

C. Taking Action to Reduce Stigma

60% of people with mental health problems are reluctant to apply for posts because they believe they would be treated unfairly. Research suggests the following is central to taking action to reduce stigma and discrimination:

- 20 A positive attitude to the recruitment of people with mental health problems.
- 21 Organisations showing how they involve the families of employees in promoting health and wellbeing.
- 21 Organisations demonstrating ways they work to improve the health or wellbeing of local communities.
- 23 Organisations passing on examples of good practice in relation to mental health and wellbeing, to other employers.

Please see the attached guidance notes for information and advice on how to achieve each of these steps

Organisations are not expected to have all of the 23 steps implemented at once. This is meant as a good practice guide for organisations to work towards.

Useful Websites

Mindful Employer: An organisation by employers for employers on reducing stigma around mental health problems at work.

<http://www.mindfulemployer.net/>

SHIFT: A government mental health at work website.

<http://www.shift.org.uk/>

Skills North East: Useful information on north east priorities and mental health.

<http://www.skillsnortheast.co.uk/>

Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health: Useful links for research and information on mental health and employment.

<http://www.scmh.org.uk/>

Health and Safety Executive: Useful website on stress at work.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/>

Please send us your feedback on how you have implemented these guidelines and the effects for your organisation: janine.brown@ntw.nhs.uk, 01670 391630



Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS in collaboration with Northumberland Care Trust and Northumberland Work and Wellbeing Group



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Guidance on Managing Stress and Mental Health at Work

Want to reduce sickness absence?

Want to improve levels of productivity?

Want to reduce staff turnover?

What will this guidance do for my business?

In 2007/2008 mental ill health was estimated to be responsible for more working days lost than any other health problem.

When BT introduced a wellbeing program, they saw a 75% increase in return to work of people on long-term sickness absence.

This guidance aims to help employers reduce stress and improve wellbeing in staff. This should result in an increase in productivity and a decrease in staff sickness and turnover.

How was this guidance created?

Northumberland Work and Wellbeing Group used research evidence to create the 23 steps.

The guidance was then reviewed by a panel of national experts (the SHIFT review panel) who reported the information to be comprehensive and correct according to available evidence.

How should I use this guidance?

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the guidance notes (found at www.mindfulemployer.net/information.html)

The guidance notes will tell you how to implement each step and where to find further information.

This information can be used to check you have good policies in place within your organisation and to assist line managers in supporting staff wellbeing.

23 Steps to Improve the Wellbeing of your Workforce

A. Promoting Good Mental Health

In 2008, 1 in 5 people reported their job was very/extremely stressful, the highest rate for 4 years. Research suggests the following are central to promoting a mentally healthy workplace:

- 1 A mental and emotional well being policy that has management commitment and the awareness of all staff.
- 2 Stress risk assessments completed as per the Health and Safety Executive Guidelines.
- 3 Encouraging a good work life balance for all staff.
- 4 Promoting positive employee relationships.
- 5 Improving employees and employers knowledge of the causes of stress and burnout in the workplace and ways of coping.
- 6 Adequate systems in place for all employees to gain feedback on their performance.
- 7 Ensuring adequate provision to support staff with personal and emotional problems.
- 8 Giving employees information on healthy eating and providing access to healthy food where possible.
- 9 Having an alcohol and drug policy that applies equally to all staff in the workplace and provides information on the effects of alcohol and drugs.
- 10 Good physical environment policies e.g. considering heating, lighting and noise levels.
- 11 Having transparent policies and practices for equal opportunities, fair pay and good work conditions.

12 Developing all policies in consultation with staff e.g. bullying, domestic abuse, mental health and wellbeing at work, and flexible working.

13 Supporting and enabling line managers and supervisors to engage in working practices that promote good workplace mental health.

14 All line managers and supervisors attending management training/mentoring.

B. Supporting People with Mental Health Problems in Employment

In 2007/2008 2.1 million people reported they were suffering from an illness caused or made worse by their job.

Research suggests the following are central to supporting people with mental health problems in the workplace:

- 15 A mental health policy and practices that support staff with mental health problems in the workplace.
- 16 Line manager and supervisor training on supporting people with mental health problems and promoting working conditions which promote good mental health.
- 17 Reducing stigma and discrimination against people with mental health problems in the workplace. E.g. ensuring all staff have information/training to allow them to be responsive to the mental health needs of others.
- 18 Effective sickness/absence management policies and practices.
- 19 Making reasonable adjustments to the work environment for people with mental health problems who wish to continue working.