Supporting Good Mental Health in the Workplace
Introduction

Since 1965, The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust (WCMT) has been funding UK citizens to investigate inspiring practice in other countries and return with innovative ideas for the benefit of people across the UK. Churchill Fellows are highly motivated individuals, who bring back a new focus and vision to improve their profession and community.

The Mental Health Foundation is the UK’s charity for everyone’s mental health. With prevention at the heart of what they do, they aim to find and address the sources of mental health problems so that people and communities can thrive.

Since 2016, the two organisations have been working in partnership on a programme of 60 Fellowships focussed on community based approaches to mental health.

The Mental Health Foundation is supporting Churchill Fellows with advice, and ensuring the lessons learnt are shared with policy makers and other relevant groups and individuals.

WCMT has committed over £500,000 to this three year programme.

This booklet presents learnings from Churchill Fellowships focussed on supporting good mental health in the workplace.
The barometer of success of any nation is the health and wellbeing of its people. Current levels of good mental health are disturbingly low. Not only is our collective mental health deteriorating, only a small minority of people (13%) are living with high levels of positive mental health.

The Mental Health Foundation's 'Surviving or Thriving?' national survey found that: nearly two-thirds of people (65%) say that they have experienced a mental health problem. This rises to 7 in every 10 women, young adults aged 18-34 and people living alone. The most notable differences are associated with household income and economic activity - nearly 3 in 4 people living in the lowest household income bracket report having experienced a mental health problem, compared to 6 in 10 of the highest household income bracket. The great majority (85%) of people out of work have experienced a mental health problem compared to two thirds of people in work and just over half of people who have retired.1 These figures highlight the importance of the 'Supporting Good Mental Health in the Workplace' initiative.

Educational attainment, successfully transitioning into employment, sustaining work and fulfilling one's potential are critical factors for individuals' mental health; and are vital for our success as a society. We know it is not simply having a job that supports one's mental health, but 'good work'. What protects and benefits our mental health at work are high levels of supervisor and peer support and job control, and low levels of insecurity and the absence of in-work poverty. Whole workplace approaches to mental health create an environment in which workers' mental health and wellbeing are promoted and protected. Talking about and dealing with mental health positively becomes part of the workplace's culture, modelled at all levels.2

The Foundation welcomes this opportunity to build on our partnership with the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust as we bring together national and international expertise including people who have made and will continue to make a difference in improving mental health in the workplace.

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1 Mental Health Foundation (May 2017) 'Surviving or Thriving: The state of the UK’s mental health
www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/surviving-or-thriving-state-uks-mental-health

2 Elliott, I. (August 2016) Poverty and Mental Health: a review to inform the Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s Anti-Poverty Strategy
www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/Poverty%20and%20Mental%20Health.pdf

Foreword by Jenny Edwards CBE
CEO The Mental Health Foundation
In 2015, an estimated 8.6 million people aged 16 or older in the UK experienced a common mental health problem.

Garry Botterill travelled to the Netherlands and the USA to investigate the use of specially trained assistance dogs to help veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Garry, a police sergeant from Sussex, is the co-founder of the charity Service Dogs UK.

Having met veterans with PTSD to understand more about the difficulties they face, his Fellowship proved crucial in providing the necessary knowledge to make the charity a success.

Garry returned to the UK, giving presentations at work about PTSD and how it can impact on police officers within Sussex Police. This led to working on the Surrey & Sussex Mental Health Working Group, to becoming an Armed Forces Network Police Champion and a mental health advocate.

Together with the co-founder of Service Dogs UK, Garry has since produced a Mental Health app called Backup Buddy, to tackle the stigma of mental health injury within the Emergency Services.

The mobile app, which has been adopted by Surrey and Sussex Police, allows officers and staff to, privately and informally, find out more about the most common mental health issues they or their colleagues might face. The app features advice and pathways to getting support, as well as stories of colleagues who themselves suffered with mental health issues - strongly enforcing the idea of ‘you are not alone!’

4,900,000
15.3% of people in work with common mental health problem such as stress, depression or anxiety

Adele Owen, a police constable and mental health lead from Manchester, travelled to Norway and the USA to investigate mental health peer support networks within the police force. She wanted to learn from police colleagues about how they run their programmes and how they support staff after terrorist incidents.

Since returning, Adele has been busy developing the Greater Manchester Police Peer Support Network, sharing good practice with other Forces and emergency organisations, and contributing to the National Police Wellbeing work stream. More recently, she has been working with Greater Manchester Police to support colleagues affected by the recent Manchester Arena bomb.

