Spotlight on...
mental health

CONSIDERATE CONSTRUCTORS

The Considerate Constructors Scheme's 'Spotlight on...' initiative focuses on different areas associated with improving the image of construction, and raises awareness among registered sites, companies and suppliers about the issues and how to help.

Spotlight on... mental health

'Spotlight on… mental health' aims to raise awareness of how mental health can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, religion or ethnicity and can cause stress, anxiety and depression.

The **World Health Organisation defines** 'mental health' as "a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and are able to make a contribution to their community." Unfortunately, many people suffer from poor mental health which affects their overall wellbeing, including their physical health and their ability to cope with day-to-day life.

Mental ill health is when someone develops a diagnosable problem related to their mental health, such as an anxiety disorder, depression, or an eating disorder, or experiences less severe symptoms such as low mood or mild anxiety which could worsen if ignored. Stress is a fact of life for many people, but it can also be the cause of/the result of mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and eating disorders.

The workforce is any organisation's biggest asset, so it is important to look after your team's wellbeing as poor mental health can result in low morale, poor timekeeping, lack of motivation, poor productivity and decision making, in addition to increased illness and absence from work.

Mental ill health can not only have an impact upon work performance and personal lives, but also impact people physically through poor physical health including high blood pressure, stomach ulcers and increased risk of heart attack as well as risk of drug and alcohol abuse.

In the construction industry, stress, anxiety and depression can often develop from heavy workloads, long working hours, travel, family separation, fear of redundancy and job insecurity, financial and budgeting pressures, tight deadlines and high risk activities. The male dominated nature of construction and the stereotypical image of the tough male who does not show emotion can lead to people feeling alone and not voicing their struggles.

Mental health is indeed a pressing issue for the construction industry. **Construction News' 2017 'Mind Matters' campaign** drew attention to the severity and scale of mental illness in construction. As the industry continues to speak out about the issue and share best practice on addressing mental illness, construction is coming to the forefront of a national conversation about mental health.

It is important for employers to recognise the problem and support their employees in offering guidance, raising awareness and ensuring that people do not feel ashamed or embarrassed to seek help.

Facts and figures

The statistics below demonstrate the scale of the issue of mental health in the construction industry and wider society. Please note there are some figures readers may find upsetting.

- 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem in any given year (Good Day at Work Annual Report 2014/2015)

- 9 out of 10 people who experience mental health problems say they face stigma and discrimination as a result (Good Day at Work Annual Report 2014/2015)

- 1 in 4 construction workers have considered suicide (Construction News, 2017)

- In 2016/17, 12.5 million working days were lost to work-related stress, depression or anxiety, an average of 23.8 days lost per case (Health and Safety Executive, 2017)

- Work-related stress, depression and anxiety is estimated to cost construction employers £178 million per annum, equating to £15,000 per case (Institution of Civil Engineers & Loughborough University, 2018)

- A construction worker is more likely to die of suicide than they are from a fall from height (Stop. Make a Change, 2017)

- People working in construction are 63% more likely to die by suicide than the national average (Office of National Statistics, 2011-2015)

- In 2016/17 there were 526,000 cases of work-related stress, depression or anxiety, a rate of 1,610 per 100,000 workers (Health and Safety Executive, 2017)

Law and legislation

Mental health is often included as part of the larger topic of health and safety at work, which is covered under legislation.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

This regulation requires employers to assess work related risks, including stress. The regulations also state that employers should undertake risk assessments for all employees and take steps to prevent health and safety risks and continuously monitor health and wellbeing. Find out more **here**.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

The act ensures employers responsible for the wellbeing of their workforce and places a duty of care on employers to take measures to control risks. This act also considers the health of employees returning to work after an illness or length of absence, to ensure that employees' health is not made worse by the work environment. Find out more **here.**

Mental Health Act 2007

Amended the Mental Health Act 1983, setting out

the legal framework for diagnosing and treating mental health disorders. This includes the process for 'sectioning' and broadening the range of mental health professionals. Find out more **here**.

