

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MB/MD/1960/15

All Assembly Members

National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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21 May 2015

Dear colleague,

I am responding to Eluned Parrot AM's question to Jane Hutt AM during Business Questions on 12 May, requesting a statement on how mental health awareness was being increased in public sector workers.

Improving mental health and well-being in the workplace is a key commitment in the Programme for Government and 'Together for Mental Health', and the Welsh Government is supporting employers to do so through its 'Healthy Working Wales' work and health programme.

Healthy Working Wales aims to improve health at work; prevent people being made ill at work; encourage retention or rehabilitation of those made ill at work; and prevent the link between work-related ill health and economic inactivity. Employers are supported to recognise that the workplace can have a positive affect on employees' health and well-being, and that mental ill health is not necessarily a barrier to effective working. Further, providing employment and maintaining people in work is a positive way of supporting individuals who are recovering from mental health problems.

The support for employers through Healthy Working Wales includes face-to-face support, web-based information and award programmes. Improving mental health and managing mental health conditions is a key focus of this support.

Through the award programmes, employers must evidence a range of policies and interventions to support employees to maintain and improve their mental health and well-being. This work includes the introduction of a mental health and well-being policy, flexible-working practices, training, awareness-raising, and engagement and communication with staff. To-date, over 2,418 employers have engaged in Healthy Working Wales, employing over 419,668 people in Wales (31% of the working-age population). Specifically, 30 public sector organisations have received awards through Health Working Wales in recognition for their efforts to improve the health and well-being of their staff. Employers include NHS organisations, Local Authorities, Job Centres, Police Services and Fire and Rescue Services.

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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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To support our Healthy Working Wales approach, I announced funding of £500k to deliver phase 2 of the Time to Change Wales campaign until December 2017. Time to Change Wales is seeking to end the stigma and discrimination faced by people with experience of mental health problems in Wales and phase 2 has a focus on workplaces. To date 28 public and third sector organisations have signed the organisational pledge, a public declaration of their commitment to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination.

Finally, earlier this year I announced that from April 2015, 12 third sector and voluntary organisations will receive £3m from the Welsh Government to run mental health projects across Wales. The projects will provide services to complement those already provided by the Welsh NHS and other public sector organisations in Wales. Several of these projects have a focus on improving mental health through workplaces, for example the Alzheimer's Society are working with employers to raise awareness of dementia and Mind Cymru's project includes a specific strand on workplace resilience.

Best wishes,
Mark

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