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Equality and
Human Rights
Commission

Mental health is your business

**Equality and Human Rights Commission
Wales**



Who do you see?

- 37 per cent of people would be unhappy if their close relative married someone with a mental health condition
- Only 40 per cent of people think that people with a mental health condition are suitable to be Primary School teachers



Time to Change?

- 92 per cent of people believe that admitting to having a mental illness would damage someone's career
- 56 per cent of people would not employ someone they knew had depression from time to time



Employees attitudes

- 58 per cent had to leave a job because of lack of mental health support
- 31 per cent had been sacked or forced out of a job after disclosing a mental health problem
- 26 per cent demoted after disclosing a mental health problem
- 1 in 4 had job offers withdrawn after disclosing a mental health problem

(Mind website survey October 2008)



What is mental ill health?

- depression
- bipolar disorder
- obsessive compulsive disorder
- schizophrenia
- self-harm
- eating disorders

This is not a complete list and there are varying degrees of severity.



Why is mental health a workplace issue?

- Most people with mental health conditions are in paid employment and are almost as likely to be working as anyone else
- Employers should expect to find that at any one time nearly **one in six** of their workforce is affected by a mental health condition



Why is action needed in the workplace?

- 91 million days are lost each year due to mental health conditions
- The combined costs of sickness absence, non-employment, effects on unpaid work and output losses in the UK is **£26 billion** a year.
- After taking six months sickness absence, only 50 per cent of employees return to work



What employers can do

- Make your workplace a safe place where colleagues can discuss, disclose and ask for help
- Do this by:
 - Creating an effective mental health policy
 - Training staff
 - Building awareness through a workplace campaign



Why a policy?

- Help to **prevent** mental ill health – by early detection and intervention .
- Help to **recognise** that work is good for mental health.
- Ensure **provision** of services for those affected by mental ill health by fully utilising existing workplace policies, and by establishing a range of support as an employer and service provider.



Top ten tips

- Talk about mental ill-health- you can break down the stigma by talking about it
- Look out for signs of mental ill-health
- Ask the individual what they need - tailor adjustments to the specific needs and abilities of the individual
- Focus on what the person can do – not what they can't
- Be flexible – some mental health conditions are episodic



Top ten tips

- Keep talking when an employee is absent or returning from sickness absence
- Offer more support when needed e.g. more 121s
- Allow variations in working hours
- Clearly communicate that support is available
- Keep up to date with the latest sources of help e.g. Gofal, Mind Cymru, Hafal, Time to change



Taking action works

- A good investment to retain skilled and experienced staff
- Staff will feel safe and supported – increasing their commitment to you as an employer
- You can reduce sickness absence and save money



Case study : BT

- BT doesn't reject job applications on grounds on mental illness
- Mental health sickness absence is down by 30 per cent
- Stress claims have been reduced dramatically
- 75 per cent of long term absentees return to their own job
- Medical retirement rate for mental illness is down by 80 per cent



EHRC toolkit

- [Digital story](#)
- [Practical tips](#) and [guidance](#) for developing a policy
- [James' story](#) – the business case for having a policy



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