



MENTAL WELLBEING TOOLKIT FOR THE RETAIL SECTOR



time to change

let's end mental health discrimination

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FOREWORD

Mental health remains a taboo subject, especially in the workplace, where 15% of employees suffer from some form of mental health condition at any one time. It is unacceptable that so many people with these problems suffer in silence; embarrassed and alone. The workplace must take its share of the responsibility for this and at the British Retail Consortium, we are working closely alongside retail employers to focus on developing an accepting and open culture to address these vital issues head-on.



Helen Dickinson OBE
Chief Executive
British Retail Consortium

We understand this is easier said than done as employers need a specific workplace wellbeing strategy - something particularly difficult in retail due to logistics, time constraints and resources.

With that in mind, we are delighted to have teamed up with Time to Change, led by two inspiring charities, Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, to create the retailers' guide to tackling mental health at work. We hope you will find this guide useful in assisting you to create a comfortable, understanding environment where employees feel they can openly discuss their mental wellbeing.

Investing in employee wellbeing not only helps staff, but also vastly improves productivity and staff retention and reduces sick days. As a result, it can save UK businesses billions of pounds each year.

Businesses urgently need to recognise the significance of a workplace which puts employee health first. This guide provides pragmatic support to employees who seek to make these crucial changes to their business. These changes aren't costly, they are simple to implement and will provide many benefits. We hope as many of you as possible utilise our guide and offer support to those in need.

FOREWORD

Since 2009, Time to Change, run by the charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, has been supporting employers to create a more open and understanding culture around mental health problems in the workplace, assisting employers to develop their workplace wellbeing interventions and action plans and providing a range of free resources, training and networking events.



Jo Loughran
Director
Time to Change

We know it can be hard to talk about mental health and we are aware that the retail sector has some specific challenges around space, size of stores, time and resources when developing a workplace wellbeing strategy. We are therefore really pleased to be working with the British Retail Consortium to put together a guide for retailers to enable you to create an environment in which your employees feel comfortable talking about their mental health.

Too many people with mental health problems are made to feel isolated, ashamed and worthless, but with the right support, those of us with mental health problems can recover a quality of life that enables us to take advantage of the same opportunities as others in all areas of life. Everyone's attitude makes a difference and we are keen to see more and more retailers develop a workplace wellbeing strategy.

Many leading employers have found that making a strategic commitment to the mental wellbeing of their workforce not only benefits their staff but also their bottom-line, improving productivity and staff retention. With one in six British workers experiencing mental illness it's time for businesses to make a change and start creating more mentally healthy workplaces.

We have designed this guide to help employers understand and implement the Thriving at Work standards. It offers accessible, practical support for meeting the standards and will help employers to make the necessary changes within a realistic timeframe and without excessive cost. We hope that you find it useful.

INTRODUCTION

WHY FOCUS ON MENTAL WELLBEING IN YOUR BUSINESS?

With mental health problems affecting one in six British workers each year and mental health being the leading cause of sickness absence, it makes business sense for retailers to put together a workplace wellbeing strategy to help support their staff and help to improve retention, engagement and productivity. Statistics below demonstrate the importance of mental wellbeing to the economy, businesses and to retail specifically.

ONE IN SIX BRITISH WORKERS ARE AFFECTED BY MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS LIKE ANXIETY, DEPRESSION AND STRESS EVERY YEAR.¹



AROUND 15% OF PEOPLE AT WORK IN ENGLAND HAVE SYMPTOMS OF AN EXISTING MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION.¹



THE ANNUAL COST OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH TO EMPLOYERS IS BETWEEN £42BILLION AND £45BILLION.²



MENTAL HEALTH IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF SICKNESS ABSENCE.¹



WITHIN THE RETAIL SECTOR, THE ANNUAL COST OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH TO EMPLOYERS IS BETWEEN £1,045 AND £1,601 PER PERSON PER YEAR.²



ONLY 51% OF EMPLOYEES IN THE RETAIL SECTOR WOULD FEEL CONFIDENT TALKING TO THEIR LINE MANAGER ABOUT THEIR MENTAL HEALTH.³



36% OF RETAIL EMPLOYEES HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION.³

1. Thriving at Work Report (2017)

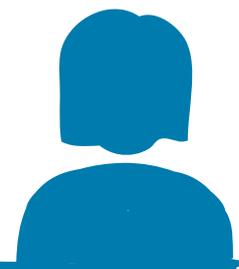
2. Mental Health and Employers: Refreshing the Case for Investment (2020)

3. Mental Health at Work Report (2017)

Across all sectors, one third of employees report having been dismissed or forced to resign from their job and 70% have been put off applying for jobs, fearing unfair treatment.

A major study into workplace wellbeing in 2018 by the mental health charity Mind revealed that poor mental health at work is widespread, with half (48 per cent) of all people surveyed saying they have experienced a mental health problem in their current job.

The survey of more than 44,000 employees also revealed that only half of those who had experienced poor mental health had talked to their employer about it, suggesting that as many as one in six UK workers is struggling in silence, which reinforces the stigma around mental health.



Case Study
WH Smith



It is not just the financial costs. Supporting employees with their mental health and creating mentally health workplaces can help with staff engagement and enables individuals to bring their whole self to work.

Investing in mental health is a priority for all of us - it is the right thing to do, and it makes good business sense. In retail, it is particularly important to keep mental health high on the agenda due to risk factors such as lower than average financial security and physically demanding roles. We started our work at WHSmith when we realised how unequal our awareness and understanding was of mental versus physical health.

Working with organisations including Time to Change has been a great way to help with awareness-raising, as has charity fundraising for Mind, MQ, CALM and Place2Be. Implementing Mental Health First Aid is enabling us to watch

out for our own and each other's mental health and to guide people to internal and external support. We have already seen some fantastic shifts in understanding and attitude toward mental health at WHSmith.

