouGov survey of 1,251 workers in Britain





# Steve Hatch, Managing Director, UK

## Facebook UK



I had the best management learnings of my life when I trained as a volunteer for the mental health helpline SANEline in 2004.

It wasn't the plan; the plan was to try and give

something back and to use some of the time I had to help others. I hoped I could make a small difference. But in those four years I spent as a volunteer listening to people talk about mental health, I didn't expect to learn quite as much as I did about how to listen and see the whole person for who they are, how important our work is in who we are, and how the culture of a workplace can elevate or squash the soul. This became an area of passion for me.

As I moved into CEOship at MEC (part of WPP, the world's largest communications services group), I put effort into creating a culture where everyone could fully express what he or she wanted to be. We are, all of us, acutely sensitive creatures. We sense tone and mood 100 times faster than we hear and process words. We know from neuroscience that how we feel directs how we think, not the other way around. We feel first. Culture makes this work for or against the individual and their journey to be themselves. Drucker famously said 'Culture eats strategy for breakfast'. I think he's wrong; culture eats everything. And culture in every company starts with how senior people behave.

Work can be central to our sense of purpose, our relationships and to our satisfaction. Being part of a team focused on a task, together in success (or failure), can be a joy. But this isn't always the case. In some situations this basic experience can be denied to people who are living with mental health problems. For many others, the day-to-day experience of the workplace can be a difficult one, with workplace stress a significant health issue for our country.

As leaders in business, I believe we have a responsibility to improve this situation and to openly support positive wellbeing in the workplace, not only because it creates better business outcomes but also because I can't think of a more rewarding goal of leadership than to help others become all they want to be. It's good for business, it's good for society and selfishly it's hugely fulfilling. At their heart, all businesses are people businesses. The skills, talent and ambition of the people in any company are what make the difference in business performance. With every sector becoming more competitive, and creativity the key difference to many businesses, it's important to have the very best people, regardless of background and life experiences, and for everyone to have the best experience at work.

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I know from personal and family experience how important mental health is and I like that the company I work for is trying hard to make this better. We're using 'unconscious bias' training to increase awareness of different forms of bias that we all carry and of the assumptions we can make.



"Drucker famously said 'Culture eats strategy for breakfast'. I think he's wrong; culture eats everything. And culture in every company starts with how senior people behave."

We're aiming to create an inclusive environment where people from diverse backgrounds and experiences can be their authentic selves and can therefore flourish.

Another effort we're making is through an initiative called Fuel. Fuel is a movement, more than a programme, that helps me and the people I work with to better understand and manage our personal energy. It works from the premise that what's most important and what works for one person will not be the same for another, which is an important foundation in maintaining peak performance at work.

But essentially it's as much about the small, incremental gains that can be made. I've been very open with my team about the importance of taking time out and of using holiday to refresh and renew. For me, this behaviour starts at the top. The most successful people I've worked with are able to switch off and this is just one small example of 'executing for increased wellbeing' so to speak. Each company will find ways that work for them and, by taking leadership in these small practical steps, businesses can improve the wellbeing of their people and create even better working environments that maintain a creative edge.

I certainly don't know all of the answers, but as part of an organisation that has a mission to make the world a more open and connected place, I'm learning all of the time and hope to inspire and be inspired by how many more companies are taking action to drive this agenda forward.

# Kevin Cahill, Chief Executive

## Comic Relief



As a major funder of the Time to Change campaign since 2007, Comic Relief sees removing the stigma associated with mental health problems as fundamental to its vision of a world free from poverty and

social injustice. In recent years we have been able to call on the experiences of some of our celebrity supporters to help raise awareness of this issue. We have continued to promote mental health problems in the short films we make and are very proud of what the Time to Change campaign has achieved in terms of a measurable improvement in attitudes.

But Comic Relief is also an employer of more than 250 people on whom we rely to deliver fantastic fundraising and grant-making activities year after year, so looking after the mental health and wellbeing of our staff is important for us, not just because it makes business sense and is known to lead to better staff engagement, productivity and retention, but also because it's our responsibility as an employer. We are a fast-paced organisation with a big public profile. Working on campaigns like Red Nose Day and Sport Relief is uniquely exciting and rewarding, but can also be stressful.

And we are also well-known for producing compelling films illustrating the work that we fund both in the UK and in some of the world's poorest countries. Our staff feel an enormous sense of achievement in being able to see the positive change that this work can bring about. But making films of this nature is tough and can sometimes be a traumatic experience. We are keenly aware of our responsibility to support the staff, crews and artists who take part in these filming trips.

Like any other employer, we know that at any particular time at least one in four members of

our team could be experiencing a mental health problem<sup>1</sup>. We know that time lost due to mental ill health can be costly to us as a business, but that it can be avoided by supporting staff and taking an early intervention and preventative approach, so we've taken a number of steps as an employer to help improve and protect the mental wellbeing of our staff. We work hard to ensure that anyone in our organisation who experiences mental health problems will not have to deal with the kind of stigma at work that we know remains prevalent in wider society.

"We are always impressed with the creativity and innovative approaches (of our Wellbeing Champions). Sometimes simple things can help, activities like 'Board Relief', a monthly board games night and 'Wednesday Walks' to encourage staff to get some fresh air and talk to their colleagues at lunch time."

We have a Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy which requires that we will promote a culture of respect and dignity for everyone, ensuring that staff are informed of how to recognize and sensitively respond to mental health problems in others. We have provided training for our managers explaining the principles behind the policy, and the part that they can play in supporting their teams and preventing work-related stress. We have also run an annual Mental Health First Aid course open to anyone who works here, in addition to specialist training in managing post-traumatic stress for those involved in our film-making, as well as for their managers.



Staff have taken part in two annual mental health at work surveys run by the Time to Change campaign. Following the first survey, we put in place a range of activities aimed at promoting a culture geared towards good mental wellbeing and work-life balance.

We have an active group of Wellbeing Champions who run events throughout the year, and we are always impressed with their creativity and innovative approaches. Sometimes simple things can help, activities like 'Board Relief', a monthly board games night and 'Wednesday Walks' to encourage staff to get some fresh air and talk to their colleagues at lunch time. We also recently ran a well-attended lunchtime taster session on Mindfulness Meditation. All of our new recruits are given a welcome pack with a leaflet explaining their rights under the Equality Act and outlining our commitment to supporting people affected by long term health conditions, including mental health problems. People are invited to disclose any issues where reasonable adjustments or other support might be helpful, and this is reiterated during induction sessions.

We also encourage people to take up activities outside work by allowing them to claim back costs for things such as gym membership and sporting activities through a small annual allowance added to their salaries, and have

put other affordable health-related benefits in place, including a 24-hour confidential counselling service.

"We work hard to ensure that anyone in our organisation who experiences mental health problems will not have to deal with the kind of stigma at work that we know remains prevalent in wider society."

It is important for us to be an excellent employer in this space and the surveys we have conducted have given senior management useful insights into ways in which we can improve employee mental health moving forward.

It is our hope that by taking an open-minded, creative and inclusive approach we can challenge the stigma attached to mental health problems whilst continuing to be one of the UK's most successful charities and enabling our people to realise their potential in a supportive working environment.

<sup>1</sup> Goldberg, D. & Huxley, P. (1992), Common mental disorders – a bio-social model, Routledge





# Nathan Elvery, Chief Executive

## Croydon Council



One in four of us are affected by a mental health problem in any year<sup>1</sup>. Work is one of the key factors influencing our mental health. We spend up to 60% of our waking hours at work. We know that work can be

good for our wellbeing – it provides an income, purpose in life, and often contact with others. However, new evidence suggests that some jobs – particularly those that are low paid or offer little job control – can be just as harmful to health as unemployment. Work can also be detrimental to our mental health if key issues of job design are not met, according to the Health and Safety Executive's management standards.

A considerable number of people see their GP with mental health problems each year. Most of these are experiencing anxiety and depression and much of this is stress-related. While not an illness in itself, prolonged stress can tip over into a mental health problem and also lead to physical symptoms, such as muscular skeletal problems, headaches, digestive problems and even long term heart damage.

The business case for workplace interventions is compelling. According to the then Sainsbury's Centre for Mental Health, costs include<sup>2</sup>:

> £8.4 billion a year in sickness absence. The average employee takes 7 days off sick each year of which 40 per cent are for mental health problems. This does not take into account those people who take time off due to workplace stress but cite another reason. In their 2014 survey Mind found that of those who had taken time off sick with stress, just 5% had felt able to be honest with their employer about the cause of their absence<sup>3</sup>. The remaining 95% cited another reason for their absence, such as an upset stomach (44%) or a headache (7%).

