WEF Global Agenda Council on Mental Health  
Examples of Good Practices for Addressing Mental Health in the Workplace

AT A GLANCE – CASE STUDY: BRITISH TELECOM (BT) GROUP PLC

RATIONALE AND DEVELOPMENT
Recognising the prevalence of mental ill-health in a workforce, BT saw this as a business issue that needs to be managed and addressed. The Company was one of the first in the UK to launch a health awareness programme on a large scale to tackle mental health issues. BT hoped that by encouraging employees to adopt small changes in lifestyle and use proven techniques for increasing their resilience they would cope better with the pressures of modern living and work more creatively and productively.

PROGRAMME
- Aim is to try and move employee mindsets and behaviours from dependency to interdependency.
- Three-tiered mental health framework comprised of Prevention, Early Intervention, and Rehabilitation.
- Holistic integrated approach encompassing health promotion such as BTs "Work Fit" initiatives delivered alongside a Mental Health Toolkit with resources linked to each of the mental health framework areas.
- BTs "Work Fit" initiatives target both physical and mental wellbeing with a focus on guided self-help.
- Key components of the Mental Health Toolkit include: Open Minds: Head First – a downloadable guide on the continuum of mental health issues for both employees and managers; STREAM – a Stress Risk Assessment and Management Tool; a range of training courses such as STRIDE – a companion to STREAM for managers, resilience training, and Managing Mental Health training (based on the MHFA movement); BTs Health and Wellbeing Passport – part of a suite of passports that can be completed by individuals with long-term or recurring health-issues and agreed with their manager to facilitate management of the individual at work; Employee Assistance Management (EAM) to support BT managers as well as Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for BT people available 24/7; and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

STAKEHOLDERS
- The head of wellbeing, a Clinical Psychologist, works with leadership teams in each line of business (whom retain ownership of Plans) to develop tailored action plans stemming from the overall strategic approach.
- Centrally, efforts are focused on strategy, policy, introducing new evidence based initiatives, raising awareness and securing support at senior level.
- Managers are trained to better manage stress and mental health in their teams.
- BT people are encouraged to take personal responsibility for their own and others' wellbeing.
- EAP and EAM providers comprise experienced and accredited practitioners and consultants trained in addressing mental health issues.
- BT partners with mental health experts such as leading charities to design and deliver programmes and training.
- BT’s CBT service is funded through an insured solution in order to remove the risk of cost volatility and short term budgetary pressures at business unit level. This approach also improves visibility of costs and provides economies of scale, strengthening the business case for rehabilitation.

MONITORING & EFFECTIVENESS
- Management information is collated from a variety of sources (e.g. sickness absence database, occupational health returns, EAP feedback, anonymised and grouped STREAM results and CARE Agile reports, company-wide engagement survey). This is presented as a mental health dashboard updated monthly and supplemented by a commentary from the in-house Clinical Psychologist. This approach targets areas for attention within the business and ensures resources are directed to where they are likely to achieve the greatest impact.
- The company funded mental rehabilitation service has delivered significant improvements in clinical outcomes among those using it. Critically from a business perspective it has also proved effective in getting people back to work safely with 92% returning to their own role on full duties after intervention.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS, LESSONS LEARNT, POINTS OF INTEREST
- Building on general aspirations to create a healthy workplace environment.
- BT focuses on a targeted approach, due to the diverse nature of its workforce which spans a number of locations and job functions. Reflecting diversity in both demographics and geography is relevant to success.
- Health promotion is a broad topic and there is a danger of communicating bland general messages unless a clear focus is maintained. Communications expertise is a core requirement for any programme.

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‘Line of Business’ programmes are implemented through their normal management chain using their standard communication channels. This serves to reinforce the message that this is part of running an effective business and not some ‘health initiative’ or ‘bolt on’.
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**IN-DEPTH OVERVIEW – CASE STUDY: BRITISH TELECOM (BT) GROUP PLC**

**PROFILE**  
**Organisation:** BT Group PLC  
**Sector:** Telecommunications  
**Country:** UK

"We believe that health, safety and wellbeing are critical contributors to our future commercial success. If we have a healthy and happy workforce, it will be more productive."

### DEVELOPMENT STAGE

BT is one of the world’s leading providers of communications solutions and services, operating in 170 countries. The company employs around 101,000 people, with circa 80% located in the United Kingdom.

BT is regarded by mental health charities as a beacon for positive changes in workplace mental health policy and practice. The Company was one of the first in the UK to launch a large-scale health awareness programme to tackle mental health issues. Its strategic approach to health and wellbeing has been in place for over 11 years. BT hopes that by encouraging employees to adopt small changes in lifestyle and use proven techniques for increasing their resilience they would cope better with the pressures of modern living and work more creatively and productively.