The Equality Act 2010

This act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in the wider society through its aim to promote equal rights for everyone. Mental health is often not considered a disability, but if the condition has a serious impact on an individual's day to day life over a long period, then it may be considered so under this law. Find out more **here**.

Mental Health (Discrimination) Act 2013

The Act revised barriers on certain activities for people with a history of mental illness. Before this law, people who had been sectioned for over six months could not serve as a Member of Parliament. Find out more **here**.

External resources

There are a number of mental health related campaigns currently running in the UK, each one designed to raise awareness of issues surrounding mental health and what can be done to offer support and help to those affected:

The **National Health Service** offers mental health services. For urgent but not life-threatening situations, call 111. In an emergency, call 999. Access the NHS mental health resource page **here**.

Charities and advice organisations

- The charity **Mind** provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing mental health problems, and raise awareness and promote understanding to the wider community.

- **Rethink Mental Illness** provides expert, accredited advice and information to everyone affected by mental health problems.

- Mind and Rethink Mental Illness have partnered to deliver **Time to Change**, England's biggest programme to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination.

- **Time to Change Wales** campaigns to improve knowledge and understanding about mental illness and, most importantly of all, get people talking about mental health.

- The **Samaritans** provide confidential, non-judgmental emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide.

- **Heads Together** is a campaign led by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry, seeking to change the conversation on mental health and end the stigma.

- **Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)** is dedicated to preventing male suicide, the single biggest killer of men under 45 in the UK.

- **Counselling Life Advice Suicide Prevention (CLASP)** is a charity focusing on the stigma of mental and stress related illness, trauma and suicide.

- The **SANE** charity has a **Black Dog Campaign** which aims to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness and encourages people to seek help early.

- National charity **Together** works alongside people with mental health issues, providing support, services and representation within the community.

- The **Mental Health Foundation** is dedicated to finding and addressing the sources of mental health problems.

  – The Foundation runs **Mental Health Awareness Week,** starting on the second Monday in May every year. The aim of this week is to educate the public and promote better mental health. It is campaigning to reduce the stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health, and develop better mental health services.

- **Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH)** is Scotland's leading mental health charity. SAMH engages in community based services for people with mental health problems, as well as participating in national programmes, policies, campaigning work and raising funds.

- **Mental Health Ireland** is a national voluntary organisation which was established as the Mental Health Association of Ireland to provide support, information, research, courses and campaigns relating to mental health issues.

- **Aware** is Northern Ireland's depression charity, delivering mental health and wellbeing programmes to schools, communities and workplaces.

- **Mental Health First Aid England** (see also MHFA **Scotland**, **Wales**, **Northern Ireland** and **Republic of Ireland**) offer training to become a mental health first aider.

- The **Prince's Trust** provides vulnerable young people with practical and financial support, as well as helping to develop self-esteem and skills for work. The Prince's Trust also has a **Youth Index**, which includes reports covering the issue of

anxiety.

- The **Movember Foundation** runs awareness and fundraising activities all year round, with the annual Movember campaign in November being globally recognised for its fun and innovative approach to raising money and getting men to take action for their health. The foundation has made available resources about how to **get involved,** their **impact strategy** and the Movember rules.

- **Acas** provide information, advice, training and other services for employers and employees to prevent or resolve workplace problems. Their **mental health resources** provide advice on promoting positive mental health and dealing with stress and anxiety in the workplace.

Programmes

- **Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP)** represent the interests of individuals and organisations concerned with employee assistance, psychological health and wellbeing in the UK. EAP is designed to assist productivity and attendance issues and support employees to identify and resolve personal concerns, which could affect work performance.

- The **British Health Foundation's Health at Work** programme promotes health and wellbeing in the workplace and provides advice, support, information and resources to help companies to get workplace health programmes up and running. Whilst these mainly focus on physical health, the programmes also address coping with stress in healthy ways and offer techniques to improve mental wellbeing.

- Schemes such as **Healthy Working Lives**, part of NHS Health Scotland, are designed to better inform managers on mental health issues, as wellas to encourage and aid employers to integrate well-being activities and policies into existing structures.

