

CASE STUDY: A-one+ Integrated Highways Services



Take 5 minutes out

Mental health problems affect 1 in 4 people every year in the UK, yet too often people are afraid to talk about their experiences because they fear it will affect their jobs or relationships. On the 5th February 2015, A-one+ Integrated Highway Services Area 14 took their latest step in its mental health culture change, which had begun 3 years prior by taking part in the National Time to Talk Day to help break the silence and end the stigma associated with mental health.

One of the worst things about mental health conditions is not the condition itself but friends and colleagues stop talking and avoid the person, because they are not sure what to say. We all have mental health, just like we all have physical health, so you don't need to be an expert to have a conversation.

The aim of the day was to take 5 minutes out to have a chat over a cup of tea and a biscuit, about mental health and the importance of taking 5 minutes out to look after ourselves. Many of the conversations were held at the operational start of shift briefing, whether that be 7am or 7pm, everyone was included.



We held a quiz to help break down the myths, used a snapper to start a conversation and gave tips on how to actively look after your mental health. After all, there are five ways to wellbeing and its about remembering those five points and putting them into action:

Connect – connect with the people around you.

Be Active – exercise makes you feel good.

Take Notice – be curious, notice the changing seasons, reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Keep Learning – set a challenge you will enjoy achieving, learning new things can increase your confidence, as well as being fun to do.

Give - seeing yourself and your happiness liken to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding.

Everyone was reminded about our Listening Buddies, who are trained in either [Mental Health First Aid](#) and / or [SafeTALK](#) or the world renowned Suicide Intervention training [ASIST](#). They are there to support a person through a mental health concern and signpost them onto appropriate further professional support or listen to any concern – after all a problem shared is a problem halved.

A Building Resilience to Stress presentation has been delivered frequently to different teams, the course helps the attendee learn: what stress is, the ‘fight or flight syndrome’, signs and symptoms of stress, short and long term effects on the body and helps identify good coping mechanisms for stress. The session ends with everyone taking part in relaxation exercises, which are different and fun, and you are able to take away with you and use at any time of the day and in most situations.

Over the past few years we have trained our Line Managers in Line Manager Mental Health and Wellbeing and we have also offered Mental Health and Wellbeing Awareness to all staff. The courses outline different mental health conditions giving them a basic understanding of the main conditions, such as Anxiety, Bi-polar, Depression and Schizophrenia and signs and symptoms of mental health conditions. The line manager training also offered the correct skills and behaviours you need to manage mental wellbeing in the workplace; assisting line managers in identifying problems at an early stage, making reasonable adjustments for mental health conditions, the employers and employees legal requirements and the ways in which you can create a positive culture in the workplace.

