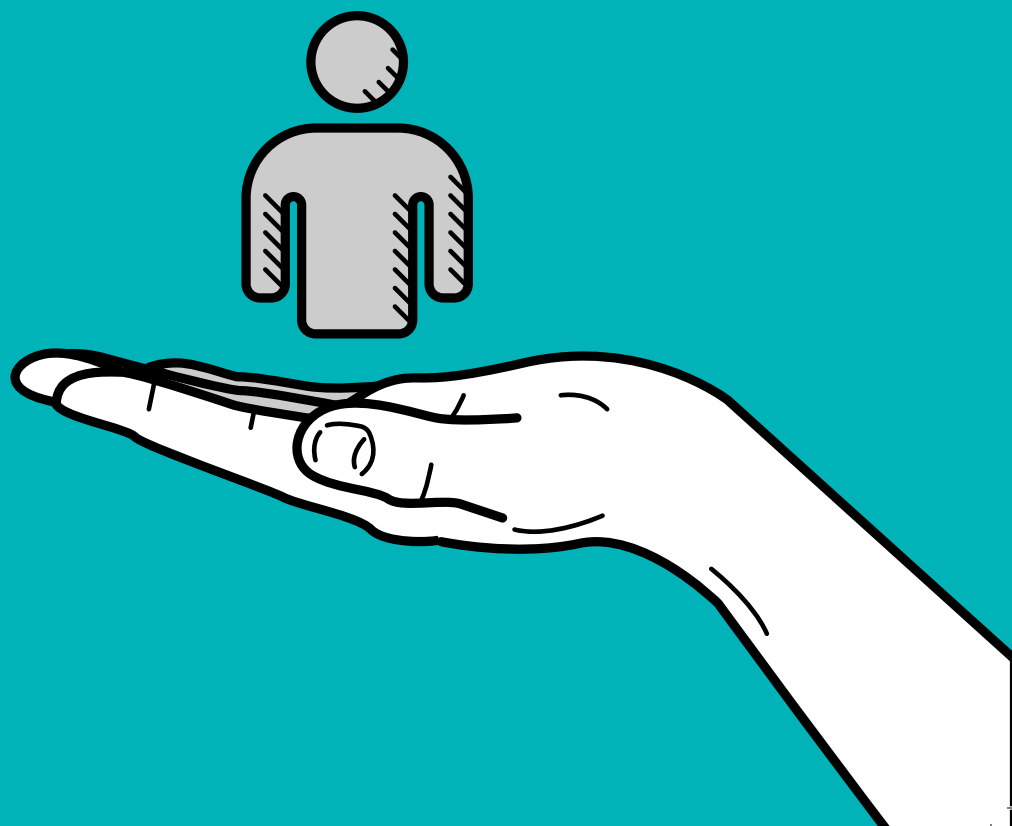# Leading the way for mental health inclusion in the workplace

See Me's Workplace Equality Project report
April 2019

See Me
End mental health discrimination

The companies involved in the See Me Workplace Equality Project

ScotRail is the national train operating company of Scotland and has 5,000 employees. The company was signed up to improvement programmes Investors in People[1] and the Healthy Working Lives Award[2] when they agreed to join the See Me pilot, and had already provided mental health training through Headtorch[3] programmes.

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Burness Paull LLP is a leading Scottish commercial firm of solicitors with offices in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, acting for private and public sector clients. It was formed in December 2012 through a merger between the firms of Burness, headquartered in Edinburgh and with a second office in Glasgow, and Paull & Williamsons, based in Aberdeen. The company has 440 employees and the combined turnover of the two firms is more than £53 million, making it one of the largest firms in Scotland.

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Apex Hotels Ltd is an operator of three star and four star hotels, owned by former accountant Norman Springford and his family. Based in Edinburgh, the company operates ten hotels in the UK and has approximately 600 employees based in Scotland. The company has provided Mental Health First Aid training prior to the pilot

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Babcock based in Hamilton is part of Babcock International, a multinational corporation headquartered in the UK that specialises in managing complex assets and infrastructure. Although the company has civil contracts, its main business is with public bodies, particularly the Ministry of Defence and Network Rail. The company was already taking the Healthy Working Lives Award when they agreed to join the See Me pilot and had already provided mental health awareness and Mental Health First Aid training.

Contents

Preface

In 2018 See Me was awarded funding from Scottish Government's Workplace Equality Fund (managed by Impact Funding Partners) to trial a tailored consultancy approach for private sector employers to developing good practice on mental health equality in the workplace. Our objective was to clarify how success could be realised in relation to disability discrimination law by growing knowledge, skills, policies and practice around mental health. The approach we took was based on organisational needs and informed by evidence and experiences from our *See Me in Work* programme.

In developing the proposal for this project inspiration was taken from the significant progress other equality issues have made in the workplace, perhaps most significantly LGBT. Unlike many other subjects, mental health inclusion is often viewed through a lens of employee wellbeing interventions rather than the structural and cultural inequalities which mean people with mental health problems have less access to good employment than the general population. In this regard this is a critical part of a fair work agenda and will hopefully add learning and capacity for future progress.

For See Me this work has proven invaluable and has taught us a great deal about how we can work with other employers in a similar fashion to embed greater mental health inclusion. Importantly it has also met a critical objective for us in adding to our sum of knowledge. We are now in a better position to recommend good practice approaches as we shall go on to do.

Most importantly for the employers and thousands of employees I hope this has set a course which will achieve workplaces free from mental health stigma and discrimination. We are indebted to them for their commitment to this agenda and look forward to many more being inspired by their efforts.

Calum Irving
See Me Director

About this report

This reflective report is aimed at people who have a role in (or can influence) the development and implementation of workplace's policies, practices and culture regarding mental health. The report highlights the successes, challenges and learning from the See Me pilot with four large private sector employers: ScotRail, Burness Paull LLP, Apex Hotels Ltd and Babcock.
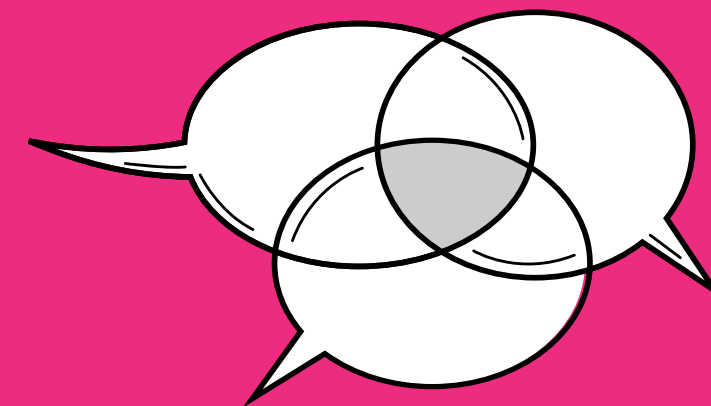
It sets out guidance for employers wanting to take steps to become more mental health inclusive, as well as a number of key recommendations for employers, funders and support organisations in Scotland to lead the way on mental health inclusion in the workplace.

Introduction

Two thirds of us will experience mental health problems in our lifetime and whilst good work can be a protective factor work can also be a significant source of distress – according to recent evidence the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) estimate that 300,000 people lose their job each year due to a long-term MH problem[4]. The workplace is one of the main areas in Scotland where people experiencing mental health problems are unable to live fulfilled lives. People spend a huge amount of time in work and it's here that stigma and discrimination is brought into sharp focus because of organisational cultures, managerial structures and processes, employee attitudes and behaviours and equalities legislation. While many companies desire change they struggle with the scale and complexity of the issue.

From See Me's experience companies need informed and tailored advice about what aspect of stigma and discrimination to focus on; when in the employment lifecycle to intervene; what shape the activities should take, and how the improvements can be evaluated. The *See Me in Work* (SMiW)[5] programme has identified that there are major gaps in good practice on mental health in the workplace, and a lack of confidence and knowledge amongst employers to make changes.

300,000
DWP estimate that 300,000 people lose their job each year due to a long-term mental health problem.

2/3 of us will experience mental health problems in our lifetime

The evaluation of year one of the programme found early signs of culture change but a significant need for practice development related to the **key building blocks** listed in the bullet points below. See Me's work has identified the need to work with employers to create the conditions for those experiencing mental health problems to feel included in the workplace through improvements in:

1. Commitment of senior leaders and managers

2. Safe, effective and pertinent disclosure

3. Confident and informed line management

4. Understanding and adopting reasonable adjustments

5. Effective approaches to training and development

6. Mental health awareness

7. Creating a stigma free culture and ethos.

The Disability Action plan refers to the Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy, which cites specifically employment as a priority area for development:

• **Action 36:** Work with employers on how they can act to protect and improve mental health, and support employees experiencing poor mental health.

• **Action 37:** Explore with others innovative ways of connecting mental health, disability, and employment support in Scotland.
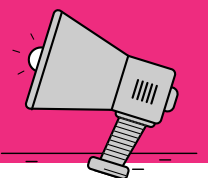
Through transforming policy and practice on mental health in the workplace this project will contribute significantly to both these actions. The Thriving at Work report on the Stevenson / Farmer review of mental health and employers commissioned by the UK Government in 2017 established the human and economic costs of poor mental health at work and proposed mental health 'core' and 'enhanced' standards, which underpin the SMiW programme and informed the approach used in the pilot.

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[4] *"Thriving at Work" report on the Stevenson / Farmer review of mental health and employers (UK Government, 2017): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thriving-at-work-a-review-of-mental-health-and-employers*

[5] *https://www.seemescotland.org/workplace/see-me-in-work/*

[6] *https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-disabled-people-employment-action-plan/*

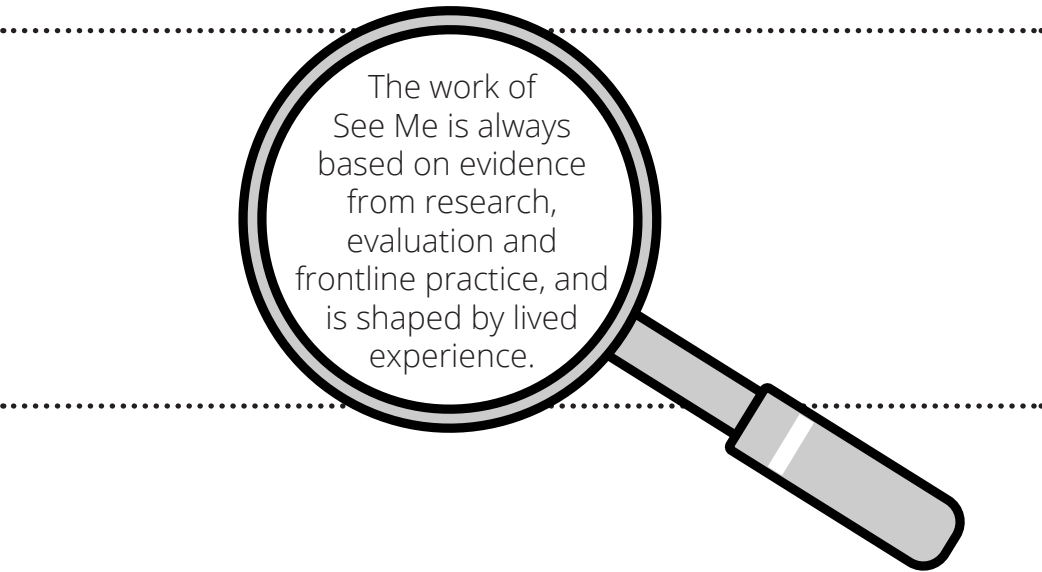[7] *https://www.gov.scot/publications/mental-health-strategy-2017-2027/*

The approach

The See Me pilot took place between May 2018 and March 2019 and was led by the Workplace Equality Consultant - managed by the Health, Social Care and Workplace Manager and supported by the Workplace Officer. Through the pilot we supported large private sector employers ScotRail, Burness Paull LLP, Apex Hotels Ltd and Babcock to embed a more inclusive, stigma free working environment focused on mental health.

