

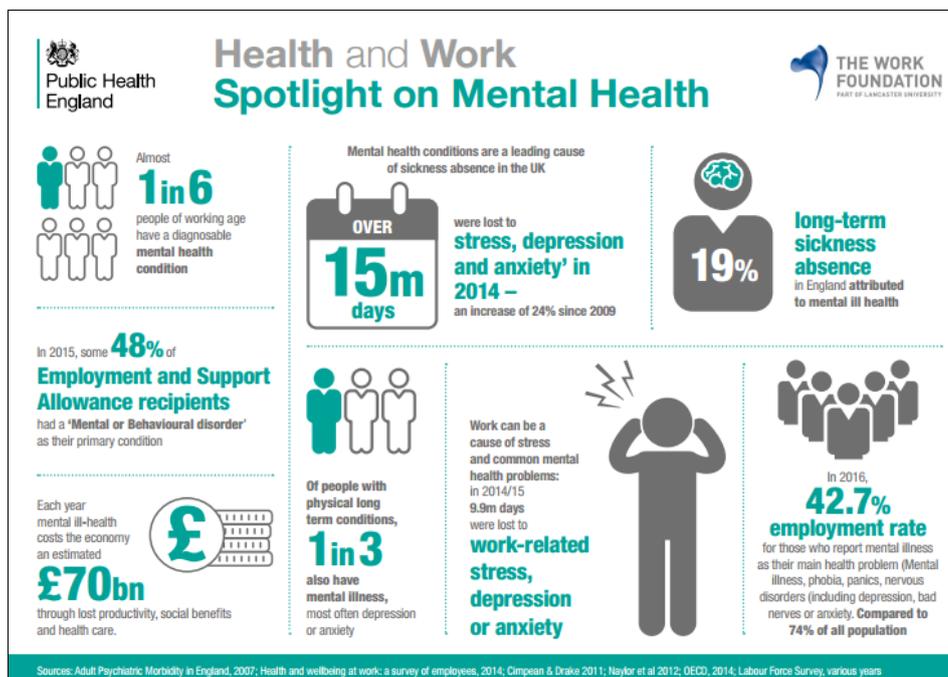


## Health at Work Summit 2017

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>. May 2017  
Holiday Inn Hotel - Kensington, Wrights Lane, London.

The event is established on the health and safety diary but at £449.00 - £499.00 per delegate for the day it is expensive – however I received an opportunity to apply for a ticket and received a message “Thank you for requesting a free place at the Health @ Work Summit 2017 on Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017. We would like to confirm you have a place.....”

The day was opened by conference Chair Louise Aston who is the Wellbeing Director for Business in the Community (BITC) [1]. She spoke of their Workwell model where everything is about the whole person and not just an aspect of their wellbeing. Public Health England has produced an easy to read infographic “Spotlight on Mental Health”.

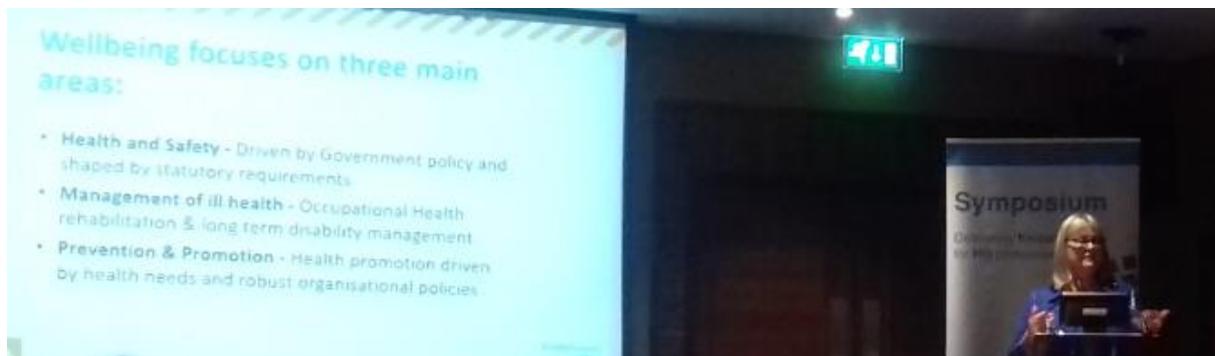


[2]

“Developing a strategy to respond to the changing landscape of health at work” was presented by Clare Forshaw who is the Head of Centre of Health at the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) [3]. Health is being pushed up the agenda by the HSE but whole health is too wide a target and to campaign workers need to know that although overall health is the goal there has to be immediate wins to “get staff on side” and more importantly to prove the companies commitment. However, everything has to be sustainable and things like increasing resilience are bottom of the list, stressors must be removed, reduced and managed first.



