

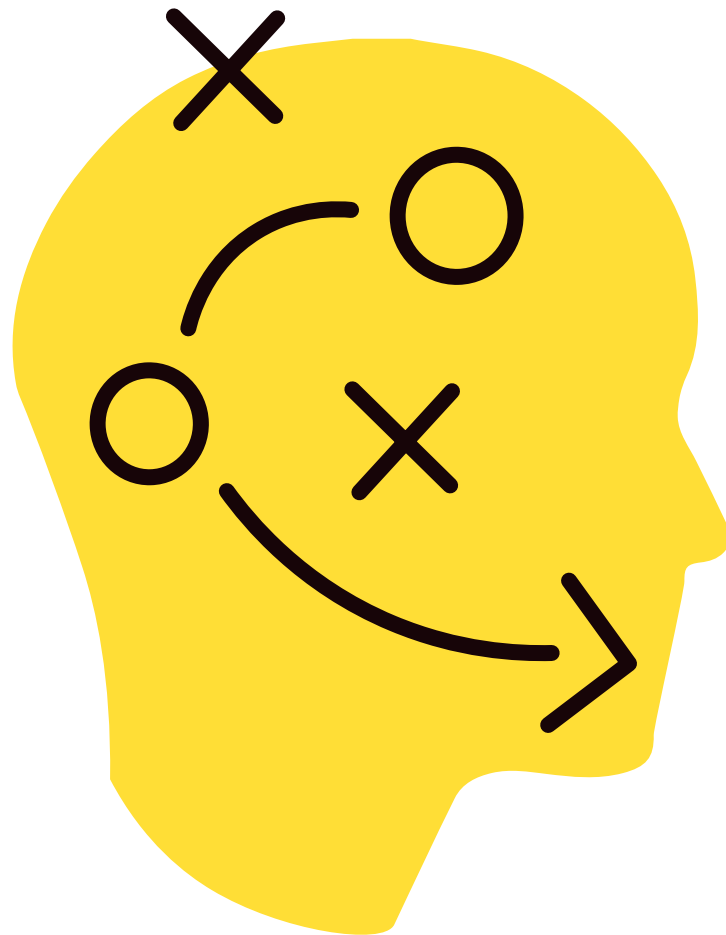
**time to change**

**Wales**

let's end mental health discrimination

# Core Standards

## Developing your Employer Action Plan: A Guide for SMEs



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This has been developed by Time to Change in England and adapted to a Welsh audience.



This document provides guidance on what each Core Standard of the Time to Change Wales Employer Action Plan entails, ideas for what to include to meet each Core Standard, things to consider and advice on how to measure the impact of your activities and actions.

Before reading this document, please ensure you have also read “An Introduction to the Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge Process: A Guide for SMEs” to fully understand what the Employer Pledge is and the benefits of signing the Pledge for both employees and employer.

## **Time to Change Wales' expectations and minimum requirements to achieve the six standards.**

In order to have your Action Plan approved we would expect to see some minimum requirements met for all six Core Standards.

### **We would expect the following to be evidenced in your submission:**

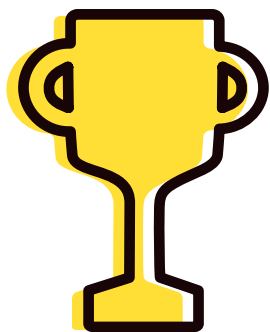
- Actions and/or activities that show commitment to addressing each Core Standard.
- An outline of who is responsible for delivery of each action or activity within your business.
- Clear timescales and dates for delivery of each mental health action or activity within your business.
- An outline of how you will monitor and evaluate the impact and success of your Action Plan.
- Actions and activities that demonstrate how the business owner, supervisors, or managers will show commitment to addressing mental health, and mental health stigma and discrimination specifically, in your workplace.
- Actions and activities that demonstrate how your business's commitment will be embedded within your workplace procedures.



# Core Standard 1

**Produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan.**

Core Standard 1 recommends employers produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan that helps to create an open and supportive culture in the workplace - one that encourages people to talk about their mental health, promotes good mental health of all employees and outlines the support available for those who may need it.



## Can our business do this? Yes, you can!

The Mental Health space is growing rapidly as more and more people realise how normal it is to have poor mental health and how not addressing it could impact not just on individuals but all those around them.

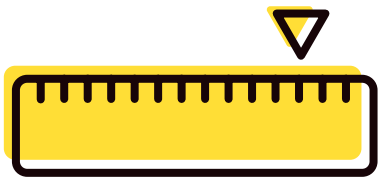
Many employers at the start of their journey, have often said they felt overwhelmed as there was so much information out there, and that they struggled to narrow it down to what they could deliver as it all seemed equally valid and important.

You may be feeling this too, in which case we invite you to refocus your thoughts on where your business is at and what you can realistically achieve in that time frame, with the resources you have access to as well as who the specific audiences you will be delivering it to are and most importantly what they are going to be receptive to.



### Suggested activities to achieve Core Standard 1

- Secure the business owner or senior manager to sign your Employer Pledge at an all staff event and ask them to talk about the importance of tackling stigma in your workplace.
- Encourage the business owner and senior members of staff to be role models by sharing their personal experiences of stress, low mood or other mental health problems in the workplace.
- Provide printed fact sheets to promote any in-house support that is available, as well as useful contacts and signposting to external support agencies where appropriate.
- Provide opportunities to improve understanding and raise awareness of mental health e.g. share links to useful websites, share blogs from the Time to Change Wales website, training etc.
- Set out your commitment physically on your website, social media and other external communications such as job adverts.



