

Connect
2care

Creating a mental health inclusive workplace



Investing in professional development to grow your business is important. However, effective growth is only possible if employees are working in a setting which is supportive and inclusive of their mental health.



The benefits of training your employees to be both highly skilled, and motivated are easy to see. At Connect2Care, we believe that if an employee's mental health and wellbeing is a business priority, a happy workforce, increased productivity, sustainable growth and long-term success will follow.

The perks of having employees who are trained in first aid for mental health are far-reaching, yet they're often overlooked by some and not known by many. For example, creating an atmosphere where employees' mental health and wellbeing is supported by a Level 3 First Aid for Mental Health trained colleague could free the concerns of morale dips or decreased productivity.

We know that working in such a fast-paced and demanding industry can mean that work takes priority over looking after your own mental health.

The purpose of this e-guide is to enlighten and provide guidance on the benefits of having a positive outlook on mental health in the workplace. In this guide, we'll discuss the issues which impact mental health in the workplace and provide information on current legal requirements in a language we can all understand.

Lastly, our fantastic team of professionals at Connect2Care are always available to help you create a mental health inclusive workplace.

Lindsey Appleby-Flynn, Adult Care Lead

HND in Mental Health

Level 3 in Supervising Mental Health First Aid

First Aid for Mental Health Instructor

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

The impact of a positive approach to mental health at work

As the volume of changes to the way we live and work increases, so does the number of stressed employees. The majority of mental health problems are initially caused by excessive stress - which can often be easily traced back to the workplace.

In recent months, many employees will have felt the strain of COVID-19 - whether through increased workloads, or due to the uncertainty of their job stability. The pandemic is a source of stress for most, with the potential for that stress to snowball into a more serious mental health condition, such as depression or anxiety. This could have a further impact on furloughed employees, increasing the risk of limited communication, support, and, at worst, a lack of acknowledgement of overall employee health.

The unpredictability of the pandemic can also contribute to the loneliness epidemic affecting both young and old. Working flat out can cause a form of isolation which can lead to feelings of segregation, or ambiguity regarding your objectives, and even your purpose within your company.

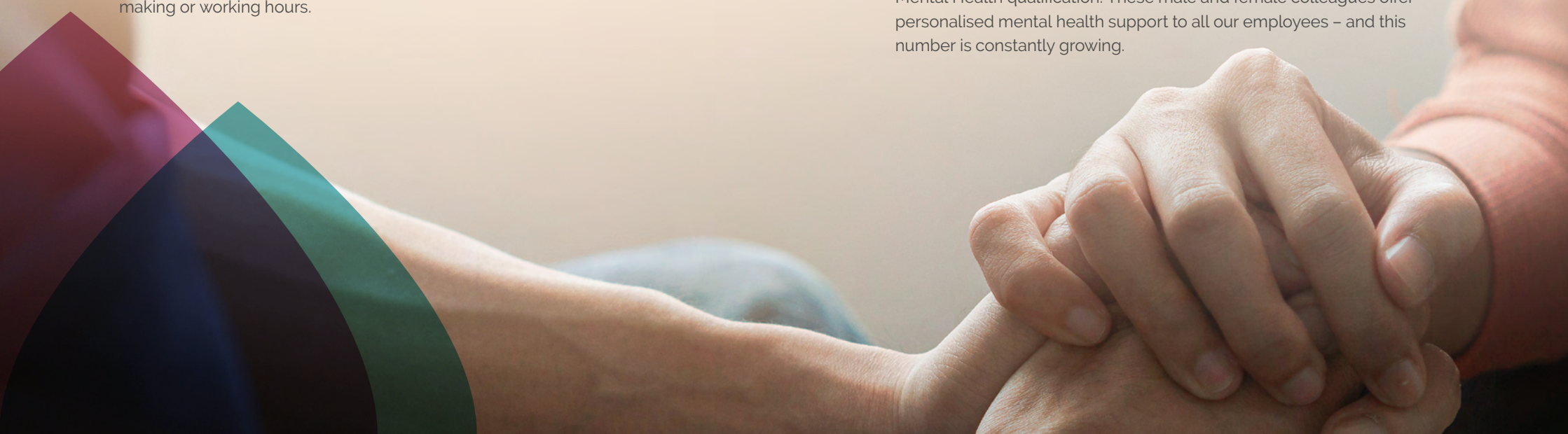
There are many other recognised sources of stress stemming from work, such as bullying or a lack of control over things like decision making or working hours.