While continuing with awareness-raising and training, we are now working on the hardest and potentially most rewarding task: identifying how we need to change our culture to enable more of us to flourish at work.

As we want to see more people thrive, we are working to understand what we do and why to ensure that our culture is driving mentally healthy behaviours.

Alison Garbutt
Head of Strategic Projects
WH Smith

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

POSITIVELY MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH UNDERPINS GOOD EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND BENEFITS EVERYONE: EMPLOYEES, EMPLOYERS AND THE BOTTOM LINE. EVERY EMPLOYER'S SUCCESS DEPENDS ON A HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE AND IF EMPLOYEES FEEL VALUED AND SUPPORTED THEY WILL ACHIEVE MORE.

This toolkit has been produced to help support the retail sector with building a mental wellbeing strategy, whatever shape, size, working practice and environment. The Government's independent review, **Thriving at Work**, includes six core and four enhanced standards for how organisations can better support employees' mental health.

By adopting these standards, the review suggests that all organisations, whatever their size will be:

- Equipped with the awareness and tools to both address and prevent mental ill-health which is caused or worsened by work
- Equipped to support people with a mental health condition to thrive, from recruitment and throughout the organisation
- Aware of how to get access to timely help to reduce sickness absence caused by mental health

This toolkit provides an overview to implementing the core standards and signposts to Mind's

"How to implement the Thriving at Work mental health standards in your workplace" for additional suggestions and advice.

It is important to see mental health at work as more than just supporting people with mental health problems. We all have mental health and supporting everyone's wellbeing will improve the performance of your organisation as a whole. Consider how you can most effectively support the mental health of your people across all areas of the organisation. You'll need to use a mix of approaches and channels to engage people in office based roles, on the shop floor, remote workers and drivers.

If your organisation is just beginning to take action, use this guide to help you take the first steps and make a long-term commitment to a better way of working. Don't constrain yourself to a plan of just one year. Organisations that are further along can use it to formalise and improve their current approach.

"At Asda, we have set out to challenge stigma and raise our mental health literacy, meaning we will replace ignorance with confidence, in order to create an environment for open conversations about our mental health.

We are committed to supporting our colleagues' mental health, so that they are able to come to work and feel at their best every day, and we ensure that our colleagues have access to information and relevant support services".

Derek Lawlor, Chief Merchandising Officer, Asda

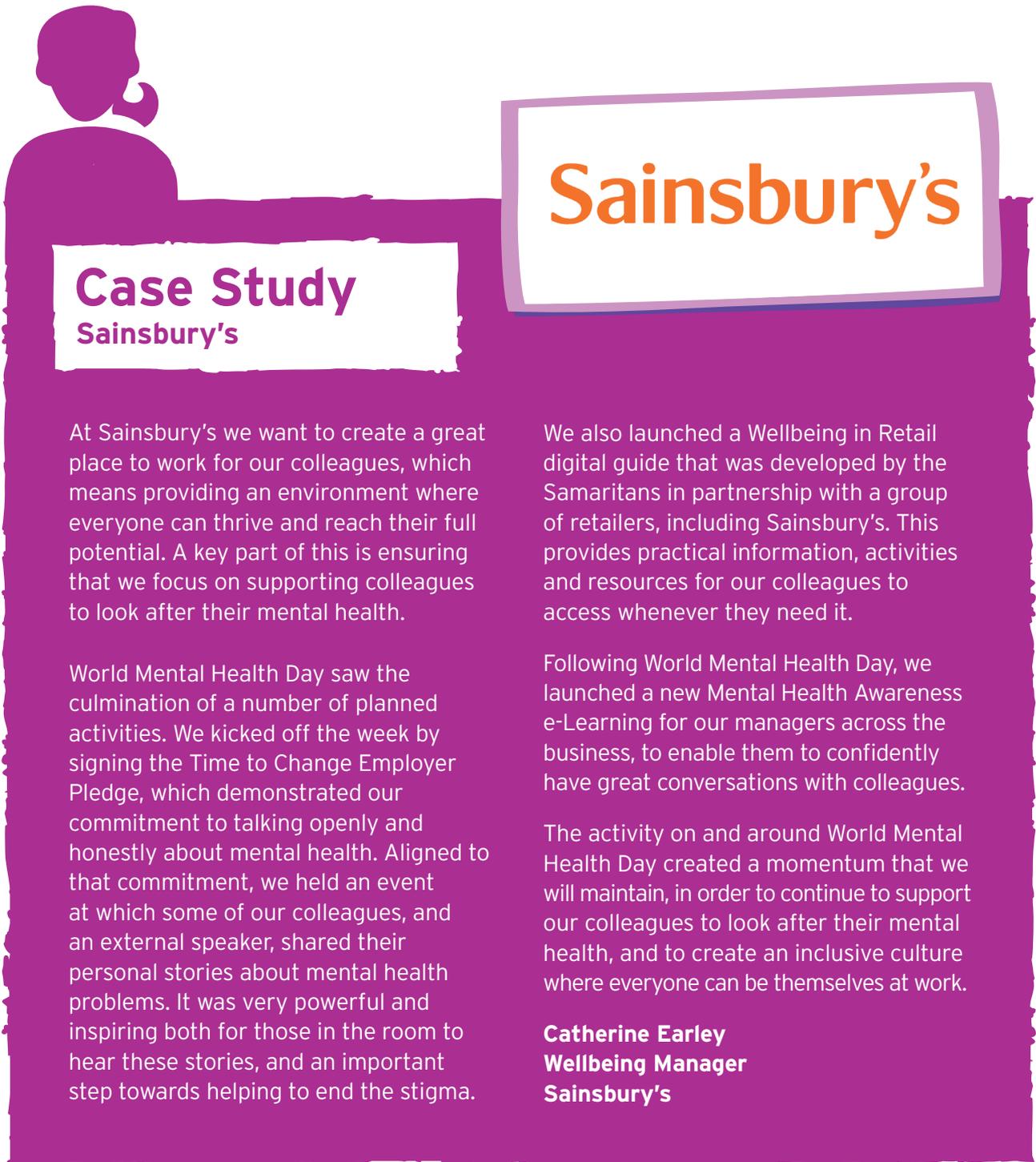


ASDA
Save money. Live better.