The work of See Me is always based on evidence from research, evaluation and frontline practice, and is shaped by lived experience. This pilot sought to compliment these elements with strong peer support, clear communications and a robust theory of change (see page 9).

The pilot was evaluated by the Mental Health Foundation (MHF) with support from the University of Strathclyde, who provided invaluable advice on emerging evidence and learning to ensure that the approach and the improvement work were informed by sound research.

Regular learning exchanges with internal colleagues and key stakeholders, such as the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), enabled us to feed learning of 'what works' into the wider See Me programme, as well as other employment related policies and practice initiatives. Key inputs from volunteers during project development, content creation, campaign events and pilot analysis ensured their lived experience of mental health problems shaped the language and focus around stigma and discrimination.

The work of See Me is always based on evidence from research, evaluation and frontline practice, and is shaped by lived experience.

See Me Workplace Equality Project pilot theory of change

Situation / Need	Resources	Participants	Activities	Outputs	Short term outcomes	Pilot company outcomes	Fund outcomes
Mental health stigma and discrimination exists in workplaces	Workplace Equality Consultant See Me In Work resources See Me staff and volunteers University of Strathclyde SAMH, MHF and EHRC Impact Funding Partners	Employees (leadership, managers, frontline and unions) of four large private sector employers in Scotland – ScotRail, Burness Paull LLP, Apex Hotels Ltd and Babcock	Desk research Relationship management Needs assessment and data analysis Improvement planning Peer support Communications and media Time To Talk Day Pilot events Evaluation and reporting	Needs assessment reports Company improvement plans Company resources See Me Let's Chat tool Pilot and event videos Communication messages Funder and public reports	Companies increase trust in See Me See Me volunteers feel involved Company employees are more aware of mental health See Me and companies better understand workplace mental health stigma and discrimination Companies better able to implement improvements	Improved disclosure environment for ScotRail employees Apex employees have greater awareness of mental health support Babcock employees are better informed about mental health in the workplace Improved communication environment for Burness Paull LLP employees	Employment opportunities and progressions in the workplace are improved for participant groups and consideration is given to how this can be embedded into the workplace to ensure lasting change Knowledge, skills, policies and practices are improved in order to address employment inequalities, discrimination and barriers/challenges within the workplace A more inclusive working environment is created and continued through employees and employers working in partnership

Assumptions

- Change takes time and requires work from improvement, social contact and leadership communication angles.
- Involving lived experience in the design, development and delivery of mental health stigma and discrimination work improves activities and outcomes.
- Evidence informed work increases the efficiency of interventions in achieving change that can be evidenced through self and external evaluation using soft and hard outcomes.
- Line management, leadership role models and internal communication are critical to the implementation of a mental health stigma and discrimination improvement plan.
- Different diagnoses cause different issues and will be experienced differently by individuals. Generally the bar for reasonable adjustments is set too low by companies and isn't person-centred.
- A tailored consultancy approach allows for deeper engagement with the specific process blockages preventing progress being made towards ending mental health stigma and discrimination.

External Factors

- Executive change, structural upheaval and or industrial action in pilot companies.
- Shifting political environments, support and concern.
- Media attitudes and message visibility.
- Funding assurance and competing priorities.

The See Me Workplace Equality Project

The See Me pilot involved four stages: 1) Needs assessment; 2) Development of improvement plan; 3) Implementation of improvement plan, and 4) Evaluation and review of impact. The seven building blocks (or conditions for mental health inclusive workplaces) were used as criteria for the needs assessment and subsequent improvements. Employers aimed to make improvements in two to three areas. The timeline for the pilot can be found in page 16.

The needs assessment

The needs assessment phase started in August 2018 when the Consultant was in post, and it was completed by November 2018. The companies:

1. Completed an organisational checklist and profile, which provided See Me with the make-up of the organisations; their motivations for taking part in the pilot, and improvement areas the companies wished to focus.

2. Ran a baseline survey, known as the SMiW Mental Health Check, to get employees' attitudes and perceptions in relation to mental health stigma and discrimination in the workplace. The survey covered all stages of employment (recruitment, in work, returning to work) as well as training, organisational culture, and lived experience of mental health problems. The survey used a 5-point scale: 5 – strongly agree, 4 – slightly agree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 2 – slightly disagree, 1 – strongly disagree).

3. Supported the Consultant to engage with employees through 1-1 and group interviews, engagement workshops and 'lunch and learn' sessions.

4. Received and discussed a findings report, which was used to inform and agree the next stage of the pilot.

Below is a summary grid of the needs assessment activities and key issues identified:

Companies	Focus areas	Baseline	Issues identified
ScotRail	Mental health awareness, confident and informed management, safe and effective disclosure and stigma free culture	Survey – 1,022 / 5,000 Interviews – 35	Disclosure environment, communication of support and managerial / HR processes
Apex Hotels Ltd	Commitment of senior leaders and managers, confident and informed management, safe and effective disclosure, and stigma free culture	Survey – 150 / 600 Interviews – 65	Communication of support and some managerial behaviours
Burness Paull LLP	Mental health awareness, confident and informed management, and effective approaches to training	Survey – 296 / 440 Interviews – 15	Workload management and barriers to open conversations created through working culture
Babcock	Commitment of senior leaders and managers, confident and informed line management, and effective approaches to training	Survey – 248 / 1,400 2 workshops – 30	Hidden issue, challenging disclosure environment and keeping this as a priority for leadership

Overall the companies were surprised at how positive the survey results were. Areas of strength were supportive colleagues, raising awareness of mental health and support for employees (assistance programmes for example) while training, workload pressures, policies and line management were reported as improvement areas.

The 1-1 and group interviews produced rich and compelling stories that supported and challenged the findings of the survey, demonstrating the nuance and complexity of mental health stigma and discrimination in the workplace:

ScotRail

Good story

"When I phoned my manager he was empathetic, patient, reassured me that I wasn't going to get sacked and told me to take as much time as you need to get yourself sorted. The way ScotRail has stood by me over the last couple of months has rekindled my pride in working for the company."

Area to be addressed

"The other thing about this is the bothy culture… if you come back too soon then you are making the others look bad… which is just ridiculous. Also we get really childish people writing people's names and phone numbers up on the posters which is pretty shocking and it's bullying actually."

Nuance, complexity and intricacy

"People are worried that if they declare an issue it will affect promotion. Staff are more comfortable saying they have an alcohol problem or a gambling addiction than coming forward with a mental health issue."

Burness Paull LLP

Good story

"We have a big open HR team that are good at listening. Similarly we have good support including linking with our employee assistance provider with 10 free counselling sessions. A challenge for us is there is probably a team to team degree of variability about what good is."

Area to be addressed

"I came back from having some time off with anxiety. My manager at the time didn't seem to understand that I needed some help to come back gently… it was come back straight to work and go. I didn't even get a return to work meeting… I would have expected my workload and conditions to be looked at. I wish I could have had a sit down with my manager at the time and talked about doing different roles just for a while."

Nuance, complexity and intricacy

"We might all be working on a deal till 11pm at night but we are all miserable together… and it works! In that context you can see why someone might not want to put their hand up and say they are struggling because then you aren't part of the team all struggling and working and achieving together."

Apex Hotels Ltd

Good story

"My manager at 12 week review physically lifted the paperwork out of the way and asked me about whether or not I was happy, keeping to my family schedule and what my feelings were. We have open conversations about everything. If you find someone approachable its good and you never hear them talking about other people… keeps everything very confidential."

Area to be addressed

"I think you can't speak here because if you tell them something… the whole hotel knows. "If it did become public knowledge you would be worried about people talking about you, changing perceptions about you that kind of thing. It depends on the people you speak too… if they aren't professional then your privacy is gone."

Nuance, complexity and intricacy

"Sometimes departments do things really differently and that's good in a way but they don't always share with each other and allow each other to improve by learning from each other."

Babcock

Good story

"Babcock should be applauded for taking positive action towards addressing mental health issues."

Area to be addressed

"I'm almost certain if somebody had substantial time off for a mental health issue they wouldn't progress here, and many people would think less of them and their capabilities."

Nuance, complexity and intricacy

"I cannot stress enough how important it is to have a mature client with a similar level of understanding of mental health as ourselves, rather than the one we have today."

Improvement planning and delivery

Meetings were held between the Consultant and the companies to discuss potential improvements once the needs assessment process was completed and the report was shared. The final decision on the timing and priority of improvements was influenced by the improvement science and adaptive release approaches facilitated by the Consultant. Improvement plans were then drawn up with each company with descriptions, timelines, responsibility, evaluation, communication and future planning all built in. Below is a summary of the progress of the four companies:

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ScotRail

Improvements successfully delivered included:

- ✔ The creation of a manager's toolkit;
- ✔ Better communication of the Employee Assistance Programme;
- ✔ Creation of a Z-Card of support resources;
- ✔ Commissioning further training on mental health, and
- ✔ Opportunities for staff to hold open conversations about mental health.

"Time to Talk Day" at Glasgow Central Station

Burness Paull LLP

Improvements successfully delivered included:

- ✔ Creation of a mental health and wellbeing policy;
- ✔ Mental health training;
- ✔ Enhanced return to work practices;
- ✔ Creation of a health and wellbeing page on the company's intranet;
- ✔ Improved reporting of mental health absence, and
- ✔ Opportunities for staff to hold open conversations about mental health.

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Apex Hotels Ltd

Improvements successfully delivered included:

- ✔ Creation of a wellbeing policy;
- ✔ Added 'support' section to the Apex app;
- ✔ Initiation of an HR drop-in cycle around all premises;
- ✔ Improved communication of support options;
- ✔ Further Mental Health First Aid training with clearer communications and role descriptions;
- ✔ Recruitment of Apex wellbeing champions, and
- ✔ Opportunities for staff to hold open conversations about mental health.

