



We're in!

The mental health challenge

Local councils championing mental health

Briefing for Member Champions

Employment and mental health

Facts and figures

Having paid work is on the whole good for mental health and protects our wellbeing (Waddell and Burton, 2006). Being unemployed, by contrast, is extremely damaging to both mental and physical health.

Up to a quarter of people of working age experience a mental health problem each year. Poor mental health at work costs employers a total of £35 billion a year, or £1,300 for every person they employ (Centre for Mental Health, 2017).

An estimated one million people are out of work as a result of poor mental health at any time.

Only a minority of people using mental health services are in work, even though more than half would like the chance. With the right help, up to two-thirds can be supported into employment. And many go on to enjoy fulfilling and successful working lives.

What can businesses to do support mental health at work?

Every employer, including local authorities, can take steps to improve the mental health of their workforce and support those who experience difficulties.

While not all mental health difficulties among working people are a result of their job, some people face higher risks than others. Risk factors for poor mental health at work include bullying, job insecurity, and a lack of control over working patterns or environment. Employers may seek to reduce these risks for their staff.

There is growing evidence that employers can also benefit from responding quickly and helpfully when an employee experiences poor mental health. Creating a culture where it is okay to disclose distress

can reduce the risk of 'presenteeism' in a workplace. And training line managers to respond sensitively and confidently can make it easier for people to get professional help and stay in touch with work if they need to take time off.

A new set of standards for both large and small employers was produced in a recent government review of mental health at work, which called on public sector organisations to take the lead in putting these in place (Stevenson and Farmer, 2017).

How can more people be supported into work?

By far the most effective way of supporting people with mental health difficulties into paid employment is an approach called Individual Placement and Support (IPS). This approach offers help to anyone using a mental health service who wants to be in work. It does not mandate participation and it provides expert support for an individual to seek competitive employment based on a person's preferences alongside health care and welfare advice. It offers ongoing support once a person starts a job for as long as it is needed (Hutchinson, 2017).

For more information about IPS visit <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/what-is-ips>.

IPS is now available in many parts of the country through NHS mental health trusts, sometimes provided by local authorities or voluntary sector organisations. The Government has committed to doubling the number of people who benefit from IPS by 2021.

The Mental Health Challenge is supported by:



Centre for
Mental Health



Mental Health
Foundation



National Survivor
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YOUNGMINDS



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What can elected members do?

1. Ask your council to consider taking the Time to Change Employer Pledge <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/get-your-workplace-involved> and lead by example in your local area. Many councils have already signed up and enjoy the benefits.
2. Find out if your council is able to meet the new mental health and work standards and if not what action is needed to achieve them.
3. Encourage partner organisations and suppliers to support the mental health of their staff, for example by becoming Mindful Employers www.mindfulemployer.net.
4. Ask your NHS mental health and social care providers what proportion of people have access to an IPS service and what plans are in place to extend coverage in your local area.

To find out more about the Mental Health Challenge:

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Centre for Mental Health



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Sources of workplace help and advice

Mindful Employer www.mindfulemployer.net

Mind Workplace <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/>

Time to Change <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/get-your-workplace-involved>

References and useful reading

Centre for Mental Health (2017) Mental health at work: the business costs ten years on <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/mental-health-at-work-report>

Hutchinson, J. (2017) IPS in the UK: Improving employment support in mental health services <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/ips-in-the-uk>

Stevenson and Farmer (2017) Thriving at work: a review of mental health and employers <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thriving-at-work-a-review-of-mental-health-and-employers>

Waddell and Burton (2006) Is work good for your health and wellbeing? An independent review <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/is-work-good-for-your-health-and-well-being>

Business in the Community (2016) Mental health toolkit for employers <https://wellbeing.bitc.org.uk/all-resources/toolkits/mental-health-employers>

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