

# Inclusive Employers

## Mental Health Guide



## **Introduction**

Raising awareness and supporting colleagues' mental health and wellbeing are integral parts of an inclusive organisation. This guide aims to support the organisation to feel more comfortable and confident in promoting mental health and wellbeing, as well as supporting line managers and colleagues to have open, honest, conversations with their team and effectively respond to poor mental health. Every person is different, and almost everyone will experience poor mental health at some point in their lives; some even mental illness. This guide provides a framework and some ideas to draw on which will support a mentally healthy workplace culture, along with ideas on how to develop a mental wellbeing action plan.

## **The Social Model of Disability**

Throughout this package we will explore the topic of mental health through the social model of disability. This model states that people with impairments are 'disabled' by the barriers operating in society that exclude and discriminate against them, which include (but are not limited to): stereotypes, physical barriers, discriminatory language, and actions. This model reinforces that society, and therefore workplaces, need to change to be more inclusive of disabled people. To reflect this, this guide will use positive language throughout, and focus on actions that workplaces and individuals can take to create more inclusive environments where barriers exist.

## **Trigger warning / Disclaimer**

In this package we cover mental health conditions, and some people may find details upsetting. It is recommended that ongoing conversations around mental health within the workplace are handled sensitively and may need to include a 'trigger warning' so that the people can make an informed choice about when to engage with the material.

# Contents

1. What is mental health?

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2. How does work affect our mental health?

---
3. Promoting mental wellbeing in the workplace

---
4. Understanding poor mental health and mental illness

---
5. Responding to poor mental health / mental illness

---
6. Mental health resources signposting

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# 1. What is mental health?

Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how people think, feel, and act. It is important that colleagues and line managers are aware of their own and others' mental health and wellbeing. Focus should not be only on poor mental health or mental health illnesses, but considerations should be given on how to work towards good mental health with encouragement, knowledge, tools and techniques shared to ensure employees can feel their most positive, productive, happiest, and healthiest at work.

## **Why is it important to promote staff mental health and wellbeing?**

Work can be satisfying and rewarding, and appropriate employment can be really good for everyone, however it is also known that work and the workplace can sometimes be stressful.

Actively taking steps to promote employee mental wellbeing can:

- Help people to enjoy work and life outside of work
- Enable people to cope with the more challenging aspects of working life such as tricky working relationships and demanding workloads
- Improve morale, inspire loyalty and increase work performance
- Reduce sickness absence and staff turnover
- Prevent people developing new mental health problems, and support those living with them to thrive

Managers have an incredibly important role to play in workplace wellbeing. [Research](#) shows good management is linked with good health, wellbeing, and improved performance while poor quality leadership is linked with stress, burnout, and depression.

Adopting a universal approach to having open and honest conversations about mental wellbeing with all staff (not only those experiencing poor mental health or mental illness) is imperative for a healthy and inclusive workplace culture. Asking a question such as “what do you need at work to feel your best?” can elicit simple effective support measures. Prevention is better than cure and it is better to develop wellbeing plans in advance rather than wait until problems arise.

[Back to contents page](#)

## 2. How does work affect our mental health?

Employers have a legal responsibility to look after employees' health and safety at work including their mental health and wellbeing. Work can have a very positive impact on wellbeing through giving social connection, sense of purpose, structure, and stimulation, but it can also have a detrimental impact. This section will look at the positive and negative effects of the workplace.

### What is 'Good work'?

There are certain factors that have been found to be vital in ensuring work is good for employee's mental health and wellbeing ([The Taylor Review, 2017](#)).

Employees must have:

- More control over their job
- Clarity of what is expected of them
- Variety in what they do
- Positive relationships with managers, colleagues, and customers
- Belief that their workplace and pay is fair
- A sense of personal purpose and of their wider value to others
- Opportunities to use and develop their skills
- A safe and pleasant working environment
- Supportive supervision

- A sense of job security and clear career prospects
- A good work/life balance



Reflect on the factors that contribute to good work above and consider how the organisation, line managers, and colleagues create a mentally healthy culture within the workplace. Consider what is done well, what could be done better, and any ideas for improvements.