STANDARD ONE

PRODUCE, IMPLEMENT AND COMMUNICATE A MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK PLAN THAT ENCOURAGES AND PROMOTES GOOD MENTAL HEALTH OF ALL STAFF AND AN OPEN ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE.

Some retailers have used the Time to Change Employer Pledge to start or progress their journey because it can provide a structured plan to follow and is integrated with the Thriving at Work six core standards.



Case Study

Sainsbury's

Sainsbury's

At Sainsbury's we want to create a great place to work for our colleagues, which means providing an environment where everyone can thrive and reach their full potential. A key part of this is ensuring that we focus on supporting colleagues to look after their mental health.

World Mental Health Day saw the culmination of a number of planned activities. We kicked off the week by signing the Time to Change Employer Pledge, which demonstrated our commitment to talking openly and honestly about mental health. Aligned to that commitment, we held an event at which some of our colleagues, and an external speaker, shared their personal stories about mental health problems. It was very powerful and inspiring both for those in the room to hear these stories, and an important step towards helping to end the stigma.

We also launched a Wellbeing in Retail digital guide that was developed by the Samaritans in partnership with a group of retailers, including Sainsbury's. This provides practical information, activities and resources for our colleagues to access whenever they need it.

Following World Mental Health Day, we launched a new Mental Health Awareness e-Learning for our managers across the business, to enable them to confidently have great conversations with colleagues.

The activity on and around World Mental Health Day created a momentum that we will maintain, in order to continue to support our colleagues to look after their mental health, and to create an inclusive culture where everyone can be themselves at work.

Catherine Earley
Wellbeing Manager
Sainsbury's

To achieve lasting change within your workplace, it is important to create a plan of tangible and measured activity that is embedded at the heart of an employer's commitment.

In many retail workplaces, mental health is still a taboo subject and often employees are too afraid to speak to their employers, fearful of prejudice and discrimination. This stigma may lead to problems spiralling and reaching crisis point.

The **Time to Change Employer Pledge** has been helping employers to help break down the stigma and open up the conversations around mental health since 2009.

The Time to Change Employer Pledge can provide the foundations in the first year upon which to build your workplace wellbeing strategy. With access to free advice and resources, including invitations to masterclasses, champion training, communications and activities packs, it can be the building blocks upon which any retailer, whatever size, can build the support for their employees. Creating your plan is the first step towards better mental health at work.

In larger retailers, the mental health plan may be an organisation-wide policy or strategy on mental health. Smaller retailers may be less likely to have formal mental health policies in place. This means the plan can be woven into current procedures with different individuals responsible for each part.





Case Study

Tesco

At Tesco, we are committed to helping to make it easier for our 300,000 UK colleagues, as well as millions of shoppers, to live healthier lives. Our goal is to create the UK's leading workplace health programme, helping colleagues to be their best at work and at home.

In May 2016 we signed the Time to Change Pledge. We wanted to make a public commitment to taking action to tackle the stigma and discrimination around mental health in the workplace and hoped to inspire others to do the same. When we signed, we made it clear to colleagues that it was very much all of our plan - every individual, team and business area. We all needed to work together to make a change.

When signing the pledge, we used it as an opportunity to launch our colleague mental wellbeing plan, focused on little helps we could all take each day to support ourselves, each other and customers. The 3 areas of focus identified for the first year of the plan were:

- Raising awareness, inspiring and supporting colleagues
- Access to tools and resources to support mental wellbeing
- Learning for managers

The Time to Change Action Plan and the support we received from the Time To Change team was key in helping us sense check what we'd already done, the impact this had and then identify key

areas of future focus for our plan and continue guiding us in its development and evolution.

In signing the pledge, it got colleagues across all levels of the business talking about mental health. Senior leaders were active within this in helping normalise conversations around mental health - further cemented this year by the appointment of our first executive sponsor for mental wellbeing at Tesco.

We also saw an immediate increase in utilisation on existing tools, learning and resources. We were then able to use this as a platform to launch different elements of our plan, with colleagues being able to see how each element linked back to our commitment in the pledge. This has included the launch of a mental health policy, mental health awareness training for all colleagues, manager training, targeted campaigns to raise awareness of our resources and using our health months to continuously talk to colleagues about mental health.

Our relationship with Time to Change extended beyond just signing the pledge. We are proud to be involved with the Time to Change Retail Group, bringing together retailers to share learnings, experiences, ideas and supporting others on their journey.

