

What employers can do to support good mental health

In the know



A new report commissioned by Prime Minister Theresa May has found that long-term mental health conditions cause up to 300,000 people a year to leave their job. The report also contains a number of proposals for employers to monitor and promote good mental health amongst employees. Here, we take a look at the contents of the report.

“Thriving At Work” report

- The ‘Thriving at Work’ report seeks to change the culture around mental health to create a more open, understanding and aware society;
- The report indicates that organisations can have the greatest impact and provide the most support to create this change and sets out a ten year vision for employers;
- The report estimates the total cost of poor mental health to organisations as between £33 billion and £42 billion.

Mental health standards

- The report contains a number of proposals and “mental health core standards” which can be put in place across all businesses;
- These include:
 - producing, implementing and communicating a mental health at work plan and developing mental health awareness among staff;
 - encouraging open conversations about mental health and available support;
 - providing good working conditions, including development opportunities; promoting effective people management; and
 - monitoring mental health and wellbeing.
- There are also “enhanced” standards which, if implemented, will set organisations apart as being those who wish to lead the way on improving their mental health culture. The enhanced standards include increasing transparency, demonstrating accountability and improving disclosure.

How to implement core standards

- A mental health at work plan may be incorporated within an organisation’s existing mental health policy or created separately;
- The plan should be individual to each business and can outline the support, services and ways of addressing issues that are currently carried out. This may include an Employee Assistance Programme via which employees can access free telephone or face to face counselling;
- In order to raise awareness around mental health, organisations should arrange training on how to spot negative mental health within themselves;
- Activities such as wellness days, open mornings, wellbeing and fitness classes, and recognising days such as World Mental Health Day will all contribute to creating the right culture.

Croner Tips

- **The core standards are designed to be best practice standards that are easily implemented to create a positive and supportive mental health culture.**
- **Organisations should approach these standards in a positive manner and assess how they can be implemented within their business, depending on factors such as resources, staff and the current culture.**

The content of this briefing is correct at the time of publishing.

Please contact the 24 Hour Advice Service for advice on your specific situation before acting on the information in this article