

mhaps

Mental Health Awareness in the Public Sector



coming together
to improve
working lives



introduction

Mental health is an integral part of how we feel about our role in work, how well we perform it and how well we interact with our colleagues and service users.

In the public sector the negative impact of poor mental health is one of the biggest threats to the wellbeing of our employees.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report that one in four adults in the UK will experience a mental health condition in any given year, estimating the cost of poor mental health to the UK economy at £70 billion per year, equating to 4.5% of GDP. Presenteeism and absenteeism problems are identified as the main causes of productivity loss and the main reasons for these substantial costs.

We have all experienced an increasing trend in sickness absence related to poor mental health. This coupled with the impact of austerity, has served to raise the profile of and the need for effective stress management in the public sector.

background

Since 2010 Knowsley Council has extensively trialled and piloted a number of resources designed to manage stress at work. We have analysed, tracked and trended sickness absence due to poor mental health using a formula designed to highlight the true cost and prevalence of mental ill health within our own organisation.

Our efforts have contributed towards a significant reduction in sickness absence due to stress, and led us to develop a public sector shared resource. For the first time, this will allow us as public sector organisations, to share learnings, benchmark against one another and work collaboratively to consistently improve in the way we promote positive mental health and support employees who are experiencing stress or mental ill health.



Helping
Great Britain
work well

mental health awareness in the public sector (mhaps)

In line with Helping Great Britain Work Well, the HSE's five-year strategy to further improve the UK's safety record, we have developed MHAPS (Mental Health Awareness in the Public Sector) a national website resource for use by public sector organisations across the UK.

For the cost of approximately one stress related absence, the resource, aimed at achieving statutory compliance, sharing best practice and raising awareness of mental health issues, allows subscribing organisations access to:

- a bespoke public sector employee survey designed to identify and manage individual and organisational stress. Surveys can be completed on PC, mobile app or printed and posted;
- instant employee and organisational results with resolution plans created to address the issues raised by employees in the completed survey;
- benchmarking of results against similar organisations on a national and/or regional basis;
- benchmarking of sickness absence through stress/mental health issues regardless of organisation size, using a formula called SFR (Stress Frequency Ratio);
- information, support and advice for employees and managers in relation to mental health and stress;
- ongoing advice and support for the organisational management of stress via a live chat facility;
- shared policies, procedures and guidance relating to mental health and stress;
- key contact details for subscriber organisations – to facilitate collaboration;
- attend an annual conference – to evaluate outcomes of the previous year and discuss priorities for the forthcoming year; and
- advertise their own stress/mental health training opportunities and resources to other subscriber members.

what can organisations do?

Organisations need to do their part to build a resilient workforce. However, it requires a commitment from the top and needs to be part of an organisation's broader mental health strategy. Using the MHAPS resource can assist your organisation to:

- identify and reduce the sources of stress;
- review policies, processes and practices;
- survey employees about stress and mental health in the workplace;
- reduce stigma associated with poor mental health;
- share training packages designed to prevent poor mental health/stress;
- implement a common standard; and
- promote good mental health in the workplace.

Further information

If you would like more information about MHAPS, please contact Knowsley Council's Occupational Health and Safety Team:

 0151 443 3611

 MHAPS@knowsley.gov.uk

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