



Staying healthy and being happy at work

A report about mental health and employers

November 2017



Easy Read

Important

This booklet tells you about how employers, the government and other people and groups can help people who work for them to stay in work and do the best they can. This includes people with mental health conditions.

Green writing

In this Easy Read booklet we sometimes explain what words mean.

The first time we mention any of these words, it is in **bold green** writing. We then write what the words mean in a blue box.

These words and what they mean are also in a word list at the back of the booklet.

If any of the words are used later in the booklet, we show them in **normal green** writing. If you see words in **normal green** writing, you can look up what they mean by looking for the blue box earlier in the booklet, or by looking at the word list.

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About this booklet

On 9 January 2017, the **Prime Minister** asked Lord Dennis Stevenson and Paul Farmer to write a report about how **employers** can help the people who work for them to stay in work and be well in work.

Prime Minister

The Prime Minister is a special minister who is in charge of the whole government.

Employer

This is a person or company that pays other people to do work for them.



What the report found out

More people with **mental health conditions** are working than ever before.

Mental health conditions

These are conditions that affect the way a person feels, thinks and acts. They can last for a short time or they can be a long-term condition like depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia and eating disorders.

But each year, 300,000 people with a long-term **mental health condition** lose their job. This is a much higher rate than for people with a **physical health condition**.

Physical health conditions

These are conditions that affect the body. They can last for a short time or they can be a long-term condition like diabetes or arthritis.

Around 15 out of every 100 people at work have an existing **mental health condition**.

Mental health conditions affect the lives of lots of people. They also affect the lives of people who are close to those people with a **mental health condition**.

It is important that we give help and support to people who may be finding it hard to cope.

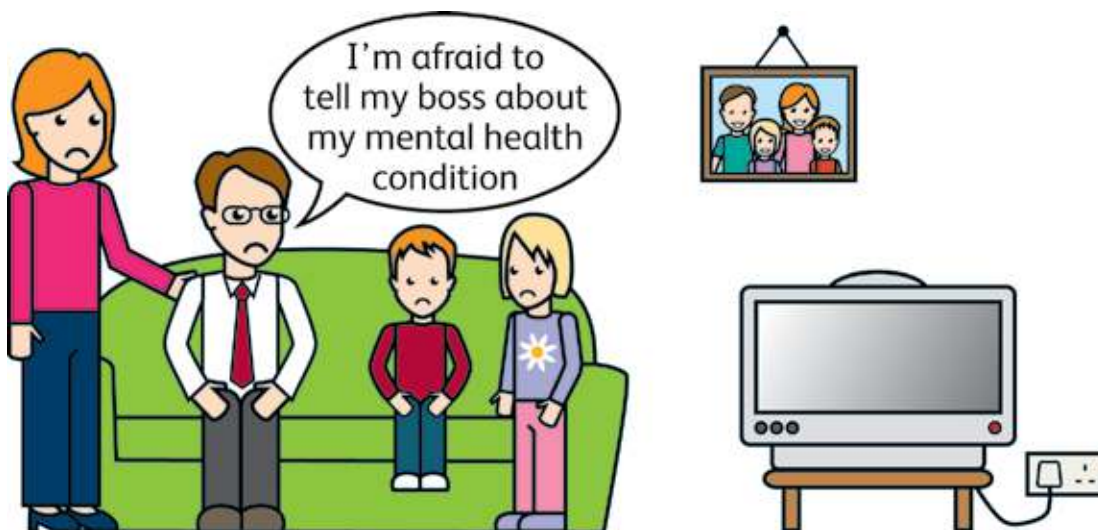
With help from a firm called Deloitte, we have found out these things.

- If people with poor mental health who are in work are not supported at work it can cost **employers** a huge amount of money. This is because the person may need time off work to deal with their illness if they do not get the support they need. This costs **employers** between £33 billion and £42 billion each year.
- Poor mental health costs the government a lot of money. This is money that is paid out in benefits, the cost to the **National Health Service** and less money coming in from tax because people are not working. This costs the government between £23 billion and £27 billion each year.

National Health Service

This is this country's health service. It gives free healthcare to everyone. Some services, like dentists, have to be paid for, unless you get benefits when they are free.

- The total cost to the country of poor mental health is between £73 billion and £97 billion each year.



This shows that, as well as being the right thing to do, it is in the interest of **employers** and the government to do what they can to help create more healthy workplaces and give people the tools to manage their own and other peoples mental health better.

Deloitte found out that when **employers** supported their workers' mental health more, the costs to **employers** and the government went down.

Lord Dennis Stevenson and Paul Farmer talked to more than 200 organisations. They found that there were lots of examples of **employers** doing things to help support and promote the mental health of their workers.

What the review looked at

The right way to think about mental health is that we all have it. We all move between these 3 mental health groups.

- Doing really well and feeling good.
- Finding things hard.
- Being ill and possibly having time off work.

People can be in any of these 3 groups. Someone could have a serious **mental health condition** but, with the right help and support, they can be well at work.

We want everyone to know more about their own mental health and how to give help and support to other people.

We all need to learn how to look after our own mental health. We need to notice if another person's mental health changes.