Providing your workforce with training in first aid for mental health will encourage improved overall employee wellbeing, providing beneficial returns on your investment. [A report from Deloitte found that on average, organisation-wide culture change and awareness raising of mental health can provide a return on investment of £6 for every £1 spent through a reduction in absence and presenteeism.](#)

The impact and effects of establishing your workplace as one which is inclusive of mental health are infinitely positive. An open door culture on all things mental health will generate a positive reputation for your business, attracting talented individuals and reducing employee turnover. Having employees qualified in first aid for mental health will create a universal feeling of security and value amongst colleagues. This will result in increased productivity, team collaboration and improved morale.

Staff sickness days can often be attributed to mental health problems. [A report from CIPD revealed that mental ill health remains the most common cause of long-term absence, with nearly three-fifths \(59%\) of organisations including this among their top three causes.](#) Having Mental Health First Aiders in your business can help reduce this by giving the person struggling someone to talk to, who can signpost them to external help before the issue becomes chronic.

At Connect2Care, we're leading by example. We currently have six members of staff who hold a Level 3 Supervising First Aid for Mental Health qualification. These male and female colleagues offer personalised mental health support to all our employees - and this number is constantly growing.



Legalities of mental health in the workplace

The 2010 Equality Act protects those who suffer with a mental health illness from discrimination in the same way as physical disabilities. This helps to reduce the stigma associated with mental health.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance for stress in the workplace states that employees have a legal duty to protect employees from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and acting on it. This can also reduce the incidence and negative impact of mental ill health. Businesses are also recommended to have trained first aid for mental health staff members, in addition to a company wide mental health action plan.

Connect2Care provides a consultancy service for businesses to support them to effectively implement a mental health risk assessment and strategy to improve the mental health inclusivity of their workplace. We also provide guidance on efficiently introducing first aid for mental health trained staff into the workplace.

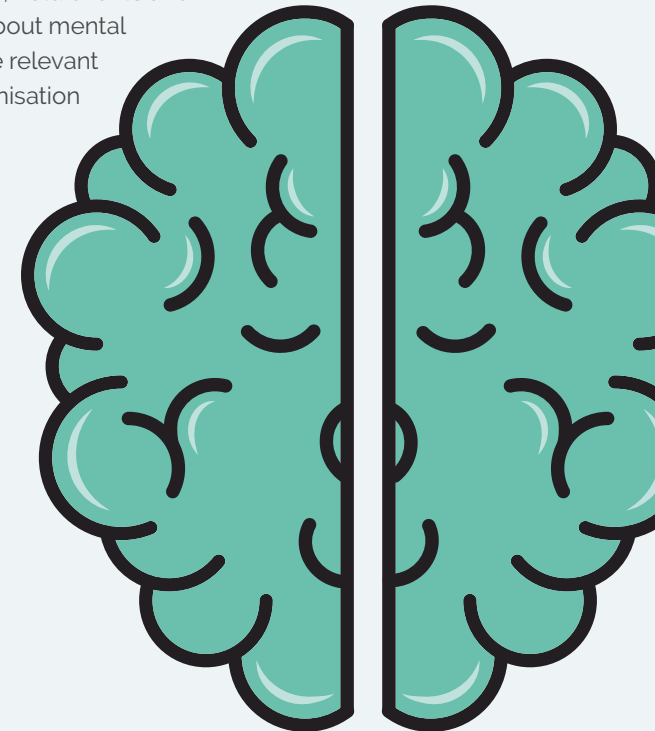


The role of a Mental Health First Aider

The role of a Mental Health First Aider in the workplace is a vital, yet multifaceted one. They act as a primary point of contact within an organisation for colleagues to turn to for mental health support, offering a listening ear and empathy with a non-judgemental approach.

Mental Health First Aiders are able to offer early intervention to support the recovery of those at risk of developing mental health problems, provide immediate support in times of crisis and summon emergency help if required to keep your employees safe. They are colleagues who have been trained to have the ability to signpost individuals to professional support services and to offer guidance or support with self-help techniques.

Additionally, they are responsible for promoting a positive workplace culture around mental health. They help to break down the stigma attached to mental ill health, hold events and encourage people to talk about mental health. They work alongside relevant individuals within your organisation to create a mental health strategy and an action plan for mental health within the workplace.





