



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 7AM 21<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2019**

## **MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK COMMITMENT**

**UK businesses and organisations join forces with mental health charities and non-governmental organisations in the most widespread collaboration of its kind to promote a nationwide commitment on improving mental health care in the work place.**

**TODAY** marks the launch of the **Mental Health At Work Commitment**. With thirty of the UK's most recognised businesses and organisations\* signed up, the ambition is to encourage employers of all sizes to join the movement and improve standards of mental health care among the workforce at a national scale.

Developed with the knowledge and expertise of mental health charities, leading employers and trade organisations, the *Commitment* provides a framework for employers who recognise the importance of promoting staff wellbeing. This framework sets out six clear standards\*\* based on what best practice has shown is needed to make a difference and better equip employers to create an environment where employees can thrive. These standards build on those published in the independent Government-commissioned *Thriving At Work* review two years ago\*\*\*. Current business signatories span multiple sectors including banking, utilities, FMCG, retail and professional services. They are joined by trade bodies including CBI, IoD, and CIPD and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports.

The recent Mental Health at Work YouGov survey conducted for Business in the Community (BITC) and Mercer Marsh Benefits\*\*\*\* shows only one in two (51%) of respondents say they feel comfortable talking about mental health in the workplace, and two in five (39%) say they have experienced a work-related mental health issue in the last year. While many employers have been acknowledging and responding to growing demands, dedicating significant resource to tackling the issue, it was leading to a scattergun approach, with duplication and often confusion. The *Commitment*

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seeks to end that confusion promoting and sharing best practice that can be activated among employers at all levels.

The *Commitment* is supported by a one stop shop for resources to help employers get started, share experiences and signpost further areas of support. The intent is to get as many employers as possible to sign up to achieve the ambitious vision set out in *Thriving at Work*: Employees in all types of employment have good work, which contributes positively to their mental health, our society and our economy.

**Sir Ian Cheshire, Chairman of the Thriving at Work Leadership Council and Chairman of Barclays UK**, said “There are no quick fixes, or simple solutions when it comes to mental health. Yet there’s no ignoring the fact that work is often a contributory factor for people whose mental health is suffering. As employers, there are lots of things we can do that can make a difference to how our employees feel at work. The six standards we are setting out today are based on, what best practice has shown, is needed to make a difference. They have been developed with mental health charities, leading employers and trade organisations. If every employer in the country signed up, we could have a meaningful impact on millions of employees across the UK.”

**Paul Farmer, CEO of Mind and co-author of the Thriving at Work review**, said “It’s great to see so many employers take proactive steps towards creating mentally healthy workplaces by engaging with *The Mental Health at Work Commitment*. With issues like stress, anxiety and depression common across all employers, regardless of size or sector, we want to see every employer recognise and address any work-related causes of poor mental health among their staff. The *Commitment* comes with resources available to help employers prevent poor mental health and promote wellbeing. Smart, responsible employers recognise that staff who feel valued and supported tend to be more productive and are less likely to take time off sick or leave the organisation.”

**David Oldfield, Chair of the Wellbeing Leadership Team, Business in the Community and Group Director, Commercial Banking, Lloyds Banking Group**, said “The research showing how people are feeling in the workplace should be

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concerning for all of us. With 1 in 4 people experiencing a mental health problem in any given year, it's likely that many of our colleagues may be struggling, and we have a responsibility to take action. We would encourage all businesses to challenge themselves on what more they can do to protect and support the health and wellbeing of their colleagues. This *Commitment* provides a framework to do this, supported by a one stop shop of resources. The more employers of all sizes who sign up and take action, the more of a real difference we can make."

**Dame Carolyn Fairbairn DBE, CBI Director-General**, said: "Everyone at some point in their lives will be affected by poor mental health, perhaps through personal experience or someone they care about. Companies perform better when their staff are happier, healthier and more engaged. Many firms are taking practical steps to help their people thrive and support their emotional wellbeing. But more must be done urgently and firms are rising to the challenge. The *Mental Health at Work Commitment* matters because it supports business leaders to make mental health a boardroom priority. It is this leadership that will help tackle the taboo around mental health, encourage people to feel comfortable talking about their emotions and seek practical support if and when they need it."

**Employers wanting join the commitment can find out more at**  
[www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/commitment](http://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/commitment)

**- Ends -**

**For further information please contact:**

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**\*The Businesses Signed at Launch (listed alphabetically):**

- Anglian Water
- Barclays
- Bupa UK
- Business in the Community
- CIPD
- Confederation of British Industry
- Deloitte
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
- E.ON UK

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- Edelman UK
- Historic England
- Institute of Directors
- John Lewis Partnership
- Lloyds Banking Group
- Mace
- Matrix Chambers
- Medivet
- Mental Health Foundation
- Mercer
- Mind
- National Grid
- Nuffield Health
- Procter & Gamble
- Roots Human Resources Community Interest Company
- Royal Mail
- Santander UK
- Society of Occupational Medicine
- Thrive Bristol
- Unilever UK & Ireland
- Virgin Money

**\*\*The Mental Health At Work Commitment** is made up of six standards, which draw on best practice from the Thriving at Work review, as well as other pledges and charters available. It brings everything together in one place.

1. Prioritise mental health in the workplace by developing and delivering a systematic programme of activity
2. Proactively ensure work design and organisational culture drive positive mental health outcomes
3. Promote an open culture around mental health
4. Increase organisational confidence and capability
5. Provide mental health tools and support
6. Increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting

### **\*\*\*Thriving at Work Standards:**

#### **Core standards**

1. Produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan
2. Develop mental health awareness among employees
3. Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling
4. Provide employees with good working conditions and ensure they have a healthy work life balance and opportunities for development
5. Promote effective people management through line managers and supervisors
6. Routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing

#### **Enhanced standards**

7. Increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting
8. Demonstrate accountability
9. Improve the disclosure process
10. Ensure provision of tailored in-house mental health support and signposting to clinical help

[Read the Thriving at Work review](#)

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\*\*\*\* **Mental Health at Work** YouGov survey conducted for Business in the Community (BITC), and Mercer Marsh Benefits. The findings are from a survey of 4,236 full and part-time employees in the UK that is representative of gender, age, industry sector, region and business size, excluding sole traders and those working alone. The survey explores mental health and wellbeing in the workplace with many questions tailored for managers and those who have a manager.

[Read the Mental Health at Work report](#)