### Workplace triggers of poor mental health

Certain elements of work can have a negative impact on staff mental health and wellbeing. Typical workplace triggers for stress and mental health problems include:

- Long hours and no breaks. Inability to use annual leave
- Unrealistic and/or unclear expectations or deadlines
- Overly pressurised working environments
- Un-manageable workloads or lack of control over work
- A poor physical working environment
- Lone working

- Poor relationships with managers and/or colleagues.
- Poor internal communication
- Poor managerial support
- Job insecurity or poorly managed change
- Financial worries

The Health and Safety Executive have a [questionnaire](#) which staff can complete to identify areas of their role which are impacting on their mental health. This can be used to inform any stress risk assessments or wellbeing plans. The [Talking Toolkit: Preventing work-related stress](#) resource can also support the development of stress risk assessments

[Back to contents page](#)



### 3. Promoting mental wellbeing in the workplace

It is important that organisations prioritise promoting the wellbeing of staff. This does not only mean responding to negative indicators such as stress and anxiety but also supporting staff to feel their most well, positive, empowered, creative, empathetic, and motivated. This section covers 10 key areas of focus in promoting mental wellbeing in the workplace and as part of a team.

#### **Communicating about mental wellbeing**

**Open and honest conversations** – Create a culture where people feel safe to talk about their mental health and it is seen as the norm. Challenge stereotypes about poor mental health, mental illness, and/or discriminatory language and behaviour.

**Two-way communication** – Poor communication can cause stress. Staff can be affected if they are:

- overloaded with information
- excluded from key knowledge
- unable to tell managers how they are feeling

Maintain regular, clear lines of communication with all staff, especially those working on their own, for example with monthly team meetings and regular phone catch-ups.

**One to ones** – Ensure managers give time in every one-to-one meeting to discuss wellbeing

### Helpful questions to prompt discussion in one to ones

#### Questions about self-care

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- What do you do to look after yourself?
- What helps you to feel your best at work?
- How do you protect yourself when you feel under pressure?
- What helps you to switch off after work?
- How do you keep a good work/life balance?

#### Questions about support

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- What support do you need from me?
- How would you like to be supported if something does not go as planned?
- How do you like to be managed? What can I do in my day-to-day work to demonstrate that I'm managing you in the way that you prefer?
- Is there anything else that's important for our working relationship?

#### Questions about their role

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- What do you love about what you do?
- When do you feel your absolute best at work?
- What areas of work are causing you particular stress?
- What stops you from having a good day?

#### Questions about the team culture

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- Do you have any ideas/suggestions for promoting wellbeing in the team?
- How do you think we can work as a team to support resilience and wellbeing?
- How can we make sure we support each other well?

**Communicate clear roles and responsibilities** – This has been found to significantly improve feelings of stress. Ensure everyone in the team knows what is expected of them, use checklists, discuss who is responsible for what when, and ensure good inductions take place.

**Early intervention** – Look out for any signs or symptoms of poor mental health and mental illness (link to section 4) and intervene early to work with staff to reprioritise their wellbeing and take steps to promote self-care. Take time to complete effective return-to-work interviews after any period of sickness or unplanned leave. This can ensure mental health problems are identified at an early stage before they get worse.

### **Raise awareness and challenge stigma**

In many workplaces, mental health is still a taboo subject. Too often, employees are scared to talk to their manager and problems can spiral. Raising awareness of mental health and encouraging discussion can help challenge harmful culture and combat stigma and discrimination.

**Staff onboarding** – ensure conversations about mental wellbeing are embedded into staff inductions. This can include asking new staff what helps them to feel their best at work and letting them know about any workplace support options.

**Developing knowledge and understanding** – Improving mental health awareness is the best way to tackle stigma. Support teams to access mental health awareness training and/or signpost to mental wellbeing resources, local charities, occupational health, and an EAP if available. Use internal communications to raise awareness through blogs, myth busters, factsheets, tips for staff, useful web links and FAQs.

**Awareness raising events** – Campaigns such as [Mental Health Awareness Week](#) and [World Mental Health Day](#) can be a great opportunity to celebrate mental wellbeing. See the [Time to Change website](#) for a calendar of key mental health awareness days throughout the year.

### **Support work/life balance**

**Hours** – Long hours might seem manageable in the short term, but over a period of time they can quickly lead to stress and burnout, reducing people's productivity, performance, creativity and morale. Encourage staff to work sensible hours and take full lunch breaks and ensure leaders role model this.

**Workload management** – Work with staff to understand how they are managing their workload and methods they can implement to avoid working too much overtime (see time management below)

**Annual leave** – Support teams to regularly take annual leave throughout the year to ensure they have regular breaks from work.

**Boundaries** – Establishing boundaries between work and home are really important. Support teams to turn their work phones off when not working and avoid working outside of their hours.

**Technology** – In some roles there may be ways to use technology to promote smarter ways of working, agile working, and reduce travel.