Sarah Fox
Project Manager - Health & Wellness
Tesco

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN YOU ARE DEVELOPING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK PLAN

GET SENIOR LEADERS ON BOARD

Make a business case and obtain buy-in at a senior level. Here are our top tips for getting your employer involved:

ARRANGE A MEETING

- We recommend booking in a meeting with a key decision-maker (potentially someone in HR or someone on your Executive/Senior Leadership Team or if smaller retailer, the owner or franchiser) to discuss developing a workplace wellbeing strategy

HAVE STATISTICS ON HAND

- Refer to the infographics and statistical information above and as detailed above and the **Thriving at Work** report to produce information to help persuade your organisation to take mental health seriously.
- Collect data, if available, on your own organisation's absences due to poor mental health. However, be aware that research has shown that where employees feel that they will be stigmatised for their poor mental wellbeing, they may have provided an alternative reason for their absence.
- Use data from staff surveys, if applicable, about wellbeing and engagement.
- Demonstrate the cost benefits of a workplace wellbeing strategy eg: positive impact on productivity, presenteeism, engagement using information from the **"How to implement the Thriving at Work mental health standards in your workplace"**.

HAVE SOME IDEAS READY TO SHOW HOW YOU CAN RAISE THE AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

- There are lots of different things you can do as part of a wellbeing strategy and it will be easier to persuade your employer if you have some concrete ideas on what to put in your plan. See Core Standard Two of the Thriving at Work guidelines mentioned above for examples.

CONSIDER THE CHANNELS YOU CAN UTILISE TO COMMUNICATE WITH STAFF

- Decide where you can display information about support organisations to make it accessible to all employees, including those workers who do not have access to computers at work (**Support Details**). For example, for drivers, you could use windscreen discs that provide details of your Employee Assistance Programme if applicable or details on posters on toilet doors or on notice boards in distribution centres etc. You could put a dedicated page to mental wellbeing on your organisation's intranet or create a Yammer page.

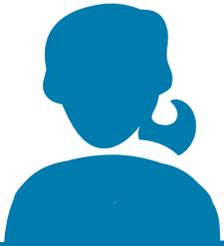
DECIDE HOW TO PRESENT YOUR IDEAS

- Use a PowerPoint presentation and embed your own approach drawing from suggestions throughout this guide.
- Produce a written business case and present in a meeting with key senior leaders explaining the key points verbally and agree date to follow up.

For more ideas on what to include in your mental health at work plan, refer to the **"How to implement the Thriving at Work mental health standards in your workplace"**.

STANDARD TWO

DEVELOP MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AMONG EMPLOYEES BY MAKING INFORMATION, TOOLS AND SUPPORT ACCESSIBLE.



Case Study Asda



At Asda, creating a truly inclusive culture that enables our colleagues to bring their best and true selves to work every day is intrinsic to our organisation. Wellbeing and mental health awareness are pivotal, and we are focused on activity to help make this vision a reality.

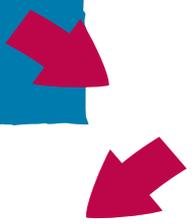
We are working with Rethink Mental Illness to deliver bespoke training around mental ill health, which looks to equip our managers to confidently support colleagues' mental health and challenge the stigma existing around mental ill health. It is a full one-day course, with colleagues then cascading during a one-hour workshop in their area. This initial

training will see 1,100 colleagues attend the full day, who through their cascade reach a further 12,000 of our salaried managers. This is designed to raise mental health literacy, so that colleagues can recognise signs of mental ill health in themselves and others, ultimately seeking relevant support.

We provide guidance to our line managers through a mental health policy that helps them to have conversations, introducing a Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan template and signpost to external support.

Some of our mental health awareness training tackles unconscious bias, focusing on how small behaviours can affect our ability to have the right environment for colleagues to speak up when they are struggling.

Working with colleagues, suppliers and charities we build awareness and provide practical tools to raise awareness on set days, such as Time to Talk, Wellbeing



Week and World Mental Health Day. We want colleagues to know there are resources to help them, and often having a conversation with someone outside of work can encourage openness.

Our Wellbeing Colleague Resource Group (staff network), made up of passionate colleagues across all areas and levels of our business support this agenda. There is a particular focus on breaking the stigma attached to mental health and creating time to talk. Colleagues in the group regularly get involved in sharing their experiences of mental health and how they have been supported.

This empowers colleagues to feel able to be open by seeing talks, watching films or reading stories about how they can be themselves at work.

Core to our focus is the view that we all have mental health that may fluctuate along a continuum, rather than just mental ill health. This approach makes the conversation accessible to all our colleagues have embraced this.

We know that our colleagues cannot be at their best if they do not feel supported in being who they are, especially when experiencing difficult times. Therefore, the conversations around mental health and wellbeing, to enable a culture where stigma no longer exists will remain front and centre. When our colleagues are at their best by being themselves, our customers also experience Asda at its best.

Katie Wynn
Diversity & Inclusion Manager
Asda



Think about how you can build mental health literacy by developing your employees' knowledge around wellbeing in order that they are able to support their own mental health and access support and raise awareness across your workforce.

This will require different approaches for different areas: distribution; shop floor; back office; stores etc and it may not be effective to use the same strategies in each area. Having different locations where staff may not have the opportunity to log-on to a computer or have their own e-mail address can limit the resources that you use.

Utilising wellbeing champions to support activities in each of the different areas can be really useful here as can the use of apps which can be accessed from an employee's own device.

KEY ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER:

- a) Have a dedicated intranet section and/or notice board on wellbeing for support information - a noticeboard can be at each store and site and maintained by champions.
- b) Use an app that is already available to purchase or create your own, depending on budget that enables you to post messages about mental health, activities, campaigns etc The app can also include links to support information both internally and externally. Many apps may have a cost per employee and can be used for communication outside of workplace wellbeing such as corporate messages. The app can also be used for staff to monitor their own wellbeing.
- c) Ensure that employees have access to information about mental wellbeing (**Information & Support**).
- d) Use huddles before shifts to communication information about campaigns or support information.
- e) Celebrating key dates in the **Mental Health Calendar** - thinking about how your stores, distribution centres, warehouses can use resource materials to raise the awareness - each will be different. For example, the windscreen discs on cars with information; canteen stands, top tip cards left in staff rooms, communal areas, messages on payslips etc.