The overall aim of BTs approach to creating a healthy workplace is to try and move employee mind-sets and behaviours from dependency to interdependency. This means driving a culture of self-help among the workforce and managers with support available from the "experts" when needed but primarily provided through comprehensive and easy to use materials. By making use of BT's own products and services, the company has used multiple communication channels to educate and inform BT employees about health issues and to promote and support lifestyle changes that are known to be beneficial to wellbeing.

### PROGRAMME

BT has developed a three-tiered mental health framework with a portfolio of resources and services available at each level. This is a dynamic process within each of the framework areas. In line with this approach, BT has developed a Mental Health Toolkit with resources linked to each of the three framework areas.

Figure 1. BTs Three-tiered Mental Health Framework
To shift employees’ mindsets around overall health and wellbeing, BT has instigated discussions through a number of forums and a community of Health, Safety and Wellbeing Champions and Business Leads. Each line of business has a tailored action plan, aligned with an overall strategic approach, and ownership of the plans is vested in individual leadership teams and developed in close association with the Head of Wellbeing, a Clinical Psychologist. Centrally, efforts are focused on strategy, policy, introducing new evidence-informed initiatives, raising awareness and securing support at senior level. The BT Mental Health Toolkit brings together the full range of resources available for BT people and managers to help themselves to stay mentally healthy, as further described.

1. **Prevention**: Range of resources to help promote good mental health and wellbeing. This includes:

   - **Management Competencies for Stress**: Behavioural competencies required by Line Managers to prevent / reduce stress at work.
   - **Positive Mentality**: Programme with the aim to get people to think about their mental health and explains what can be done to promote positive changes.
   - **Managing Pressure**: Resource to help people understand, manage, and cope more effectively with/in stressful situations.
   - **Achieving the Balance**: Advice on achieving the work-life balance. The resource provides information on flexible working, career-life planning, child-care, and carers.
   - **Health Promotion Campaigns**: Campaigns are regularly run to demonstrate how regular exercise, healthy eating, relaxation techniques and even the support of friends and family can help to ward off depression, stress and anxiety. Campaigns are also used as a medium to educate employees to help reduce the stigma of mental illness.

2. **Intervention**: Range of resources to help with early identification and management. This includes:

   - **STREAM**: The Stress Risk Assessment and Management Tool (STREAM) is intended for use by BT people who feel that they are subject to stress or who have suffered a period of stress-related sickness absence. STREAM seeks to provide an objective assessment of an individual’s personal levels of stress. The tool is also used to broadly identify the stressors in an individual’s life and to provide an overall rating of an individual’s stress levels. In addition, it can be used to provide recommendations for the individual and his/her line manager to
help manage and reduce the individual’s stress levels. There are three STREAM ratings based on a traffic light system. These are ‘Red’ which indicates that the individual is under potentially high levels of stress and action should be taken quickly to address and manage the issues; ‘Amber’ indicates the individual is under some degree of stress or is at risk of becoming under stress in the near future. These issues are still important and should be addressed at a convenient time in the near future; and ‘Green’ indicates the individual is not under stress at the moment. This does not mean that they are necessarily capable of taking on more work. Instead it could indicate that they are managing with the work and domestic demands and pressures being placed upon them at the moment. The STREAM tool allows the individual to select their first or second line manager to receive and manage their STREAM report. It is the responsibility of the selected line manager to receive and deal with the individual’s STREAM report.

- **STRIDE**: STRIDE is a training course specifically aimed at Line Managers to outline the actions they should take to deal with stress in their teams.

- **Employee Assistance Management (EAM)**: This is an internal team of trained counsellors who support BT managers looking for guidance with particular issues involving an individual or team of people. This free support service is available on an ad hoc, day to day basis. EAM includes exploring the various options for help that are available both within and outside the company or serves as a sounding board for proposed courses of action so that the best solution is achieved for all concerned.

- **Health and Wellbeing Passport**: The BT Health and Wellbeing Passport is designed to help people who have a long term health issue that could have an impact on their ability to work effectively, either now or at some point in the future. It is a voluntary undertaking entered into between BT and an employee. The document can be used for the benefit of individuals and their line managers to flag up potential difficulties at work and provides a recognised means of overcoming them. The focus is firmly on what the employee can do rather than what they can’t and in helping to remove any barriers that might prevent them from making a full contribution at work.

The purpose of the BT Health and Wellbeing Passport is:
- To describe the potential impact of an individual’s condition on their ability to do their job effectively.
- To detail reasonable adjustments, either temporary or permanent, which will allow them to carry on doing their job.
- To provide a list of resources that can be called upon to support them and their manager in helping them to continue working.
- To outline the actions their manager and/or colleagues might consider if they become unwell at work.
- To define the best means of communicating with them if they are unable to come to work.

- **Managing Mental Health Training**: A one day workshop covering the help available for someone experiencing a mental health problem before they get professional help. The course teaches people how to recognise the symptoms of mental health problems, how to provide initial help, and how to guide a person towards appropriate professional help. The workshop introduces the concept of Mental Health First Aid, describes the common Mental Health problems, provides best practice advice on the management of common Mental Health problems by the lay person, and gives guidance on more formal management through additional resources and support services.

- **Training**: A variety of courses are available on stress and its management. BT has a range of training on Resilience on offer including a toolkit, a one-day course for all BT people and a two-day course for Line Managers. The latter was developed with the support of Action for Happiness, part of the Young Foundation charity. The aim is to provide managers with the knowledge and skills to build their own resilience as well as promoting that of their people thereby enhancing wellbeing, engagement and performance. An online module has recently been launched.

3. **Rehabilitation**: Resources to help manage mental health issues. This includes:
Open Minds: Head First: Booklet created for individuals and Line Managers in BT to support them if they experience mental ill-health and to encourage the promotion of good mental health.

Self-help Books: A list of recommended self-help books that cover psychological / mild mental health problems such as anger management, addiction, depression and compulsions. Most of the books employ a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) approach, providing step-by-step self-help treatment programmes which encourage readers to think about the way their thoughts, feelings and behaviour interact and affect their wellbeing.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and EAM: The EAP provides a range of personal and group services, which can help BT people deal with worrying or difficult situations. The service is free and confidential to users and available at any time. Services include personal counselling and advice lines (legal, financial, consumer issues, state benefits/social services).

Occupational Health Service (OHS): Specialist Occupational Health (OH) Clinicians are available to provide advice about managing and preventing work related health problems. Confidential advice is available about all work-related health matters via the OHS referral process. Details are available on the health and wellbeing website. Managers can also ask for general OH advice via BT’s Senior Nursing Advisor.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) Service: The programme provides telephone contact, self-help, face-to-face or computer based therapy (or intensive therapy) to employees needing it. The CBT service comprises a triage by telephone and advice by a case manager within 48 hours of the referral. An information pack about the mental health condition is sent to the individual. Case managers liaise with the line manager with the individuals’ consent to advice on progress and any workplace adjustments. The mental health service is based on the model developed for musculo-skeletal disorders and both are funded through an insured solution in order to remove the risk of cost volatility and short term budgetary pressures at business unit level. This approach also improves visibility of costs and provides economies of scale, strengthening the business case for rehabilitation. Management at a central level by Group Risk advised by in-house specialists has also helped drive innovation and efficiencies.

MONITORING & EFFECTIVENESS

Management information is collected from a variety of sources (e.g. sickness absence database, occupational health returns, EAP feedback, anonymised and grouped STREAM results and CARE Agile reports - company-wide engagement survey). Management information is presented as a mental health dashboard updated monthly and supplemented by a commentary from the in-house Clinical Psychologist. This approach targets areas for attention within the business and ensures resources are directed to where they are likely to achieve the greatest impact. Key impacts include:

- Intervention plans have resulted in significant improvements in a range of measures and served the company particularly well during the financial crisis of 2008/09.

- A wellbeing index derived from the engagement survey has shown a long term improving trend in all divisions though adverse trading conditions have resulted in localised dips over time.

- The company funded mental rehabilitation service has delivered significant improvements in clinical outcomes among those using it. Critically from a business perspective it has also proved effective in getting people back to work safely with 92% returning to their own role on full duties after intervention.

- BT’s sick absence rate has decreased from 2.29% (1 April 2013) to 2.11% (31 March 2014) alongside maintenance of employee engagement levels. This percentage reduction is significant when considered across the entire BT workforce.

- The various metrics used to track progress have showed a gradual improvement against a previously rising trend. BT’s Wellbeing Index has improved from 3.65 (1 April 2013) to 3.85 (31 March 2014). Incremental changes are considered significant when considered in the context of reflecting the entire workforce. BT has seen reductions in lost time injury (LTI) rate and work-related ill health which remains significantly below CBI best quartile results.
• Recent surveys showed that 81% of BT employees ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that the opportunity to participate in health promotion campaigns made them feel that BT cared about their health. The majority of people (58%) said that it made them feel valued as an employee and 64% said that it made them feel proud to work for BT.

• An evaluation of BT’s ”Work Fit - Positive Mentality” campaign showed more than 50% of BT people had been influenced by the programme to make changes in their lifestyles. The programme demonstrated how regular exercise, healthy eating, relaxation techniques and the support of friends and family can help to ward off depression, stress and anxiety. It also aimed to educate employees to help reduce the stigma of mental illness and promote the range of support services the company provides.

• An ecological study of the web-based screening tool for depression trialled by BT found that it is feasible to use in a workplace setting. However, further trials are needed to fully evaluate the risks and benefits of any screening programme. For further information see: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21525074

Appendix

• N/A