- > This adds up to 70 million lost working days a year, including one in seven directly caused by a person's work or working conditions.
- > £15.1 billion a year in reduced productivity at work. 'Presenteeism' accounts for 1.5 times as much working time lost as absenteeism and costs more to employers because it is more common among higher-paid staff.
- > £2.4 billion a year is spent in replacing staff who leave their jobs because of mental ill health.

Research from ICM, the market research agency, found that almost a third of employees said they would consider leaving their job if they didn't feel cared for by their employer<sup>4</sup>, so it is no wonder that employers have begun to take employee engagement and wellbeing more seriously and to promote more proactive approaches to retaining talented staff.

Local authorities have been asked to do more with less, facing budget cuts, restructures and redundancies for some years. Currently the council faces the Croydon Challenge, a need to save £100m over the next 3 years, and a major restructure from the top down. Research supports the common sense view that frontline staff working in deprived areas face greater stresses than those working in less deprived areas and, in the current financial crisis, the need to support frontline staff is particularly important. With these continuing stressors comes our obligation under the Equalities Act 2010 and the responsibility to make mental health and wellbeing for our staff a key priority.

To reflect on our journey so far, Croydon council took part in the Reachout Challenge during 2012, having conversations about mental health with Hear Us, a local organisation whose staff and volunteers all have lived experience of mental health problems.

The project, funded by the Time to Change campaign, involved “tea and talk” sessions with council staff about mental health and culminated in the council being one of the first local authorities to sign the Time to Change pledge in January 2013 to address stigma and discrimination around mental health in the workplace. A generic stress risk assessment, based on the HSE management standards, was reviewed and re-issued in 2014. Two members of staff have been trained as Mental Health First Aid instructors and have delivered in-house training to over 90 members of staff from August 2013 to date. A survey was carried out leading to the formation of a network of Mental Health First Aiders, with contact details available on the intranet. The network reports monthly and cases are anonymised. The results of the survey led to the introduction of MHFA Lite and Supporting Staff training courses. Both MHFA Instructors were members of the Time to Change Organisational Learning Peer Network, which consisted of organisations sharing good practice in promoting good mental health at work.

The London Healthy Workplace Charter is run by the Greater London Authority with support from Public Health England-London, which aims to improve the health of Londoners via the workplace. Croydon Council has been awarded the Charter at Achievement level. The scheme consists of 8 themes (e.g. Physical Activity, Mental Health and Wellbeing) across 3 levels, Commitment, Achievement and Excellence. The Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator is the mental health lead for the Charter and attends conferences and seminars to share the council’s approach to mental health.

Staff diversity networks were formed – for mental health, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender), BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic), disability and carers – each sponsored by a member of the Corporate Leadership Team. On Time to Talk Day on 5 February 2015, mental health first aiders and staff network members held 41 conversations about mental health; in contrast with 2014, when we were unable to

engage any staff in conversation. There are dedicated intranet pages for our wellbeing offer, including the Employee Assistance Programme which offers access to confidential counselling, signposting to training, resources and self help websites. Methods of communication also include plasma screens, the ‘Our Croydon’ staff magazine and our staff networks.

"Research supports the common sense view that frontline staff working in deprived areas face greater stresses than those working in less deprived areas and, in a difficult economic climate, the need to support frontline staff is particularly important."

Croydon Council has come a long way in recent years to reduce stigma and discrimination around mental ill health, but there is still more to do. A project is underway to post photographic details of the mental health first aiders at the relevant locations and we are compiling case studies of staff willing to share details of their lived experience. Future themes will include better support in the workplace for those on the autistic spectrum and work around presenteeism. The mental health agenda forms an integral part of one of our corporate values, ‘Open and Honest’.

A staff health and wellbeing survey was conducted during the summer of 2013 and will be repeated in 2015. In the meantime, monthly Pulse Surveys and live web chats indicate that the direction of travel is positive. There is now a willingness to have “the conversation” at all levels of the organisation, and the feedback from mental health training is overwhelmingly positive. However, we must continue to move this agenda forward in order to achieve complete parity between mental and physical health.

<sup>1</sup> Goldberg, D. & Huxley, P. (1992), Common mental disorders – a bio-social model, Routledge

<sup>2</sup> Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health (2007), Mental Health at Work: Developing the Business Case

<sup>3</sup> Mind (2014), YouGov survey of 1,251 workers in Britain

<sup>4</sup> Unum (2014), ICM Research survey

# Ian Ashman, Principal

## Hackney Community College



Hackney Community College is a leading provider of further education in north east London, with around 10,000 enrolments every year. Our mission is 'Unlocking the potential by educating students for

work and life and meeting employers' needs for skills'. We take the word 'community' in our name very seriously, focusing on the full range of needs amongst local people and businesses and developing our provision responsively, to adapt to changing needs. This includes our new project for students with high-level learning needs, delivered in partnership with the Orthodox Jewish Community in Stamford Hill, or our Tech City Apprenticeships programme, which provides higher level apprenticeships in Digital Media, helping local people get jobs and meeting the skills shortages of the business community in Shoreditch.

A vital element of our responsiveness to local need is our Mental Health Education Employment Service, delivered in collaboration with and part funded by the East London Foundation Trust & London Borough of Hackney Public Health, which works in partnership with Mind and many other third sector organisations. This work supports people with severe and enduring mental health problems to get back into education, to use education as a springboard to a healthy life and, for many, as a route into employment. The quality and value of this work has been recognised many times, most prestigiously in the Queens Award for Further and Higher Education in 2012 (the equivalent of a knighthood for the college).

The Service has at its heart two highly qualified and experienced mental health practitioners, John McClean and Erica

Thompson, who have between them helped thousands of people with mental health problems to become students and stay on-track, despite the health challenges they encounter, and to progress on to further study and work. Further education is very important to society and for those with a mental health problem it can be a valuable foundation from which to build their health and wellbeing, given the increased self-esteem and mental wellbeing that comes with setting and working towards personal goals. I know from talking to students that some would not be alive today were it not for the relief from symptoms they have found through getting into education, then into jobs, with the support of our team.

"Leaders who acknowledge and talk about the issues undoubtedly make it easier for others to do so and help create a climate in which mental health is seen as a mainstream issue."

The Service is also a vital resource for staff, regularly running training in mental health awareness for our 500 staff and providing one to one advice to teachers and managers on how to understand the issues and manage any difficult situations they may encounter. This Service has helped to create a clear understanding within the organisation of the wide prevalence of mental health problems in society, and crucially that they can affect anyone, including our staff.

The Mental Health Education Service, along with our HR team and occupational health service provide support and advice to staff with mental health problems and every year the mental health team organises a World Mental Health Day Event for staff and students.

The purpose of these events is to increase mental health awareness, challenge assumptions and reduce stigma in order to promote a culture of openness and inclusion.

The College sector has faced a particularly challenging period in the last five years. As a result of the difficult economic climate and the bar having been raised in the measurement of quality standards, we are having to deliver a better service with less resource. The implications of this on the mental health of both staff and students poses a challenge. Our staff have risen to this challenge however, with every member of my team committing themselves to identifying and working on developing their skills to support improvement. This is paying off with rising success rates for our vocational qualifications, more students getting jobs or going to university, and the quality of teaching now overwhelmingly good. Students are feeding back that the College is doing even better in supporting their learning; with an overall satisfaction rate of over 93%. A key part of this success has been the focus that we have given to wellbeing and to the proactive promotion of good mental health among our staff, as this environment of 'more for less' undoubtedly creates pressure for staff. Some pressure is a good thing and it is right we should expect high standards of delivery to the people we support; indeed many people, including myself, thrive on pressure and find it exciting and motivating. However, there are situations in which excess pressure can tip over into stress and it is in these circumstances that we as employers must recognise the pressures our staff are under and do what we can to support them. Our sickness figures show that stress-related sickness fortunately only represents about 5% of sickness days, about a third of the average for college and employers as a whole. In part, I believe that these low figures are down to the high level of mental health

awareness in the College, as a result of which people can recognise and take action to address problems early.

That said, we are definitely not complacent. Pressure is growing and the causes are often not under our control. Unions and staff report increasing concern about work pressure. We are engaging with these concerns and have been encouraged by many practical suggestions which Unions have made to reduce stress. These range from really simple things such as encouraging staff to take breaks, creating a quiet area for staff away from students and staff only toilet facilities, to arrangements to undertake risk assessments on workload and act on these, within the constraints of our resources. Leaders who acknowledge and talk about the issues undoubtedly make it easier for others to do so and help create a climate in which mental health is seen as a mainstream issue.