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Babcock

Improvements successfully delivered included:

- ✔ Commissioning further mental health training with clearer communications and role descriptions;
- ✔ Reviewing in-work policies;
- ✔ Strengthening return-to-work procedures, and
- ✔ Opportunities for staff to hold open conversations about mental health.

See Me Workplace Equality Project pilot timeline

Timeline months: Aug 18 · Sep 18 · Oct 18 · Nov 18 · Dec 18 · Jan 19 · Feb 19 · Mar 19 · Apr 19 · Future

- **Aug 18:** Workplace Equality Consultant hired and initial meetings with pilot companies take place. One of the selected employers pulls out of the pilot citing work pressures and timing difficulties. Burness Paull LLP joins the pilot.

- **Sep 18:** Needs assessment – Consultant meets with Mental Health Foundation (MHF), Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), University of Strathclyde and See Me volunteers.

- **Oct 18:** Needs assessment activities continue with surveys, interviews with company staff, review of the baseline survey by Babcock and 3 "lunch and learn" style events with Burness Paull LLP. Media communication released to coincide with Mental Health Day.

- **Nov 18:** Needs assessment with companies begins with organisational profiles and baseline surveys. Consultant meets with companies to review findings, and improvement plans produced. Peer support session hosted. Interim report written and discussed at meeting with Impact Funding Partners.

- **Dec 18:** Needs assessment activities completed; meetings held with companies to review workplace conference successfully delivered. Second engagement workshop with Babcock hosted. Consultant planning for pilot outputs, events and reports.

- **Jan 19:** Engagement workshop with Babcock delivered. Meeting held with Apex Hotels Ltd leadership team. Planning for engagement events to support "Time To Talk Day" 2019. Company improvements being developed and delivered.

- **Jan 19:** Improvement phase of the pilot and planning for "Time To Talk Day" ongoing. Input at See Me workplace conference successfully delivered. Second engagement workshop with Babcock hosted. Consultant planning for pilot outputs, events and reports.

- **Feb 19:** All four companies deliver "Time To Talk Day" events. Workplace planning and tool development session with See Me volunteers facilitated. Pilot evaluation by MHF begins. Two peer support sessions hosted and meeting with University of Strathclyde.

- **Mar 19:** Improvement phase of the pilot finished; "Leading the Way" event delivered; pilot video created; "Let's Chat" tool designed; workshop at funder learning event facilitated. Resources created by the companies being shared.

- **Apr 19:** "Leading the Way" event video created, pilot evaluation by MHF completed, funder and public reports written and review meetings held with MHF, University of Strathclyde, EHRC and the four companies.

- **Future:** Work continues with the four companies. Learning and consultancy approach to be further tested with new employers. New See Me workplace resources to be produced. Evaluate "Let's Chat" tool. Dissemination and communication strategy continues.

Peer support

Representatives from the pilot companies took part in three peer support sessions: two alongside organisations involved in the SMiW programme and one just for the four companies involved in the pilot. The peer learning element was carefully embedded into the pilot to:

✔ Introduce the pilot organisations to ongoing successful improvements around mental health stigma and discrimination;

✔ Increase the motivation levels of the employers engaged in SMiW who were witnessing the companies making progress in a short timescale (albeit with focused, tailored consultancy);

✔ Maximise the learning outcomes for the pilot company leads, and

✔ Facilitate sharing of practical tools and resources between SMiW organisations and the pilot companies creating lasting collaborations and reducing duplication of effort.


"The session was very interactive which encouraged us to share good practice. Great examples from private and public sectors to see what they've been doing. Seeing the Let's Chat tool as well was excellent and it was nice being able to share ideas on what can be included."

Involving lived experience

See Me volunteers were invited to share from the outset their perspective on the aims of the pilot and advice about what organisational improvements would make a difference to people with mental health problems. These discussions were invaluable, enabling the Consultant to introduce the voice of lived experience into the live processes of the pilot and to model the types of behaviours and language that See Me and the companies were trying to encourage.
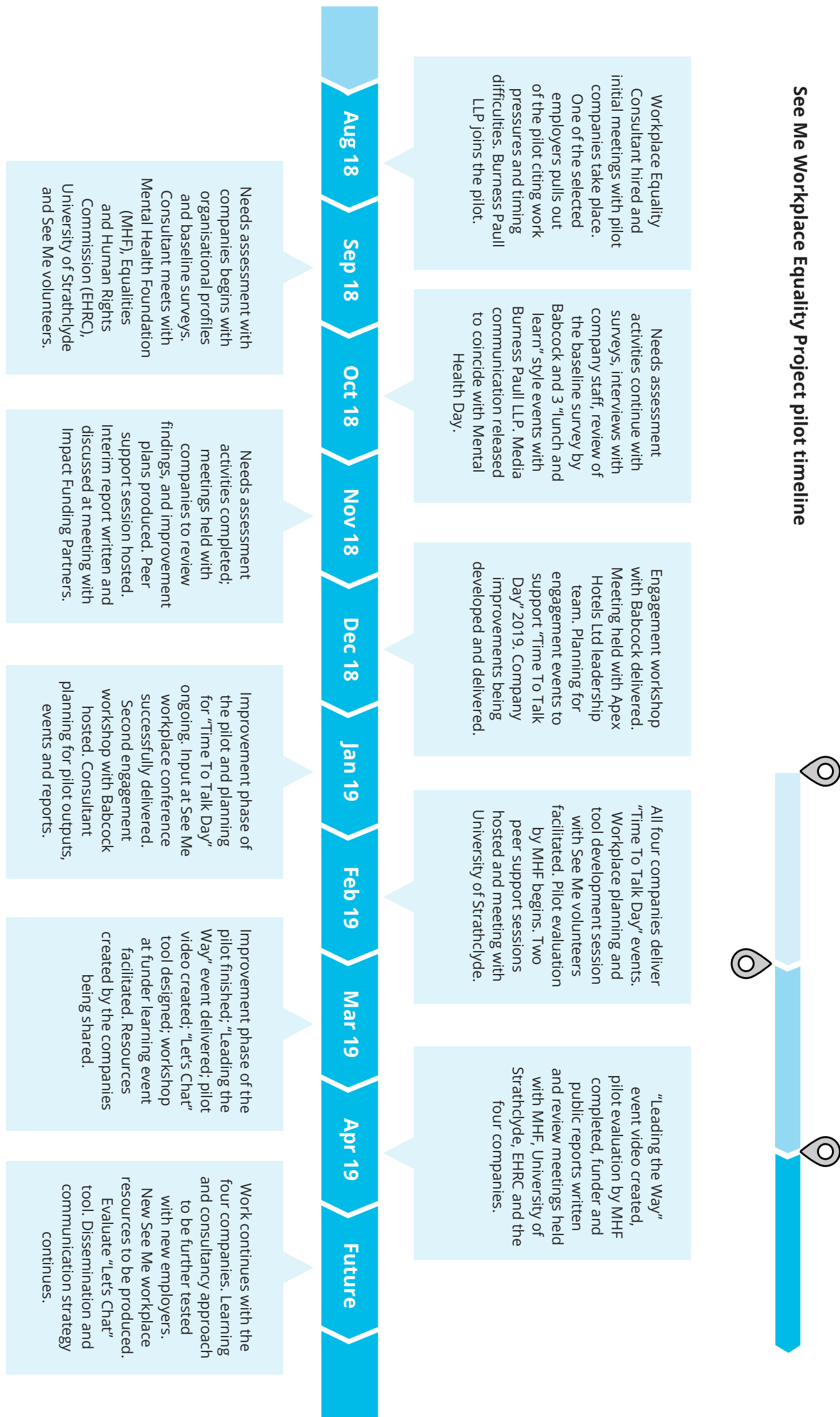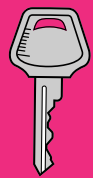
Some key recommendations from the volunteers included:

✔ A focus on structured, in-built stigma to plant the seed for greater change later

✔ Preventing policies and procedures being used "against" people

✔ Being mindful that the style and tone of how people are treated are as important as the processes people go through.

The reality of what reasonable adjustments can look like in practice was another point of learning. One of the volunteers spoke about feelings of anxiety when arriving on time to work but later than everyone else and having to take a hot desk over the other side of the very large office floor away from the rest of the team. When this happens the manager now discreetly swaps seats with the employee to prevent those feelings building up.

Having these meetings with the volunteers also gave an early glimpse into the difficulties around disclosure and the layers of mental health stigma and discrimination.
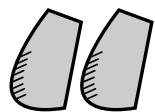
"Even when good things are happening it can be hard because I did a speech at an event and I opened up about my experience and my boss was just overwhelmed saying that we never knew how hard you struggle and you must be so proud – and I was initially so pleased with how it went and the reaction. Then I thought, "Oh... I've let them in... they are going to look at me and talk to me and treat me a different way...as if I am the mental health issue and not me" but actually my colleagues and my work has been really great for support."
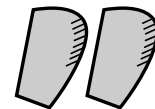
"Time to Talk Day"[8] is a UK-wide campaign led by Time to Change[9], our counterpart in England, aimed at encouraging open and honest conversations about mental health. It takes place every year on the first Thursday of February. All four companies delivered activities at their workplaces to link in with this day. On "Time to Talk Day" See Me volunteers:

✔ Contributed to the live FEELS FM[10] (See Me's latest children and young people's campaign) event at Glasgow Central Station organised by ScotRail and they had conversations with passengers and employees in trains on several routes across Scotland.

✔ Shared their lived experience of mental health problems at events at the three Burness Paull LLP offices in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. The Consultant attended the event at the Edinburgh office and witnessed the surprise and impact of the employees at hearing how the volunteer had managed to build a highly successful professional career while also living with complex mental ill-health.

✔ Had been scheduled to have an input at the events hosted by Babcock and Apex Hotels Ltd but were unable to attend due to illness and personal circumstance so Time to Change and See Me videos were used to ensure the voice of lived experience made it into the room.

See Me volunteers were key players in developing some of the outputs from the pilot. For instance, See Me volunteers participated in a full day workshop designed to produce content and thinking for an employee/manager conversational tool; inform the production of a situation tree, a solution tree and a theory of change for mental health inclusive workplaces (see pages 22 and 23), and draw from their lived experience to conversational examples / top tips to include in the tool.

Evaluation from the session highlighted the importance of involving lived experience in the development of tools and resources aimed at creating mental health workplaces. In particular See Me volunteers appreciated:
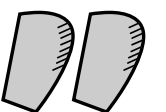
✔ New ways of working and engaging with excellent facilitation

✔ Feeling like they contributed to something meaningful

✔ Great collaborative working opportunity with people who think in very different ways

✔ Working with other volunteers to create resources and share ideas

✔ Fun people and fun activities – achieving a purpose with pleasure!