Adele believes that many employees who have personal experience of mental ill health underestimate (as many of their employers do) how valuable an asset they are to an organisation, as they can better recognise the signs and demonstrate more empathy to others going through those experiences. They can also be a great means of unofficial and confidential support, helping to reduce sickness absence and stigma while showing that recovery is possible. Providing this support also improves their own confidence and sense of wellbeing.

‘Anyone can be affected by mental ill health and it is not a weakness. These experiences can be utilised for good’, says Adele.

**Surviving or Thriving: The state of the UK’s mental health**

**About the population as a whole:**

- Nearly two-thirds of people say that they have experienced a mental health problem: 65%

- This rises to 7 in every 10 women, young adults aged 18-34 and people living alone: 70%

**The most noticeable differences are associated with economic activity:**

- The great majority of people out of work have experienced a mental health problem: 85%

- Compared to two thirds of people in work and just over half of people who have retired: 66%

- And 53% among people who are retired.

Professor Julie Logan

Julie Logan was a Professor of Entrepreneurship when she travelled to North America to investigate best workplace practices for adults with dyslexia. In her academic work, she was fascinated to find a high percentage of entrepreneurs to be dyslexic, having started companies because they could not function in the corporate environment.

Having set up a mentoring scheme for adults with dyslexia (AWD) Julie set off on her Fellowship to explore best practice in supporting AWD. She met many key people who were championing the rights of adults with learning difficulties, and formed several key contacts. AWD possess significant strengths, including innovativeness and creativity, but as her large study also found, many have considerable work anxiety.

Soon after her return to the UK, Julie helped to establish Mentoring Hubs, a not-for-profit mentoring scheme for dyslexic people in the workplace. This led to an approach by Ravensbourne to help set up a voluntary scheme providing mentors for young dyslexic artists, which has proved highly successful.

Julie also carried out a survey of dyslexic adults in high-powered jobs in the UK, all of whom were very successful in their field. Amongst the respondents, there was a high incidence of mental health issues, in particular - anxiety, which appeared to centre on concealing dyslexia and ‘keeping up’ with colleagues.

Until now, there has been little research around this issue and consequently few employers are aware of the stress experienced by staff with dyslexia, which often goes undisclosed. Adults with dyslexia, and their employers, need to understand how dyslexia may influence their workplace performance and what strategies they can use to overcome their negative perceptions. Companies can also make work environments dyslexia friendly. Professional dyslexia counselling can help individuals; and job coaching - where AWD take control of their own learning with a goal of bringing awareness to their work-related skills - can make a difference.

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Helen Lee-Savage

Helen Lee-Savage is a Registered Mental Health Nurse working with Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. She travelled to America to learn directly from some of the world experts in mental health and suicide prevention.

She returned from her trip determined to carve out a specialist post in Cornwall, and has since been appointed as lead for suicide prevention for Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

She has designed a new, one day training course for doctors, and has delivered several projects within a Zero Suicide collaborative. Helen also offers in depth risk assessments, as well as supervision and support to her nursing and medical colleagues, to share her expertise.

The increased knowledge and confidence gained from her Fellowship has led her to present at many conferences.

‘I am confident that most people thinking about suicide very much want to stay alive, and there are very simple things we can all do to help reduce distress, and reconnect people with a sense of hope,’ says Helen.

Helen.Lee-Savage@nhs.net
Introducing a workplace intervention in the form of an employee screening and care management for those living with (or at risk of) depression was estimated to cost £30.90 per employee for assessment, and a further £240.00 for the use of CBT to manage the problem, in 2009. According to an economic model, in a company of 500 employees where two thirds are offered and accept the treatment, an investment of £20,676 will result in a net profit of approximately £83,278 over a two year period.

Promoting wellbeing at work through personalised information and advice, a risk-assessment questionnaire, seminars, workshops and web-based materials will cost approximately £80 per employee per year. For a company with 500 employees, where all employees undergo the intervention, it is estimated that an initial investment of £40,000 will result in a net return of £347,722 in savings, mainly due to reduced presenteeism (lost productivity that occurs due to an employee working while ill) and absenteeism (missing work due to ill health).

Dr Jenny Tillotson was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to explore personal wellness interventions using aromas as stress management strategies. Her goal was to develop wearable technology tools that could be used to reduce the risk of an acute bipolar disorder episode, enhance an overall sense of wellbeing, and alleviate anxiety.

Building on her 'Sensory Fashion' research from Central Saint Martins, the Fellowship focused on the benefits of eScent®, a patented, wearable device that dispenses mood-enhancing fragrances triggered by a biometric stimulus and concentrated on the personal sensory space around the user. The Fellowship findings were that eScent® could attract high levels of acceptability with the public, and as a ‘de-stigmatising’ fashion item it would be easy to integrate into everyday items.