I am sure the pressures that I describe here are common to many publicly-funded organisations. My experience is that having greater awareness of mental health problems and mental health expertise within the organisation, combined with a willingness to listen to staff concerns and act, insofar as we can, makes for a healthier and more successful workplace.

"There are situations in which excess pressure can tip over into stress and it is in these circumstances that we as employers must recognise the pressures our staff are under and do what we can to support them."



## Call to Action

### John Binns, Wellbeing and Personal Resilience Advisor

Deloitte



As a business leader who was one of the first to speak out publically about his own experience, I am delighted to be part of an increasing number of individuals and businesses represented in

this excellent publication, who recognise that mental health problems can affect anyone at any point in their career.

I joined the Deloitte Consulting business in 1994, and by 1998 had been made a salaried Partner. By 2001, I was a full equity Partner and my career continued to prosper as I took on many senior leadership roles and successfully managed large and complex transformation projects for key clients. If you had asked me in 2005 whether I thought mental health was something I, or the firm, needed to worry about, I would probably have said no. I would have told you that it was something that happened to “other people”, that they probably weren’t like me and that it was likely not a big issue for our firm. I could not have been more wrong. So you can imagine how I felt in early 2007 when I found myself desperately trying to work out how I could send an email to the three key Managing Partners most important to my career, that I couldn’t face going into work and that I couldn’t seem to be able to function in a way that felt anything like “me”. After an initial feeling of relief, a deeper wave of despair followed. I was off for three months, including three weeks spent as an inpatient at a psychiatric hospital. I thought my career was finished and indeed that I was finished.

But it wasn’t and I wasn’t. Even at that time the support that was available was much better

than I had expected and the support from colleagues was significant. It was just that people didn’t know it was there. I did return to work, initially on a phased return, but I am proud to say that after two months I had resumed all my previous leadership positions and went on to have seven highly successful years back in the full swing of the Deloitte Consulting practice. However, I reflected that although there were some very good things in my experience once the crisis had happened, what was missing was any culture of talking about mental health as if it were an issue that might affect our people, along with little or no training on how to spot the signs. In reality, I had been incrementally suffering with stress related depression and heightened anxiety for about eighteen months.

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I now absolutely know that, just like in physical health, early recognition and early help works and it is very possible to increase one’s resilience.

If I had been more aware, or colleagues, friends and family had been more aware of this eighteen months earlier, I need not have sunk to that terrible place and Deloitte would not have lost my input to the business for those months.

As a result of this experience, I came together with some other Partners at Deloitte and launched a range of innovations to get people talking about mental health and to create a culture where openness and prevention were as important as support in a crisis. The Deloitte Partner Mental Health Champions initiative, where Partners provide a confidential one to one advisory service, was ground-breaking, achieving national and international recognition. The Agile working initiative launched last year by our Talent partner Emma Codd has also made real, substantive changes to some of the rigid working practices that have historically impacted mental health in the business.

Of course we haven't cracked it entirely yet and the firm and individuals in it will still get it wrong sometimes. There are hundreds of years of stigma to overcome. But people are beginning to realise that mental health problems can affect anyone, that they are not the curse of the weak as is often misconceived and in fact are very often the curse of the strong. People who care deeply about the outcome, are ambitious, listen to feedback, volunteer for projects and take on responsibility are the people we all want in our teams. But if we add the words "too much" after each of those traits we begin to see where the problem might lie.

A great milestone was when in 2014 the people of Deloitte voted for Mind to be the national charity partner. A mental health charity would simply not have been in the running to win such a vote five years earlier. As a Board member of Mind, this was doubly pleasing to me. Not to mention the fact that, in 2007, when I tried to bring together the business leaders who thought mental health should be a boardroom issue, we could have met in a telephone box. We now have 26 City Firms as members of the City Mental Health Alliance and some of the country's leading corporates sitting on the Business in the Community Mental Health Champions Group.

But more needs to be done. There is still a huge fear of being open because of being perceived as weak. Too often we still feel the need to

hide behind euphemisms or cite physical health issues instead. The anti-stigma work of Time to Change in particular, which helps people to feel able to speak out, is critical to this. Firms need to integrate preventative training into the fabric of their people development strategies, and businesses need to fully understand that mental health is an issue for everyone. It's not just about being ill. It's also about understanding what good mental health looks like and creating workplace environments and cultures that genuinely foster this. And as an increasing number of businesses are beginning to understand, the business case for making staff mental health a priority is as strong as any moral case. With this in mind, my call to you is as follows:

1. Senior leaders have massive potential to influence attitudes – a belief in the importance of this issue needs to come from the top if change is to be effected.
2. Recognise the business case and act by making mental health a boardroom priority – the business case is clear. An increasing number of organisations know this now and are acting on it. Join them!
3. It's a journey – you won't always get it right. If you're at the beginning of the journey and unsure how to proceed that's ok. Making a commitment and getting the conversation started is the first step.
4. Let's end stigma – outdated definitions of 'strength' and 'weakness' don't do anyone any good. They lead to misplaced shame and a culture of silence.
5. Don't go it alone – encourage staff to access support when they need it – it is perfectly possible for someone to become ill (for instance with stress related depression) and yet return to exactly the same or even better performance with the right help and support.
6. Take action today – find out what support is available for your organisation or which alliances or groups support your sector and join today.

Better mental health not only means better performance but happier and more fulfilled lives. It should be a no brainer. Let's make it so!



## Further Information and Resources

### Mayor of London

The London Healthy Workplace Charter is a free self-assessment tool that recognises and rewards good employers who invest in workplace health and wellbeing. It is an evidence-based framework with three levels of accreditation – commitment, achievement and excellence. Centrally coordinated by the Mayor's office and delivered in collaboration with Public Health England (London) and the London boroughs, joining the charter provides access to local

support and advice, opportunities to learn from others and ultimately allows you to get the best out of your workforce.

For further information on the Mayor of London's London Healthy Workplace Charter, please visit [www.london.gov.uk/healthyworkplace](http://www.london.gov.uk/healthyworkplace)

**MAYOR OF LONDON**

## Mind

We're Mind, the mental health charity. We believe no one should have to face a mental health problem alone. We're here for you. Today. Now. We're on your doorstep, on the end of a phone or online. Whether you're stressed, depressed or in crisis. We'll listen, give you support and advice, and fight your corner. And we'll push for a better deal and respect for everyone experiencing a mental health problem.

Mind's Workplace Wellbeing team provides guidance and support to employers around promoting staff wellbeing, tackling the causes of work-related ill health and supporting staff who are experiencing a mental health problem. For free webinars and resources please visit [www.mind.org.uk/for-business](http://www.mind.org.uk/for-business).

### How can Mind help?

#### Infoline

Provides information and advice as well as details of help and support in your local area.

- > Call 0300 123 3393 (lines open 9am - 6pm, Monday – Friday)
- > Text 86463
- > Email [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

#### Legal Advice Line

Provides legal information and general advice on mental health related law.

- > Call 0300 455 6463 (lines open 9am - 6pm, Monday – Friday)
- > Email [legal@mind.org.uk](mailto:legal@mind.org.uk)

#### Resources for HR professionals and line managers

For tips on how to support staff have a look at our free resources and webinars at [mind.org.uk/for-business](http://mind.org.uk/for-business).

Our workplace information booklets are a great resource to have available for your staff, and can be bought in packs at [mind.org.uk/shop](http://mind.org.uk/shop).

#### Training and Consultancy

Mind offers training, coaching and consultancy on a broad range of mental health problems and work-specific situations. Our bespoke courses can be delivered at your place of work and focus on the most useful content for your needs. We also hold scheduled courses, available to anyone, if you have just one or two members of staff requiring training. For a quote or to discuss options, please contact Mind's training team at [training@mind.org.uk](mailto:training@mind.org.uk) or visit [mind.org.uk/training](http://mind.org.uk/training).

#### Local Minds

Some local Minds provide support to employers. To find your local Mind, visit [mind.org.uk/local](http://mind.org.uk/local).





"For those organisations who are at the start and are just now beginning to take action, I encourage you to see this as a learning process and a long term commitment to a better way of working - not only for individuals, but for the success and productivity of your business as a whole."

Paul Farmer, Chief Executive of Mind



## London Healthy Workplace Charter

Greater London Authority  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
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London SE1 2AA

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[londonhealthyworkplace@london.gov.uk](mailto:londonhealthyworkplace@london.gov.uk)  
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## Mind

Mind  
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 @MindCharity  
 [Facebook.com/mindforbettermentalhealth](https://www.facebook.com/mindforbettermentalhealth)  
 Follow us on LinkedIn

Infoline 0300 123 3393  
Text 86463  
Email [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

We provide advice and support to anyone experiencing a mental health problem.  
We campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding.

Mind's registered charity number is 219830.