Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace

Proposal for a UK Schools Employer Pledge to promote positive mental wellbeing at work

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Sam Cooper & Lisa James
“For far too long, people of all ages with mental health problems have been stigmatised and marginalised...But in recent years, there is a growing commitment among communities, workplaces, schools and government to change the way we think about it.”

What factors contribute towards positive mental health and wellbeing?

Contributors to good mental health and wellbeing are:

– Diet
– Exercise
– Sleep
– Positive relationships
– Sense of purpose
– Feeling of contribution and of being valued
– Work/life balance
– Access to talk / feeling connected
– Financial security
– Environment
– Sense of community
– A level of choice and autonomy

Image by Christof Van Der Wath
Stigma in Statistics

According to ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service):

— Mental ill-health, including stress, depression and anxiety, is thought to be responsible for 91 million lost working days each year, more than for any other illness.

— Analysts believe that this sickness absence costs £8.4 billion each year, plus another £15.1 billion in reduced productivity. A further £2.4 billion is lost replacing staff who leave work because of mental ill-health.

— Recent estimates put the cost to UK employers at £30 billion each year.

According to the annual CIPD Absence Management survey:

— Over two-fifths (41%) of organisations have seen an increase in reported mental health problems (such as anxiety and depression) over the last twelve months.

— 1 in 6 workers experience depression, stress or anxiety, and 4 in 10 employees are afraid to disclose mental health problems to their employer.

— Mind’s recent research found that 56% of employers said they would like to do more to improve staff wellbeing but don't feel they have the right training or guidance.
Pearson UK Schools mini health check

During February 2016, a sample* of UK Schools employees took part in a mini health check to:

– Gauge their knowledge and opinion of mental health and wellbeing at Pearson

– Help us identify any gaps between our aspirations for creating support for our mental wellbeing at work, and our current practices and culture

*285 employees sent the survey were from both field and office-based roles
Pearson UK Schools mini health check results

Results:

67% of respondents said they had experienced stress, low mood or mental health problems whilst working at Pearson and/or other organisations.

Only 20% of staff are aware of any support offered by Pearson on wellbeing and mental health.
Pearson UK Schools mini health check results

Results:
38% of staff described their current mental health as ‘moderate’, ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’, 46% of whom said that problems both at work and in their personal life were the main cause

Only 12% believe that Pearson encourages staff to talk openly about mental health, and only 16% of people believe that Pearson supports staff with mental health needs.
Pearson UK Schools mini health check
(manager’s results)

65% of line managers don’t feel confident in supporting people they line manage with mental wellbeing
Pearson UK Schools mini health check
(manager’s results)

Only 16% of line managers feel they have been given sufficient information and guidance from Pearson on how to support people they line manage that experience mental ill health.
Some quotes from the survey

“Mental health isn't just about treating symptoms, it's about treating the cause. Creating a better working environment would help.”

“Listen to staff, and not presume just because we are here, we are doing okay.”

“Support for line managers around how to deal (well) with someone having mental health challenges.”

“Get senior leaders to acknowledge the importance of mental health and to give it equal importance as physical health in the workplace.”

“Provide workshops and events promoting mental well-being...Offer free or subsidised yoga, meditation or other mind body classes.”

“Pearson need to step up to the plate and commit properly to things like this. Talking about it on Neo isn't enough.”
Our proposed solution

To work with Mind and Time to Change to promote mental wellbeing at work, by creating an Employer Pledge and improving our practices in this area.

http://www.mind.org.uk/
http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/
Pearson UK Schools Pledge

We will promote positive mental wellbeing and reduce the stigma of mental illness across Pearson UK Schools

To achieve this, we will:

• Create a clear framework consisting of Advocates, Line Managers, HR and Mental Health First Aiders;
• Improve understanding amongst managers how they can support staff members who may be experiencing mental ill health;
• Raise awareness of the support that staff can access to maintain a positive wellbeing;
• Utilise technology to run interactive campaigns throughout the year to highlight mental illness, support mental wellbeing and promote national campaigns (for e.g. National Mental Health Awareness Days);
• Give equal weighting to mental health and ensure it is evident in organisation values, behaviours, practices and policies.
## Proposed activity to deliver on the Pearson Pledge

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*Image credit: Pearson*
Investment required:

Mental Health First Aid Training:

Train 16 people on a 2-day course, run by Mental Health First Aid England (including booklets & workbooks)
Total cost: £1,950

Mental Health at Work Training for Line Managers:

Approximately 60 managers; 6 training sessions run by Mind
Total cost: £8,370 + VAT & expenses

Dual branding of support materials with Mind:

Total cost (based on a 12 month agreement): £500 + £300 per dual-branded licenced e-booklet (excl. VAT)

Total investment costs: £11,120
What will be the benefits of our solution?
Benefits to Pearson UK

Mental Health is a business priority
– An open, supportive and understanding workplace culture results in increased productivity, creativity, morale and staff retention

– Research shows that FTSE 100 companies that prioritise employee engagement and wellbeing outperform the rest of the FTSE 100 by an average of 10% (Business in the Community Workwell FTSE 100 benchmark)

How much could we save?

Assuming approximately 500 employees across Pearson UK Schools:
– 10% decrease in mental-health related absenteeism: a saving of £46,468
– 10% decrease in staff turnover: a saving of £83,200
– 5% increase in productivity: a saving of £910,000

In total, helping our employees with their mental wellbeing could save the company £1,039,668 per year

(Source: www.happinessatworksurvey.com)
By signing the Time to Change Employer Pledge, we will be joining a growing movement of more than 350 employers in England, across all sectors, who are working to tackle mental health stigma and to help keep their staff well for work.

See David Kinder talking about his lived experience and why HM Treasury signed the Pledge.
Timeline for action:

End of February:
Mini Healthcheck
Engage with HR re sickness and absenteeism data

End of March:
Research cost for internal mental health at work training
Present case and proposal to SLT for approval

April:
Planning for May launch event
Sign Time to Change Employer Pledge (SLT)
First draft of Neo page
Proposal signed off for training costs

16th-22nd May 2016:
Launch of Pearson Pledge to link with National Mental Health Awareness Week
ALWAYS LEARNING