### **Time Management**

When staff are struggling with organising their work, prioritising, and time management, this can cause an enormous amount of stress. Support teams and staff with developing coping strategies which may include:

Planning their day in advance and allocating time for different activities. Listing everything that needs to be done, ordering them in importance and trying to focus on the most urgent first. Staff may find the [urgent and important matrix](#) helpful.

Finding their productivity zone – some people are early birds and some are night owls

“Eat the frog” – Mark Twain said, “If it’s your job to eat a frog, it’s best to do it first thing in the morning. If it’s your job to eat two frogs, it’s best to eat the biggest one first.” Encourage staff to tackle their most difficult, challenging task first to avoid procrastination.

Taking regular breaks to refresh and refocus.

Developing their skills in assertively saying no and delegating appropriately

Varying their activities. Balancing interesting tasks with more mundane ones, and stressful tasks with those they find easier or can do more calmly.

Trying not to multi-task. Taking on too much at once makes it harder to do any individual task well and can impact concentration and performance.

### **Working environment**

Factors like excessive noise, mess, lack of space and heat can be significant contributors to stress at work. Consult with staff on how the work environment may be improved, for example keeping desks clear, avoiding talking loudly when people are trying to concentrate,

bringing in some plants etc. Is it possible to create a quiet space or a quiet time in the office space?

Noisy, crowded environments with strong artificial lighting can be particularly difficult for people with sensory issues. Sensory overload has the same effect on a person with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as extreme stress has for other people, and may lead to mental health difficulties.

### **Relationships**

Actively work on developing and strengthening working relationships through:

- Having fun. Plan team building activities and regular social events
- Taking time to laugh, catch up, and get to know each other as people
- Seeking to remove ‘us and them’ barriers between staff and managers
- Allow staff to see leader’s vulnerabilities and who they really are
- Challenging negativity such as ‘toxic moaning’ but also ‘toxic positivity’
- Responding promptly and effectively to any conflict
- Spending time discussing how to work together and support each other

### **Feeling valued**

There are many ways to ensure staff feel acknowledged and valued:

- Acknowledging the challenges staff face
- Celebrating their successes, for example starting a team meeting by asking everyone to share something that has gone well, implementing a staff award scheme, and recording achievements during one-to-one meetings
- Saying thank you to each other and regularly giving authentic, specific praise
- Showing you are genuinely listening
- Recognising abilities by giving a staff member / teams something interesting and important to be responsible for

- Making decisions about complex situations with the team as opposed to telling them

Research has found that in the highest performing effective teams there were 5 positive comments (such as ‘that’s a great idea’, ‘yes I agree’) to every one negative comment (such as ‘that would never work’, ‘I don’t think we should do that’). In the lowest performing teams, there was almost three negative comments for every positive one.

### Learning culture

Make sure employees are confident and supported to do their job to a high standard and foster a learning culture.

Blame cultures are characterised by low trust, low involvement, and management control which cause stress, blame, fear, and avoidance of trying anything new or taking positive risks.

Learning cultures are based on collective problem-solving, collaboration, personal accountability, and shared responsibility. They can deepen understanding, confidence, and sense of purpose.

Prioritise learning and development activities including regular work-related conversations, giving feedback, shadowing, and team meeting learning slots as well as formal training.

The 70:20:10 model is a simple formula, created in the 1980s by McCall, Lombardo and Eichinger which suggests that 70% of learning happens informally in daily activities, 20% comes from the people around us and 10% from formal, structured learning. Therefore, everyday interactions between managers and staff are key to building a learning culture.

Empower teams to be decision makers, be solution focused, and in control over their own work. Focus on what staff can bring and how they can grow.

Give healthy constructive feedback but always be non-judgemental and avoid a blame culture. Role model acknowledging personal mistakes in learning.

## Recruitment

Supporting mental health starts with getting the right person for the job. If there is a mismatch between a new recruit and the workplace, or their skills and abilities and the organisation's needs, it can lead to intense stress. Be realistic about the role in interviews and be careful to select people on their skills and competencies, or realistic potential.

Communicate the organisation's commitment to equal opportunities during the recruitment process, including in the job advert. State clearly that reasonable adjustments are available, for the interview and the job itself, so applicants understand that disclosure of mental health concerns could be beneficial in receiving full support.

## Remember the 5 ways to wellbeing

The [five ways to wellbeing](#) are a set of evidence-based ways to improve mental health and wellbeing. Work with staff to embed them every day.

