Challenges & Opportunities to Support Staff Wellbeing

Mental Health Network
NHS Confederation

Sean Duggan
CEO
Mental Health Network

11 May 2023

NHS Staff and Mental Health

- Anxiety/stress/depression/other psychiatric illnesses account for about 20% of all sickness absence in the NHS.
- This equals over 547,800 full time equivalent days lost in Dec 2022.
- Poor mental health in the NHS equates to £1,749-£2,174 per employee per year.
- Staff more likely to seek support for musculoskeletal conditions (66%) than mental health conditions (52%).
- The return on investment of workplace mental health interventions is £4.20 for every £1 spent.
- 70% of managers say there are barriers to them providing mental health support – training in how to talk to people with mental health problems is a key barrier.
- 56.6% of staff said their line manager takes a positive interest in their health & wellbeing (NHS Staff Survey, 2022),
- About a third of NHS staff say they feel burnt out because of work.

Mental wellbeing in the workplace

FACT

Mental health problems quadrupled in NHS staff during the first wave of COVID-19.[1]

FACT

Nurses have consistently reported higher levels of depression and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic.[2]

COSTS

Poor mental health in the NHS equates to £1,749 - £2,174 per employee, per year.[3]

ROI in workplace mental health interventions is £4.20 for every £1.[4]

CAUSES

1 in 3 NHS staff have felt unwell due to work-related stress.[5]

70% of managers say there are barriers to them providing mental health support.[6]

44% of NHS staff reported feeling unwell as a result of work related stress in 2020.[7]

33.4% of NHS staff reported that their trust definitely takes positive action on health wellbeing in 2020.[8]

IMPACT

Top factors affecting mental wellbeing in learners are:

- Fear of being judged.
- Stress.
- Finding confidence to discuss mental health problems.
- Stigma that mental health problems are seen as a weakness.[9]

ACCESSING SUPPORT

Wellbeing hubs have been set up to provide health and social care colleagues rapid access to assessment and local evidence-based mental health services and support where needed.[10]

Our emotional wellbeing toolkit explains the contributors to decreased emotional wellbeing and shows you how to encourage improvements.[11]

STIGMA

Staff are more likely to seek support for musculoskletal conditions **(66%)** than mental health conditions **(52%)**.[12]

73% of doctors would disclose mental ill health to family / friends rather than a healthcare professional*.[13]

*based on a survey of 3,500

1. Nursing times 'Staggering rise' in mental health issues among NHS staff since Covid-19
2. Greater Manchester mental health trust, The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Mental Health of Healthcare Workers
3. NHS Staff and Learners' Mental Wellbeing Commission (2019) Health Education England
4. NHS Staff and Learners' Mental Wellbeing Commission (2019) Health Education England
5. NHS Staff and Learners' Mental Wellbeing Commission (2019) Health Education England
6. Mental Health at Work 2019: Time To Take Ownership Business in the Community
7. NHS Staff Survey 2020 National results briefing
8. NHS Staff Survey 2020 National results briefing
9. NHS Staff and Learners' Mental Wellbeing Commission (2019) Health Education England
10. Staff mental health and wellbeing hubs
11. Emotional wellbeing toolkit
12. The John Lewis Partnership Working Well Report (2019) John Lewis Partnership
13. NHS Staff and Learners' Mental Wellbeing Commission (2019) Health Education England

NHS Employers

www.nhsemployers.org

enquiries@nhsemployers.org

@nhsemployers

Pandemic and NHS Staff Mental Health & Wellbeing

- 1 in 5 or 20% met diagnostic criteria for mental disorder
  - 21.5% had generalised anxiety disorder
  - 7.9% had PTSD
  - These findings were across all job roles, but especially women & younger staff
- Staff in ICUs especially vulnerable to developing mental disorders
  - 48% showed signs of mental health conditions.
  - Particularly high in staff who wore PPE for more than 6 hours over a day – 40% higher.
  - Staff who experience moral injurious events = higher incidence of mental disorders e.g. PTSD

NHS Staff and Suicide Risks

- Doctors are twice as likely to take their own lives compared with people working in other professions.
- Nurses four times as likely to take their own lives than people working in any other profession in the UK.
- Female nurses are more likely to take their own lives than their male counterparts.
- Experiencing a colleague or a patient taking their own life is likely to have a big impact on NHS staff and sticks with them.
- Why postvention support is so important Suicide prevention and postvention | NHS Employers

How organisations can help support staff’s mental health and wellbeing

Support staff

- Raising awareness of mental health and wellbeing
- Educating their people – training for line mangers
- Having the right resources in place to encourage open conversations – MH First Aiders
- Beating the stigma about mental health

Understanding risk factors for mental health

- Poor communication and management practices
- Lack of support for staff
- Inflexible working hours

Embed positive factors

- Culture where it is ok to disclose mental health issues
- Recognise the impact of chronic stress, burnout, loneliness and moral injury can have on mental health

Support NHS people with moral injury

- Raise the profile in your organisation & how to access support

Mental health in the workplace | NHS Employers

Examples of Good Practice

Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust

• The trust is planning to train over 200 mental health first aiders (approximately 10 per cent of the workforce), as the trust feels that this training best fits the model of a community trust. Community trust team members often work in small teams at multiple different locations and can go for long periods of time without direct contact with colleagues. Mental health first aiders will enable the organisation to offer wide-reaching cover across its many locations, for those who may be experiencing mental health concerns, including initial support for those who may be thinking about taking their own life.

University Hospitals of Northamptonshire NHS Group

• The group comprises Northampton General Hospital (NGH) and Kettering General Hospital (KGH). The group developed a suicide risk awareness campaign aimed at all staff. The campaign empowers staff to start a conversation and offer support when they see someone struggling.

Thank you