## Suggested ways to measure for Core Standard 1

### To measure impact

Measure employee awareness of the Action Plan and the Pledge by getting feedback via staff surveys, discussions with staff in meetings, suggestion boxes etc. If you have a larger team you could use focus groups.

Check employee understanding of mental health routinely. This could be achieved by adding or building on existing practices such as routine questions in staff meetings/updates, marking key date events such as Time to Talk Day, World Mental Health Day, away days, staff outings etc.

### To measure success

Track to what extent communications are accessed for example email open rates, how many leaflets are picked up by staff.



## Consideration points to test your Action Plan and its deliverables across the 6 Core Standards

**To help you ensure that you are delivering the right activities at the level that your audiences will engage in and that you are able to monitor, we have listed a set of key consideration points that you can use as a test guide for every time you plan to develop an activity or action.**

**We have also listed the rationale behind the consideration points to help you understand why we think they are important.**

Can your business make any information available about employees who will be involved in or affected by activities in your Action Plan?

When you are thinking of activities and with it the messages you would like to communicate, think about your business and all the employees in it, that this Action Plan need to reach:

- Think about people who work in different roles - whether they are customer facing, working on different shifts, office based, working remotely, lone working or always on the move.



- Consider people's situations, for example if they have children, are carers, lone parents, if they work part-time, have access to flexible working or not, if they are contracted or paid by the hour. Also consider times people work – so regular 9-5 hours or shift work or simply do irregular hours.
- Think about the diversity of your business as a whole, the ages of employees, cultural/religious backgrounds, ethnicities, sexual orientation, gender, disabilities etc.

**Consider if you are able to properly assess the impact of your Action Plan and its activities, or is there likely to be any gaps or/insufficient information provided from activities that stops you assessing? And how will you address this?**

**Are you able to get support from employees with lived experience of poor mental health?**

Time to Change Wales is very much about Lived Experience Leadership – that is to consult people with lived experiences of poor mental health or mental health problems to influence, guide or support the development and delivery of our products and activities. By doing this we embed lived experience in all that we do.

Our invitation is that employers consider this approach when it comes to developing, delivering and embedding the Action Plan, as it takes the pressure off the person leading the Pledge process especially if they have limited knowledge on the subject matter.

Whilst people with lived experiences might not be experts on the subject they are certainly experts of their experiences which could be invaluable for the organisation to learn from.

Is there an opportunity for your programme/activity to foster good relations between each member of staff?

Consider if you are engaging people with a wide range of backgrounds and protected characteristics in the development, delivery and review and/or monitoring of the Action Plan, its activities and deliverables.

The mental health and wellbeing needs of employees needs to be at the core of every business.

There is also an opportunity to encourage connecting with other key dates and promote impact on mental health of their audiences. For example during Black History Month (October), LGBTQ+ History Month (February) International Women's Day (March) raise awareness around mental health with dedicated network focusing on the mental health of people allied to the network.



Interestingly Black History Month overlaps with World Mental Health day (10th October) and LGBTQ+ History Month overlaps with Time to Talk Day (first Thursday of February).



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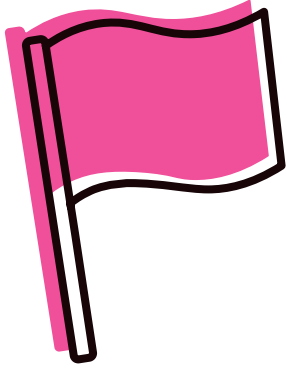
## **Business owner and senior manager buy-in, representation and engagement**

Buy-in, visual representation of that buy-in as well as meaningful engagement from the business owner or senior manager is crucial to the successful delivery and implementation of your Action Plan. The reality is that when the business owner or senior manager gives the go ahead, the business follows suit. Meaningful engagement from a senior staff member gives people permission to be more open and so people feel safer to be more open as it's seen to be accepted and acknowledged. It's a giant leap towards normalising mental health in the workplace.

With business owner and senior staff support, you will find it much easier to change the culture of your workplace. Even better, getting them to be open about their mental health at work can create a seismic shift in how mental health problems are talked about amongst your employees.

Consider scoping which senior staff might support taking this campaign internally and whether they have a story that they might be willing to share. Storytelling is a powerful component of this campaign and when senior staff shares their story, not only does it give employees permission to talk about their own experiences, it also promotes safety in being able to do so. Another key factor is that the senior staff member's mental health problems/experiences didn't diminish them but rather they have managed their conditions and are able to deliver to a leadership role within the business.





## Things senior staff might do to show they are committed and engaged to addressing mental health in the workplace

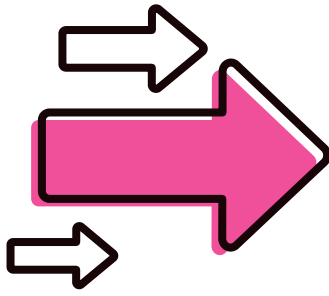
- The business owner or senior manager signs the Pledge publicly sending out a strong signal to all staff.
- Be actively supportive and involved at various stages in taking this campaign forward internally, for example attending activities, events and discussions, participating in key dates such as World Mental Health day etc.
- They clearly demonstrate how and why they are invested. In an ideal setting they would speak about personal reasons or experiences with mental health problems as this has the biggest impact. However, even a message about wanting staff to feel empowered to speak about mental health is important.
- Ensuring employees know about their commitment, this could be done by utilising an all staff email/bulletin to explain why they think it is important to sign the Pledge, the impact they hope their commitment makes and how they relate/resonate with others by sharing their own experiences.