<b>Connect</b>	<b>Be active</b>	<b>Take notice</b>	<b>Keep learning</b>	<b>Give</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talk and listen.</li><li>• Be there.</li><li>• Feel connected.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do what you can.</li><li>• Enjoy what you do.</li><li>• Move your mood.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remember the simple things that give you joy.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Embrace new experiences.</li><li>• See opportunities.</li><li>• Surprise yourself.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your time.</li><li>• Your words.</li><li>• Your presence.</li></ul>

[Back to contents page](#)

## 4. Understanding poor mental health and mental illness

The terms poor mental health and mental illness are sometimes used interchangeably, however they are not the same thing. Mental health refers to emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing, while mental illnesses are diagnosed conditions that affect thoughts and behaviours. This section helps to clarify these differences in more detail.

### Poor mental health

Everybody experiences mental health, from good mental health to poor mental health. Mental health can fluctuate depending on life experiences both in and out of the workplace. [The Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale](#) can be a good indicator of the levels of stress different life events can cause. These events can cause our mental health and wellbeing to fluctuate up and down the [mental wellbeing scale](#) (adopted from the physical pain scale). Problems arise when our mental wellbeing becomes so poor that it leads to a mental illness diagnosis. Of course, mental health conditions and illnesses can be diagnosed irrespective of mental wellbeing, due to biological reasons such as genetics and/or brain chemistry.

### Mental health conditions / mental illness

There are many different mental health conditions. A person may have several diagnoses at once or they might not have any particular diagnosis. A person may be diagnosed with a mental illness but still have good mental health, or vice versa. It is important to take the lead from the person experiencing a mental health condition, and not make assumptions based on the diagnosis. Some people find labelling a condition helpful, whereas others prefer to talk about experiences, thoughts, and feelings instead. A better indicator for how



unwell someone is feeling is often the level of distress they are experiencing rather than a diagnosis.

Mental illnesses can be, but often are not, lifelong conditions. They can be episodic and fluctuating in their nature. This means that people can develop them at any point in their lives, may experience periods of severe distress and crisis but also have periods of good mental health. With the right support and care people can manage their mental health condition(s).

The Mind website [A-Z of Mental Health](#) has lots of information about different mental health conditions. Some of the most common diagnoses are:

**Anxiety problems** – feeling fearful, worried, nervous, and uneasy. Occasional anxiety is a normal human experience but if feelings are very strong, or last for a long time, they can be overwhelming. People might also experience physical symptoms such as sleep problems and panic attacks.

**Bipolar disorder** – affects mood with people at times experiencing manic or hypomanic episodes (feeling high) and depressive episodes (feeling low); and potentially some psychotic symptoms. Everyone has variations in their mood, but in bipolar disorder these swings can feel very extreme and have a big impact on a person's life. In between, someone might have stable times where they experience fewer symptoms.

**Depression** – a feeling of low mood that lasts for a long time and affects everyday life. It can make people feel hopeless, despairing, guilty, worthless, unmotivated, and exhausted. In its mildest form, depression does not stop someone leading a normal life, but it makes everything harder to do and seem less worthwhile. At its most severe, depression can make someone feel suicidal, and be life-threatening.

**Eating problems** – The most common eating disorder diagnoses are anorexia, bulimia, binge eating disorder, and other specified feeding or eating disorder (OSFED). It is also possible to have a very difficult relationship with food and not fit the criteria for any specific diagnosis. Lots of people think that if you have an eating problem you will be over or under weight, but this is a myth. Anyone, regardless of age, gender, or weight, can be affected by eating problems.

**Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)** – Obsessive-compulsive disorder is a type of anxiety disorder. OCD has two main parts: obsessions (unwelcome thoughts, images, urges, worries, or doubts that repeatedly appear in their mind) and compulsions (repetitive activities they feel they have to do to reduce the anxiety caused by the obsession).

**Personality disorders** – a type of mental health problem where a person’s attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours cause them longstanding problems in their life. They may regularly experience difficulties with how they think about themselves/others and find it very difficult to change these unwanted patterns. There are several different categories and types of personality disorder.

**Phobias** – an extreme form of fear or anxiety triggered by a particular situation (such as going outside) or object (such as spiders), even when it is very unlikely to be dangerous. A fear becomes a phobia if the fear is out of proportion to the danger, it lasts for more than six months, and has a significant impact on how someone lives their day-to-day life.

**Schizophrenia** – people now question whether Schizophrenia is a distinct condition, or a few different conditions that overlap. People may be given this diagnosis if they experience symptoms such as psychosis (such as hallucinations or delusions), disorganised thinking and speech, feeling disconnected from feelings, having difficulty concentrating, wanting to avoid people, a lack of interest in things and not wanting to take care of themselves.

