

TRAILBLAZING FIRMS LEAD THE WAY ON MENTAL HEALTH

EMMA MAMO IS HEAD OF WORKPLACE WELLBEING AT MENTAL HEALTH CHARITY MIND, WHICH PROVIDES ADVICE AND SUPPORT TO EMPOWER ANYONE EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM



Workplace wellbeing is increasingly at the top of employers' agendas, and rightly so. After all, we all have mental health just as we all have physical health, and it fluctuates from good to poor, where we

can suffer from issues including stress, depression and anxiety. It's important for all employers to create an environment where staff feel able to talk openly about stress and mental health at work and to encourage a clear work-life balance as much as possible.

In the last few years, we've seen employers make great strides when it comes to tackling stress and supporting the mental wellbeing of their staff, including those with a diagnosed mental health problem. In recognition of some of the good work happening, last year **Mind** launched its Workplace Wellbeing Index – a benchmark of best policy and practice when it comes to employers putting in place initiatives to support and promote good mental health at work.

In its first year, we've seen 30 organisations – of various sizes and across a range of sectors – take part in the Index. We surveyed 15,000 employees from employers such as **Deloitte**, the **Environment Agency**, **Jaguar Land Rover** and **PepsiCo**, and found that, overall, staff mental health was good. Just over one in ten (12 per cent) said their mental health was poor. But for those staff who said their mental health wasn't good, four in five felt their workplace was a contributory factor. In fact, 80 per cent of employees said that their poor mental health was due to problems at work (26 per cent) or a combination of problems at work and outside work (54 per cent).

The data also shows how important it is that, when someone opens up about poor mental health, they feel supported; and that any wellbeing initiatives are available, promoted and easy to access. Of those staff who had disclosed poor mental health at work (2,200 employees), just over half (53 per cent) said

they felt supported, and 72 per cent said they'd been made aware of the support tools such as Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs), counselling, staff support networks or informal buddying systems.

These figures highlight the good work and creative initiatives that employers are offering to promote and support positive mental health, from hosting wellness webinars and appointing mental health champions to providing free meditation sessions for staff.

The results also show a discrepancy between how well managers feel they support staff versus how well supported employees feel. Only half of respondents (54 per cent) felt that their line manager supports their mental health, yet three in four line managers (73 per cent) said they'd feel confident in supporting a member of staff experiencing a mental health issue.

“FORTUNATELY, FORWARD-THINKING EMPLOYERS ARE MAKING MENTAL HEALTH A PRIORITY”

There's still a problem with employees feeling able to talk about their mental health, as only one in four (26 per cent) of all respondents said they would be likely to seek support from their manager if they were experiencing a mental health problem.

Our research shows that mental health problems are very common in the workplace. Fortunately, forward-thinking employers are making mental health a priority and we're delighted to recognise and celebrate those who've taken part in our Workplace Wellbeing Index.

In our first year, we've seen good practice right across the board, from each and every one of the 30 pioneering employers that took part. The Index also provides all employers that have participated with recommendations on specific areas for improvement.

Employers keen to find out more about next year's Index can register by emailing work@mind.org.uk, visiting www.mind.org.uk/workplace, or through Mind's LinkedIn page. ■