## Core Standard 2

**Develop mental health awareness among employees by making information, tools and support accessible.**

Core Standard 2 recommends employers think about how to increase everyone's awareness about mental health and get them openly talking as well as accessing and utilising information and tools provided by employer and other sources. The reality is that in many workplaces mental health is still a taboo subject. Too often, employees are scared to talk to their manager and problems can spiral. By raising awareness of mental health, and encouraging discussion, you can challenge this harmful culture.



**To change how people think and act about mental health in the workplace, you may consider the following simple framework to raise awareness:**

- Help people understand what mental health is by providing reliable information. The Time to Change Wales website is a great place to start.
  - Talk about mental health - it's easy to believe that there's no right place to talk about mental health. But the more we talk about it, the better life is for all of us.
  - Ensure that people know where to go for support and information.
  - Recruit Time to Change Wales Employee Champions. Employee Champions are self-appointed employees who help challenge stigma by raising awareness, sharing useful information, promoting how to access tools and resources as well as signposting to support services.
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## **Time to Change Wales' expectations and minimum requirements to achieve this standard**

We would expect the following to be evidenced in your submission:

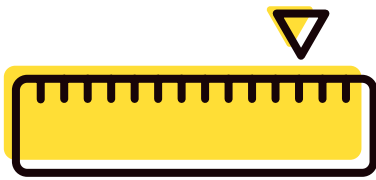
Activities that demonstrate how you will raise your staff's understanding of mental health problems and mental health stigma in the workplace. We suggest you make reference to any planned events/activities/initiatives your business will run in addition to any information or resources the business makes available/signposts to staff.

Clearly list all the tools or resources that are/will be made available to staff to self-reflect on their own mental health in the workplace and discuss what supports them stay well in your business.



## **Suggested activities to achieve Core Standard 2**

- Sign your Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge in front of as many staff as possible e.g. at a business wide event, team meeting.
- Raise awareness in the workplace of the campaign using Time to Change Wales promotional materials to encourage employees to start talking about mental health in the workplace.
- Harness the power of your Employee Champions to help you raise awareness among staff.
- Share myth busting information and case studies on your staff emails and noticeboards.
- Why not invite a speaker on mental health to an event as part of diversity, disability or mental health awareness activities? Hearing what it's like to have a mental health problem from people who've experienced the issues first hand can help break down negative stereotypes.
- Take part in key Time to Change Wales campaign dates and run activity within your workplace for World Mental Health Day (10th October) and Time to Talk Day (first Thursday of February every year).



## Suggested ways to measure for Core Standard 2

### To measure success

Monitor attendance at meetings/events, number of pamphlets taken by staff, emails being opened etc.

### To measure completion

Gather evidence informally by getting feedback from Employee Champions and staff.

### To measure impact

Include questions in employee surveys such as 'Do you think we as a business have an inclusive environment in which you feel able to talk openly about mental health?'

**Awareness days have allowed us to target a wide range of staff at different levels. We have utilised Time to Change Wales Champions to tell their story and support us at events.**

**We have seen the positive benefits of staff sharing personal experiences of their mental health. For example, at Children's Mental Health Awareness Week, a staff member was happy to share her story on our board. This shows everyone that anyone can be affected by mental health and encourages others to talk openly.**

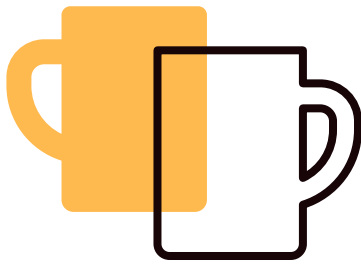
Cardiff & Vale Hospital UHB Paediatrics



## Core Standard 3

**Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling.**

Core Standard 3 focuses on encouraging open conversations about mental health as well as the support that is available to them should they find themselves struggling, during the recruitment process and at regular intervals throughout employment. It is important to highlight how the business will support people and this should be by offering appropriate workplace adjustments to employees who require them.



The majority of employers tell us that getting their employees to share their personal experiences of mental health problems with one another is an incredibly powerful tool.

By getting just a few people to open up and tell their story, you signal that it's okay for employees to be open with each other about their mental health. We recommend that you do this not only on an individual level but also as a business as a whole. Whilst we know that encouraging open conversations as a message from the business is important in ensuring that open conversations become part and parcel of every day at work, we also know that for this change to happen, finding a way to enable peer to peer support to flourish is key.



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## **Time to Change Wales' expectations and minimum requirements to achieve this standard**

Activities that demonstrate how your business will encourage employees to share their experience of mental health problems at a business-wide level. We suggest that you make references to the opportunities that will be made available to share experiences e.g. wellbeing events, blogs, intranet posts or through internal newsletters.

An outline how your business will normalise conversations about mental health and encourage people to share. We suggest that you make reference to the opportunities and communications that will be released to encourage employees to disclose and reinforce your business's commitment to supporting these individuals e.g. sharing information about the business's commitment when employees are recruited.