Reports

- **Business in the Community** provide an extensive report on mental health at work, covering the role of management and how to respond to employees. Read the report **here**.

- The **Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)'s** December 2017 report '**The State of Well-being in the Construction Industry'** details the areas of working life which leave construction professionals most at risk of mental ill health, including work-life balance, workload and work relationships. The findings are based on two psychometric validated scales: A Shortened Stress Evaluation Tool (ASSET) and the Work-related Resilience Scale.

- The **Office for National Statistics** released a **report on suicides by occupation in England between 2011 and 2015.** The shocking statistics reveal that construction jobs have the highest risk of suicide, with suicide rates among low-skilled construction workers 3.7 times higher than the national average. This report demonstrates the scale of the problem facing the industry.

MANDATE

NOUN. / THE BEGINNING OF A BEAUTIFUL BROMANCE.
SUBMITTED BY @CLAREWHITBY

#MANDICTIONARY

CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIVING MISERABLY
CALM

KEEPING MEN ALIVE BY TALKING
www.thecalmzone.net

MANIFOLD

NOUN. / TALL MAN ILL AT EASE WHILE CONTORTING INTO A SMALL CITY CAR.

#MANDICTIONARY

CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIVING MISERABLY
CALM

KEEPING MEN ALIVE BY TALKING
www.thecalmzone.net

MANDALF

NOUN. / A MAN OF A CERTAIN AGE WHO DECIDES TO GROW A VERY UNWISE BEARD.
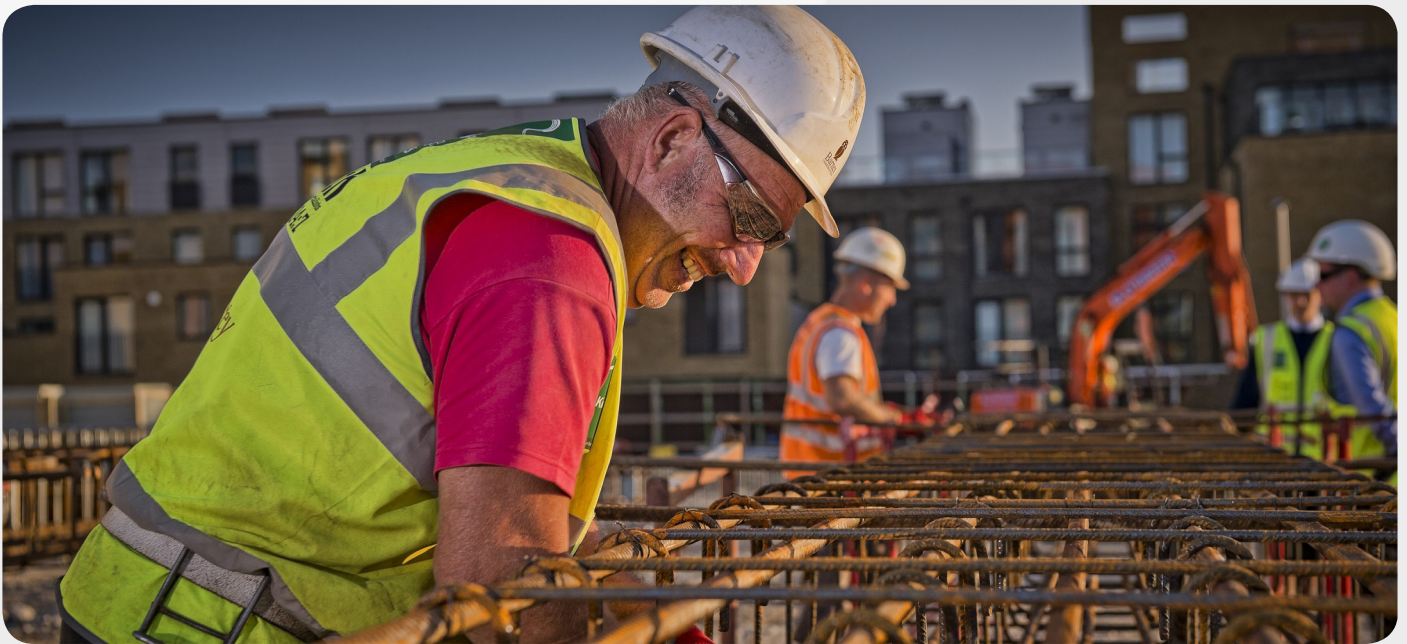SUBMITTED BY @DERBEIAN

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What is the industry doing?

