

Managing mental ill-health It makes business sense

Chris Clarke, Chief Executive at AdviserPlus



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Prevention is better than Cure.

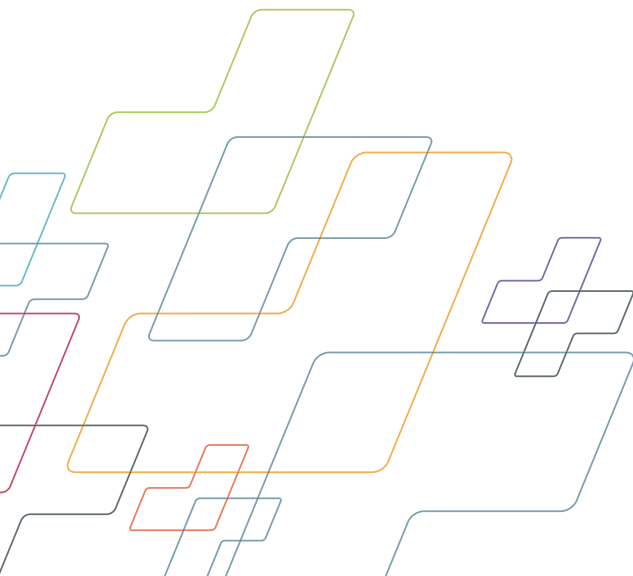
If we can help managers to improve their levels of capability and enable them to spot and deal with the early signs of distress, there is an increased likelihood that they may be able to prevent a condition from becoming acute and therefore reduce long term absence.

This approach makes good business sense, helps to reduce the cost of sickness absence and is the right thing to do.

Chris Clarke, Chief Executive, AdviserPlus, a leading provider of professional HR advisory services
www.adviserplusintelligenthr.co.uk

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The business case for change

Given that 15.2m days of sickness absence in the UK are due to mental ill-health, the business case for change is compelling.

Business needs to focus on the importance of employers providing greater support for, and recognition of, mental ill-health in the workplace. This has been reinforced by Theresa May's January 2017 announced plans to increase support and resources available to employees suffering from mental ill-health problems in the workplace, to try and tackle the 'hidden injustice' of these issues.

The statistics on mental ill-health make for depressing reading. One in four people in the UK will suffer a mental ill-health condition in any given year.

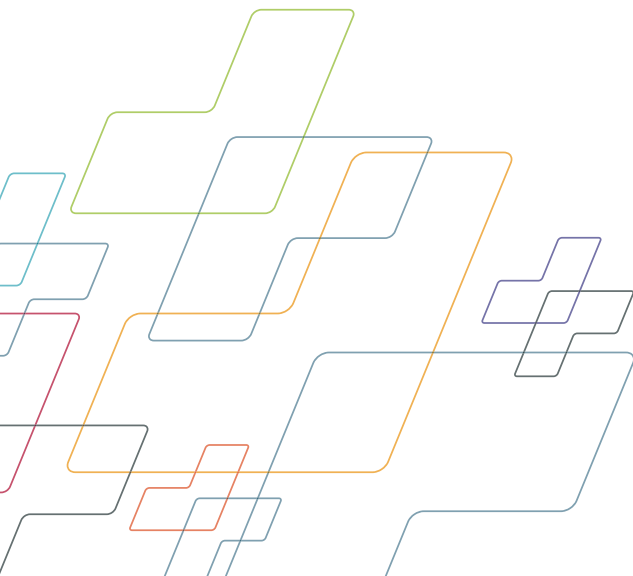
Half of all employees feel their work has at some point been impaired by a mental illness, according to a Canada Life Group Insurance study. And in 2015, the CIPD Absence Management Survey revealed that, for the first time, mental ill-health and stress became the leading cause of sickness.

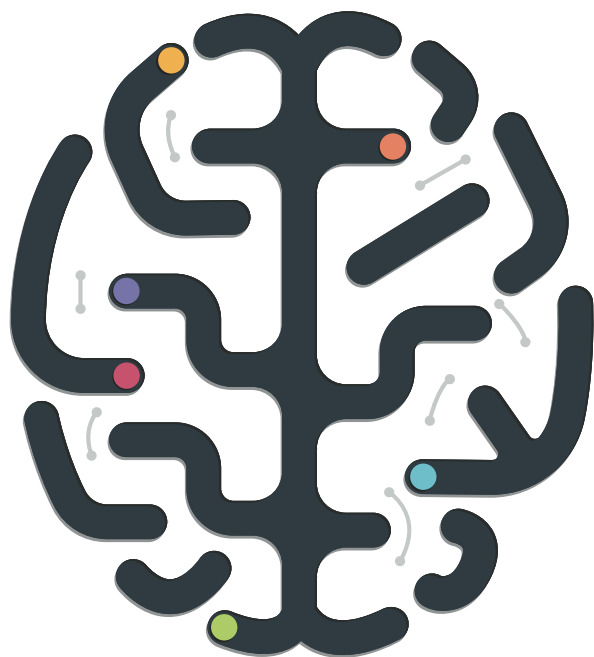
47% of staff were uncomfortable disclosing mental ill-health issues to their employer or manager and 25% felt there was inadequate support for mental ill-health in their workplace.