### **Recognising signs and symptoms of mental ill health**

Everyone is different and mental health conditions can manifest in many ways. Spend time for yourself and with your team members identifying what the personal ‘tell-tale signs’ are, that you are not feeling 100%.

Below are some suggested signs to look out for:

<b>Physical</b>	<b>Psychological</b>	<b>Behavioural</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fatigue</li><li>• Indigestion or upset stomach</li><li>• Headaches</li><li>• Appetite and weight changes</li><li>• Joint and back pain</li><li>• Changes in sleep patterns</li><li>• Nervous trembling speech</li><li>• Chest or throat pain</li><li>• Sweating</li><li>• Constantly feeling cold</li><li>• Increased heart rate and blood pressure</li><li>• Regularly getting colds and minor infections</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feelings of anxiety or panic</li><li>• Tearfulness</li><li>• Feeling low</li><li>• Mood changes</li><li>• Indecision</li><li>• Loss of motivation</li><li>• Loss of humour</li><li>• Increased sensitivity</li><li>• Distraction or confusion</li><li>• Difficulty relaxing</li><li>• Lapses in memory</li><li>• Difficulty taking information in</li><li>• Anger and irritability</li><li>• Responding to experiences, sensations or people not observable by others</li><li>• Increased suicidal thoughts</li><li>• Apparent over-reaction to problems</li><li>• Risk-taking</li><li>• Disruptive or anti-social behaviour</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased smoking and drinking</li><li>• Not sleeping or over sleeping</li><li>• Withdrawal and isolation</li><li>• Irritability, anger or aggression</li><li>• Being sarcastic or criticising others</li><li>• Over-excitement or euphoria</li><li>• Restlessness</li><li>• Lateness, leaving early or extended lunches</li><li>• Working far longer hours</li><li>• Intense or obsessive activity</li><li>• Repetitive speech or activity</li><li>• Impaired or inconsistent performance</li><li>• Uncharacteristic errors</li><li>• Increased sickness absence</li><li>• Uncharacteristic problems with colleagues</li><li>• Over or under eating</li></ul>

Learning to recognise these signs is one of the most important stages in developing resilience and wellbeing as it enables action to be taken before the threat becomes overwhelming.

[Back to contents page](#)

## 5. Responding to poor mental health / mental illness

Every week, one in six people in the UK will experience a common mental health problem, including anxiety, stress and depression. It is therefore very likely that you will be working alongside someone who is experiencing poor mental health and/or mental illness.

Managers can have an exceptionally important role in helping staff to feel safe, supported and able to maintain work when experiencing poor mental health.

### **Why is it important to support staff with poor mental health?**

There are obvious moral reasons to effectively support staff with poor mental health. The workplace should be that of a team and community, as well as a place to provide support, reduce distress and create a positive work environment. There are many other reasons too:

- Workplaces have a legal duty to avoid discrimination and to make reasonable adjustments
- Lots of competent, capable staff have mental health conditions and talent would be lost if those individuals are not well supported
- Workplaces can be an agent for change and can contribute to challenging stigma, stereotypes, and discrimination in wider society
- Poorly managed mental ill health can lead to errors and misjudgements, low morale, sickness absence, burnout, staff turnover, conflicts, and unhappiness

## **Key approaches when responding to poor mental health**

9 out of 10 people who have mental health problems have experienced stigma and discrimination. This means they may be very reluctant to talk about their mental health and conversations may initially need to be prompted by the manager.

### **1. Empathetic Listening**

If someone discloses a mental health problem or there are concerns about someone's mental wellbeing, talk to them in a safe and quiet place and demonstrate empathy. The most important way to support someone in distress is empathetic listening.

Ask supportive open questions such as:

- How are you feeling?
- What has helped you when you have felt like this before?
- What are you finding more difficult at the moment?
- What do you feel you need right now?
- What can you do to look after yourself at the moment?
- What can I do to support you?

### **2. Signpost to sources of support**

It is important to recognise the limits when it comes to supporting individuals with their mental wellbeing. Staff members experiencing mental health concerns will be best supported by a mental health professional, and the role of the line manager, colleague, mental health first aider and/or wellbeing champion should be signposting and supporting with access.