Space is often a challenge for retailers especially in areas such as railway stations, airports or small kiosks which is where the app may be more appropriate to communicate.
- f) Provide mental health awareness training to staff and ensuring that staff are able to access it. Embed mental health in your induction and all training provided. This could be by e-learning and/or face to face training.

Again this can be a challenge where you have many sites and limited or no access to computers. Short training clips on an app can be useful or training can be provided to managers who then cascade the information to employees in modular format ie short bursts. This could be during catch ups or merge with induction and health and safety training.

- g) Develop a wellbeing champions' network which can help you carry out activities in different stores and different parts of the business, not just head office once you have your support information and signposting in place. Utilise the information on the Time to Change site for help and support with this: **Wellbeing Champions**.
- h) Run internal communication campaigns taking into account how employees will access the information depending on their role (customer facing, drivers, warehouse roles). Some retailers use Yammer or an internal social network to communicate.
- i) Think about how you can share stories to encourage employees to speak openly about mental health. This could be done via internal social websites, intranets, noticeboards, invite speakers with lived experience to talk to employees at lunch and learns. See below.
- j) Use resources produced by mental health organisations such as:
 - Time to Change website and **TTC Resources**
 - Mental Health At Work Website: **www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk**
 - **Samaritans: Samaritans workplace resources** which includes a specific e-learning module for employees within the retail sector: **Samaritans Wellbeing in Retail**

Refer to the Thriving at Work Guide to Implementing the Core Standards for further examples: **How to implement Thriving at Work Core Standards**.

STANDARD THREE

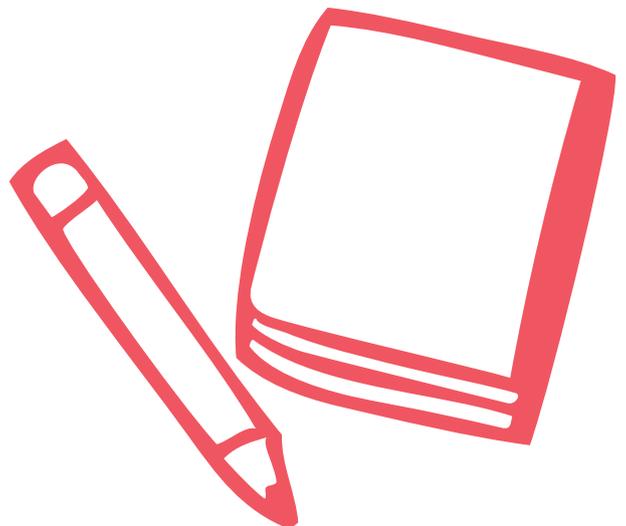
ENCOURAGE OPEN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH AND THE SUPPORT AVAILABLE WHEN EMPLOYEES ARE STRUGGLING, DURING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND AT REGULAR INTERVALS THROUGHOUT EMPLOYMENT, WITH APPROPRIATE ADJUSTMENTS OFFERED TO EMPLOYEES WHO REQUIRE THEM.

Creating a culture in which employees feel comfortable talking about their mental wellbeing as well as their physical wellbeing is really important.

Being able to have an open conversation with a colleague means that strategies can be put in place to support the employee rather than having to react when the situation becomes a crisis. This is especially important where you have many different sites, with different demographics.

EXAMPLES OF WAYS IN WHICH RETAILERS CAN ENCOURAGE A CULTURE OF OPENNESS INCLUDE:

- Utilise the campaign **'This is Me'**.
- Share stories from the Time to Change **website**.
- Ask senior leaders to write a blog about their own mental wellbeing and how they manage this. Share via your communication channels.
- Produce a talking heads film of employees/ champions willing to talk about how they will support open conversations.
- Put together a collage of 'stories' from the above and put on a noticeboard accessible by staff in their breaks or on backs of toilet doors, on lockers, in staff car parks, bicycle rack areas.
- Sign the Time to Change Employer Pledge.
- Implement **Wellness Action Plans** for all staff These are a great way for employees to have a conversation with their manager about what keeps them well at work.
- Review your flexible working policy to determine whether working hours can be adjusted to allow flexibility for employees.
- Consider adjustments to help employees remain in work whilst managing poor mental wellbeing and to help them return to work.
- Have early conversations with employees about their mental and physical wellbeing and follow up.



ASK TWICE

There are lots of ways you can get your organisation talking about mental health.

With the average person saying that they are fine 14 times a day and 1 in 4 people experiencing a mental health problem each year - sometimes a colleague might say he is fine when he's not. The **Ask Twice** campaign encourages everyone to simply ask twice; to demonstrate compassion and show that they have time to invest in listening and supporting a friend.

By creating a workplace culture in which employees feel they can be open and honest about their mental health we can ensure that staff are supported before they reach crisis.

These bright and visual resources are perfect for putting up in staff rooms, common areas - even the back of toilet room doors! Whilst our YouTube videos are easy to share on internal social channels, intranet pages and in staff newsletters.

Download these by visiting the Time to Change website: **Ask Twice Resources**.



HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE AT WORK ABOUT THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

CHOOSE AN APPROPRIATE PLACE

Somewhere private and quiet where the person feels comfortable and equal. Possibly a neutral space outside of the workplace. If they are a remote worker, consider whether going to where they are may help.

ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO TALK

People can find it difficult to talk about their mental health but it helps to have an open culture where conversations about mental health are routine and normalised. Ask simple, open and non-judgmental questions and let people explain in their own words how their mental health problem manifests, the triggers, how it impacts on their work and what support they need.

DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

Don't try to guess what symptoms an employee might have and how these might affect their ability to do their job - many people are able to manage their mental health and perform their role to a high standard but may require support measures when experiencing a difficult period.

LISTEN TO PEOPLE AND RESPOND FLEXIBLY

Everyone's experience of a mental health problem is different so treat people as individuals and focus on the person, not the problem. Adapt your support to suit the individual and involve people as much as possible in finding solutions to any work related difficulties they're experiencing. Remember effective workplace adjustments are often quite individual but needn't be costly or require huge changes.

BE HONEST AND CLEAR

If there are specific grounds for concern, like high absence levels or impaired performance, it's important to address these at an early stage.

ENSURE CONFIDENTIALITY

People need to be reassured of confidentiality. It's sensitive information and should be shared with as few people as possible. Create strict policies to ensure this. Discuss with the individual what information they would like shared and with whom.

DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

Work with your employee to develop an individual action plan which identifies the signs of their mental health problem, triggers for stress, the possible impact on their work, who to contact in a crisis, and what support people need. The plan should include an agreed time to review the support measures to see if they're working.

ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO SEEK ADVICE AND SUPPORT

People should speak to their GP about available support from the NHS such as talking therapy. If your organisation has an Employee Assistance Programme it may be able to arrange counselling. The Mind Infoline can signpost people on to support and our network of local Minds across the country can also help source advice and support.

SEEK ADVICE AND SUPPORT YOURSELF

The Mind Infoline and local Minds can provide information to employers too. Occupational Health (if you have it) can provide tailored advice to support both employers and employees. If relationships have become strained or confrontational mediation can help - some local Minds run mediation services, as do ACAS. Small businesses can access the free Health for Work Adviceline service provided by NHS occupational health services.

REASSURE PEOPLE

People may not always be ready to talk straight away so it's important you outline what support is available, tell them your door is always open and let them know you'll make sure they get the support they need.

STANDARD FOUR

PROVIDE YOUR EMPLOYEES WITH GOOD WORKING CONDITIONS AND ENSURE THEY HAVE A HEALTHY WORK/LIFE BALANCE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT.

Employees will have different opinions about what they view as being 'good working conditions' but there are a number of areas that retailers can look at to create an environment in which they feel able to have a healthy work/life balance.

Ensuring that your policies are inclusive of people with poor mental wellbeing and do not discriminate against them will help to show employees that your organisation is serious about looking after their wellbeing.

WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN CREATE A POSITIVE WORKPLACE ARE:

- Create a space to have regular catch ups and one-to-ones. In some shops or stores this may be difficult and it may therefore be important to be creative in how to build space for this. For example:
 - a walking meeting outside (weather permitting!).
 - Chat over a coffee outside of the workplace if appropriate, or in a quiet part of a canteen.
 - Create a space where one-to-ones can be held even if this is a small room but where you will not be disturbed.
 - Enable managers to create space and time to catch up with staff. If this is a regional manager, ensure that they let staff know when they will be at the store and enable them to arrange to meet with you, if needed.
- Include reference to mental wellbeing in team meetings or morning huddles to normalise the conversation.
- Provide information about mental health and signposting as stated above and put in places where it can be seen eg: toilet doors, staff room notice boards, canteen/kitchen, locker space or via an app.
- Flexible working can provide employees with some control of how and when they work and support other demands that they may be facing outside of work. Consider adjustments to the standard shift patterns.
 - Look at what opportunities there are for employees to develop their work and ensure that work is meaningful to them.
 - Be aware of what personal issues may be affecting staff and have policies in place to support managers in dealing with these.
 - Provide training for line managers to provide them with the tools to have open conversations with their team about wellbeing.

Refer to the Thriving at Work Guide to Implementing the Core Standards for further examples: **'How to implement the Thriving at Work mental health standards in your workplace'**.

Case Study

John Lewis Partnership Working Well campaign

As an employee-owned business, we have a responsibility to look after our 81,500 Partners who work for the John Lewis Partnership. We're committed to driving a commercially successful business which offers satisfying and meaningful jobs and supports our people to lead healthy, fulfilled lives. It's one of the key performance objectives for our leaders, alongside our financial objectives.

We know that what's going on in peoples' personal lives doesn't stop when you come into work, so we want to enable our Partners to feel well, enjoy life and have support when they need it - both in and out of work.

The bedrock of wellbeing at work is creating a healthy and inclusive workplace. This starts with meaningful work, empowering managers, providing opportunities for growth and supporting work-life balance. We've been refreshing our focus on good people management, training 8,000 people managers this year. At work, we've been supporting our Partners to develop on the job through apprenticeships. Outside of work we pay a subsidy so that any Partner can pursue their passion and learn something new - from learning French to learning how to paint. We also have five hotels which Partners can stay in at a subsidised rate, with 84,000 overnight stays last year.

Social connection is good for wellbeing, so we encourage our Partners to take time out together and just under 13,000 of our Partners belong to our clubs and societies.

JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP

JOHN LEWIS
& PARTNERS

WAITROSE
& PARTNERS

Our business has over 400 different sites across the UK. To ensure we reach as many Partners as possible, we've developed a network of local Wellbeing Champions who engage Partners and organise activities locally to look after their wellbeing.

We also actively encourage our Partners to look after themselves and their health and wellbeing, taking a preventative approach. For example, all of our Partners have access to the clinically-backed mental health app Unmind. The app has exercises and guides to help our Partners to proactively look after their mental wellbeing on a daily basis.

We also know that it can be hard for our Partners who want to help colleagues struggling with their mental health but don't know what to do. That's why we've worked with six other retailers and the Samaritans to develop an online Wellbeing in Retail guide, specifically targeted at those working in retail with advice on peer-to-peer support. We've also trained our Executive team and 2,000 line managers in mental health awareness, so that understanding and inclusivity runs right through our business and is set from the top.

