

CASE STUDY

ROYAL MAIL GROUP: BECAUSE HEALTHY MINDS MATTER

Throughout the pandemic and going forward, Royal Mail Group's award-winning mental health strategy 'Because Healthy Minds Matter' continues to provide resources, support and signposting for key worker colleagues.

About the company

Royal Mail Group's (RMG) health & wellbeing tools, materials and support help it reduce mental health stigma, normalise conversations and work towards further developing a culture where mental health support can be accessed. RMG has recognised the impact that the coronavirus pandemic has had on its people from all backgrounds – the impacts on physical, mental and financial health, bereavement, isolation – and that, during lockdown and beyond, home is not always a safe space for everyone. RMG has maintained high levels of communications and guidance, utilising multi-media to reach across the organisation.

Introduction

As one of the UK's largest employers, RMG's number one priority is to create a safe and healthy working environment for its people, where everyone is free from injury, with good physical and mental health. It is the organisation's view that employees should be able to come to work every day feeling their best, and leave in the same, or better condition.

Increasing awareness, reducing stigma, and encouraging colleagues to access support have been key to working towards strengthening a health culture at RMG.



Having a clear brand for mental health activity 'Because Healthy Minds Matter' has strengthened its ability to clearly promote and communicate the resources and support. RMG understood the importance of mental health to its people and wanted a strong approach to messaging so that it was clear and stood out. Utilising employee-led case studies has also been successful in getting key messages across to front-line colleagues.

The development of cohesive support strategies and tools work to make a difference to individuals and together build a strong mental health culture where asking for help and accessing support are as normal as receiving treatment for a physical health condition.

RMG values its relationship with BITC both through the Leadership Team and Champions Forum,



recognising that collaboration on health opportunities leads to better outcomes for all.

What Royal Mail Group did

Through the 'Because Healthy Minds Matter' activity, launched in 2017, awareness of mental health was raised so as to reduce stigma and work towards a culture where mental health can be openly discussed by all colleagues.

Ensuring everyone that needs support can access it from either internal or external credible sources is RMG's aim. There are challenges, but leadership buy-in, starting with the outcome in mind, building the story, having four clear aims and developing resources, place RMG in a stronger position to make a difference. The organisation regularly talks with BITC colleagues, gaining feedback and accessing good practice and benchmarking.

Throughout the pandemic, RMG shared campaigns, communications, guidance and signposted colleagues to support. This includes for physical and mental health; domestic abuse; suicide; bereavement; isolation; financial wellbeing and the impact of being a key worker.

The organisation's 'First Class Support' employee assistance service remains available for colleagues to self-service 24/7 via a helpline and digital services including online chat. All colleagues have direct access to counselling via the service or by a manager referral to the occupational health service.

Currently there are over 600 'volunteer' Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors who play an important role locally alongside managers, in promoting physical, mental and financial health support at their workplace. They help promote health campaigns and initiatives, engaging employees in the importance of good health and wellbeing and signpost to support.

There is a zero-tolerance policy towards retaliation of any kind against people reporting concerns. All reports are taken seriously and dealt with confidentially and sensitively via a 'Speak Up'

service. A helpline and online service is available 24/7 and managed by an independent provider.

The recently launched mandatory 'Speak Up' and 'Leading with Integrity' eLearning provides colleagues with tools to ensure all act with integrity in their roles and can speak up with confidence and without fear of reprisals.

Employee opinion survey results and feedback are one way to measure engagement and culture – using data and colleague comments to develop local, national, and business unit action plans to further improve working environments and culture.

This year RMG has taken the opportunity to refresh its approach and focus on the 'Big Trust Survey', which features updated questions focussed and aligned to the strategic priority of further building trust throughout the organisation.

The HR community works with senior leaders and managers, monitoring for areas of focus. There are several channels that enable colleagues to share concerns directly, including through local union partners.

It is recognised that one size does not fit all, and the aim is to develop solutions which provide choices that are fully inclusive for all colleagues. The employee survey, as well as various listening and steering groups, helps to ensure RMG remains a fully inclusive employer, whether you are a front-line delivery colleague or a manager in one of the central support teams, who has been working from home for the past year.

As part of continuous improvement, RMG reviews roles, for example it is reviewing what an average day looks like for a delivery office manager role.

It has also recently undertaken a full review of the management population as part of a transformation journey and was able to use this activity to review its management structure, roles and responsibilities at all levels.

Impact

Calls to the employee assistance helpline increased considerably at the start of the pandemic. Whilst these have now generally levelled, it is continually monitored for any trends which can help better support colleagues.

Dedicated coronavirus information intranet pages were set up which received over 30,000 hits in the first month and continue to be a valuable source of information and guidance for colleagues.

In 2020 RMG was honoured to become a [BITC Responsible Business Champion in the category of Health and Wellbeing](#). The award recognises the five-year 'Because Healthy Minds Matter' Mental Health strategy and activity launched in 2017.

During 2020 it was also recognised at the 'This Can Happen' Awards, winning the Best Mental Health in the Workplace Strategy: Large Company Award, again for the 'Because Healthy Minds Matter' Mental Health strategy and activity. The Best Mental Health in the Workplace Strategy Award led to also winning the 'Grand Prix' which is given to the application that was 'best in class' from all 11 separate categories awarded.

Call to action

Keep talking, listening and signposting colleagues to support. It takes courage to ask for help, let's all keep working to ensure people get the support they need.

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