Support could include:

- Their GP or 111 or 999 in an emergency
- Mental health and/or wellbeing peer support groups
- Relevant policies such as Sickness and Flexible Working policies
- The Employee Assistance Programme (if the workplace has one)

- Occupational Health
- Online peer support communities such as [Side by side](#)

### **3. Identifying risks and coping strategies**

Complete a stress risk assessment with the person. The [Talking Toolkit: Preventing work-related stress](#) resource can support the development of stress risk assessments. Work with them to identify:

- What areas of their work are contributing to them feeling more unwell
- What actions, support measures or processes are currently helping to support them?
- Is there anything else you can put in place to support them at work?

Staff member's daily maintenance plan can include:

- A list of things they can do while at work when feeling upset, angry, anxious, stressed e.g. have a cup of coffee or tea, talk to a friend on the phone at lunch-time, get out of the situation for a while, maybe by going out for a break
- A list of things they can do after work to avoid taking work home with them e.g. talking through the events of the day with colleagues before they go home, taking a walk, getting some exercise, listen to music or a podcast.

### **4. Occupational Health**

When staff are experiencing poor mental health an Occupational Health Service can advise on:

- Fulfilling your duty of care to your staff
- Sickness absence and return to work
- Disability and adjustments to work
- Promoting a safe, healthy workplace

## **5. Support for staff while they are off sick**

Sometimes staff experiencing poor mental health or mental illness will need time signed off sick to rest, recover, and access treatment. Here are some important actions to take when someone is signed off:

- Make it clear that the organisation will support the employee during their absence, and reassure them about their role.
- Maintain regular, open, and meaningful communication with the employee. Agree how often this should take place early on and confirm in writing.
- Ask the person how they want to communicate – whether by phone, email, text or face-to-face. Reassure them that they can change this at any time.
- Have an open-door policy so the employee can contact you at any time.
- Ask how they are doing and focus conversations on their wellbeing. Encourage them to seek the support they need from specialist mental health services.
- Make it clear the person should not rush back to work or push themselves too much.
- Send a get well soon card as you would with a physical health problem.
- Agree what information they would like shared with colleagues.
- When discussing a return to work reassure them that you will work with them to agree a phased return and will ensure support is in place for them.

## **6. Return to work**

Sometimes people may need to take time off work for reasons related to poor mental health. They may need some time to adjust to a new diagnosis, experience a worsening in their symptoms, and/or require intensive treatment or support.

For some, returning to work is a big milestone in their recovery but it can also be daunting. There are ways support can be offered to employees to come back to work in a well-managed way.

Talk through the return to work process making sure the plan is clear for the person. Take time to address any concerns or questions before their return date.

Plan for their first day back at work. Meet them before they come into the office or invite them out for lunch to catch up on their first day.

Consider giving them lighter duties during their initial return to work. Introduce any reasonable adjustments which might need to be made.

During the return-to-work interview, encourage them to review their stress risk assessment or develop one together if one is not yet in place

Review any occupational health reports and discuss if another referral to occupational health is required

Incorporate a phased return to work for the individual, if appropriate. Schedule daily catch ups to ensure any concerns or questions are being addressed.

**Agree reasonable adjustments.**

An employer may be under a duty to make changes for disabled people if this will make the organisation more accessible. It is a form of discrimination to fail to provide these reasonable adjustments for a disabled person if as an employer you know or ought to know that the person is disabled. When deciding whether a change is reasonable, the organisations can consider the cost of making the change, the level of benefit the change will bring to the disabled person or people, and how practical it is to make the change.

Reasonable adjustments for someone experiencing mental illness could include:

- Flexible working or changes to start and finish times
- Changes to role (temporary or permanent)
- Equal amount of break time, but in shorter, more frequent chunks
- Extra training or coaching
- Increased supervision or support with managing workload
- Lightbox or seat with more natural light
- Mediation if there are difficulties between colleagues
- Mentor or buddy systems (formal or informal)



- Quiet rooms
- Phased return to work – reduced hours gradually building back up
- Redeployment to a more suitable role
- Relaxing absence rules for those with disability-related sickness absence
- Temporary reallocation of some tasks
- Time off for appointments
- Working from home

It is important to speak to the staff member about how their particular condition affects them and what they think would help them to overcome any barriers.

[Back to contents page](#)

## 6. Mental health resources signposting

Below are a list of mental health resources which can be shared in the workplace. Some suggestions on how to use these resources:

Share this resource list on your intranet or via email with your team during events such as Mental Health Awareness Week.

Watch one of the Ted Talks at the start of a meeting and discuss it with colleagues, and then write a blog about it to share good practice.

Always include a 'trigger warning' when relevant.

### Emergency help

**The Samaritans** – phone: 116 123 – this free phone number is available 24 hours a day 365 days a year and provides confidential support to anyone who wants to talk.

