

MULTIPLEX

CASE STUDY: Multiplex – Improving Mental Health in the Construction Industry

At Multiplex, we work in a physically and mentally challenging environment, and our senior leadership recognises the importance of having a robust health and wellbeing strategy. We are built for people, which means health and wellbeing is embedded into our culture.

To ensure we capture the needs of all employees, we have established a dedicated occupational health and wellbeing steering group. This group is made up of people from various Multiplex departments, as well as our occupational health advisor and out occupational health provider. Through this steering group, and in consultation with our senior leaderships, we have introduced an occupational health and wellbeing strategy where mental health plays a key role.

Implementing a Mental Wellbeing Awareness and Support Programme

Construction is still a male-dominated industry where some people may not feel comfortable expressing their emotions. At Multiplex, our proactive approach to mental wellbeing is designed to eliminate the stigma surrounding the subject of mental health, and to get people talking their problems and offering support where required. As a business, we have signed up to the '**Building Mental Health Charter**' (a construction industry-wide initiative) to declare our commitment. To ensure we achieve our goal, we have introduced the following strategies:

- **'Let's start the conversation'** – A 45 minute introduction to mental health that gives delegates the tools to care for themselves and spot potential problems with their work colleagues, while also building the confidence necessary to start a conversation. We have rolled this out to all Multiplex team members as a mandatory training session and we are also extending it to our subcontractors.
- **'With performance in mind'** – A half-day training course delivered to Multiplex managers. It provides information on self-coping strategies and helps our managers understand how their actions can affect their team members. It also provides them with coaching techniques and support. This is a mandatory course for all of our senior managers.
- **Mental health first aiders** – Each of our projects and offices have a minimum of at least one trained mental health first aider, and we have trained all of our occupational health nurses in mental health first aid. Our mental health first aiders are qualified to identify the signs of mental ill health, listen to concerns, offer support and guidance, and signpost sources of further help where needed.
- **Trauma support** – Due to the nature of our industry, we recognise that there is a potential for incidents. We have trained a number of our managers to offer initial 'first on the scene' trauma support. Our first responders also carry critical incident debriefing cards and receive regular refresher training.
- **Multiplex and project inductions** – We include mental health within our induction programme to ensure we capture everyone on our projects, including all new

starters. Mental health is also included as a training module on both our management and graduate training programmes.

- **Signposting** – We have an Employee Assistance Programme and promote this service to all Multiplex team members. We also support the Construction Industry Helpline and distribute their pocket-sized cards at our 'Let's start the conversation' sessions and inductions. We also promote the Construction Industry Helpline app.
- **Support** – As well as our Employee Assistance Programme, we have a consultant psychologist who offers support and guidance where needed. Our mental health first aiders meet once a quarter to check in with each other, offer support and listen to invited guest speakers talk about various experiences, such as suicide.
- **Recognition** – As with Building Mental Health, we award all those taking part in our mental health awareness programmes with a bronze, silver or gold ribbon sticker. All our mental health first aiders display gold stickers on their hard hats and we also have posters identifying them on each project and at our head office. We also have a dedicated mental health page on our company intranet.



- **Physical health** – We recognise the connection of good mental health to good physical health and run a yearly health and wellbeing calendar that incorporates the two. Along with our occupational health provider, we run monthly campaigns and activities to encourage exercise, healthy eating and regular health check-ups.

Outcomes and Conclusion

Through our mental wellbeing programme, we have our own in-house mental health first aid instructor and 66 trained mental health first aiders. We have carried out mental health awareness training with hundreds of our managers and subcontractors, and introduced mental health awareness to everyone entering our projects through our inductions. Our mental health first aiders have had many conversations with the Multiplex team members and our subcontractors, and many people are now openly talking about their mental health concerns, which demonstrates that we are breaking down some longstanding barriers.