✔ Fantastic, thought provoking and enjoyable event

✔ Taking part in well-structured, engaging and enjoyable training.

"Glad I could make an input and hope it helps change workplace culture."

"Let's Chat discussion tool will allow me to design a managers session. Loved the situation tree... will use this idea in mental health sessions."

"Today was lovely and very insightful. Not only did I feel heard and appreciated I was able to learn techniques that I will be able to apply in my daily life. The last two exercises were particularly helpful and I was able to meet more lovely See Me volunteers. I hope the toolkit will be successful as I genuinely believe it will really help people!"

[8] https://www.seemescotland.org/movement-for-change/campaigns/time-to-talk/time-to-talk-day-2019/
[9] https://www.time-to-change.org.uk
[10] https://www.seemescotland.org/young-people/resources/campaigns/

Pilot outputs

Key outputs from the pilot are:

✔ A situation tree and a solution tree for mental health stigma and discrimination in the workplace (see pages 22 and 23)

✔ A theory of change for mental health inclusive workplaces (see page 9)

✔ A video of the Workplace Equality Project

✔ A video of the closing event for the pilot: Leading the way for mental health inclusion in the workplace

✔ The Let's Chat tool for managers and employees to have open conversations about mental health in the workplace

✔ Various resources developed by the pilot organisations

✔ Case studies

✔ This reflective report.

A new section[11] has been added to the See Me website to ensure resources are easily accessed by anyone with an interest in mental health inclusion in the workplace. The new section will contribute to ensuring the See Me website becomes a hub of evidence, tools, videos and other resources focused on ending mental health stigma and discrimination for organisations of any size and sector to access.
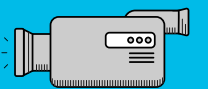
Videos

See Me commissioned Thirteen Squared to produce a film that concisely and effectively showcased the achievements of the four large private sector companies involved in the pilot and captured the approach taken by See Me. The film shows the Consultant explaining the rationale and activities of the pilot while the lead employees from the four companies highlight the motivations for signing up to the pilot, the improvements and outcomes achieved and planned future work.

Apex Hotels Ltd employees discussing mental health in the workplace – taken from the pilot video

The core message of the film is that, *"change is possible – cultural, structural and personal change can be achieved even with limited time and budget and in spite of the scale and complexity of mental health stigma and discrimination. Companies large or small are capable of making a positive contribution by improving training and communication, strengthening policies and procedures and most importantly by opening up conversations in your workplace... you can end mental health stigma and discrimination."* This message, the design of the film and the people involved are all purposefully targeted towards other private sector businesses and large organisations.

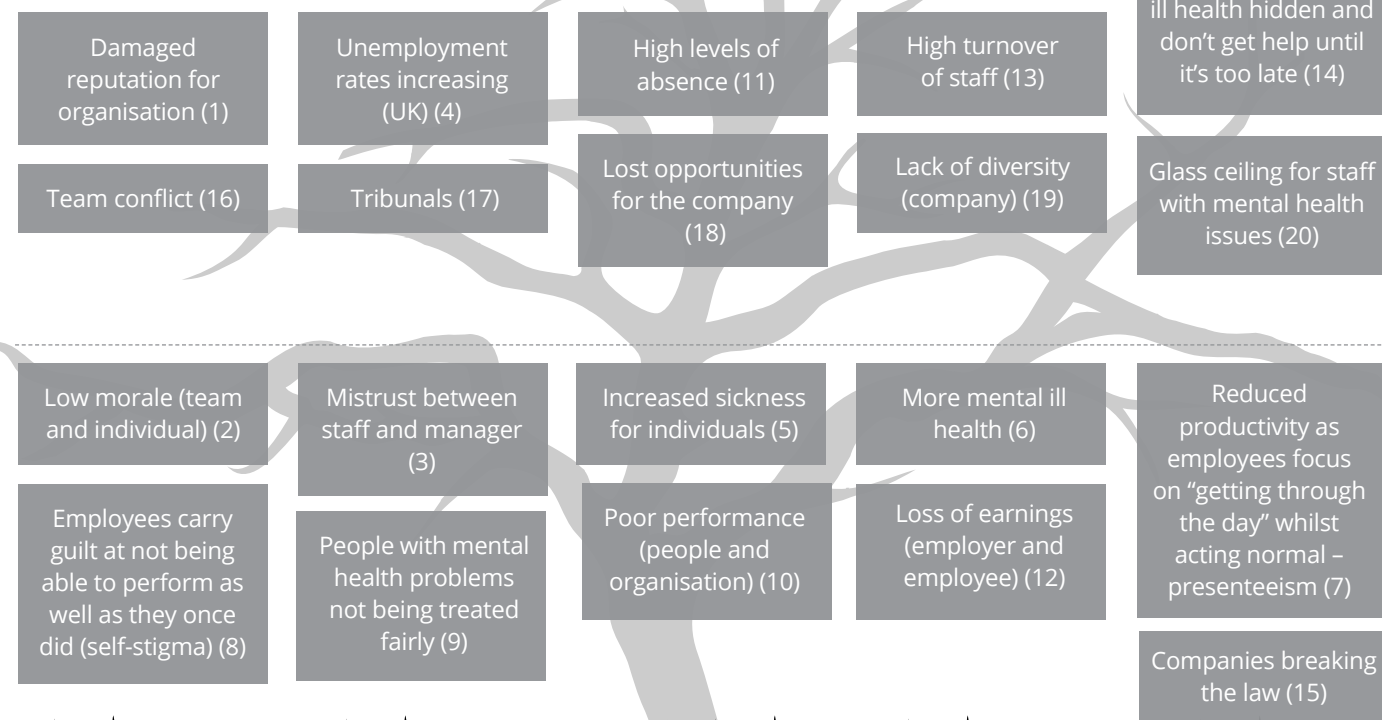**Attendees at "Leading the Way" (project event)**

Thirteen Squared also produced a video of the closing event for the pilot, "Leading the way for mental health inclusion in the workplace", which was hosted by See Me and delivered by the Consultant, the pilot organisations and their employees, and See Me volunteers. This event attracted 87 people from 65 companies to spend a day discussing the successes, challenges and learning from See Me and the four companies involved in the pilot. The highlight of the day was the lived experience 'Fireside Chat' involving a See Me volunteer and four employees from ScotRail holding a discussion about mental health in the workplace. The event evaluation reported that more than half of attendees saw this session as the best part of the day – *"Very brave of each of the speakers to talk through their experiences. Discussions like this should be happening every day in every workplace."* This powerful and innovative activity proceeded without agenda and free from interference by the audience. This was the conversation that most of us never get to hear... lived experience talking to lived experience. The session finished with a performance of a poem written by one the ScotRail employees about his experiences and feelings.

Workplace mental health situation tree

Situation tree

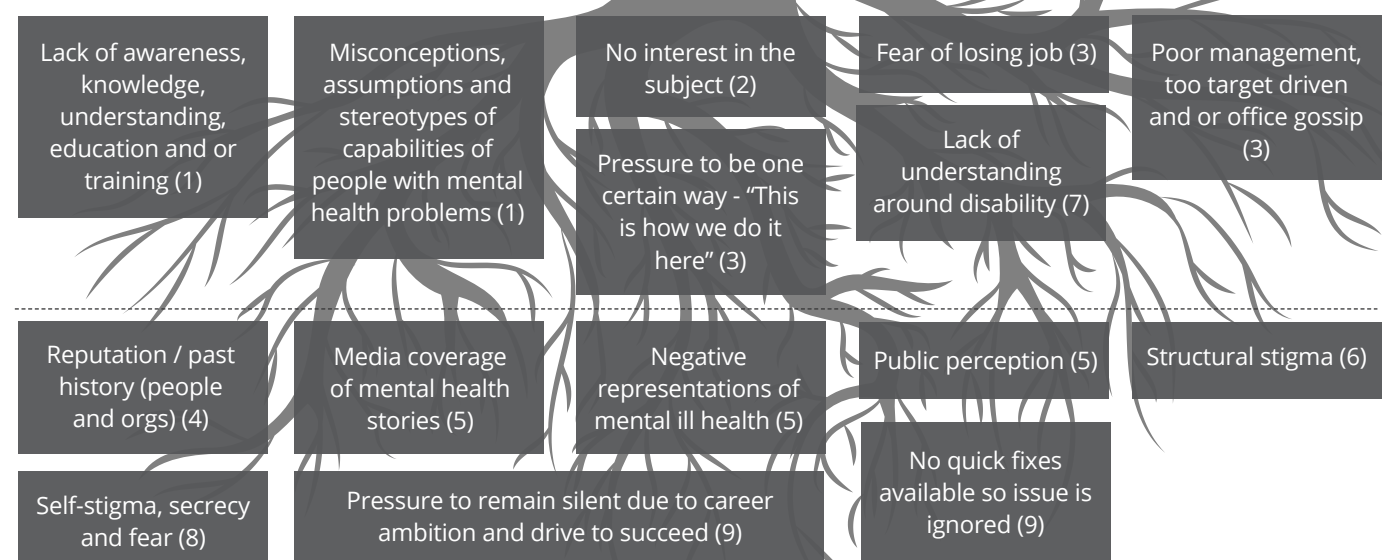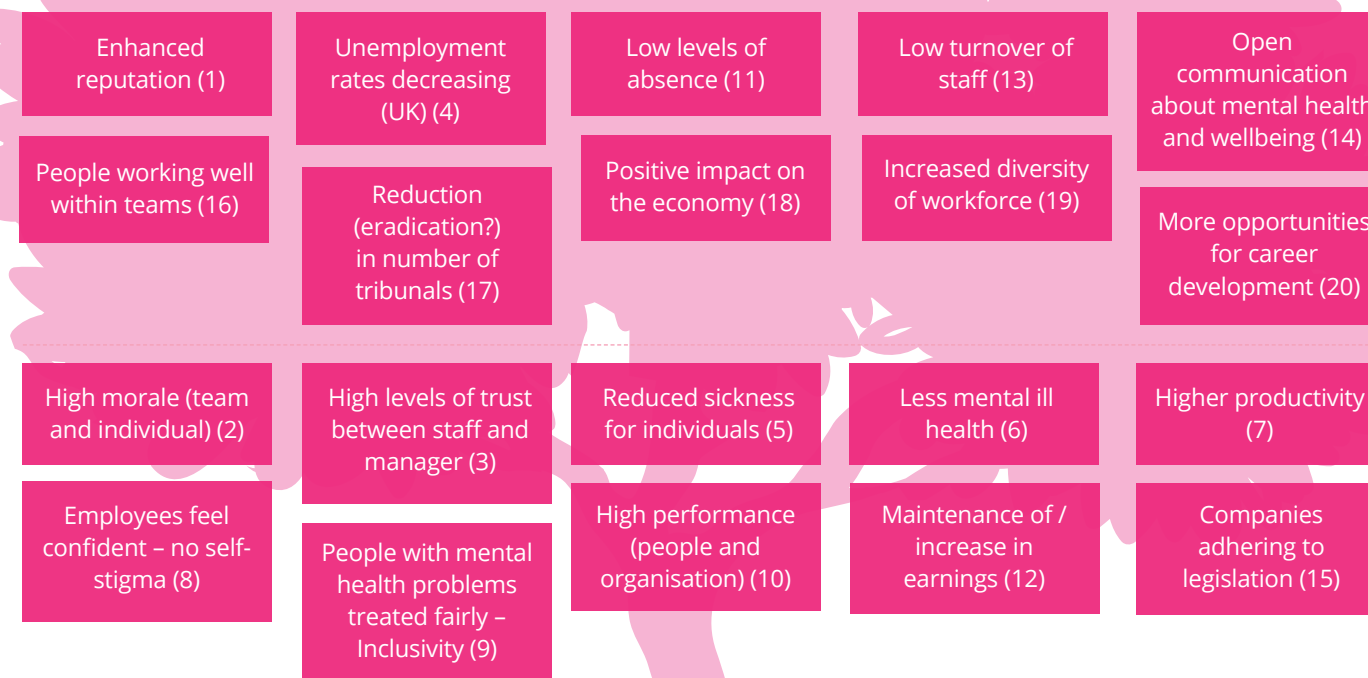### Consequences