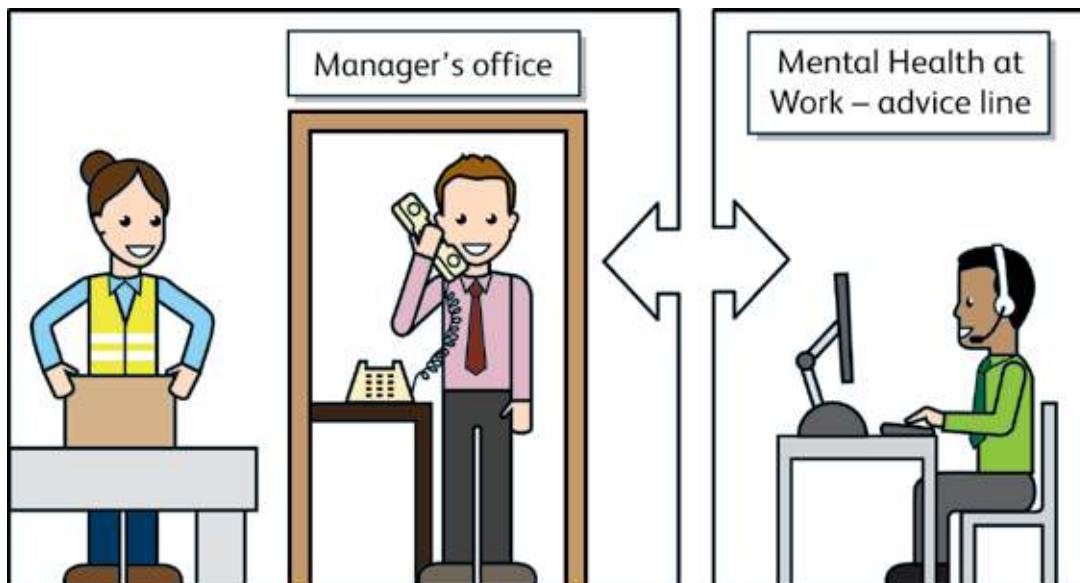


But **employers** can have a huge effect on mental health, and they are who this review is aimed at.

What we want to happen

In 10 years' time we want to see these changes and we believe this is possible.

- Workers in all types of employment will have good work which will have a good effect on their mental health, our society and the economy.
- Everyone will understand and be able to look after their own mental health and the mental health of people around them.
- All organisations will be able to support their workers' mental health.
- All organisations will help and support people with **mental health conditions** so that they do the best they can in their job.
- All organisations will help people to stay in work as much as possible.



If we do these things then fewer people with long-term **mental health conditions** will leave their job. Also, more people will feel better because they are in good work

How we can make sure these things happen

We have 6 things employers can do, these are called the core standards. We think everyone should follow these core standards. We think that all employers and organisations should work to put in place the core standards in their workplaces.

- Make a mental health at work plan and tell workers about it.
- Make sure that workers know about mental health.
- When workers are finding things hard, give them the chance to talk about mental health and the help and support they can get.
- Make sure workers have control and a sense of purpose about their work. Working should make people feel good.
- Make sure that managers and supervisors manage people properly.
- Make regular checks on workers' mental health and their wellbeing.

The report also shows 3 extra things that **employers** can do.

- If **employers** take action on mental health then that action should be clear and easily understood by everyone. Making any action clear to everyone will show people which help and support works best.
- We want trades unions, industry groups and other professional groups to help to make sure these standards are used.



- **Employers** need to think about using computer programs and websites to give extra help to their workers, so they can look after their **mental health conditions**. Everyone should be able to use these programs and websites when they need to.

What the public sector can do to help

The **public sector** has 5.4 million workers and is well placed to carry out our ideas.

Public sector

These are groups that provide services and are run by the government. This includes most schools, most hospitals and local councils.

We have talked to some senior civil servants, permanent secretaries and other senior managers in the **public sector** about what help and support is needed. These people are called leaders.

The leaders are looking at setting up help and support for **mental health conditions** in the 3 largest **public sector employers**. They are the **National Health Service**, Education and the Civil Service.



The **public sector** must also look closely at the areas of their workforce that are most at risk of stress and strain.

What the government can do to help

The government should do these things to change things more quickly.

- The government should set up a system online for both **employers** and workers to use so everyone can see what help and support they can use.
- The government should look at what else they can do to make sure everyone knows about the core standards.
- The government should change the law so that workers know what their rights are or what support they should receive when they have a mental health problem
- The government should change the way Statutory Sick Pay works so that people with **mental health conditions** get better help and support. This would let people go back to work in stages when they are able to do so.



- The government should make sure the **National Health Service** supports mental health at work. It could do this by making sure that everyone can get high quality support that fits around their work.

Setting up and delivering the changes

We hope the **Prime Minister and the people she works with** will accept this report and start putting our ideas into practice straight away.

This needs to be done in a way that will carry on in the future and will make changes that everyone can see.

We think that all the senior workers, like Permanent Secretaries, Chief Executives and leaders in the **public sector** should, as part of their job, have to look after the mental wellbeing of all their workers.

To make sure the core standards are set up and work properly, the **Prime Minister** should set up a group called the Mental Health and Employer Leadership Council. We know that there are many people who would work on the Council.

Most workplaces should be able to put the core standards in place.

Smaller businesses and self-employed people will be helped by other organisations, like banks, who already work with them. Local groups and organisations can also help.

Local trials and research should be used to build up evidence of what works.

Our ideas

We have 40 suggestions that we want employers and government to consider. All the suggestions are written out in full in the main report.

Finally...

If you want to find out more about staying healthy and being happy at work, there are a lot of websites and information you can look at. For example, you can look at websites like these.

- Mind at <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/>
- NHS England at <https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/improve-mental-wellbeing.aspx>
- Rethink Mental Illness at <https://www.rethink.org/news-views/2016/1/8-ways-to-start-your-conversation>

Word list

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Notes

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