



A  
manager's  
guide.

Right now 1 in 6 workers in the UK are dealing with a mental health problem such as stress, anxiety or depression.

As a manager you have a crucial role to play in promoting a healthy culture in your team, where your employees feel valued and supported on a daily basis.

We're committed to supporting Thames Water employees who are experiencing mental health problems to cope, recover and get back to top performance.

This guide is designed to help you support anyone in your team who is experiencing mental health difficulties.



## What is SPOT?

We want to create a working environment that supports positive mental health for everyone at all times.

Work generates routine, purposeful activity and a social network - essential for good mental health - so we're keen to help employees remain in work with the right support. Support at work can be key to how well and how quickly someone is able to get back to top performance.

Our approach to improving mental health support at Thames Water is underpinned by our simple **SPOT** principles:

**S**ee the signs

**P**rovide opportunities to talk

**O**ffer a listening ear

**T**alk to a professional

## See the signs.

It's essential you take an active interest in really knowing the people in your team, so you can notice changes in them. You should never make assumptions about people's mental health, but some signs to look out for may include:

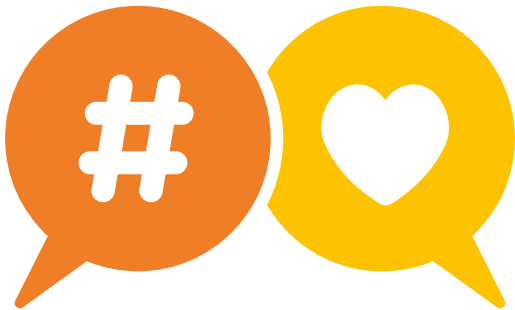
- changes in behaviour or mood or how they interact with colleagues
- changes in their work output, motivation levels and focus
- struggling to make decisions, getting organised and finding solutions to problems
- appearing tired, anxious or withdrawn and losing interest in activities and tasks they previously enjoyed
- changes in eating habits, appetite and increased smoking and drinking.

## Provide opportunities to talk.

Work can be a stressful factor in people's lives, but many people don't feel able to ask for help when they're struggling.

This silence can lead to misunderstanding and prejudice, which can make it harder for people to be open.

That's why it's vital managers routinely ask their teams how they're doing and discuss their mental health – it helps build people's confidence to speak up earlier on and get the help they need sooner.



## Offer a listening ear.

Sometimes people can worry about how to approach a conversation about a person's mental health, but there are no special skills needed – just the ones you use every day as a manager like common sense, empathy, being approachable and listening.

If you do nothing, problems can spiral, with a negative impact for the individual and the business.

It doesn't have to be awkward or difficult – just as you would with physical health, a good place to start is simply to ask someone how they're doing.



## Talk to a professional.

If you believe someone in your team is experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition, seeking professional help early can make all the difference in keeping them at work and helping them recover.

If work appears to be the main issue, you should:

- Undertake an assessment to identify the specific trigger using our stress assessment tool on the portal (search 'stress assessment' on Bluebytes).
- Make a referral for specialist occupational health support by contacting the team on:



## Finding professional help.





## Occupational health.

The occupational health team offer an impartial independent advisory service. The team have responsibilities to the employee and the manager.

They provide advice and support to assist managers when an employee's health appears to be affecting their work or if work is affecting their health.



More information and resources for employees and managers are available on the portal. Search 'SPOT' on Bluebytes.

## Mental health first aiders.

We now have qualified mental health first aiders across the business, who are equipped with the knowledge and confidence to provide first aid and support for people experiencing a mental health problem.

You can spot them by looking out for the badge on their lanyard, or find your local first aider by checking the list on the portal (search 'MHFA' on Bluebytes).



## A GP appointment.

GPs can provide advice about support and treatment, if necessary.

To make the most of an appointment, Mind suggest noting down the answers to the following questions, which are likely to be asked by a GP:

- How have you been feeling lately?
- Has anything happened or changed in your life recently?
- Are you eating normally?
- How are you sleeping?



## Confidential counselling.

Free confidential counselling is available to all Thames Water employees through Workplace Wellness, our employee assistance programme.

The service is designed to help you resolve personal and work related problems which may affect your health, wellbeing and work performance.

WorkplaceWellness™



[Redacted] (username '[Redacted]')

Managers and employees can request a call back by choosing the 'My EAP' tab and 'Contact Us' link after logging in.




## Mind.

Mind is a leading mental health charity in England and Wales and their infoline can provide information on a range of topics including:

- types of mental health problem
- where to get help
- medication and alternative treatments
- advocacy

They can also look for details of help and support in the local area.

 0300 1233 393

 [mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk)

## Mental health training.

We want to make sure everyone has the confidence to support their colleagues through difficult times.

We have two specific training courses, developed in partnership with mental health experts, that are open to all employees, and particularly recommended for managers.



## Mental Health first aid.

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Many people are unsure how to respond to someone who appears to be experiencing a mental health problem.

Our two day certified mental health first aid course will give you the knowledge and confidence to recognise mental health problems, to respond helpfully and support the person's recovery.

To book, search 'Mental health first aid' under Performance and Development on SAP.

## Mind Fit.

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Our half day mental health awareness course, Mind Fit, is being run in partnership with the charity Mind.

It's an innovative and interactive half day course designed to improve your understanding and awareness of mental health, both in and out of the workplace.

To book, search 'Mind Fit' under Performance and Development in SAP.