How to create a healthy culture

There remains a stigma attached to mental health which impacts people's willingness to open up and speak about their own mental health conditions. Removing this stigma in your workplace starts with clear communication to establish your business as a safe place for employees who have mental health concerns.

This can be achieved by creating and publicising action plans, addressing the risks of poor mental health and showing that this is a key priority within your business. It's important to evaluate how the specific nature of each job role can impact mental health illnesses and signify areas for improvement. [Additionally, the NHS provides evidence based advice on the five steps to an improved well-being.](#)

[A report by HSE found that in 2019, 12.8 million working days were lost due to work-related mental health issues.](#) There are a handful of practices you can introduce to your business to help tackle this issue.

For example, you could implement a company wide workload/task review for employees to ensure staff are able to play to their strengths, helping to boost morale. Your company could monitor individuals and their workloads with an outstretched hand, and not with a raised baton - this will encourage a positive outlook on work levels and pave the way to educate employees on the negative impact of burnout.

It can be beneficial to encourage those in your leadership team, or those who work with colleagues with a known mental health illness, to undergo first aid for mental health training. Good quality training can go a long way in removing workplace stigma and the insecurity of employees to open up about their own mental health. If these leading individuals are open and engaged with the topic of mental health, employees will not be afraid to talk about how they are feeling and feel safe asking for help.

[According to HSE, in 2018/2019, there were 595,000 individual cases of work-related stress, depression or anxiety in Great Britain.](#) Leaders and employers can contribute to a positive mental health culture by educating themselves and having first aid for mental health qualified employees, which will challenge the narrative around mental health.

BE KIND
TO YOUR MIND

Support for your business

Connect2Care is ready to help you create a mental health inclusive culture in your workplace. Our highly experienced team of experts have been serving businesses nationally for fifteen years.

Our experienced mental health experts provide a range of training courses to help educate your colleagues and create an inclusive workplace culture.

Managing Change and Building Resilience

There's no doubt that we've all had to undergo significant change to every part of our lives due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Whether that's spending less time socialising or following new procedures at work, the changes have been overwhelming.



This course highlights the importance of an organisation's understanding of how customers, clients and colleagues react to change. It teaches how to manage change, as well as building on the resilience you already have.

How to Manage Anxiety and Burnout

Workloads can often seem more demanding or complex everyday, and because many of us now work in unpredictable environments, anxiety and burnout are not uncommon. In our high-pressure workplaces, remaining productive and engaged can be challenging.



This course helps build resilience skills and coping strategies, along with advice and guidance on signs, symptoms, signposting, and intervention to enable an effective, resilient workforce.

Dealing with Loss and Bereavement

Experiences of loss and bereavement are unique, complex, and personal. Loss and bereavement can come in many forms, such as due to the death of a loved one, the loss of someone within your care, a lifestyle change or even a job loss. Our cultures, personalities, and experience can all affect how we deal with these.



This course provides the tools to recognise, manage and support the emotions experienced due to loss and bereavement.

Awareness of First Aid for Mental Health Level 1

This course provides a general overview of what First Aid for Mental Health is. Delegates will look at the impact of stress and how to symptoms. It will look at both identifying and understanding the various mental health conditions, as well as providing advice and starting a conversation.



The Awareness of First Aid for Mental Health course will provide learners with the knowledge to identify mental health conditions, the skills to start a conversation about mental health and be able to signpost a person towards professional help if needed.

First Aid for Mental Health Level 2

This course discusses and provides analysis on First Aid for Mental Health in the workplace. Across two four-hour sessions, learners will gain the skills to identify mental health conditions, the confidence to start conversations about mental health and implement a positive mental health culture within the workplace.



Learners will be introduced to the First Aid for Mental Health Action Plan, look at ways to implement a positive mental health culture within the workplace, and delve into the effects of drugs and alcohol on mental wellbeing.

Supervising First Aid for Mental Health Level 3

The course provides learners with an in-depth understanding of First Aid for Mental Health in the workplace. They'll study specific mental health concerns including personality disorders, bipolar disorder, psychosis, schizophrenia, eating disorders, depression and anxiety.



Learners will explore the impact of stress on mental health, suicide, self-harm, and post-traumatic stress disorder. They'll also look into methods to implement a positive mental health culture within the workplace, and delve into the effects of drugs and alcohol on mental wellbeing.



Get in touch today to see how we can assist you with communication, planning, training and introduction of supportive measures to improve the mental health of employees in your organisation today.



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