



Spotlight on...
mental health

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Case Study: Marks and Spencer Employee Wellbeing Programme

Marks and Spencer pride themselves in taking employee wellbeing seriously with an established employee wellbeing programme addressing business and local needs, focussing on physical, social and mental health. This year M&S have developed key areas of their employee wellbeing programme to focus specifically on raising awareness and supporting employees around mental health.

A significant obstacle to ensuring the wellbeing of your staff is a lack of awareness of the issues associated with mental health and ways to support individuals managing low mental health.

M&S have taken a number of steps to develop in this area including updating learning resources for their People Policy Service on serious mental health conditions and creating a dedicated online Mental Wellbeing Hub within their employee wellbeing website to help equip both employees and line managers with the information and tools in which to fully support their people. To read more about M&S's mental wellbeing activities, [click here](#).

The website also hosts signposts to their support services of Occupational Health team and their dedicated confidential support service 'Live Well Work Well' available to employees 24/7 on any mental health needs.

M&S's have also focussed their commitment around mental health externally. M&S were the first retailer to sign the Mind and Rethink Mental Illness 'Time to Change' pledge on tackling mental health stigma in the workplace. To read more about the 'Time to Change' programme to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination, [click here](#). As well as becoming a member of the BITC Mental Health Champions group, who actively campaign to drive change on mental health, in the business sector.

M&S delivered their first 'Mental Wellbeing Awareness Week'. This campaign was targeted to all employees with the aim to raise awareness of how M&S supports mental wellbeing and methods available to seek advice and support. During the week, a poster and social media campaign was run to promote a range of messages in support of mental wellbeing.

Beth Ryder Employee Wellbeing Manager at M&S said:

"We saw really high levels of engagement across the week and across the business with many examples of colleagues who found the confidence to speak out about their personal experiences and share ideas and agree actions on what more we can do to support each other to be the best we can be at work and at home."

This employee engagement campaign has started a business wide conversation around mental health and has helped to further M&S's understanding of the needs of their employees. M&S look forward to developing this area of their wellbeing programme to promote transparency, proactive prevention and timely support around mental wellbeing across M&S. Plans for 2015/16 include focussing on supporting a network of individuals to grow across the business to support positive work place mental wellbeing and linking positive mental health with wider wellbeing campaigns across the year, for example the businesses healthy eating and physical activity and the Dementia Friends and cancer support campaigns.