				People keep mental ill health hidden and don't get help until it's too late (14)
Damaged reputation for organisation (1)	Unemployment rates increasing (UK) (4)	High levels of absence (11)	High turnover of staff (13)	
Team conflict (16)	Tribunals (17)	Lost opportunities for the company (18)	Lack of diversity (company) (19)	Glass ceiling for staff with mental health issues (20)

Low morale (team and individual) (2)	Mistrust between staff and manager (3)	Increased sickness for individuals (5)	More mental ill health (6)	Reduced productivity as employees focus on "getting through the day" whilst acting normal – presenteeism (7)
Employees carry guilt at not being able to perform as well as they once did (self-stigma) (8)	People with mental health problems not being treated fairly (9)	Poor performance (people and organisation) (10)	Loss of earnings (employer and employee) (12)	
				Companies breaking the law (15)

Problem

Mental health stigma and discrimination exists in workplaces

Causes

Lack of awareness, knowledge, understanding, education and or training (1)	Misconceptions, assumptions and stereotypes of capabilities of people with mental health problems (1)	No interest in the subject (2)	Fear of losing job (3)	Poor management, too target driven and or office gossip (3)
		Pressure to be one certain way - "This is how we do it here" (3)	Lack of understanding around disability (7)	

Reputation / past history (people and orgs) (4)	Media coverage of mental health stories (5)	Negative representations of mental ill health (5)	Public perception (5)	Structural stigma (6)
Self-stigma, secrecy and fear (8)	Pressure to remain silent due to career ambition and drive to succeed (9)	No quick fixes available so issue is ignored (9)		

Solution tree

Outcomes

Enhanced reputation (1)	Unemployment rates decreasing (UK) (4)	Low levels of absence (11)	Low turnover of staff (13)	Open communication about mental health and wellbeing (14)
People working well within teams (16)	Reduction (eradication?) in number of tribunals (17)	Positive impact on the economy (18)	Increased diversity of workforce (19)	More opportunities for career development (20)

High morale (team and individual) (2)	High levels of trust between staff and manager (3)	Reduced sickness for individuals (5)	Less mental ill health (6)	Higher productivity (7)
Employees feel confident – no self-stigma (8)	People with mental health problems treated fairly – Inclusivity (9)	High performance (people and organisation) (10)	Maintenance of / increase in earnings (12)	Companies adhering to legislation (15)

Solution

Mental health stigma and discrimination doesn't exist in workplaces

Activities

Provide mental health education and training (1)	Make core learning elements mandatory (2)	Create a positive organisational culture for mental health (3)	Adopt a social model of disability as an organisation (7)

Create an inclusive work environment and respect individuality (4)	Take opportunities to influence media portrayal e.g. sharing stories (5)	Develop inclusive policies and procedures (6)	Openly communicate about mental health (8)	Role model positive behaviours around mental health (9)

"Colleague A." By Andy Lang

I'm your colleague in the bothy you see every day
I'm your friend, your boss or the stranger here for today.
I'm the chatty one with not a care
Or the weirdo in the corner who just sits and stares.

I'm your colleague with mental scars you cannot see
Longing for your help to set me free.
I'm your colleague being bullied by my peers
You are my colleague, restrained by fear.

I'm your colleague LGBT who has to hide
Bursting to be free with "PRIDE".
I'm the colleague, who has to care,
With not enough hours in the day, too care.

I'm your colleague with mounting debts
Hiding from the bailiffs and their threats.
I'm your colleague with ill health
Now affecting my mental health.

I'm your colleague who sees no way out
Except to end it all, goodbye it's lights out...

You were the colleague who dared to ask," Are you ok"?
Little did you know you just saved my day?
You gave me your ear, and relieved my fear
You guided me to help and saved many tears.

Thank you my colleague for stepping up, and seeing my pain
There is life; there is light with everything to gain.

One day at a time, and in my head there's no more doubt
Because you my friend have shown me," there is a way out".
My dark days still remain but with much less pain
Life is getting better, and NO I'm not insane.

Yes the road is rough, and the hills are steep
But with your help, I've learned to speak.
So thank you my colleague you saved my day
It's only over, and "NOT OUT" many thanks Colleague A.
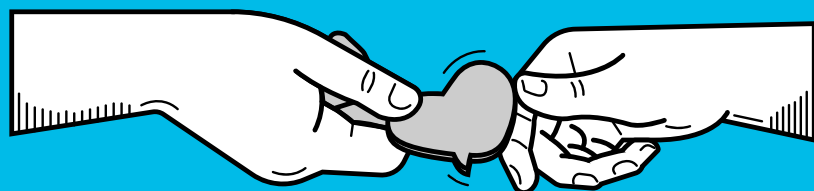
The Let's Chat tool

The four companies in the pilot had their own strengths and weaknesses, workplace practices, culture and their own improvement priorities. However, there were a few critical elements that were consistent across all of them: leadership role models, internal communications and line management behaviour.

During the needs assessment phase employees in all four companies made the point that having a line manager who had an understanding of mental health was more important to having a positive experience than workplace policies or culture. Based on these kinds of stories, combined with evidence from research and from lived experience See Me have created a light and accessible tool to improve the quality of mental health conversations between managers and employees – "Let's Chat". This tool draws on **eight key ingredients for having a conversation** that will be productive for both sides:

- **L**ook for an appropriate space and time
- **E**nsure confidentiality
- **T**ake an open mind-set into the conversation
- **S**ee the whole person
- **C**ommunicate regularly with your employees
- **H**umanise the conversation
- **A**ctively listen
- **T**alk about other support options.

Each point in the tool is augmented by a description of what each point means, a top tip drawn from workplace practice and most importantly, an example conversation between manager and employee drawn from See Me volunteers with experience of mental health problems and workplace challenges. At only six pages this tool is specifically designed for frontline managers who told us during the pilot that they are nervous about saying the wrong thing, unclear about what a positive mental health conversation looks like and concerned about managing unreasonable demands.

Employers' resources

The four companies produced several physical / digital resources during the pilot including a managers' toolkit, mental health and wellbeing policy, a "Z-Card" of support resources, a health and wellbeing intranet page, a wellbeing action plan template, a wellbeing section on a company app and mental health first aider role description.
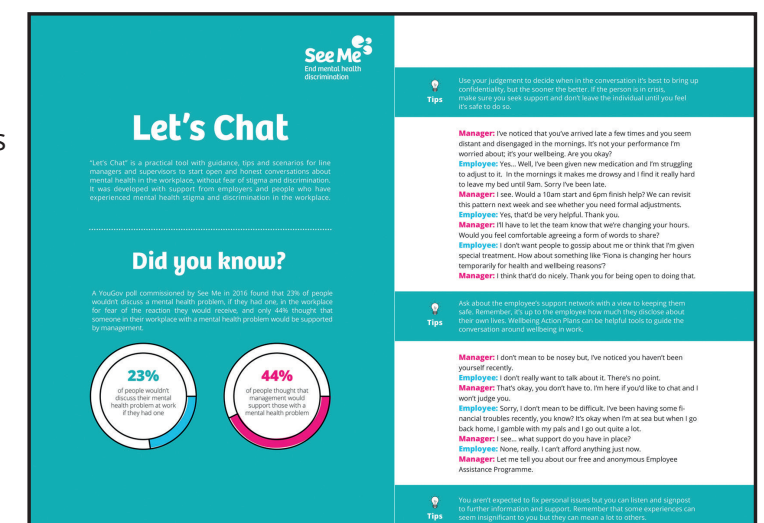
Learning and considerations

Unions have a key role in facilitating mental health inclusive workplaces

Employers have legal duties and responsibilities towards employees, which include supporting their mental health in the workplace and ensure a healthy and safe working environment. On the other hand, unions work to maintain and improve the conditions of employment for their members. Under the law employers have to work with recognised unions to negotiate working conditions and make sure that the health and safety of workers are protected – this includes mental health.

Tips

From our work with employers we know that positive relationships between employers and trade unions are key to embedding mental health inclusion in the workplace, and can make or break improvements made towards this goal.

The relationship between ScotRail and the trade unions (Unite, The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers, Transport Salaried Staffs' Association and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen) initially was not as positive as it could be, but it has continually developed throughout the pilot. Various disagreements and discussions extended the timescale of the implementation of their mental health and wellbeing policy, but ScotRail have managed to build a more positive relationship with the unions due to having shared goals regarding mental health in the workplace. These challenges and even the potential of industrial action meant that it was slightly harder than it might have otherwise been to keep mental health stigma and discrimination near the top of the priority list.

Organisational change, staff turnover, industrial action, TUPE processes and mergers can get in the way of mental health inclusion in the workplace

Key people leaving posts within human resources, recruitment and operations at ScotRail have also had an effect on where mental health sits on the agenda. These challenges combined with those described above could have seriously affected the extent to which improvements were introduced and implemented were it not for the experience and dedication of everyone involved.

Babcock were going through structural change during the life of the pilot including up to a half of their workforce going through a TUPE process as a major work contract was going to another employer. This situation meant that time and priority was at a premium amongst employees of all levels. Despite being further ahead than the other companies in terms of policies, available

support and prior engagement with See Me they required more focused support to make sure that some progress was made towards the planned improvements and good ideas were not lost due to the current challenges. Again, the experience and dedication of the company leads and the Consultant were critical to ensuring that as much forward progress as possible was made.