Provide an outline as to how your business will empower employees to champion mental health in the workplace including providing peer to peer support and activities in support of normalising the conversation and ultimately mental health.

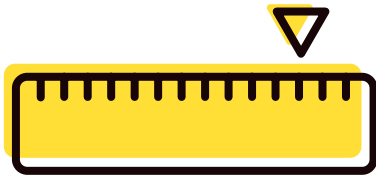
An important element of this is to recruit and establish an Employee Champion role within your workplace. Free training is available from Time to Change Wales to explain and prepare staff for what the role involves.



## **Suggested activities to achieve Core Standard 3**

- Get senior or high-profile employees with experience of mental health problems to speak out and lead by example.
- Encourage staff at all levels to write blogs and share their experiences through staff email, notice boards and other internal communications.
- If you think your staff will struggle to do this, ask for anonymous submissions and gradually work up to people putting their name to their story.
- Host a Q&A panel session with people with experience of mental health problems who are comfortable sharing their story to empower others to share their stories.
- Set up a wellbeing group for staff to share experiences and tips for managing mental health and wellbeing at work.
- Organise a 'Tea & Talk' session to bring employees together. Create an open and friendly space where they can share their experiences with one another.
- Recruit Employee Champions and arrange free training from Time to Change Wales.





## Suggested ways to measure for Core Standard 3

### **To measure impact**

Why not include questions in employee questionnaires or suggestion boxes - e.g. 'In your opinion, how well does your organisation support employees who experience mental health problems?'

### **To measure success**

Collect feedback from staff about your activities and actions to raise awareness.

### **To measure completion**

Reflecting on engagement with activities - doing this will give you an understanding of what the levels of openness and stigma are with your workplace.

Identify areas for improvement where additional training and awareness raising initiatives may be required.

Following from previous measure - also looking at retention/return to work rates for people with diagnosed mental health conditions.



## Recruiting and establishing an Employee Champions Group

A big part of encouraging employees to talk about mental health is by inviting staff to become Employee Champions.

**Champions make a real difference by providing peer support to their workplace culture and to the lives of their colleagues by:**

- Starting conversations about mental health.
- Running activities to make mental health a normal topic of conversation.
- Helping to dispel myths and stereotypes.
- Sharing stories and lived experiences of poor mental health.
- Providing a point of peer support - making it easier for people to seek support.
- Signposting colleagues appropriately.
- Champions can also be there to help you implement these actions and to help maintain the momentum. You can share this Action Plan with your Champions and add a suggested recurring way of communicating (eg. email group/six weekly Champion meetings).

Free Employee Champion Training is available to Pledged Employers from Time to Change Wales. Contact the team for more information and availability.



## Suggested ways to measure impact of Employee Champions

### **To measure impact**

Improve your ability to understand your employees' stress/wellbeing levels by inviting staff to become Employee Champions.

If you are able to look at the data from the above survey in a more regional area way and compare it to champion activity.

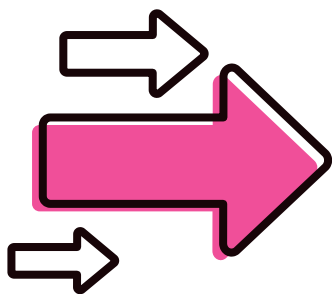
### **To measure success**

Note the number of Employee Champions signing up.

Note the number of Employee Champions wanting to share their lived experiences.

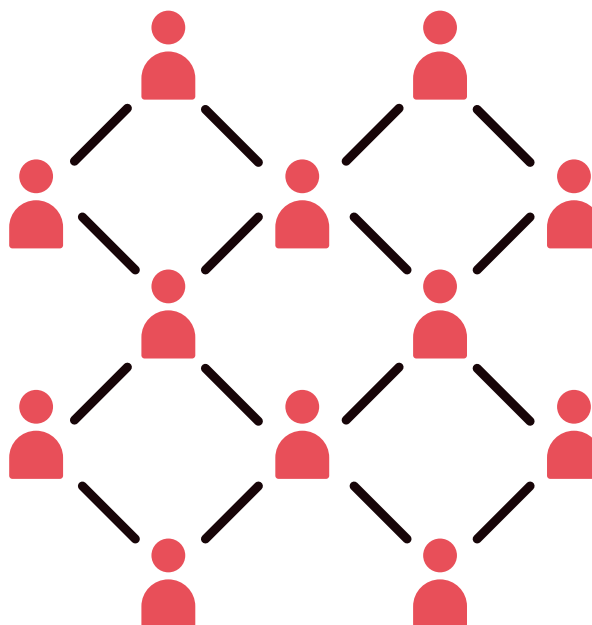
### **To measure completion**

If you recruit Employee Champions on the basis of self-selection notice what parts of the business have champion representation and what parts don't? This is an opportunity to understand where stigma is concentrated within the business/ or access to the campaign internally is limited. Either way it helps you to focus your efforts on a more targeted delivery in those low representation of champion areas.



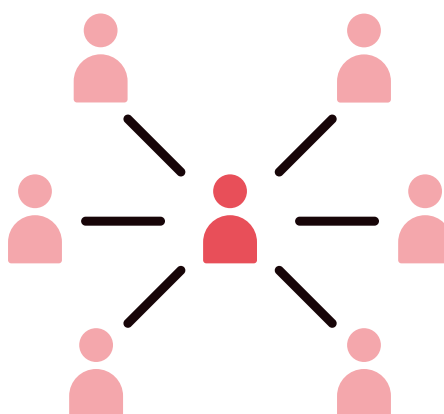
## Models of networks for you to consider

Depending on the size of your business, you may have one or two Employee Champions or you may have many! The diagrams below highlight different models of network for you to consider when setting up a Champion and staff network within your business.