There are various organisations offering specific guidance to the industry in relation to dealing with mental health in the workplace.

- The Scheme's **Code of Considerate Practice** consists of five sections. The 'Value their Workforce' section focuses on how registered sites, companies and suppliers consider the health and wellbeing of their workforce, paying particular attention to mental health and stress.

- The **Lighthouse Club** provides emergency financial assistance, welfare and wellbeing advice, and emotional and legal support to the construction industry workforce and their families in times of hardship and stress.

- The Scheme has proudly partnered with the **Construction Industry Helpline,** which delivers a range of charitable services and support covering safety, occupational health, welfare and financial aid to help people in construction through difficult times, funded by The Lighthouse Club and through **purchasing helpline products** from the Scheme. The helpline can be contacted 24/7 on a confidential number and is available to anyone working in the industry and their families.

- **Mates in Mind** is a charitable programme to promote positive mental health in the construction industry. Established by the **Health in Construction Leadership Group** and the **British**

Safety Council, the initiative provides resources and training on the issue of mental health. Mates in Mind aims to reach 75% of the construction workforce by 2025.

- **Stop. Make a Change** asks construction organisations to put work on hold for one day to focus on building a healthier, safer industry. One of the event's commitments was to address mental health in the industry.

- The **CITB Toolbox Talks** have been created to provide help and guidance for employers to train their staff in different aspects of Fairness, Inclusion and Respect. The Fairness, Inclusion and Respect – Health, Work and Wellbeing toolbox talk in particular is tailored for mental health issues.

- The HSE website includes a section on **Management Standards** for work related stress. These include six key areas of work, that if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence which have been identified as the primary sources of stress at work.

Examples of best practice

The Scheme aims to improve the image of construction through sharing best practice with the industry. Below are a number of best practice examples that have been witnessed by the Scheme's Monitors on their visits or submitted directly by registered sites, companies and suppliers…

- A 'wellman pack' was created and issued to all operatives giving information and helpline numbers for various health, social, domestic and safety issues;

- Sites have arranged visits from occupational health nurses to advise workers on stress and mental health issues

- Confidential support and counselling was offered on site.

- Toolbox talks were held covering the topic of mental health at work and construction workplace stress

- The workforce were issued with 'stressbands' to measure stress levels throughout the day

- A scheme was introduced where professionals from a hospital mental health department, accompanied by volunteer patients, visited the site to deliver presentations on recognising mental health issues and the support that was available for anyone needing assistance

- The company held a mental health week across all sites to raise awareness of the topic

- One member of the site team voluntarily put together a case study of their personal experiences with mental health issues

- Posters and leaflets of organisations such as Mind and CALM, who support those affected by depression and suicide, were made readily available

- The company appointed and trained a mental health first aider to watch for behaviour changes in staff such as stress, anxiety and depression. The first aider was the first point of contact and referred cases to doctors/professional help where required, as well as providing confidential support and counselling on site

- Notices to promote awareness of stress, bullying and organisations which support those affected by depression and suicide were displayed around site

- To reinforce worker consultation, a union official was invited to the site to assist in matters including worker conditions and stress reduction, in relation to travelling time, facilities, health and safety

- 'You said, We did' boards were installed, which showed that operatives' complaints and ideas were being listened to and action taken

- A suggestion box was installed for operatives to anonymously add complaints, ideas or comments

- Counselling was available to staff in the event of a major accident and this was used by some people for a considerable length of time;

- Healthy living promotion efforts included providing maths quiz sheets and Sudoku puzzles in the canteen to encourage mental exercise. These were reviewed and updated regularly

- The site established a wellbeing room for workers to unwind and de-stress.

