

# Mates in Mind

## An overview



### Setting the context

Poor mental health affects people of all ages, yet, with effective promotion, prevention and early intervention, its impact can be reduced. Furthermore, the interaction between work and mental health is complex and sensitive.

Stigma and discrimination remain a barrier to people getting timely support. According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE, 2014) lack of staff awareness and lack of expertise or specialist support are seen as making psychological risks, including mental health, harder to address by around a quarter of all organisations across all industries, including construction.

Other business costs associated with poor mental health include presenteeism, which can account for 1.5 times as much working time lost as absenteeism; as well as costs associated with staff turnover. Taking simple steps to improve the management of mental health in the workplace should enable employers to save 30% or more of these costs a year (Sainsbury Centre, 2007).

In 2017, the Health in Construction Leadership Group hosted a summit for CEOs and leaders from across construction who overwhelmingly voted to improve the mental wellbeing of its workforce. Mates in Mind is the reality of that vision, reaching out across the construction workforce.

### Our mission and objectives

We believe that there is no health without mental health. Mates in Mind provides a joined-up and collaborative approach to support and services, including awareness and education, working in conjunction with other business initiatives.

Mates in Mind objectives to:

- Raise awareness and understanding of mental health and mental ill-health
- Help people to understand how, when and where to get support
- Break the silence and stigma through promoting cultures of positive wellbeing throughout the industry.

Mates in Mind has an ambitious goal – to reach 100,000 workers by September 2018; and by 2025, we aim to have reached 75% of the construction industry.

### How do we support businesses?

We help to make sense of available options and provide clear information and support to employers on mental health, mental illness and mental wellbeing. We help employers address this within their organisations, creating mentally healthy workplaces.

We are working with organisations across the scale and scope of the industry, and our approach is flexible to suit the needs of an individual organisation and their business priorities.

We are working in partnership with leading charities and organisations such as Mind, Samaritans, Mental Health First Aid England, British Safety Council, Lighthouse Club, Remploy and the National Counselling Society.

We also collaborate with various trade associations and industry bodies to ensure that we can streamline into existing industry frameworks.

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## Our approach

Within the Mates in Mind framework there are four key elements which, importantly, together offer a holistic and joined up approach.

**To support your organisation in creating the right programme** – offering guidance on specific worker issues to creating a stress management policy through to connecting the workforce to appropriate support at the right time.

**To help build an evidence base** – Mates in Mind are developing a research programme which will help the industry understand the nature and impact of mental health, and ensure development of effective and robust solutions.



**To educate and inform your workforce** – with messages tailored to the workforce, to leaders and to champions – helping everyone understand their roles and responsibilities when it comes to mental wellbeing.

**To visibly support the framework throughout your organisation** – including relevant and accessible communication materials – from hard hat stickers to van stickers, to posters, flyers, wallet cards etc.

## Who's involved

The founding partners of Mates in Mind are the Health in Construction Leadership Group and British Safety Council.

The Health in Construction Leadership Group (HCLG) was formed to drive the health agenda, supporting the aims of Construction 2025 and the Construction Industry Advisory Committee (CONIAC) forums in tackling strategic issues where the whole industry is required to work together.

The British Safety Council is a charity whose vision is that no-one should be injured or made ill at work. For sixty years, British Safety Council has been campaigning and promoting the value of good health and safety at work.

Our core partners supporting this programme are Mind, Samaritans and Mental Health First Aid England.

We have been supported during the pilot phase in the earlier half of 2016 by six construction companies – Balfour Beatty, Careys, Heathrow, Thames Tideway, VolkerWesselsUK and Willmott Dixon.

### Be part of the action

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