Finally, we also offer Partners early help and support when things go wrong in life. We have free access to comprehensive in-house and third party medical, emotional and financial support for our Partners when they need it. Our in-house Partnership Health Services team are CBT-trained and work with Partners with a mental health condition and their managers to ensure they are supported at work. Our Partner Support team also offers a confidential listening service as well as ongoing advice for Partners in emotional or financial difficulty. We've found that having an in-house service, provided by Partners who've worked in and know our business, means we can tailor the support for our Partners.

Nick Davison,
Head of Health and Leisure Services
John Lewis Partnership

STANDARD FIVE

PROMOTE EFFECTIVE PEOPLE MANAGEMENT TO ENSURE ALL EMPLOYEES HAVE A REGULAR CONVERSATION ABOUT THEIR HEALTH AND WELLBEING WITH THEIR LINE MANAGER, SUPERVISOR OR ORGANISATIONAL LEADER AND TRAIN AND SUPPORT LINE MANAGERS IN EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.

Managers play an extremely important role in supporting mental wellbeing in the workplace and can help to create an environment in which their team feel able to speak openly about how they are feeling. It is therefore important for retailers to provide managers with the tools and skills that they need to support their staff.

The **How to implement the Thriving at Work mental health standards in your workplace Guide** has useful information to support this and you will see from the case studies in this toolkit that providing training enables managers to spot signs and be able to have supportive conversations with their team.

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- Provide training on mental wellbeing and stress management which includes how to spot the signs of poor mental health and how to have supportive conversations. Think about the format that will work well in your each of your work environments and the time and space available to run the training. Mind provides a range of **Training courses** on mental health awareness in the workplace including e-learning. There will also be many other providers local to you which you can access including training of Mental Health First Aid and mental health awareness.
- Have clear guidelines for managers on managing mental wellbeing issues. See the Mind website for ideas: **Mind Resources**.
- The website **www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk** also provides a wealth of information with links to training, toolkits and case studies which can help managers to develop mental health literacy and awareness.
- Mind and The Royal Foundation have put together a collection of free resources for small and medium sized organisation to help build mental health awareness, provide tools for employees to look after themselves and how to support each other. This is a useful tool for smaller sized retailers: **Mental Health at Work e-learning**.
- Your policies can help support your managers and provide them with the confidence to have conversations with their staff. Normalising the conversation and creating space to ask questions and raise issues is key.
- Encourage and support managers who demonstrate positive behaviour in their support of staff with their mental wellbeing.
- Determine what budget you have to source training and if this is limited, look at the resources that are mentioned above which can be accessed for free.

Refer to the Thriving at Work Guide to Implementing the Core Standards for further examples: **How to implement the Thriving at Work mental health standards in your workplace.**

Case Study

Pets at Home

pets
at home

When I took on my role I was asked to develop a wellbeing strategy for Pets at Home and when developing a new engagement survey for the business I seized the opportunity to ask our colleagues what they wanted. I also reviewed our absence figures and our biggest reason for people taking time off work was mental health. I also thought about the things that I had been through and how I got help or didn't get help when I was at my worst.

We put together an action plan for the Time to Change Employer Pledge and once this was signed off, and I had buy in from the senior leaders including our CEO I knew that we had already achieved something huge - they all wanted to make a difference. My inbox was flooded that evening with stories about all the things they had been through. We started our journey by talking about mental health in weekly communications: we have daily shoals (shoals of fish, we do that at pets at home).

We have every manager across the business with mental health on the agenda in every meeting. We decided to attend MIND's in house training courses and then role them out across the business with managers first and then colleagues.

We also wanted to have wellbeing champions in all areas of the business, another route for colleagues to reach out to someone who isn't their manager. We started supporting all national mental health days and we went out to the whole business, with Peter Pritchard our CEO and shared our pledge.

We had some challenges. We have a real mix of sectors, so being able to tailor everything we do to all of them was hard so we needed to keep it simple: one message for all, we weren't training people to be counsellors and we never will. We wanted to create an environment where people felt that they could speak to anyone, and everyone knew the places to signpost people to get help. We continued to set out doing what we said we would do (which is one of our company values).

Success was simple for us, People were having conversations about mental health, people have started being honest out how they are feeling, Managers feel like they can support people and sign post them to get help. I feel like over the last year we have laid the foundations, and now we are creating an environment where people feel like it's ok not to be ok and they can admit that and go get the help they need.

We also have various surveys throughout the year we send to our colleagues, on the one in March we asked questions about wellbeing and colleagues were telling us how great it is what we have done so far. I'm really excited to continue this journey.

Francesca Davis
Group Engagement & Wellbeing Partner
Pets at Home



STANDARD SIX

ROUTINELY MONITOR EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING BY UNDERSTANDING AVAILABLE DATA, TALKING TO EMPLOYEES AND UNDERSTANDING RISK FACTORS.

Developing a clear picture of the mental wellbeing across the whole of your organisation enables you to understand what impacts on your staff's mental wellbeing and how well you are supporting them. It also enables you to assess whether your approach is effective and supports you to plan further improvements.

As mentioned at the beginning of this toolkit, you may decide to focus on a few key areas early on in your workplace wellbeing strategy and monitoring its effectiveness as it develops will be key to helping you to understand how to progress your plan going forward.

The best way is to think about how you could adapt the tools you already use, such as staff surveys, sickness absence data and one-to-ones/appraisals. Including relevant questions into these existing tools will help you to build a comprehensive picture, without creating extra work.