Opening conversations about mental health in the workplace is a stepping stone to employee wellbeing

More generally See Me always has to manage the risk of "mission drift", especially when organisations are looking to improve their wellbeing indicators. See Me's objective is to eliminate mental health stigma and discrimination through open and honest conversations; however, employers approach this via wellbeing, often focusing on mental health awareness training, but missing the importance of creating the conditions for conversations to take place. This difference in approach was strongest in Apex Hotels Ltd. These are of course not mutually exclusive concepts but it was important that the pilot retained a focus on stigma and discrimination to protect the transformative effect that opening up conversations can have on wellbeing, amongst other things.

"Time to Talk Day" resources

Pilot evaluation and impact

The See Me pilot contributed towards the following **Workplace Equality Fund outcomes:**

✔ Employment opportunities and progression in the workplace are improved for participant groups and consideration is given to how this can be embedded into the workplace to ensure lasting change.

✔ Knowledge, skills, policies and practices are improved in order to address employment inequalities, discrimination and barriers/challenges within the workplace.

✔ A more inclusive working environment is created and continued through employees and employers working in partnership.

The good practice and learning developed through the pilot will feed into Scottish Government's **Fair Work agenda**:

Effective Voice:

The voices and experiences of employees gathered during the comprehensive needs assessment shaped the company improvements. See Me volunteers with lived experience of mental health issues were critical to the successful delivery of the pilot by informing the approach of the Consultant; helping to develop workplace tools; speaking at "Time to Talk Day" events, and supporting the final event.

Opportunity:

This pilot adopted a tailored consultancy approach to interrogate the company workforce profiles and identify barriers to progression. An adaptive release approach to delivering improvements was chosen to address these barriers creatively. Their continuing commitment to the work demonstrates that genuine value is being placed on equality and diversity by the companies. Early work on this principle includes the ScotRail managers' toolkit and Burness Paull LLP reviewing of return to work procedures but all four companies will examine their recruitment/induction processes and reasonable adjustments over the next six months.

Security:

The companies are much better informed about the nature, complexity and nuance of mental health stigma and discrimination in their workplaces and are better placed to achieve change after the needs assessment and early successful improvements.

Fulfilment:

All the companies have worked towards establishing a culture of openness and understanding around mental health issues, and eventually a complete normalising of difference among employees. The engagement with national campaigns and social movement elements of the pilot such as "Time to Talk Day" events, establishing forums, communicating on social media, etc. is particularly pleasing.

Respect:

The "Let's Chat" tool is designed to improve the quality of mental health conversations between managers and employees specifically by eliminating stigma and discrimination. The companies willingness to trial this tool, improve their own processes and engage with UK campaigns are early indicators of moving towards a situation where difference is normalised in the workplace.

The **case studies** in the section that follows provide an overview of the improvement journey for each of the pilot organisations to date, as well as next steps.
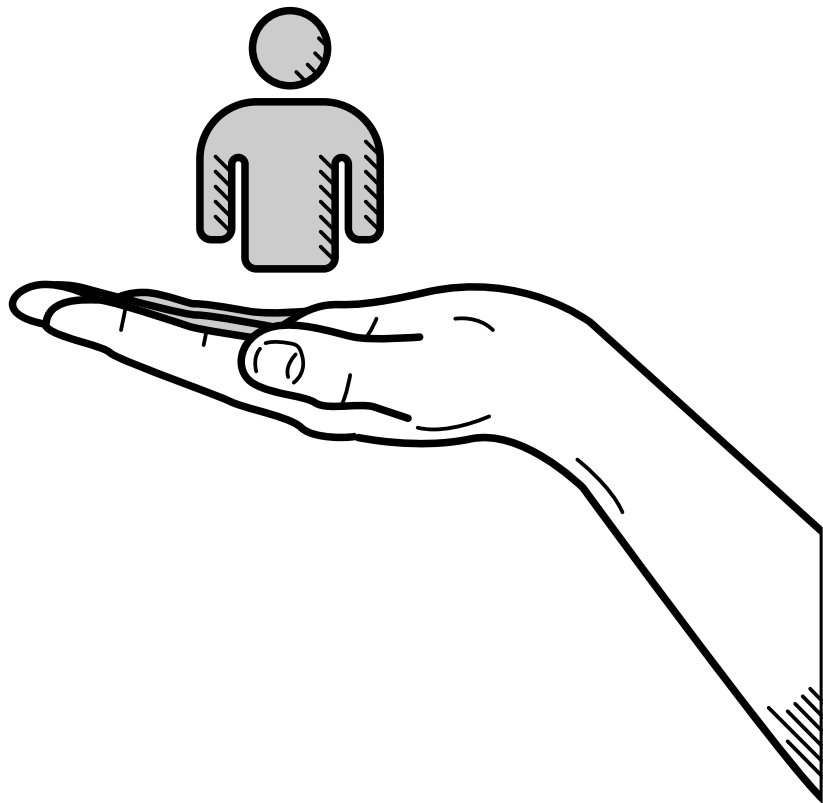
Pilot case studies

## ScotRail: Towards safe and pertinent disclosure

Within our company the absence rates relating to mental health were high and suspected to be higher due to more people not disclosing a mental health condition. On speaking to employees, we became aware that there was a high amount of stigma attached to mental health in the workplace. This wasn't a huge surprise as this is most likely due to the culture in ScotRail where the majority of the workforce is male. This combined with the survey results, which revealed most of our employees didn't know where to go for support and didn't feel their managers were approachable, confirmed we needed to introduce something that supported managers to be well informed and to create a better disclosure environment for employees.

Creating an improved disclosure environment was one of our key priorities which is why developing the Mental Health Managers Toolkit was so important. It would support managers in their role to provide guidance and support to their colleagues but we also hoped it would encourage employees to come forward and disclose any concerns or issues to their managers as they would have more confidence in their abilities to help. The Toolkit was low cost to develop as it only involved research into our support needs and linking this to the procedures we already had in place. The main areas we wanted to focus on were prevention rather than intervention and providing the right support information to colleagues. From this we developed a range of documents containing guidance for managers in noticing early signs of mental health conditions, what support they can offer colleagues, the correct occupational health referral process and how to have a conversation about mental health.
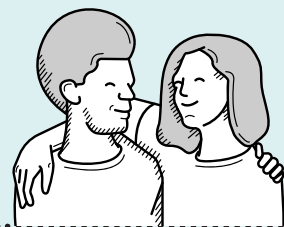
We believe that the managers' toolkit could start the process of creating a more open and honest work environment where everyone feels supported, which was one of the main reasons we joined the See Me Pilot.

Feedback from the survey was collated and the See Me Consultant provided analysis from interviews and other feedback received from our employees. Based on this, research was done to determine what was needed in the toolkit and what support was required using the processes we already had in place. We wanted to keep the documents as straight forward and compact as possible so they would be easily accessible and easy to follow. An initial roll out of the toolkit was done to managers with high levels of mental health / stress absences and managers in areas with low absence rates to gain feedback and improvement advice.
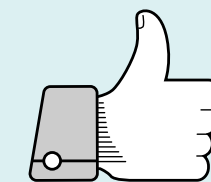
The overall feedback was very positive and that the managers felt it was a comprehensive toolkit with lots of useful information; this was taken on board and changes were made to reflect the feedback we received. The toolkit was officially rolled out recently and we have sent out an evaluation wheel along with it to obtain further feedback from managers and team leaders across the company. We believe that this toolkit will provide the guidance and support that managers need to confidently support their colleagues, which in turn will create the open and safe work environment we are aiming to achieve.

The toolkit will be uploaded to the intranet so it will be readily available to everyone, we will also continuously develop the toolkit in line with any feedback we receive in future. The toolkit was a huge success at the "Peer support day" with the other pilot companies and they all requested a copy so they could create and implement the same kind of resource within their companies. This reaction was also received from the Share & Compare workshops at the "Leading the way" event held in Edinburgh in March from external companies not involved in the pilot, which was great. We have sent read only copies of the toolkit out to everyone who has requested it to share good practice.

Burness Paull LLP: Improving return to work policies and procedures

Burness Paull
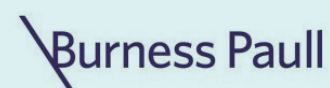
One of the key findings to emerge from our questionnaire results and from our drop in sessions was the need for an improved return to work process after absence. Although our employees were confident that they would be supported by HR, they were not confident that line managers had the training to adequately deal with mental health issues. Further analysis of this revealed that line managers did not feel they had the confidence or expertise to have successful conversations around mental health.

> It was clear that one of our first priorities was to open up conversation on mental health in our organisation and we identified that one way we could do this would be in relation to the absence management and return to work process.

Prior to the pilot we had been ready to launch a new absence management policy, process and manager guidelines and on the back of our results we decided to reassess our approach and include specific guidance for managers around how to have return to work conversations when an employee has had a mental health related absence. Our new guidelines give examples of the types of conditions that employees may suffer from and how to spot signs and symptom of these. We incorporated language and examples from the See Me 'Lets Chat' tool to help managers open up conversations. We have included specific guidance on when and how to make Occupational Health referrals and specific guidance on reasonable adjustments including a list of examples. We have incorporated signposting to external resources such as our Employee Assistance Programme and counselling services as well as links to external resources such as Scottish Association for Mental Health, Samaritans and Mind.

In conjunction with the policy and manager guidelines, we have introduced new mental health categories in our HR system so that we can more accurately record and report on mental health related absences. This will not only reinforce the business case for ensuring a mentally health workplace but will allow us to pick up on mental health related absence quicker and ensure that each time

a mental health related absence is recorded, the line manager is prompted to check in with the employee, open up a conversation and offer support. This will allow us to identify patterns in absence across the business and potentially where mental health related absence may be attributed to issues such as workload, working environment or working relationships.

> Mental health would not have been incorporated into our proposed revised absence management process to this extent had it not been for the See Me survey highlighting this as an area for improvement.

The pilot group network has been invaluable in sharing ideas, processes and practices which have made it much easier for us to achieve significant changes to our absence management policy and process. We anticipate an initial spike in mental health related absence due to improved reporting capabilities and increased disclosure, however we envisage mental health related absence to decline in the long term as a result of a more supportive culture which encourages employees to talk about their mental health and seek support before their condition ever has to cause them to be absent.

Apex Hotels Ltd: Improving communication of support available

Our needs assessment process showed the need for improved communication for all employees and further training for managers regarding conversations around Mental Health. We already had the Apex Employee App in process and this coincided with the communication work needed. Mental Health First Aid training was already underway; however, as a result of our improved communication clarity around responsibilities and boundaries more people have signed up and to date 40 people have completed the training.

Peer support was the most beneficial aspect of the project and where we have been able to gather information and templates. As working alone on this within the company as well as doing full-time work, it is crucial to have others to support you and provide working resources ensuring no duplication of work. The other companies' representatives have been fantastic in creating an open, approachable and sharing peer group.