### More organic

Multi people led - suits bigger more spread out businesses.



### Coordinated

By single person/selected group - suits a more smaller to medium sized business.



## Core Standard 4

**Provide employees with good working conditions and ensure they have a healthy work life balance and opportunities for development.**

Core Standard 4 focuses employers to consider how and if whether they provide employees with good working conditions and ensure that employees are able to have a healthy work/life balance which includes taking up support when struggling with poor mental health such as stress and burnout.



Good working conditions are ones that promote an environment where employees are encouraged to thrive and not just survive. A good working condition is one that gives each employee the feeling of having a choice to share if they are OK or not without fear of judgement or repercussions.

### **A safe workplace for mental health**

The reality is that good working conditions inspire loyalty and high performance from staff. Plus, they can also prevent people developing new mental health problems, and support those living with them to thrive. We also know that good work is stable and secure, allowing people to plan for the future and to stay financially secure. Research shows that a good job is where people feel in control, have some control over their work, and can build social networks. It's also where people feel they have a healthy work/life balance and get opportunities to develop.

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## **Time to Change Wales' expectations and minimum requirements to achieve this standard**

Activities that demonstrate how your policies and procedures support employees with mental health problems and support them to come forward and disclose? We suggest you make reference to these documents and the mechanisms through which these are reviewed and updated including any involvement of persons with lived experience of mental health problems in the review.

An outline of what support services and information are available to your staff. We encourage you to make reference to all support available e.g. HR support, open door policies, Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP), helplines, information available on your intranet, useful external contacts such as the ones listed on our website here: [www.timetochangewales.org.uk/en/need-help/](http://www.timetochangewales.org.uk/en/need-help/)



**1. Being open:** Managers and supervisors should check-in regularly with staff to see how they're doing and find out what's causing them stress. They can do this by adding a regular item to team meetings where people talk about stress and wellbeing as a group.

**2. Use two-way communication:** Poor communication can cause stress. Staff can be affected if they are:

- Overloaded with information they can't process
  - Excluded from key knowledge and conversations
  - Unable to tell managers and supervisors how they're feeling.
- If communication is clear, open, effective, manageable and responsive, staff will be able to access all the information they need to do their job while avoiding overload.

**3. Promote work/life balance:** Long hours might seem manageable in the short term. But over time, constant pressure and a poor work/life balance can quickly lead to stress and burnout, reducing people's productivity, performance, creativity and morale. To avoid this, managers and supervisors can encourage staff to:

- Work sensible hours
- Request consistent shift patterns
- Take full lunch breaks
- Rest and recuperate after busy periods
- Take their full annual leave
- Where possible allow flexible working.

**4. Provide opportunities to develop:** Research shows employees need to feel valued, supported and that their work is meaningful. A positive culture that values all staff and invests in their skills and development builds the trust and integrity essential to maintain commitment and productivity levels.

Encourage managers and supervisors to give staff development opportunities where possible. This can be done in a cost-effective way by using skills and knowledge within the business to develop coaching, learning, training and job shadowing opportunities.



## Addressing minimum requirement

Core Standard 4 emphasises that it's important to be open about mental health. However, to encourage this open culture, employees must be confident how information they share will be used when talking about their mental health. Policies and procedures must be clear and fair to avoid discouraging them from sharing sensitive issues.

Therefore, regardless of whether your business has a standalone mental health policy or addresses mental health within existing policies or procedures, it is important that employees are informed about what they should do when encountering mental ill health. A clear mental health policy establishes a framework for everyone to work within and shows new recruits and current employees that your business takes their mental wellbeing seriously.

It is therefore worth considering for this Core Standard the following with regards to any mental health policies your organisation hold:

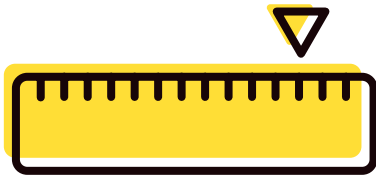
- How easy is it for an employee struggling with a mental health problem?
- How easy is it for their manager/supervisor?
- How easy is it to find out how your business will treat them?
- How can you change your policies or procedures to encourage those with mental health problems to come forward?





## Suggested activities to achieve Core Standard 4

- Review your current policies and procedures to ensure your workplace is supportive of people experiencing mental health problems. Review your sickness absence policy to ensure this supports both those with physical or mental health related illness.
- Consider implementing a standalone mental health or wellbeing policy to highlight the business's commitment to the issue and link to existing policies.
- Integrate case studies into existing policies to highlight to managers and staff how these operate in practice.
- Review your lifecycle of employment, from recruitment, through to returning to work after an absence. Look at every interaction where mental health may come up as an issue and put in place policies to ensure they are positive for your employees.
- Take stock of the support tools your business has available and consider how much employees know about these and how to access them.
- Create a permanent space in your workplace or internal messaging sites for people to access information about mental health.
- Signpost to local providers such as peer support groups, NHS services and voluntary sector support.
- Highlight stories of staff members who have benefited from using support services e.g. you EAP, Hafal or local Mind service.
- Consider training Mental Health First Aiders.
- Invite your service providers into the workplace to highlight the support package and allay any fears staff may have about accessing service.



