A recent survey conducted by UK Construction Week, with support from Mates in Mind charity, has found that six out of 10 workers in construction have suffered mental ill-health because of their work. Mates in Mind is now calling on industry leaders and government to be more considered and consistent if they want to achieve meaningful improvement within the workplace.

This has never been more important in the fight to address the high rate of suicide within the UK construction industry. Construction is a sector in which the impacts of mental ill-health and suicide are particularly prominent, with alarming reports showing that within the industry, two workers take their own life every working day.

Thursday 10 October is World Mental Health Day, an internationally recognised day in which organisations and individuals come together to break the silence surrounding mental ill-health. This year’s theme focuses on suicide prevention. According to The Office of National Statistics, in 2018 there was a rise in the number of deaths by suicide with 6,507 recorded - the highest level since 2002.

James Rudoni, Managing Director, Mates in Mind said:

"We are deeply concerned to see a rise in this figure, despite the attention that has been given to suicide prevention and increased awareness of mental health in recent years.

"The work that Mates in Mind is doing to further raise awareness, address the stigma of and improve mental wellbeing throughout workplaces across construction and associated industries, continues unabated. And over the last three years, this interest hasn't dropped off, in fact just the opposite.

"A significant part of the work that we do is to provide real understanding and clarity around the issue of mental health. Signposting and supporting organisations to deliver the right support for their workforce. It is vital that organisations realise that this requires them to listen, encourage and support employees, rather than simply running short-term awareness campaign or one-off training.

"We are seeing the evidence from an increasing number of our Supporter organisations that taking a ‘whole organisation’ approach is having both quantifiable and qualitative impact. Amongst the benefits we are witnessing are improved sickness absence rates, improved staff retention rates and more engaged workforces. For example, in the last two years, Tideway has reported a twelve per cent rise in the number of staff who felt that they could approach their boss with a mental health problem – up from 64% in 2017 to 76% in 2018. A similar increase was reported in RSE Building Services, an SME firm, where they reported a nine per cent rise in staff feeling supported in relation to mental health – up from 66% in 2018 to 75% in 2019.

"It is important to create space to talk about mental health at work, and through improved awareness, increase individual’s understandings of how and where they can get support. That is why we are so pleased to be a partner supporting Public Health England’s campaign Every Mind Matters – enabling individuals to understand and better manage their own mental health.

But the fact remains, employers must do more to ensure that the environments in which their workers are operating are improved, to sustain an individual’s mental wellbeing, and in turn their businesses overall.”

END
Notes to editor

About Mates in Mind

1. Mates in Mind can support your organisation to build a mental health plan and to create a culture of prevention.

   Our dedicated team of Support Managers work with organisations of any size to develop a tailored action plan, evaluating your organisation’s priorities and gaps and providing the tools and support you need. This plan will not only include ongoing support with communication and delivery of your plan, but also training opportunities, promotional materials and a suite of tools (including packs like this one) to enable you to drive long-lasting and meaningful change. Find out more about how Mates in Mind can help your organisation build a culture of prevention when you become a Supporter by contacting us.

   If you are already a Supporter and want to speak to someone about this pack or any other queries, please contact your Support Manager or the team.

   020 3510 5018 support@matesinmind.org

2. Mates in Mind is a collaboration of founding partners: Health in Construction Leadership Group and British Safety Council and is supported by core partner charities Mind, Samaritans, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England and Inspire. It is also supported by construction industry charities and bodies and has various Mates in Mind business champions, including Balfour Beatty; eight2O; Galliford Try; Mineral Products Association; RSE Group; Sellafield; Tarmac; and Tideway. Quotes of support from these organisations are available on request.

3. Mates in Mind was the result of a Health in Construction Leadership Group summit in early 2017 for construction industry CEOs and senior leaders who voted overwhelmingly to improve the mental wellbeing of its workforce. At an event on January 2017, Mates in Mind was launched, and the pilot phase was started. Mates in Mind was featured in the Thriving at Work report published in October 2017.

4. More details on Mates in Mind is available at www.matesinmind.org

5. Mates in Mind must only be referred to in acronym form as MinM.

Mates in Mind’s networks

Website: www.matesinmind.org
Twitter: www.twitter.com/matesinmind
Facebook: www.facebook.com/matesinmind
LinkedIn group: www.linkedin.com/company/matesinmind

Media requests

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