"Time to Talk Day" tour at Apex Hotels Ltd

Apex have now put in place a wellbeing policy and budget, which is looking to be signed off within the next couple of months and implemented nationally. Both will incorporate not only mental wellbeing, but also physical and financial wellbeing. Financial wellbeing workshops have already commenced nationally as well as roadshows led by directors to update all employees on company news and future plans. Apex are also looking to have a core Wellbeing Champion

Group to ensure the work completed with See Me is rolled out in every location by employees of those hotels; and therefore not see as an HR agenda but instead embedded within the culture and becoming workplace norms. To assist with all aspects of wellbeing, Apex have changed EAP Provider, and now all calls to the EAP will be answered by trained counsellors and cover multiple topics regarding wellbeing, financial supporting and living arrangements to name a few. Apex are also looking into resilience training and conflict management to better support managers and employees with daily pressures they can face.

It would be beneficial going forward to have more resources as to how to align best practice in the workforce, with scenarios and lived experience of both people returning to work after a period of low mental health, but also from managers who have supported, managed and dealt with change through an employee's period of low mental health. There is still a lot of uncertainty about managing long term sickness regarding low mental health and employee relation concerns, therefore further guidance around this from See Me would be beneficial.

Apex are now reporting on absences and absence reasons. We only have a few months' data but already we can see that although mental health is not the reason stated for the most occasions of absences, it is mental health that employees remain off work for the longest. We expect to see a rise in number of absences for mental health and a decrease in 'other reasons'; however, the aim is to decrease the length of time absent.
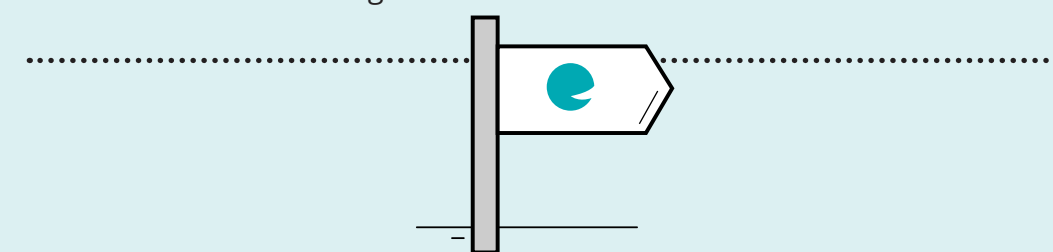
It is therefore crucial that Apex continue in this work to ensure preventative measures can be embedded within the workplace to ensure support and signposting are offered to employees from the beginning, enabling them to remain in work whilst seeking assistance where able.

The reaction from other companies has been very positive, with increased levels of networking and requests to share learnings and ideas. To sustain this amount of work the core Champion group will be pivotal in these movements with time authorised and allocated by management along with ongoing support and guidance from See Me.

Babcock: Embedding consistency of disclosure across the organisation

babcock™

From the engagement workshops delivered by See Me in two locations and from the Mental Health Check survey, we found out that our employee's perception is that Babcock has the legal requirements in place as well as the policies and procedures including flexible working to encourage disclosure and address any mental health issues. However, these are not necessary applied consistently across the business. The way mental health issues are dealt with as well as return to work depends very much on the attitude and behaviour of line management. Employees are still afraid to disclose for fear of discrimination in the workplace or afraid that this might be seen as a sign of weakness.

Good mental health and good management go in hand and there is strong evidence that workplaces with high levels of mental wellbeing are also more productive. It is why it is a priority for us at Babcock to create the right environment for employees to disclose any mental ill health safely and that all issues are addressed to in a similar and consistent manner. Babcock had already engaged with See Me a couple of years ago and with the Hope Café delivered mental health workshops around awareness, suicide prevention and mental health first aid training. We believe that this made a difference to some degree but that further training is required to achieve a more consistent approach. As we had already worked with SeeMe in the past, engagement in the See Me pilot was the next natural step to evolve and reinforce our mental health message going out to our business.

We developed an improvement plan together with the See Me Consultant following the result from the survey and the engagement workshops. The improvements include revision of our induction process, mental health check, further training for managers, review of our in work and return to work procedure, creation of mental health and wellbeing spaces to encourage safe disclosure, all needed to be reinforced with an internal communication campaign.

We have since promoted the role of our mental health first aiders, who they are and their locations as well as further advertised our Employee Assistance Programme. Events such as Time to Talk sessions are helpful in keeping the message alive and to reinforce awareness and our commitment to create a mentally healthy workplace at Babcock. The See Me Consultant attended the two Time to Talk events (coffee morning and afternoon tea) held in our Hamilton offices to assist and discuss the See Me pilot with our employees. We have just reintroduced the See Me on-line training and are looking into introducing more awareness sessions as well as further mental health first aid training session.

It might be extremely difficult for people to talk about their feelings at work but if you have a supportive colleague or manager who has been trained and to whom you can talk to, can really make a difference and help them remain in work with reasonable adjustments.

One of the big changes that we've noticed in our employees is that it helps them feel more comfortable to approach a vulnerable individual. It also gave them the skillset to identify mental health issues within themselves but also within their extended family and friends and we have had a few cases of employees coming to us to thank us for the support because it has helped them deal with a troubled teenager, for example, or a family member who is going through a particularly challenging time.
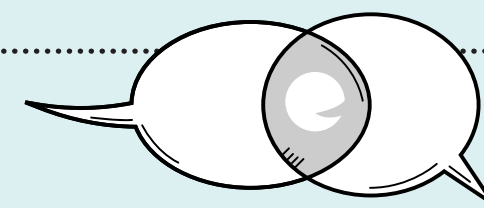
Sustaining this is going to be more challenging, keeping that message fresh without lecturing. Our employees have actually recognised the leading direction that Babcock have taken with regards to mental health, not only within our own organisation but within the rail industry in general, to actually identify and tackle mental ill health and discrimination within the workplace, and actually promote a more inclusive and open environment in which they can work. This is something that they've fed back to us on a regular basis on the positive measures that we've been taking.

Engaging in this programme allowed us to get exposure from other organisations within Scotland and to receive peer-to-peer learning and support from the other organisations, understanding the challenges that we all face and how we can support one another as organisations to tackle that single problem of mental ill health and discrimination in the workplace. We found that really beneficial. The peer-to-peer learning is really invaluable because we can provide support and initiatives that other colleagues could run with and they could give us something alternative in return.

Next steps

For pilot companies

All four companies have committed to maintain and build on the early success of their improvement work over the next six months to continue moving towards creating workplaces free from stigma and discrimination.

Pilot de-brief and development meetings are being arranged for April and May with the four companies planning for more improvements, such as employee stories style videos, wellbeing spaces, enhanced recruitment and induction processes, introducing small tests of change, strengthened return to work practices and a more person-centred approach to reasonable adjustments. The Consultant and company leads will also be actively moving the work to a more sustainable footing in a practical sense by establishing steering groups, mental health forums with support from named leadership role models and bringing together leaders from the companies for roundtable discussion sessions. The four companies have also decided to fully integrate themselves with the SMiW Peer Learning Network sessions.
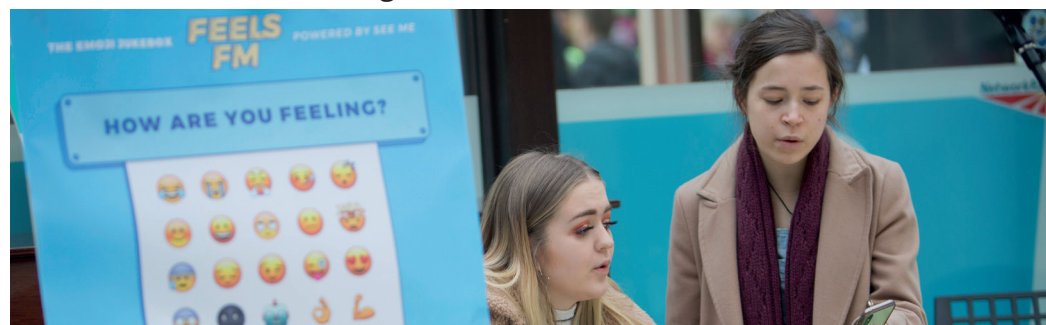
Singers at live "FEELS FM" event

For See Me

The project findings and learning from the approach are contributing to a step change in the SMiW programme, informing partner's workplace programmes and are being disseminated through business networks to support longer-term benefit and wider sustainability to the Scottish workforce.

See Me is developing a 'starter pack' resource to support employers to self-assess their readiness to to take a strategic approach to mental health inclusion and get ready to engage in the SMiW programme, should they want to do so. See Me will be working on a SMiW Do-It-Yourself toolkit, which will increase the flexibility and reach of our main offer of support to employers. In addition, the consultancy approach and learning from the pilot will be used with a small number of employers from other industries. This will enable us to test further applicability and flexibility of the approach.

Recommendations for employers

As demonstrated by the See Me pilot, the complexity and nuance of mental health stigma and discrimination in the workplace should not be underestimated. Employers working towards mental health inclusion in the workplace should focus on **three critical drivers of change**, which can act as levers to begin to get a workplace system to release itself from existing patterns and cultures:

1 Leadership role models

The message and the messenger matters. If mental health stigma and discrimination is a door then this is the closest thing we have to a key. Whenever leaders have stood up and talked about how they are successful, high flying professionals and they are also people who have struggled with a mental health problem then things have started to change (strongest recent example being Deloitte). However, disclosure is always at the individual's discretion so having this type of exemplar leader isn't always possible.

ScotRail executives took part in the needs assessment and future planning, partners at Burness Paull LLP attended "Time to Talk Day" events - one of the pilot leads from Babcock was the Head of Safety, Health, Environment and Quality and Apex Hotels Ltd arranged for the Consultant to make a presentation directly to the leadership group. Leaders from all four companies also participated in the panel debate at our "Leading the way for mental health inclusion in the workplace event".

Leaders panel debate at our "Leading the Way" event

Tips

If leaders can talk openly about the issue, take part in learning events and lead sessions with employees about mental health in the workplace it will impact the perception and practicality of the work environment.

2 Clear and consistent internal communication:

During the needs assessment process with employees from Apex Hotels Ltd the Consultant found a positive working culture, engaged employees, a principled and considerate employer and strong availability of support resources that very few people knew about!

If employees are unaware of the existence or purpose of an Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) or if they are unclear about communication between the EAP and the employer then they won't access that support. If employees are unaware of the opportunity for mental health training then they won't attend. If managers are unsure about where mental health first aiders / champions / buddies / allies fit in the corporate structure and or what their role entails then they won't make best use of them.

Babcock and See Me put on engagement workshops, Burness Paull LLP enhanced their intranet pages around wellbeing and ScotRail created the Z-Card of support resources. Apex Hotels Ltd introduced a raft of measures including a wellbeing section on their company app and HR drop in sessions at the hotels and facilities.

