

Time to Change Wales Case Study – North Wales Police

Why we signed the pledge

There is a perception that you have to be tough to work in policing and that admittance of any mental health problems is a weakness. This has led to stigma about speaking up about mental health and has prevented individuals from getting the help they need before problems become more serious. As our work demand increases and becomes more varied, it is even more important that we look after our workforce and support them to be resilient.

For this reason we signed the Time to Change Pledge to take action to change our culture and make it ok to talk and seek support when someone is struggling with their mental health. The pledge also supports our achievement of the Blue Light Framework, which is a standard for wellbeing in policing. The framework covers a wide variety of wellbeing issues including resilience, protecting our workforce, understanding of mental health, absence management, wellbeing training and awareness, work environment and leadership.

As a public sector organisation, we also feel a responsibility to achieve a high standard and set an example to other organisations. By signing the pledge, we set ourselves actions to take as an organisation to end stigma and discrimination around mental health and send a clear message to our workforce that we care.

How to promote mental health awareness

One of the four strands of our Health and Wellbeing Strategy is Healthy Mind and we've carried out a variety of actions to encourage our workforce to be proactive, support colleagues and speak out about any problems;

We have a group of individuals in our workforce who have volunteered to become Mental Health Peer Supporters and provide a confidential listening and signposting service. We have gradually seen an increase in the amount of support provided through the scheme and encourage our peer supporters to take part in promoting awareness of mental health and being role models by sharing their personal stories to help others;

Last year we worked closely with North East Wales MIND who delivered a number of different training sessions for us including a Trauma Workshop, Speaking Up Speaking Out sessions for our peer supporters and Managing Mental Health sessions for our Line Managers. We started to see the positive impact of this after several months.

Since May 2019 we have been delivering our own bespoke Healthy Mind Foundation Training to our workforce and aim to have delivered this to everybody by Autumn 2020. This training raises awareness of some of the actions that can be taken to support positive mental health and prevent illness, as well as identifying the signs that someone is struggling and promote the support that is available.



We run a number of wellbeing promotions during the year where we encourage our workforce to get involved and increase their awareness around mental health. This has included drop in sessions where we offer information, advice and support, taking part in national promotions such as Time to Talk Day and World Mental Health Day, running a step challenge to encourage people to take a break from work and more recently promoting men's health awareness and awareness around suicide. These are all promoted through posters, emails, our Intranet, our staff engagement forum and our staff networks and associations.

We also have a number of wellbeing notice boards around our organisation where we display information about our wellbeing support and our Health and Wellbeing Site on our Intranet is regularly updated with new resources and factsheets.

We recently ran a number of Mindfulness taster sessions as well as signposting to online resources – these sessions were popular and received extremely positive feedback. We're also considering other means of supporting the mental health of our workforce such as resilience training, positive psychology and classes such as yoga.

In January we officially launch our new Welfare Support Team who will be providing one to one support to individuals across our organisation. The investment in this team of three demonstrates our commitment to improving welfare and wellbeing.

As part of our Health and Wellbeing Strategy we have also included Wellbeing Pledges which describe the behaviours we expect from all levels of our organisation, particularly in relation to challenging stigma. We're hoping that integrating these into our workforce culture will encourage a positive approach to wellbeing.

How this helps in the workplace

We believe that all the visible initiatives we've run around healthy mind have encouraged more open conversations about wellbeing and started to change our culture. We're finding that more individuals feel able to speak up and seek support and people are much more aware of what support is available. We're also finding that more of our workforce are engaging with us to improve the wellbeing of their teams and colleagues, including senior managers and our staff associations who are helping to raise the profile of mental health.

We also believe that offering a variety of different approaches helps us to cater for the diversity of our workforce and ensure that everybody can access support that suits their needs. Regular promotions ensure that mental health is always visible and that there are always opportunities to talk about mental health.