## Suggested ways to measure for Core Standard 4

### **To measure impact**

Engagement survey results – include questions in employee surveys e.g. (1) 'I achieve a good balance between my work and my private life' (2) 'I have an acceptable workload' (3) 'How frequently do you feel the demands of your current job and/or timescales for delivery of key tasks are unmanageable?'

Consider measuring number of sickness absences relating to mental health including stress-related.

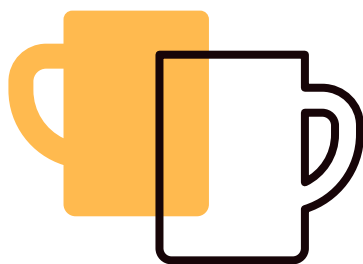
Feedback from exit interviews.

### **To measure success**

Gather evidence informally by getting feedback from Time to Change Wales Employee Champions/Mental Health First Aiders, Any disability/wellbeing/health groups/networks.

### **To measure completion**

Monitor workplace risks (e.g. causes of stress identified in HSE Management Standard).



## How can you change your policies and procedures to encourage those with mental health problems to come forward?

There may be groups of staff within your business that you could proactively recruit as Employee Champions to help inform these documents.

**An excerpt from the Thriving at Work Report (2017) around the importance of implementing support measures, training to flexible working - all points worth considering and embedding in your Action Plan:**

“We have spoken to employers who shared concerns that employees might feign mental health problems as an excuse for poor attendance or low productivity. We believe that this can be addressed through ensuring that line managers are well trained to have practical and engaging conversations with employees, and create a culture where working with a mental health problem is supported.

Our hope is that the mental health Core Standards will encourage awareness and training amongst those who might find it difficult, but also put in place wider structures and processes which encourage managers to develop skills and understanding of mental health whilst providing alternative sources of support for employees.

Employers should also recognise that their role goes beyond what happens in the workplace as technology and other factors increasingly blur the line between work and home life. Flexible working can benefit all employees, including those with caring responsibilities.

Employers can also play a more significant role in supporting employees through major life events which may include bereavement, problem debt, and relationship breakdown.”



## To further develop your Action Plan consider evaluating the effectiveness of your policies

As policies and procedures work together in service of a business, defining goals, the process for organisational action as well as help protect an business's interest, it is worth considering if your business policies and procedures are effective in supporting your employer's commitment towards breaking down mental health stigma. Below we have included a framework to evaluate your policies and procedures with in terms of how effective they are with regards to mental health.

### To evaluate policies

**Consider from a process perspective, is the policy based on:**

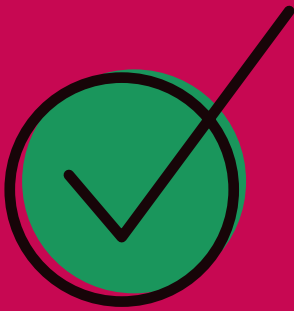
- A thorough consultation process, including asking for input and feedback from employees with lived experience of poor mental health.

**From a content point of view, does the policy take into account;**

- Relevant and available data regarding the mental health care and wellbeing needs of all employees (so is inclusive of all in its approach)?
- Respect for and promotion of equitable opportunities?

**Consider what the purpose behind the policy is and what it aims to guide on and then ask does it have;**

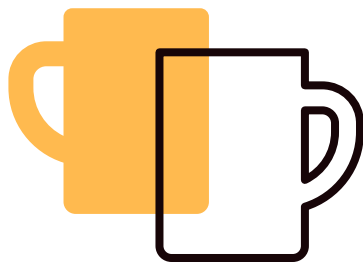
- A clear vision? That is explicit values and principles?
- Clear and realistic objectives that have been thoroughly considered and discussed?
- Areas for action clearly linked and relevant to the main objectives (such as recruitment, sickness and absence, performance; etc.
- Quality improvement; information systems; human resources and training; research and evaluation.



## Core Standard 5

**Promote effective people management through line managers and supervisors.**

Core Standard 5 is all about promoting effective people management to ensure all employees have a regular conversation about their health and wellbeing with their line manager or supervisor and train and support line managers in effective management practices.



It's critical that all of your managers and supervisors feel confident having a conversation about mental health with individuals in their teams.

Increasing their capability to spot signs and symptoms in their team, and feel confident in discussing this with those who are struggling will help stop problems before they become more challenging.

Research shows that good line management is linked with good health, wellbeing and improved performance. Meanwhile, poor quality leadership has been linked with stress, burnout and depression. Investing in good management doesn't have to be complex, or expensive. It's often about managers taking simple steps to support staff. Developing a management style that is open, approachable and self-aware goes a long way.

Managers can do this by asking simple, open and non-judgemental questions about a person's mental health.

These can include:

- Regular catch-ups with staff.
- Setting clear priorities.
- Celebrating individual and team successes.
- Involving staff in decision making.
- Flexing management style to suit individual needs.



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## **Time to Change Wales' expectations and minimum requirements to achieve this standard**

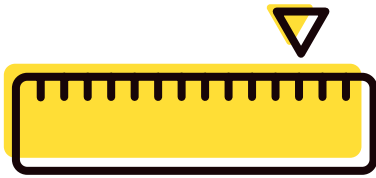
An outline of how your business will ensure managers and supervisors are suitably prepared and educated to have effective conversations with their team about their mental health? We suggest making references to training provided, resources made available and ongoing support (internal/external) that can be accessed.

