

# A piece of my mind

**May is the month where mental health awareness is put front and centre. We've all experienced low times, worries about money or family, and of course suffered a personal loss. There are countless situations most of which have no direct correlation to the work we're paid to do, but they can impact it drastically**

The cost of poor mental health to UKplc is quite shocking. 300,000 employees leave the workforce each year costing £33-42bn a year. This figure is made up from:

Absenteeism + presentisms + staff turnover = 'total cost'

There are some core standards we would encourage all employers to commit to:

- Produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan. The plan must be both appropriate and workable. Providing a phone number that employees can use to speak to an advisor isn't enough.

- Develop mental health awareness among employees by making information, tools and support accessible. That's not to say your workforce should be trained as counsellors, simply that they can recognise the symptoms and subtle behavioural changes.

- Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available at all stages of employment.

- Provide employees with good working conditions and work-life balance.

- Promote effective people management through support training for line managers.

- Routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing using available data e.g. return to work interviews, performance reviews, and one-to-one informal chats.

Mental Health Awareness Week is on between 13th and 19th of May. We would encourage employers to actively take part in this week. There is a range of material available from video clips, posters and prompt material available online. The Mental Health Organisation website is particularly focusing on body image but employers should explore what subjects best suit their own workforce.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week>

If you have examples that you'd like to share showing how positive interventions have both improved the mental health of your workforce and in turn helped your business we at GGF would be interested to hear it. Please send your examples to [ppinnington@ggf.org.uk](mailto:ppinnington@ggf.org.uk). Often employers don't immediately recognise the advantages these little changes make. ☐



Phil Pinnington

“Encourage  
open  
conversations”