If you are a small/medium sized retailer and do not collect sickness absence information, you can start to do this and use the ideas provided below.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING METHODS TO CONSIDER USING:

STAFF SURVEYS

A staff survey can be a great tool to capture information about mental wellbeing. If you do not already have one, consider introducing one to measure information such as workload, support of leadership and management, opportunities for personal development and internal communication, whether employees are currently or have experienced poor mental wellbeing at work and whether they sought support.

Do you know how many of your staff have poor mental wellbeing? A question in your staff survey can be a good way of capturing this data, reinforced by the message that your organisation will respond proactively and reassurance that their personal information will be kept confidential.

A pulse survey (a short and specific survey comprising only about 5-10 questions) could be used to focus on mental wellbeing or monitoring employee attitudes towards mental wellbeing. These could be run before you implement a mental health strategy/plan and then 12 months later.

Example questions could include:

- How comfortable would you feel speaking to your line manager about your mental health?
- How comfortable would you feel speaking to a colleague about your mental health?
- If you have called in sick due to a mental health problem in the last year, did you tell your manager the real reason or give another reason for your absence?



Case Study

Co-op Retail Workplace Wellbeing Toolkit



Over the last two years, we have been developing a wellbeing strategy and during this time we have listened to our people to determine our key priorities, looking at our biggest risks first. We are developing a manager's dashboard which will help provide important information for all managers across the business and in each of our sites. We see this as a really important tool to enable our managers to support their teams and look at patterns of absence, reasons and also providing us with data to help determine our future direction with regards to workplace wellbeing.

We have a Manager's Helpline (ER Services), staffed by the Employee Relations professionals who are part of our Co-op Service Centre. Managers are able to access support and we're able to obtain a great deal of insight from the data collated and by listening to the team about what they see day-to-day. It enables us to see how mental health may be impacting on long term absence, disciplinary and grievance processes and also under-performance. We spend time with the ER Services leadership team to drill a bit deeper and obtain an in-depth view of the mental health landscape. We have seen from this information that 1 in 4 cases through ER Services had underlying mental health problems at their root. We saw that managers were generally raising concerns as performance issues and not related to mental health.

This information has led us to launch a mental health toolkit for managers comprising educational material, guides on how to have a conversation and an online learning module. We then built a second toolkit based on supporting mental health related absence with guidance on:

- how and when to keep in touch
- examples of adjustments that may help the employee to return to work
- the role of occupational health and
- signposting to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

We recognise the importance of collecting data about mental health and we continue to develop the tools necessary to ensure we help support all of our people.

One of the things we have found is the importance of sharing ideas about how to support staff with their mental health with other retailers. In a sector that is often very competitive, it is refreshing to have worked with a number of retailers on the new Samaritans Wellbeing in the Retail tool and understand the challenges and successes that others have experienced.

Paul Caudwell
Health Wellbeing Manager
Co-op

TAKE STOCK AT A TEAM LEVEL

You could carry out mental health audits by holding a session at a team meeting and ask your team:

- What they think a mentally healthy team looks like.
- What the team already does well to promote good mental wellbeing and how your organisation can build on this.
- Discuss what can be done on anything that is having a negative impact on the team's mental wellbeing.
- What does the team have control over with regards to the above three questions which can link to your action plan. Areas that the team has no control over can be acknowledged and agreed whether this needs to be raised at another level or needs to be mitigated against.
- What the team can influence and this can be captured as part of your action plan.
- Discuss what triggers poor mental wellbeing in the workplace - see the **How to implement the Thriving at Work mental health standards in your workplace** for more information.

TAKE STOCK AT AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Regular one to one meetings may be challenging within some retail environments where space is at a premium (see Core Standard Four in the link below for ideas to overcome these barriers) but creating time and space to have a catch up will help to build trust and provide employees with a change to raise problems at an early stage and thereby provide an opportunity to manage it before it becomes a crisis.

See the **How to implement the Thriving at Work mental health standards in your workplace** for more information.



CHECKLIST

THE START

- Look at the **Thriving at Work** Review.
- Read the introduction of this toolkit and have an understanding of why you are focussing on mental wellbeing in your organisation
- Meet with other individuals who share your passion around mental health and form a wellbeing steering group.
- Determine which Standards you will focus on for the first year.

STANDARD ONE: MENTAL HEALTH PLAN

- Use the Time to Change Employer Pledge Action Plan as a structured format with which to begin your work.
- Collect and put together the relevant data and ideas that will help form your mental wellbeing strategy in a format to discuss with your senior executive team.

STANDARD TWO: RAISING AWARENESS

- Put together activities that you can run across all of the organisation to increase the mental health literacy of your staff.
- Involve representatives from the different areas of the business (eg shopfloor, warehouse, offices, drivers etc) to generate ideas.
- Include headline activities in your mental health plan.

STANDARD THREE: ENCOURAGE OPEN CONVERSATIONS

- Agree what activities in Standard Three will work within each of your working environments and timelines for rolling these out.
- Utilise resources and campaigns already out there that you can engage with.
- Encourage your senior team/owner to talk about mental wellbeing.

STANDARD FOUR: GOOD WORKING CONDITIONS

- Ensure signposting for mental health support is easily accessible to all employees.
- Ensure there are adequate spaces for one to ones/supervisions to be held on or off site.
- Review policies to ensure a parity between mental and physical wellbeing.

STANDARD FIVE: PROMOTE EFFECTIVE PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

- Research the training and tools that your organisation can provide to enable your line managers to support their team with their mental wellbeing

STANDARD SIX: ROUTINELY MONITOR EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Identify key measures and the frequency with which you can monitor and execute data capture activities in order to obtain these measures, eg survey, analyse and review data for trends and priority areas for intervention.

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