An outline of how your business' policies and procedures ensure regular opportunities are presented for managers and supervisors to have conversations with line reports about their mental health? We suggest making references to induction policies, supervision policies or one-to-ones/appraisal activities.



## Suggested activities to achieve Core Standard 5

- Organise mental health awareness training for line managers to build knowledge around mental health problems and information on spotting signs and symptoms of mental ill health.
- Deliver training for line managers on how to have an important conversation, with a particular focus on mental health.
- Consider training for line managers to include unconscious bias training, as we all have biases that may influence how we approach situations.
- Integrate mental health into existing training and induction to highlight the topic and demonstrate its okay to raise any issues staff may be facing.
- Provide training on mental health and stress management - including how to spot the signs and how to have supportive conversations.
- Consider how you will train line managers who are reluctant to address mental health issues - non-compulsory training risks only reaching the line managers who are open to talking about mental health.
- Support line managers to have clear guidelines for managers on managing mental health issues and encourage and support positive manager behaviours.



## Suggested ways to measure for Core Standard 5

### To measure impact

Encourage sharing safely - 360 feedback i.e. upward feedback of line managers that feeds into performance management process.

Include questions in employee surveys such as 'How confident would you be in talking to your manager about a mental health problem?'

### To measure success

Collect anecdotal feedback and anonymised information from employee health or wellbeing networks.

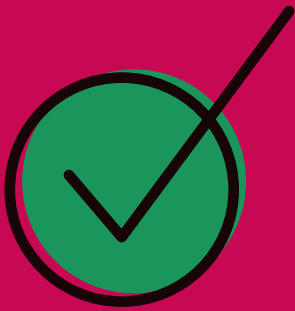
### To measure completion

Exit interviews are a great way to understand what the line management experience and they can provide useful information for individual line managers as well as food for thought for the organisation.

**We need to de-medicalize discussion around mental health because the most important factors are the preventative role of line managers and good people management.**

Rachel Lewis, Affinity Health at Work,  
Kingston Business School (Thriving at Work 2017)

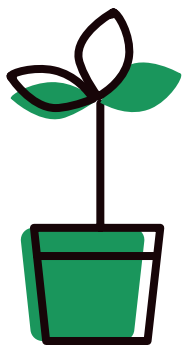




## Core Standard 6

**Routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing.**

Core Standard 6 recommends that employers routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing by understanding available data, talking to employees, and understanding risk factors - so in a nutshell taking stock of where you are at as a business with regards to stigma and essentially how open your business really is.



Developing a clear picture of the mental health of your business helps you understand what affects staff's mental wellbeing and how well you're supporting them. It also lets you assess whether your approach is effective and supports you to plan further improvements.

Achieving this may sound complicated. But if you already ask your staff about their experiences, perceptions and how they manage their mental health - formally or informally - you've probably got a lot of the information already. Think about how you could adapt the tools you already use - like staff surveys, HR data, staff suggestion boxes and appraisals, etc. Putting relevant questions into these existing tools will help you build a comprehensive picture, without creating extra work.



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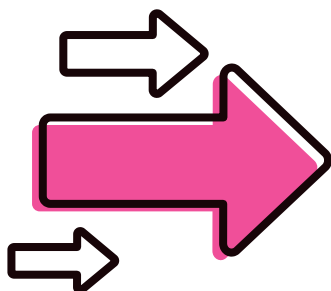
## **Time to Change Wales' expectations and minimum requirements to achieve this standard**

Details of who will be appointed as the lead/s within your business has overall responsibility for the implementation, evaluation and subsequent review of this Action Plan? It does not have to be an individual and could be led by working groups that might also have ownership of/significant stake in the delivery of this plan.

A description of what mechanisms your business currently uses to monitor and evaluate employee mental health and wellbeing? Please include details of any surveys that will be deployed with specific reference to the sort of questions to be included and any of the performance measures outlined in this document that will be drawn from this research.

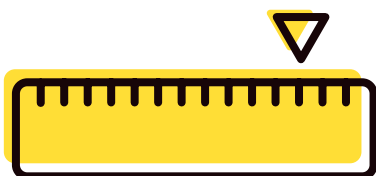
Does your business record and monitor sickness absence in relation to mental health problems and stress? We suggest you make reference to what is recorded through your HR systems and how this data is monitored, reviewed and determines organisational action e.g. the data is used to further develop wellbeing.

Provide an outline on how you will monitor the impact of the deployment of your Time to Change Wales Employer Action Plan in your business.



## **Suggested actions to embed accountability and the ability to routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing**

- Decide who will have oversight of implementing the Action Plan and carefully choose someone who can bring together staff members to work collaboratively.
- Share your Action Plan with your Employee Champions and staff once you have recruited them and think about how you will communicate with your Champions on a regular basis.



## **Suggested ways to measure for Core Standard 6**

### **To measure impact**

Always remember that whilst data is important for prompt conversations and actions it is never as powerful as inspirational stories. Context is key.

### **To measure success**

Use data collected to assess performance against all standards of this guide and Action Plan.

### **To measure completion**

Consider focusing on soft measures e.g. team discussions, and participation in activities versus access to services.

Clarify and set what can be identified as/represents low, good or high engagement in your business.