**Accident and Emergency** – all A&E departments will have mental health professionals on hand 24/7 if someone is in crisis and may be a harm to themselves or others around them.

## Websites

### 7 Cups

7 Cups connects you to caring listeners for free emotional support and is available 24/7  
<https://www.7cups.com/>

### Big White Wall

An online community of people who are finding it hard to cope [www.bigwhitewall.com](http://www.bigwhitewall.com)

### Business balls

The Business Balls website explains more about stress at work [www.businessballs.com/self-management/stress-and-stressmanagement/](http://www.businessballs.com/self-management/stress-and-stressmanagement/)

### CALM – Campaign Against Living Miserably

A leading movement against suicide, where support is available through a helpline and chat function between 5pm and Midnight, 365 days a year <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>

### CIPD

Offer guidance, factsheets, and podcasts about supporting mental health at work and developing resilience. [www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being](http://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being)

### Headspace

Guided mindfulness for everyday life <https://www.headspace.com/>

### Hub of Hope UK

The Hub of Hope is the UK's leading mental health support database. It is provided by national mental health charity, Chasing the Stigma, and brings local, national, peer, community, charity, private and NHS mental health support and services together in one place for the first time. <https://hubofhope.co.uk/>

### Health and Safety Executive

Information about health and safety law in the workplace. Specialist information on stress for employers and employees. [www.hse.gov.uk/stress](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress)

### **Mental Health Foundation**

A range of content designed to give you more information about mental health and to help you to look after your mental health. <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/your-mental-health>

### **Mind Infoline**

Details of local Minds and other local services, and Mind’s Legal Line. Call 0300 123 3393, Open from 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. text: 86463. email: [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk).  
[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### **Mind Tools**

Provides information on topics including stress management and assertiveness.  
[www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)

### **NHS**

**Every mind matters** --Gives expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/your-mind-plan-quiz/>

**NHS Mental wellbeing audio guides** – On this page you can listen to a series of mental wellbeing audio guides to help you boost your mood.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/moodzone-mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/>

### **Rethink mental illness**

Provide advice on different types of therapy and medication, benefits, debt, money issues, your rights under the Mental Health Act. Call Rethink advice and information line Monday to Friday, 10am-2pm: 0300 5000 927

### **The Samaritans**

The Samaritans offer free confidential emotional support 24 hours a day. Call 116 123. Or email [jo@samaritans.org.uk](mailto:jo@samaritans.org.uk)

### **Side by side**

Is an online peer support community where you can connect with others.

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

### **Time to Change**

An organisation which challenges mental health stigma and discrimination. Provides information on stress and workplace wellbeing for employers and employees. [www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk)

### **The Mindful Employer**

Website brings together information about the law, good practice, training, and organisations around mental health. [www.mindfulemployer.net](http://www.mindfulemployer.net)

### **Understanding the social model of disability**

The social model of disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by disabled people. Visit the Scope website to understand more about it.

<https://www.scope.org.uk/about-us/social-model-of-disability/>

### **The Zero Suicide Alliance**

Free suicide awareness training that teaches people how to identify, understand and help someone who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts.

<https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/>

### **Podcasts**

**Talking Inclusion with...** A podcast by Inclusive Employers: The podcast explores how we can all look after our mental health and support our colleagues to do the same. Steven Copsey is joined by Jake Mills, an award-winning stand-up comedian, mental health campaigner and the founder and CEO of Chasing the Stigma, and Inclusive Employer's Senior Consultant Addison Barnett. <https://www.inclusiveemployers.co.uk/talking-inclusion-with-podcast/mental-health/>

BBC Radio 4's **All in the Mind** podcast takes a scientific look at how the human mind works:

<https://play.acast.com/s/allinthemind>

Sophie Hagen's **Made of Human** podcast explores how Sophie's guests cope with the darkness, and the light, in their lives: <https://play.acast.com/s/mohpod>

Cariad Lloyd's **Griefcast talks** to comedians about death and grief: <https://play.acast.com/s/griefcast>

The mental health charity Mind has a series of podcasts talking to people about their experiences with a variety of mental health issues: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/podcasts/>

## **TED talks**

### **How to make stress your friend (14:17) – Kelly McGonigal**

Stress. It makes your heart pound, your breathing quicken and your forehead sweat. But while stress has been made into a public health enemy, new research suggests that stress may only be bad for you if you believe that to be the case. Psychologist Kelly McGonigal urges us to see stress as a positive and introduces us to an unsung mechanism for stress reduction: reaching out to others.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly\\_mcgonigal\\_how\\_to\\_make\\_stress\\_your\\_friend/c](https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend/c)