CIPD and Halogen Survey

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➤ **Circa £70 billion**

Cost of mental ill-health to UK Economy per year

➤ **1 in 5**

Workers fear disclosing their condition

➤ **Circa £26 billion**

Cost to UK employers per year

➤ **9 out of 10**

People with a mental ill-health condition suffer discrimination

➤ **Over 15 million**

Days of sickness absence in UK due to mental ill-health

➤ **Circa £1,000**

Average cost per employee each year

➤ **1 in 5**

People take a day off work due to stress

➤ **Suicide**

Number one cause of death for men under the age of 50

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Cutting the costs

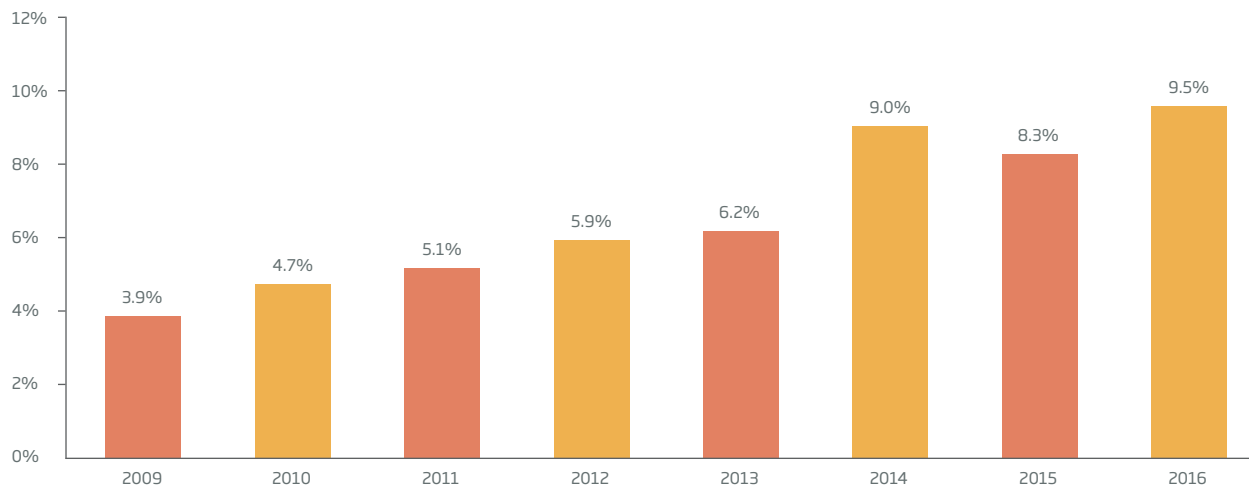
The Centre for Mental Health Charity estimates employers should be able to cut the cost of mental ill-health by about one-third by improving their management of mental ill-health at work.

This may be particularly challenging in the context that 14% of workers are sceptical about colleagues who take time off for mental ill-health issues.

Willis OMI Group

Organisations and line managers need to be proactive in challenging negative perceptions of mental ill-health, and improving the general understanding of mental ill-health problems and their effects.

Although there are pockets of good practice, too often those who do disclose they are suffering a mental ill-health condition find they may receive sympathy - at best - but will ultimately be discreetly sidelined.



Percentage of sickness associated to mental ill-health

AdviserPlus Case Study: Financial Services Sector 2017

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Managing mental ill-health

A crucial missing link is often found in the relationship between line managers and their employees.

Just 22% of employers are investing in developing line manager competence and capability to manage and support staff with mental ill-health problems.

Most managers miss opportunities to talk about mental ill-health issues, meaning that employees are all too willing to bypass talking to their manager in favour of trying to deal with things themselves.

“People need to feel at ease raising issues at work, and trust that they will be supported. Training for line managers needs to cover how to have these kinds of sensitive discussions with members of their team and where to signpost them to help if needed.”

Dr Jill Miller, policy adviser at the CIPD.

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6 tips for improving manager capability:

➤ Develop understanding and awareness of where to go to access help for colleagues

➤ Help managers to spot the early signs of distress

➤ Help managers to understand what they can and can't say when managing a colleague presenting with a mental ill-health condition

➤ Develop the skills and techniques that are essential in managing sensitive conversations as these are the things that set managers up for success

➤ Help managers appreciate how much stigma there is surrounding mental ill-health

➤ Increase understanding of the mental ill-health spectrum and the scope of conditions



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