Assess GDPR implementation impact (May 2018) on confidentiality, regulatory requirements, conduct implications, impact of poor disclosure and culture impact.



### **Taking stock of stigma at a team level**

Regularly carrying out mental health surveys or questionnaires is a great way to monitor this. If your business has a staff survey, which asks about employee experience, workplace culture and mental health, you may be able to gather information about your team's experience of mental health and wellbeing.

- You could take this further, by holding a session at a team meeting. You could ask your team:
  1. What they think a mentally healthy team looks like.
  2. What they already do well to promote good mental health.
  3. How you can build on this together.
  4. If anything is having a negative impact on the team's mental wellbeing.
- Ask team members to group these issues under the following headings:
  1. What do we have control over?
  2. What can we influence?  
These can then be captured as part of your Action Plan
  3. What issues are beyond our control or influence?  
These can be captured as an issue that needs to be acknowledged but cannot be mitigated against at the present time although it may well be something that can be influenced or controlled in the future.

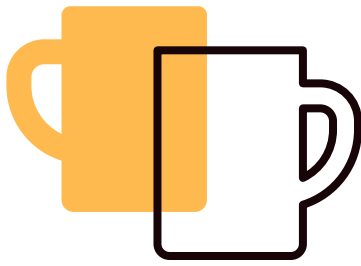


## **Taking stock of indicators present in the workplace that tend to be triggers of poor mental health**

### **Typical workplace triggers for stress and mental health problems include:**

- If employees routinely work long hours and take no breaks.
- Zero-hour contracts.
- If there is unrealistic expectations or deadlines.
- Overly pressurised working environments.
- High-risk roles.
- Lone working.
- Employees feel unable to use annual leave.
- Unmanageable workloads or lack of control over work.
- Managing parental/caring responsibilities with shift work.
- Poor managerial support.
- A poor physical working environment.
- Bullying.
- Poor relationships with managers.
- Poor relationships with colleagues.
- Poor internal communication.
- Job insecurity or poorly managed change.
- Poor transport links to work.
- Financial worries.

Any of the above if routinely present for employees, then there is a risk that employees are vulnerable to poor mental health with an added risk of stigma preventing people to have those open conversations and accessing much needed support and/or appropriate workplace adjustments.



## How to take stock at an individual level

Regular one-to-one meetings and catch-ups are a great place to ask your staff how they're getting on. Doing so regularly will help build trust and give employees a chance to raise problems at an early stage.

Ask your team members how one-to-ones can be tailored to suit their needs. Employees should also be able to request a meeting outside the normal schedule if they need to discuss anything important. Regular one-to-ones have significant benefits for employers, employees and the bottom line.

### Benefits of one-to-ones

- Boosts employee engagement and builds mutual trust.
  - Identifies issues early, so employees can get the support they need.
  - Ensures employee wellbeing is monitored throughout the business.
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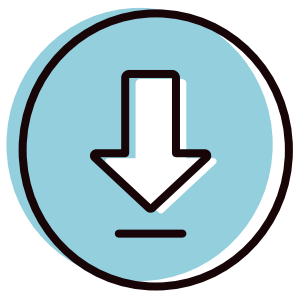


## How to create an evaluation plan

Monitoring and evaluating activities and deliverables is primarily about understanding where the organisational culture is at and what impact Action Plan activities might have had on it.

By having an evaluation plan that sits alongside your Action Plan ensures that your business' mental health journey is mapped and evaluated at every point, findings which can help you decide the following:

- How you need to move forward.
- Whether you need to change the approach of delivery.
- Whether you need to do more targeted activity.
- Whether you need to adapt the delivery to suit differing audience need.
- Whether you need to discard elements completely as they are not being engaged with at all.



## Useful Resources

### Available via the Time to Change Wales toolkit

(To access these log into your Employer Account [here](#))

- An introduction to the Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge process (TtCW)
- TtCW Action Plan Template
- Champions in the workplace complete handbook (TtCW)
- Supporting your Champions (TtCW)
- Starting the conversation (TtCW)
- Employer Communications Pack (TtCW)
- Press release to tell the world about your Pledge!
- Case studies from other employers.

### Available on our website:

- Blogs on a variety of mental health problems, written by our Champions, which can be shared with staff: [www.timetochangewales.org.uk/en/personal-stories](http://www.timetochangewales.org.uk/en/personal-stories)
- Some useful contacts for anyone experiencing a mental health problem or in need of urgent support: [www.timetochangewales.org.uk/en/need-help/](http://www.timetochangewales.org.uk/en/need-help/)
- Support for Employers: [www.timetochangewales.org.uk/en/employers/employee-champions-workplace/](http://www.timetochangewales.org.uk/en/employers/employee-champions-workplace/)

### Information and advice on wellbeing in the workplace:

- Thriving at Work Report 2017
- The Mental Health at Work website to find resources, toolkits and training for, both paid for and free: [www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk)
- You may also want to think about introducing [Wellness Action Plans](#) which are a really helpful tool for all staff. More information can be found [here](#).
- Our local Minds and local Hafal offices across the country can also help source advice and support. Use our online tool to find your local Mind for more information: [www.mind.org.uk/localminds](http://www.mind.org.uk/localminds)
- [www.hafal.org/in-your-area](http://www.hafal.org/in-your-area)

**Be part of Time to Change Wales' movement for change in workplace mental health.**



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