### **All it takes is 10 mindful minutes (9.17 min) – Andy Puddicombe**

Mindfulness expert, Andy Puddicombe, asks “when is the last time you did absolutely nothing for 10 minutes?” We need to look after ourselves and to do this we should put time aside to not do anything and that means no texting, talking or thinking which can not only help us when stressed but prevent it.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/andy\\_puddicombe\\_all\\_it\\_takes\\_is\\_10\\_mindful\\_minutes](https://www.ted.com/talks/andy_puddicombe_all_it_takes_is_10_mindful_minutes)

### **How Autism freed me to be myself (6.08 min) – Rosie King**

Storytelling activist, Rosie King, discusses her experience with autism and the stereotypes of autism. [https://www.ted.com/talks/rosie\\_king\\_how\\_autism\\_freed\\_me\\_to\\_be\\_myself#t-142195](https://www.ted.com/talks/rosie_king_how_autism_freed_me_to_be_myself#t-142195)

**There's no shame in taking care of your mental health (8:57) – Sangu Delle**

When stress got to be too much for TED Fellow Sangu Delle, he had to confront his own deep prejudice: that men shouldn't take care of their mental health. In a personal talk, Delle shares how he learned to handle anxiety in a society that's uncomfortable with emotions. As he says: "Being honest about how we feel doesn't make us weak – it makes us human."

[https://www.ted.com/talks/sangu\\_delle\\_there\\_s\\_no\\_shame\\_in\\_taking\\_care\\_of\\_your\\_mental\\_health](https://www.ted.com/talks/sangu_delle_there_s_no_shame_in_taking_care_of_your_mental_health)

**The voices in my head (14.13 min) – Eleanor Longden**

Diagnosed with schizophrenia, research psychologist Eleanor Longden, states that appearances are deceiving. Going to university she was like any other student from the outside; however she had a voice inside her head narrating her life and communicating her emotions which became hugely dictatorial causing her to self-harm.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/eleanor\\_longden\\_the\\_voices\\_in\\_my\\_head#t-337783](https://www.ted.com/talks/eleanor_longden_the_voices_in_my_head#t-337783)

**Break the silence for suicide attempt survivors (04.14 min) – JD Schramm**

19 out of 20 people will fail at attempting suicide. For John he was fighting an addiction and depression when he chose suicide as a way to escape. Communicator JD Schramm asks the audience to talk about suicide and break the silence around this topic.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/jd\\_schramm](https://www.ted.com/talks/jd_schramm)

**A tale of mental illness – from the inside (14:52) – Elyn Saks**

Imagine having a nightmare when you are awake. For Mental Health Law Scholar, Elyn Saks, she discusses schizophrenia as a brain disease, a disease which puts you out of reality and where you can kill people with thoughts. She suggests that treatment is not all you need to recover, supportive workplaces and family and friends are as important because the stigma is a powerful thing. [https://www.ted.com/talks/elyn\\_saks\\_seeing\\_mental\\_illness](https://www.ted.com/talks/elyn_saks_seeing_mental_illness)

**On being just crazy enough (05.51) – Joshua Walters**

Comedian and Activist, Joshua Walters, discusses the skills associated with his bipolar and blurs the line between mental illness and mental "skillness".

[http://www.ted.com/talks/joshua\\_walters\\_on\\_being\\_just\\_crazy\\_enough](http://www.ted.com/talks/joshua_walters_on_being_just_crazy_enough)

**Talks to help practice patience** – TED playlist

[https://www.ted.com/playlists/353/talks to help practice patience](https://www.ted.com/playlists/353/talks_to_help_practice_patience)

### **Mindfulness apps**

There are many mindfulness, meditation, and wellness apps, and as with all approaches to wellbeing, mindfulness may be one of many tools which can help promote good mental health.

**Ten percent happier** – After a panic attack on live TV, ABC news anchor Dan Harris had to make some changes. He sought out meditation, and now shares his learning via his Ten Percent app with guided meditations from expert meditation teachers.

[www.tenpercent.com](http://www.tenpercent.com)

**Calm app** – Calm is a meditation, sleep and relaxation app. [www.calm.com](http://www.calm.com)

**Headspace** – Headspace is a popular app offering guided meditations, articles and support to be more mindful, sleep better, and meditate. [www.Headspace.com](http://www.Headspace.com)

[Back to contents page](#)