Susan Gee, Head of Occupational Health and Safety, Yorkshire Water and a lecturer at Leeds Beckett, former Head of Occupational Safety at Bradford MBC; Susan spoke about making wellbeing a part of “our blueprint” and about the need for robust strategies.



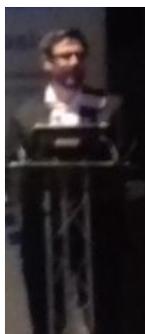
If something is leaking it is fixed ASAP and if a staff member is ill that should be fixed just as quickly. We need to keep people in work in the long term and that may mean giving them time off in the short term. It is ridiculous to expect workers to leave all their problems at the gate or front door when they come in to work at 8 o'clock, it is impossible and employers should work with trade unions and the workforce whatever the issues are to support them it makes simple business logic.

Dr Davina Deniszczyk, the Charity & Market Development Director, from Nuffield Health which is a charity but so large it has 14k employees. Emotional wellbeing is complicated with wide variety of definitions and targeted weeks are ok only if sustained. The issue of mental health affecting people and 1 in 4 figure is widely quoted in public domain for mental health issues every year. But, the Dr. refutes that figure and states that everyone is affected when somebody is ill, the figure should be 4 in 4. Everyone has issues at some point; it is not them and us.

John Green, HSE Director European Hub, Laing O'Rourke spoke of the “War on Error” and stated that we are looking at things wrong. Workplace health and safety goes right most of the time and we should investigate this as well. Investigating people asking what they have done well will get honest answers, investigating the positive will create a better more supportive atmosphere in the workplace. Accidents happen when resources are insufficient to meet demand and a safe workplace is the presence of



positives not merely the absence of negatives. Asking questions like “what do you need to improve safety?” or “what safety issues do you struggle with?” will get the useful answers that can be acted on. People are the solution, they are not the problem. Safety should not be seen as a bureaucratic activity but an ethical responsibility.



Andrew Collings, Head of Sales, Neyber spoke about severe stress related illness which can arise from personal/family finances and a good employer will offer support or guidance, it is not just about pay but understanding the DNA of financial wellbeing and its impact on the workforce. He quoted Dr Stephen Covry [4] and family wellbeing is important to effectiveness in the workplace, it makes simple business to assist where needed, that doesn't mean sorting out an employee's financial issues but point them towards guidance – and importantly give them the time – to see those who can like The Money Advice Service [5]. It would be invaluable and long remembered if you help, time during the working day to go and see someone; or arrange for the use of a private room and give the time to make a confidential call and so on.

Lisa McGrevy, HSEQ Manager from Wincanton talked about managers not needing to know legislation but they do need to know, what they need to know – that is different. Do not issue targets to managers for accidents, even the concept is bizarre. You don't want any accidents but if there is one you must investigate it thoroughly, and jointly. STAR = Stop, Think, Assess, React.

A friend of the Branch, Steve Exall who the Health and Wellbeing Lead with BT, led a session on the importance of a supportive return to work strategy before joining in the panel Q and A on safeguarding health, safety and wellbeing now and into the future, this was introduced by Crispin Kenyon from the Health and Safety Lawyer's Association.



The final presentation was from Emma Mamo, the Head of Workplace Wellbeing at MIND [6], noting that the stigma must end on discussing mental health. Campaigns such as “Times Change” and “Heads Together” are aimed at raising awareness and mainstreaming issues. In any company it needs the senior management team on board. For example, you should have a policy of no emails by any level of staff between 6:00pm and 6:00am for example; none in and none out, absolutely no exceptions. You are not lessening tomorrow's work but you are pressurising staff in to working when should be resting to make them fit for work.

**We're Mind, the mental health charity**



There were quite a few things to take away from the event especially the interesting concept of investigating the good or the well done issues and not those that have gone wrong resulting in incidents.

The principle of no emails between 6 and 6 is one the Branch or CWU could enforce, and I was aware at the time of writing up the report I was doing exactly that, working on a Saturday afternoon when should be off.

Getting a free invite was welcome even if not sure how, though it was a lengthy trip as started early morning.

### References:

- [1] Business in the Community - [www.bitc.org.uk/](http://www.bitc.org.uk/).
- [2] Public Health England. (13 Sept. 2016). *Health and Work - spotlight on mental health*. Available: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/552695/Health\\_and\\_work\\_infographics.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/552695/Health_and_work_infographics.pdf). Last accessed 5 May 2017.
- [3] [www.hsl.gov.uk/](http://www.hsl.gov.uk/).
- [4] Dr Stephen R. Covey. (May 8th, 2009). *'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families'*. Available: [www.stephencovey.com/blog/?tag=the-7-habits-of-highly-effective-families](http://www.stephencovey.com/blog/?tag=the-7-habits-of-highly-effective-families). Last accessed 6 May 2017.
- [5] [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en).
- [6] [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk).

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