Since completing her Fellowship, Jenny has won a number of Innovation awards and is a member of Cambridge Neuroscience at the University of Cambridge.

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Added Value: Mental Health as a Workplace Asset

- People living with mental health problems contributed an estimated 12.1% of GDP - that is: £226,000,000,000 per year
- By 2030, the foregone gross value added due to the challenges arising from staff mental health problems is predicted to rise to: £32,700,000,000 per year
- Some businesses have shown that it is possible to reduce the costs associated with staff mental health problems. If just 10% of the costs were mitigated, the UK economy could be: £3,300,000,000 larger by 2030

- 86% of all respondents believed that their job and being at work was important to protecting and maintaining their mental health.
- One in five line managers surveyed agreed that a person disclosing a mental health problem in their organisation would be less likely to progress because of this.
- Of those diagnosed with a mental health problem in the last five years, 23% reported exactly this consequence, underlining the importance of ensuring that disclosing is a positive experience.
- Only 10% of line managers felt that they had had sufficient training to deal with mental health problems at work, indicating a training need.
- A majority of the respondents who had disclosed to an employer rated the experience as positive (54%), with 30% categorising it as neutral, and 14% as negative.


Churchill Fellow of 2016

Sara Preston

Sara Preston is Senior National Officer [Scotland] for Beat, the UK’s eating disorders charity. She also comes from a place of lived experience in overcoming Anorexia Nervosa before entering the eating disorders professional field.

She travelled to the USA and Canada investigating best practice evidence-based approaches to eating disorders treatment interventions, education programmes and stigma reduction initiatives.

Eating disorders can have significant impact on an individual’s psychological, social and physical functioning, alongside complexities, disruption and barriers to employment, both for the individual affected and family members directly supporting them.

Studies have shown carers of those with an eating disorder experience marked psychological distress and burden, coupled with challenges in maintaining their work commitments in the absence of support. Employer understanding, adjustments and accessible support mechanisms can have a significant positive impact for individuals and carers, in supporting recovery and enabling positive performance within the workplace.

Since returning from her Fellowship Sara has shared her findings nationally, joined the committee for the Scottish Eating Disorder Interest Group and the Government Mental Health Strategy forum. She is also developing a national carers support walk, support group professional network and eating disorders training programme for Scotland.

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Clare McAvinchey is a civil servant. She is exploring trends in the mental health of teachers, and how different countries have approached the role of trade unions, professional bodies, government and health systems in improving prevention, early intervention and support.

She has already undertaken part of her fellowship in Sweden, where she met key stakeholders and academics. Phase two of her Fellowship will take her to Australia and New Zealand to further investigate delivering public health in the workplace.

Clare is currently responsible for two government reviews on mental health and work. In January 2017, the Prime Minister announced that “Government was forming a new partnership with employers to support mental health in the workplace.” Lord Dennis Stevenson, the long-time campaigner for greater understanding and treatment of mental illness, and Paul Farmer CBE, CEO of Mind and Chair of the NHS Mental Health Taskforce, will lead a review on how best to ensure employees with mental illness are able to stay in work.

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Public mental health priorities:
Investing in the evidence

- Mental health problems cost the UK economy:

  **£70-100,000,000,000** per year

- In 2013, the number of sick days lost to stress, depression and anxiety had increased by 24% and the number lost to ‘serious mental illness’ had doubled since 2009.

- 60-70% with common mental health problems are in work.

- But 75% are not in receipt of treatment.

- Increased employee flexibility improves mental health early and regular contact from managers during sick leave has been associated with early return to work outcomes.

Statistic and data source material

Added Value: Mental Health as a Workplace Asset. Mental Health Foundation
Available at: https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/added-value-mental-health-workplace-asset

Surviving or Thriving: The state of the UK's mental health. Mental Health Foundation
Available at: https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/surviving-or-thriving-state-uksmental-health

Fundamental Facts about Mental Health
Available at: https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/fundamental-facts-about-mental-health-2016

The annual report of the Chief Medical Officer 2013. Public mental health priorities: Investing in the evidence
Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officer-cmo-annual-report-public-mental-health

Contact details

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For information on how to protect and sustain good mental health please visit:
www.mentalhealth.org.uk/your-mental-health

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The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust (WCMT) was established in 1965 on the death of Sir Winston Churchill. We fund UK citizens from all backgrounds to travel overseas in pursuit of new and better ways of tackling a wide range of the current challenges facing the UK.

www.wcmt.org.uk

We would like to thank the Mental Health Foundation for the invaluable expertise they bring to our partnership, and the excellent support and advice they give to our Fellows.

The Mental Health Foundation

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