To view all Best Practice Hub entries relating to the 'Spotlight on... mental health campaign click **here.**

Case studies

The Scheme has received case studies from a number of contractors on how they provide help and support with regards to mental health.

A-one+ have recognised the stigmas associated with mental health and have embarked upon a number of initiatives. These include dedicating a day to raise awareness of mental health, delivering presentations on stress management and training members of staff on the realities of mental health and how to support employees.

Click **here** to find out more.

Bouygues have supported their workforce and tackled the issue of work related stress by displaying posters providing stress related tips and offering wellbeing helplines.

Click **here** to read more.

Galliford Try have 'Mental Health' awareness as a key focus for the workforce, using AXA Insurance literature and posters on the importance of recognising and dealing with mental health. These posters and literature are shared in offices, online and with the site teams and workforce, ensuring easily accessible advice to all employees. There are a number of posters available for distribution across sites, including '**Making time for relaxation**' and '**Easing your worries**'.

ISG have demonstrated their commitment to supporting the workforce, by establishing a number of initiatives addressing mental health and wellbeing.

Click **here** to find out more.

Jehu Group Ltd have worked closely with Mind to deliver talks about mental health, raise awareness and take part in a team triathlon to raise money for the Mind charity in Wales.

Click **here** to read more.

Marks & Spencer have used their award winning employee wellbeing programme as a platform to start a company-wide conversation around mental health and drive greater awareness to employees of the services and tools M&S have developed to support them at work.

Click **here** for more information.

Simons Group have used various initiatives and activities to try to remove the stigma of mental health and support their workforce. These include raising awareness through participating in Mental Health Day, the launch of their 'Green card' scheme and conducting an external employee effectiveness survey.

Click **here** for more information.

What can you do?

As has previously been identified, mental health is an issue that affects everyone and thus demands attention. Awareness of the issues contributing to and associated with mental health is vital in proactively supporting your workforce.

Employers have a legal responsibility to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of their employees at work, which includes assessing and minimising the risk of stress-related illness or injury.

1. **Sites should be proactive in educating and informing those who work on site, so that everyone understands mental health and stigmas can be challenged and removed.**

This can be achieved through simple measures including regular toolbox talks, an open door policy, supportive literature, visits arranged to site by a nurse or employee wellbeing advisor or talks given by organisations such as Mind or CALM.

2. **Sites should include the topic of mental health in all site inductions and raise awareness of mental health when gathering medical details from the workforce.**

Whether people are working on site or in an office environment, there needs to be a clear message communicated to the workforce. Managers should remove the stigma associated with mental health by making mental health in the workplace equally as important as physical wellbeing.

3. **Site managers should create a culture where anyone affected by mental health is able to come forward, know they will be taken seriously and that appropriate support and advice will be available.**

Management need to lead by example and take a proactive approach to interact with their workforce and must not be afraid to speak to someone who is displaying signs of distress, making themselves as available and approachable as possible. This will enable managers to spot potential problems and to effectively support staff members.

The construction industry is doing a great deal of work to eradicate the stigma around mental health.

The industry should continue to work towards a culture of openness through raising awareness of the issues and making mental health a prevalent topic on construction sites.

A heavy focus is required from the industry to identify ways in which it can help to alleviate the issue of mental health. The industry has put forward a support system for construction workers through the **Construction Industry Helpline,** whom the Considerate Constructors Scheme has proudly partnered with.

The helpline will support construction workers with stress, depression and anxiety issues, providing a 'go to' place for construction worker issues outside any employee assistance scheme, available to all within the industry, especially small and medium sized companies that do not have the resources to support in-house initiatives.

As well as the information above, it is also advised to use the resources provided in the 'External resources' section of this campaign, which offers a plentiful amount of resources from other organisations and companies that cover the full spectrum of the topic.

The Scheme will continue to update this page as new examples and case studies of how the industry is tackling this issue are identified.

If you would like to share how your company is addressing mental health, please contact the Scheme by emailing **enquiries@ccsbestpractice.org.uk**