Tips

Communicating clearly and consistently across multiple channels at times when employees are likely to be able to engage with them is a strong and cost effective lever for improving perceptions and conversations around mental health.

3 Informed and confident line management:

Tips

The most consistent piece of feedback from employees of all four companies was that regardless of policies, processes and procedures, "If you have a manager that gets it then you are going to have a good experience... if you have a manager who doesn't get it then it's gonna go the other way."

The Consultant spoke to employees, union representatives, leadership and managers and everyone appreciated the pressure that line management is under. The vast majority of managers were supportive allies seeing both the business and wellbeing benefits of reducing mental health stigma and discrimination among their teams. The issues were that they didn't know what that supportive conversation looked-like within their role and a human compassion desire not to make a challenging health situation worse by doing or saying the wrong thing. They also reported that any resources they had seen were either 'single page / five bullet point style' leaving the managers to translate the headlines into practical reality, or 100+ page tomes that managers simply don't have time to read and digest.

It was this feedback that led to ScotRail creating their managers' toolkit; Apex Hotels Ltd targeting team leaders with internal communications; Babcock beginning to create tailored support aimed at Foremen, and Burness Paull LLP winding mental health stigma and discrimination messages into their ongoing push to improve manager training for promoted solicitors. It also motivated See Me to create "Let's Chat" – a concise practical tool with guidance, tips and scenarios for line managers and supervisors to start open and honest conversations about mental health in the workplace without fear of stigma and discrimination. It was developed with support from employers and people who have lived experienced mental health stigma and discrimination in the workplace.

Tips

We would always encourage employers to learn as much as they can about how mental health stigma and discrimination manifest in the workplace system and culture before planning and implementing improvements. It's more than likely that the three points above will play a part in employers' improvement efforts to some extent and the See Me website has resources to help employers maximise the benefits.
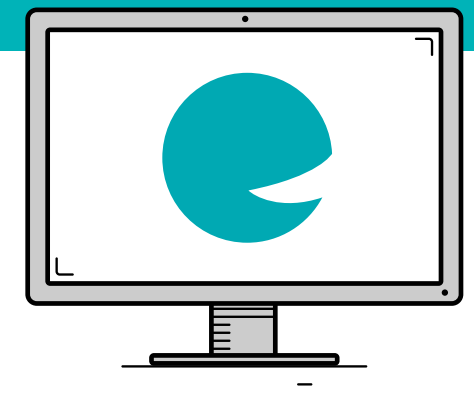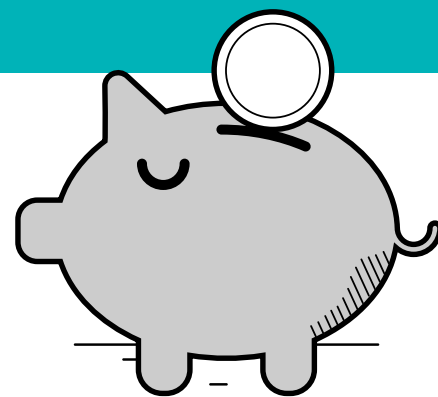
Recommendations for funders

The challenges involved in successfully delivering this pilot have been outlined earlier in the pilot. The flexibility of Impact Funding Partners in terms of support, budget and reporting was a source of reassurance that they understood how development and improvement projects can be affected by factors out with the control of the lead personnel and organisations. In the end the pilot over delivered on activities and outputs; all deadlines were met, and all of the outcomes were reported against, which was ideal. Nevertheless the willingness of the funder to offer flexible approaches to getting the best results for all involved and the highest quality evidence possible was extremely progressive and very much appreciated.

During the life of the pilot representatives from the funder have attended our "Leading the Way" event; involved us in events arranged by other organisations, and invited us to deliver showcase workshops at their main Workplace Equality Fund event alongside people involved in other equalities work. The funder acted as a conduit for learning from other agendas and disseminating the learning from our pilot effectively.

Tips

During discussions with our key contacts at Impact Funding Partners they demonstrated not only a genuine support for the project and a nuanced view around the achievement of outcomes which was refreshing coming from a funder. The scale and complexity of the issue of mental health stigma and discrimination is massive and the fund outcomes are challenging to completely achieve after 8 months of work. During our first meeting it became clear that the funder wanted good quality evidence of change that demonstrated the extent to which the outcome had been achieved rather than an over claim of having hit the outcome 100%.

Recommendations for support organisations

"Nothing about us without us"

"Nothing about us without us" is the idea that no policy should be decided by any representative without the full and direct participation of members of the group(s) affected by that policy. The See Me programme is informed by lived experience and this pilot was no exception. The Consultant held meetings with See Me volunteers within the first few weeks of starting employment, engaged them in "Time to Talk Day" events at the four companies, facilitated them as they produced the scenario and top tip content for the "Let's Chat" tool and invited them to our final pilot event – "Leading the way for mental health inclusion in the workplace". During the needs assessment the Consultant spoke with many people who had lived experience of mental health problems and their willingness to share their testimony influenced the improvement work of the companies. Finally the Consultant designed the "Fireside Chat" session at the "Leading the Way" event where a See Me volunteer and four employees from ScotRail (all with lived experienced of mental health problems) held a conversation about their workplace experiences. Involving lived experience in the design, development and delivery of mental health stigma and discrimination work improves activities and outcomes. A large proportion of the success of this pilot is due directly to their courage and expertise.

In too many action plans, improvement processes and other interventions the work takes total priority while other considerations are forgotten. Peer support, communication and evaluation was built into this pilot from day 1. The company representatives supported each other though peer learning sessions organised by See Me. They also communicated through the Consultant and directly with each other by email to discuss plans, exchange ideas and share resources. Our Communications Manager was kept informed on the progress of the pilot and asked for their input at every stage ahead of delivery time. This allowed for production of a clear communications strategy for the pilot that included a media release coinciding with "World Mental Health Day", social media communications around all our major events including "Time to Talk Day", supporting the Consultant to edit the transcripts and clips of the two videos produced for the pilot, the creation of a Workplace Equality Project section on the See Me website and recording the "Fireside Chat" at our "Leading the Way" event for a podcast. Evaluation of the pilot, both

self and external, was vitally important to make sure that any learning was effectively translated into the SMiW programme – our core offer to employers. The Consultant produced a theory of change for the pilot, designed bespoke evaluation and "test of change" tools for the companies, evaluated and wrote reports for every workshop, engagement event and campaign activity delivered and provided needs assessment reports, funder updates, improvement plans and supplementary information to MHF (our evaluation partner) prior to the evaluation activity taking place. Ensuring that all of these considerations; peer support, communication and evaluation were core to the planning and delivery of the pilot has increased our ability to effectively disseminate the learning from the pilot for companies, funders and support organisations alike.

The Consultant took an improvement science approach to much of the work following the 6 core principles of improvement[12] (see in page 45). It was these principles that maintained the focus of the Consultant on completing a detailed needs assessment despite time challenges, evaluation permeating the improvement work and starting to move ownership of the work outside HR teams.

This was married up to the social contact model which sets out that intergroup contact under appropriate conditions can effectively reduce prejudice between majority and minority group members. People with lived experience of mental health problems were genuinely and flexibly involved from start to finish and as described above have made a tangible contribution to the pilot's success. These two approaches combined to form what can be described as an "adaptive release" approach to systematic change in the workplace. Key levers of change – people, processes and policies – were identified and strengthened while quick wins, activities delivering visible benefits and improvements that made tangible alterations to the vocabulary, style and tone of conversations in the workplace were targeted. This was meant to ensure that alongside the more subtle, cultural change that takes more time to embed, there was "easy to communicate" success that would build trust between See Me and the companies, reduce the perception of risk among company leaders and build momentum towards work on the more challenging equality elements and improvement work around mental health stigma and discrimination such as unconscious bias in recruitment processes and support for people with complex and enduring mental ill-health.

The Six Core Principles of Improvement

1 Make the work problem-specific and user-centred. It starts with a single question: "What specifically is the problem we are trying to solve?" It enlivens a co-development orientation: engage key participants early and often.

2 Variation in performance is the core problem to address. The critical issue is not what works, but rather what works, for whom and under what set of conditions. Aim to advance efficacy reliably at scale.

3 See the system that produces the current outcomes. It is hard to improve what you do not fully understand. Go and see how local conditions shape work processes. Make your hypotheses for change public and clear.

4 We cannot improve at scale what we cannot measure. Embed measures of key outcomes and processes to track if change is an improvement. We intervene in complex organisations. Anticipate unintended consequences and measure these too.

5 Anchor practice improvement in disciplined inquiry. Engage rapid PDSA cycles to learn fast, fail fast, and improve quickly. That failures may occur is not the problem; that we fail to learn from them is.

6 Accelerate improvements through networked communities. Embrace the wisdom of crowds. We can accomplish more together than even the best of us can accomplish alone.

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See Me in Work Peer Learning Network

Thirteen Squared

Studio Something

See Me employees and volunteers
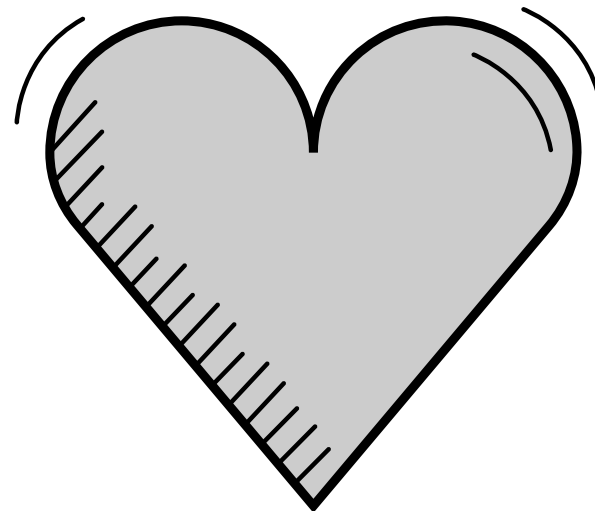
About See Me

We are Scotland's programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination enabling those who experience mental health problems to live fulfilled lives.

We are funded by the Scottish Government and Comic Relief, and managed by the Scottish Association for Mental Health and the Mental Health Foundation. Our mission is to mobilise people to work together and lead a movement to end mental health stigma and discrimination; work with people to change negative behaviour towards people with mental health problems, and ensure that the human rights of people with mental health problems are respected and upheld.

We believe change is needed to improve the culture of mental health so its impact on every aspect of our lives including where we live, learn, work and receive care isn't ignored. When we struggle with our mental health we often face stigma and unfair discrimination in all these areas. See Me is focused on four settings where stigma is most prevalent and has the most detrimental impact: in education, health and social care, communities and workplaces.

See Me encourages workplaces to get involved in campaigns and activities that support employees to open conversations about mental health, and build the capacity of line managers to support employees to stay in / return to work when they experience mental health problems. Visit our website for details: www.seemescotland.org.