

No. 088/2018

14 February 2018

Our Ref: P26/18

Royal Mail Group 5-Year Mental Health Strategy - Mental Health Ambassadors Pilot Launch Event 6th February 2018 Report To Branches:

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

This Report is further to earlier Reports and updates in LTBs 533/17, 543/17 and 649/17.

In October 2017 Royal Mail Group launched a new 5-Year Mental Health Strategy with the full involvement and support of the CWU and the strategy has been making good progress with another milestone reached in the mental-health plan earlier this month with a major event at the Mount Pleasant Phoenix Centre.

The event, with well over a hundred people present, was told that to date the Royal Mail Mental Health Strategy has progressed as follows:

- Completed senior leadership mental-health engagement sessions across the business;
- Engaged with the CWU and Unite CMA, securing Union support and commitment;
- Launched a multi-media communication campaign including Work Time Listening and Learning (WTLL), Courier, Intranet, RMTv;
- Launched new mandatory e-learning to all managers (7,000 have completed the course to date);
- Rolled out new mental health support 'z-cards' or pocket cards to all of the Royal Mail Group's workforce and all offices;
- Increased the promotion of Royal Mail's Feeling First Class and Employee Assistance Services;
- Designed the mental health ambassador programme pilot, launched this month;
- Planned the upskilling of physical first aiders, in mental health first aid; and
- Launched a new 'Everyday People' mental health video.

On 6th February 2018 Royal Mail, supported by the CWU and Unite/CMA, launched their mental-health ambassador programme pilot with 80 pilot ambassadors nominated from across the business in attendance. This peer to peer awareness and signposting pilot will be reviewed in July 2018. At that stage the benefits and learning points from the pilot will be shared and discussed with stakeholders including the Unions and together will agree the next steps for the programme. The 80 individuals comprised of a wide range of people consisting of CWU grade front line workers, managers, CWU health and safety reps, first aiders etc.

The pilot aims are to:

- Create a network of local mental-health ambassadors;
- Provide peer to peer awareness raising and signposting support;
- Contribute to working towards normalising mental health conversations; and
- Help improve internal education and signposting to support services, increasing usage.

The Ambassadors role will be to:

- **Advocate** - Promote guidance and information;
- **Support** - Work with colleagues and managers locally to signpost colleagues to support and tools;
- **External knowledge** - Signpost people to external local mental-health support, groups and organisations;
- **Promote** - Share information on agreed noticeboards and with local agreement via WTLL and team meetings; and
- **Role model** - Be a role model and champion mental-health support locally.

Ambassadors will encourage workers to follow the synonym 'ACT':

- **Acknowledge** – If you or someone close to you is not their usual self;
- **Communicate** – If you are not feeling okay, speak to someone. If you're worried about someone, ask them if they are okay and encourage them to talk. Take the time to listen;
- **Take action** – Find out what support is available and encourage others to do the same.

CWU National Health, Safety and Environment Officer Dave Joyce delivered a key-note speech and said:

"The CWU has been concerned for some time that the government was ignoring the Mental Health issue and that employers were failing to make adequate changes in the workplace to provide support and to enable people with mental illnesses, anxiety or depression to stay in work and get better.

Mental health problems can often be 'invisible' to others, so a lack of mental health awareness amongst employers, managers and colleagues is also likely to be a factor.

Medical retirement is not a solution - not only is there a loss of skills and talents these workers have, but having to leave your job can worsen your mental health not make it better.

So the CWU has been saying for a long time that the government and employers must do more to support people with mental health conditions. Simple steps like giving an employee paid time off to get professional help and counselling appointments can make a huge difference.

The CWU Strategy in short is to work with Royal Mail and the mental health charities and experts to raise awareness of the problems and issues faced by those with mental ill health. This includes opposing stigma, getting Union Reps trained in mental health awareness and Mental Health First Aid so they can identify, help and work with our members and others to help working people who have mental health conditions, assisting and supporting those in crisis, signposting people to professional help and to work with Royal Mail to provide support for workers who become ill or disabled and to make reasonable adjustments, so that people can stay in work and get better.

CWU has recently published a "CWU Guide to Work and Suicide" (copies of which were distributed to meeting delegates) and last week the CWU supported "Time To Talk Day" (and copies of the CWU Letter To Branches and Posters were distributed also) demonstrating the work the CWU is doing.

All you people present today have an important role to play as Mental Health Ambassadors and I want to thank each and every one of you for putting yourself forward for this new role and being here today - It's one of the many reasons why everyone should get together with their workmates and join in the combined effort led by Dr. Shaun Davis and Rachel Boon on behalf of Royal Mail. I very much support and endorse the Royal Mail Group 5-Year Mental Health Strategy launched last October which sets out a clear commitment to improve the lives of employees and their families with mental health conditions. Today marks an important milestone in the progress of that strategy."

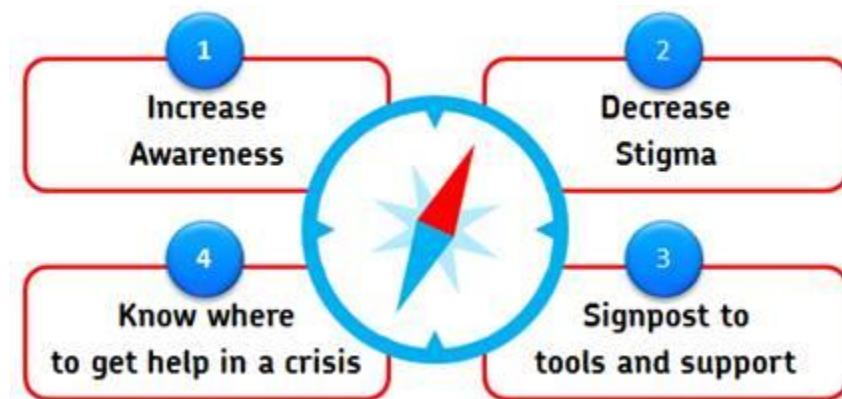
Dr. Shaun Davis, Royal Mail Group Global Director of Safety, Health, Wellbeing & Sustainability said:

"I am proud to sponsor Royal Mail Group's mental health strategy 'Because Healthy Minds Matter'. I was delighted to attend the launch event where 80 ambassadors joined together with us and the Unions for a fantastic day learning about the ambassador pilot and the local role they will play in increasing awareness and signposting to support".

Rachel Boon Royal Mail Group Head of Health said:

"Our five-year mental health strategy '*Because Healthy Minds Matter*' and plan continues at pace. Through awareness raising and support options we are working with the CWU and Unite/CMA, towards the further improvement of our mental-health culture and the reduction of sickness absence that results from these debilitating conditions. We are clear that ambassadors are not intended to be counsellors and nor should they act as such or involve themselves in individual cases with managers or others. They should act to signpost employees to specialist support if and when required."

The Royal Mail Group 5-Year Mental Health Strategy is summarised through a "mental health compass" and campaign logo:



Yours sincerely

Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer