



World Suicide Prevention Day Pack



World Suicide Prevention Day

World Suicide Prevention Day takes place on 10 September each year. It was established by the International Association for Suicide Prevention and co-sponsored by the World Health Organisation to raise awareness of how to prevent suicide.

Why is it important?

We know that in 2023, there were 6,069 suicides registered in the England and Wales [1]. Around 3 in 4 people who died by suicide in 2023 were men [2]. Suicide is the biggest cause of death in men under the age of 50 [2]. We also know that workers in construction were at some of the highest risk of suicide in the country, at 3.7 times higher than the national average [3]. But there are other occupations throughout UK industry where groups are also vulnerable, including transport and logistics, farming and agriculture, and so on.

As the Office of National Statistics report [4] stated: attempting to explain suicide is complex as it is likely that a number of factors act together to increase risk, including some job-related features. We believe employers can play a critical role in helping to prevent suicides.

There is a moral case, but also a growing awareness of a strong business case which demonstrates that prevention needs to be at the heart of changes to company culture which employers wish to make.

World Suicide Prevention Day pack

This is why Mates in Mind is driving meaningful and long-lasting change across UK workplaces. We work with employers, supporting them to understand how they can take action and use a joined-up strategy to improve mental health within the wider business agenda.

We know it can be difficult to begin taking action. Where do you start? What do you say? Who do you talk to? How do you make it more than a one-off?

This pack is part of the growing suite of Mates in Mind resources which can be used by workplaces like yours to raise awareness and to begin moving towards a more inclusive and engaged workforce, whether they are direct employees or contractors.

Wherever and whenever your organisation began its mental health conversation, Mates in Mind is here to support you.



Together we are building positive mental health in and through work.

[1] [Suicide statistics - ONS](#)

[2] [Suicide statistics - ONS](#)

[3] [Suicide statistics - ONS](#)

[4] [Office of National Statistics report](#)

Taking steps to prevent suicide



Start the conversation, start to prevent suicide

Talking about mental health supports steps towards suicide prevention because those important conversations have the power to:

Increase awareness

Talking about the fact that we all have mental health and recognising that this is part of who we are, can help to normalise the conversation around the topic. This contributes to an environment where individuals have greater awareness and understanding of the challenge and how it can be tackled.

Creating awareness is an important step in a prevention strategy. It is important for individuals to be able to recognise when they may need support, for themselves or others, and how to get help.

Let people know they're not alone

Building awareness and understanding means that colleagues are able to support each other. Just as with safety, we recognise that we have a responsibility not to ignore an issue.

If someone has been impacted by suicide, talking about it can empower them to seek more help - and not feel alone.

Help bust the taboo

Individuals may be put off talking about suicide because of the stigma and taboo around the subject. The feelings of being alone, coupled with the thought they might be judged, can stop them reaching out for the support they need at a difficult time.

Knowing the facts helps start conversations

When talking about mental health and also suicide, it's important to know the facts.

The **statistics and trends resource** by Samaritans can support you in your conversations and help you understand the ins and outs of the topic.

Busting the taboo also means busting the myths

Busting myths like these can help you to support someone who might be affected by suicide. Samaritans have listed a number of these common misconceptions in the helpful resource below, explaining the facts around the topic.

For example:

Myth: People who say they are going to take their own life are just attention seeking and shouldn't be taken seriously.

Fact: People who say they want to end their lives should always be taken seriously.

It may well be that they want attention in the sense of calling out for help and helping them get support may save their life.

Myth: Talking about suicide is a bad idea as it may give someone the idea to try it.

Fact: Suicide can be a taboo topic. Often, people who are experiencing thoughts of suicide don't want to worry or burden anyone with how they feel and so they don't discuss it.

But, by asking someone directly about suicide, you give them permission to tell you how they feel. People who have experienced thoughts of suicide will often say what a huge relief it was to be able to talk about what they were experiencing.

Once someone starts talking they've got a better chance of discovering options that aren't suicide.

Myths about suicide

Support for individuals



Are you struggling to cope?

Remember, you are not alone and there is always someone to help you.

Below you can see the immediate actions you can take if you are struggling to cope.

Coping right now [5]

- Try not to think about the future – just focus on getting through today.
- Stay away from drugs and alcohol.
- Get yourself to a safe place, like a friend's house.
- Be around other people.
- Do something you usually enjoy, such as spending time with a pet.

Start the conversation

If you find it difficult to talk to someone you know, you could:

- **Call your GP** – ask for an emergency appointment.
- **Call 111 out of hours** – they will help you find the support and help you need.
- **Contact your mental health crisis team** – if you have one.
- **Call a confidential helpline** – there is a list on page 11.



If you are struggling, remember you are not alone.

There is always someone there to support you.

You can call the Samaritans on 116 123 if you need to talk to someone.

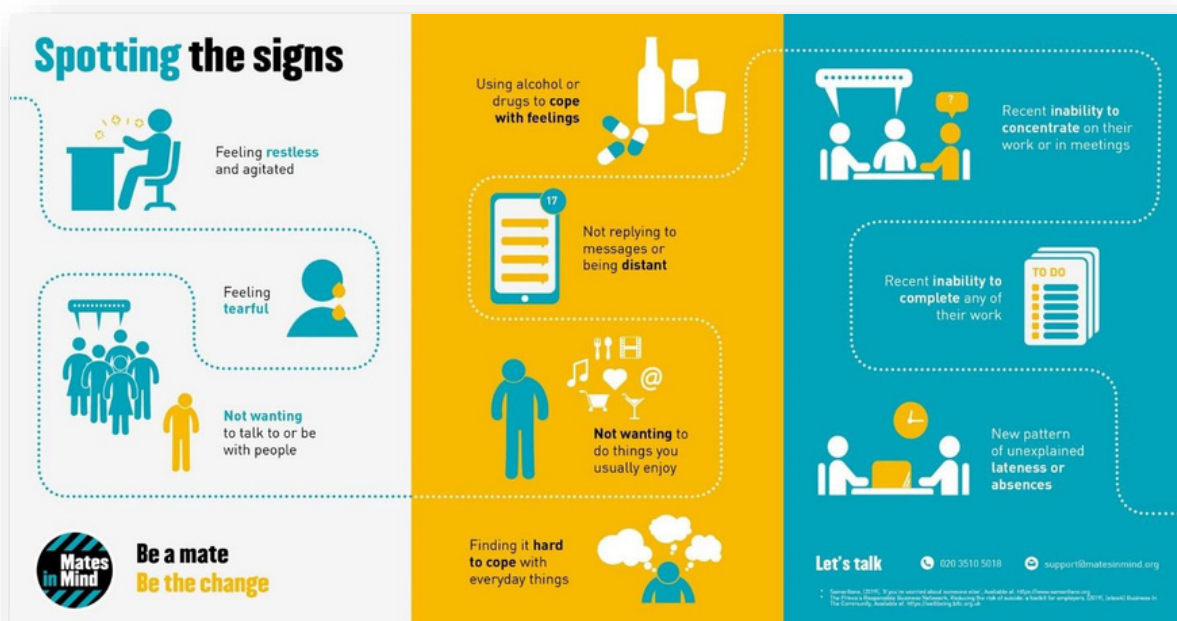
[5] [Coping with suicidal thoughts - NHS](#)

Spotting the signs that someone needs support

Signs that someone may need support

- Feeling restless and agitated.
- Feeling tearful.
- Not wanting to talk to or be with people.
- Not wanting to do things they usually enjoy.
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope with feelings.
- Finding it hard to cope with everyday things.
- Not replying to messages or being distant.
- Their work just doesn't appear to be at the same standard.
- New pattern of unexplained lateness or absences.
- Recent inability to concentrate on their work or in meetings.
- Recent inability to complete any of their work.

You might not always be able to spot these signs, and these emotions show up differently in everyone.



[Download this infographic](#)

Taking action when you spot the signs

Encourage them to talk about what they are experiencing and actively listen

Enabling individuals to speak about what they are experiencing can be the best way of supporting them in what they're going through.

Don't be afraid to start a conversation with someone if you are worried about them.

For tips on how to be an active listener when you start the conversation you can use **Samaritans SHUSH tips [6]**.

Encourage them to seek help for what they are struggling with

Remind the person: there is always someone to listen and support you with whatever you are experiencing.

If the person you are worried about is struggling to cope right now, see the immediate actions that they can take on page 11.

If you are supporting someone in the workplace you can suggest they talk with their Employee Assistance Programme, HR representative, occupational health department, or another health professional, such as their GP.

You can also signpost the person to confidential helplines if they are not comfortable talking to someone they know. Our **confidential helplines** resource has a range of services which support individuals to cope with what they are experiencing.

Follow up

When you are supporting someone, always follow up with other people where possible to ensure that action has been taken.

Take care of yourself

Supporting someone in distress can be distressing in itself. If you're helping someone who's struggling, make sure you take care of yourself as well.



[6] [SHUSH tips](#)

Further reading:

- [Supporting someone experiencing thoughts of suicide](#)
- [Supporting staff who are experiencing a mental ill- health](#)
- [Reducing the risk of suicide: toolkit for employers](#)

Supporting those impacted by suicide

When taking action and raising awareness about mental wellbeing, with an aim of preventing suicide, it's important to remember that suicide bereavement is thought to affect around half the general population and that 'grief doesn't stop, it changes' [6].

Therefore, it's important to consider that it doesn't matter how long ago somebody may have been touched by suicide, they may still need support – and your words and actions will mean something to them. However, it has been reported that '25% of people bereaved by suicide said they received no support after their loss. Only 1% said they preferred to cope without support' [6].

For further information, guidance and templates for supporting your team following a death by suicide, please download our **Post-Suicide Response Guide and Infographic** from the Resources page on our website.

The resource below can help you to find the words to reach out to someone who may need it.

"We all need a little help from time to time but for some who find it hard to communicate or understand their problems the world can feel a very dark and lonely place. I want to help by encouraging people to talk and for others to listen. Sometimes all it takes to make a difference is a kind understanding ear."

**SHEQ Co-ordinator and
Mates in Mind Member**

"When I first worked as a site manager, I never felt I could talk to anyone about any difficulties I faced, I didn't want to show any weakness as I thought people would think I couldn't do my job. I have had to work hard to get better at talking to others and keeping my mental health 'healthy'."

**Project Executive and
Mates in Mind Member**

[6] [Finding the words](#)

Confidential helplines

Contact the services below for free, confidential support.

Remember, you are not alone.

- **Samaritans: 116 123**

The Samaritans offer a safe place for you to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you. 24/7 support for people who are in despair or suicidal.

- **Mind Infoline: 0300 123 3393**

The team at the mental health charity Mind can provide information on a range of topics including types of mental health problem, where to get help, medication and alternative treatments.

- **Workplace Mental Health Support Service: 0300 456 8114**

Provided by Remploy, in partnership with Access to Work, WMHSS offers a free and confidential support service to help you remain in your job when it is being affected by stress, anxiety, depression or other mental health issue (whether diagnosed or not). If you are finding work difficult or you are absent from work, their advisors will help you make a wellbeing plan and support you with workplace adjustments, including how to get support from your employer.

- **Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM): 0800 58 58 58**

CALM provide a helpline for men in the UK who are down or have hit a wall, who need to talk or find information and support. The helpline is open 5pm–midnight, 365 days a year. They also offer a webchat service between the same hours.

- **Prevention of Young Suicide (Papyrus): 0300 102 2470**

Papyrus provides confidential help and advice to young people and anyone worried about a young person. Their HOPELineUK service is staffed by trained professionals who give non-judgemental support, practical advice and information to; children, teenagers and people up to the age of 35. They can be contacted on 0300 102 2470, by email: pat@papyrus-uk.org or webchat on their website.

- **Mates in Mind: Text "BEAMATE" to 85258**

Mates in Mind partner with Shout to offer a free and confidential mental health support service 24/7 to anyone in distress for free.

Employers guide to building a culture of prevention



An employer's role in suicide prevention

Employers and workplaces are part of a community's social fabric and therefore play a part in addressing this wider public health issue.

It doesn't matter when or why your organisation is taking action to prevent suicide, we are here to support you with the tools and resources you need to make a change.

At Mates in Mind, we empower organisations to build positive mental health in and through work by providing the skills, clarity and confidence so that employers can take **action** on mental ill-health through raising awareness, improving understanding, implementing effective interventions and ending the stigma that surrounds it.

We recognise that mental ill-health does not always necessarily cause suicide, and that 'most people who choose to end their lives do so for complex reasons'. However, we also understand that mental illness can play a part, with research showing that 'many people who die by suicide have a mental illness'.

The tools and resources here have been collated to support you in looking after the mental health and wellbeing of your workforce, in order to support suicide prevention more widely.

It is important to note that employers have a legal duty to protect employees from stress at work by doing an individual stress risk assessment and acting on it.



Did you know that employers have a legal duty to protect employees from stress at work?

Download our Guides to find out how you can make a positive change to your workplace.

The impacts of driving a culture of prevention

What is a culture of prevention?

When Boards and senior leaders take responsibility for creating a workplace culture founded in psychosocial safety, they are taking the positive step of moving from awareness to action.

If an organisation has integrated strategies, tools and support across its workforce, which support their employee's mental health and wellbeing within work, they have the foundations of a culture of prevention.

These actions, combined with improved awareness and understanding of the topics, opportunities for further education around both suicide prevention and mental health, and a commitment to improvement of these from across an organisation, all produce a workplace culture geared towards ongoing prevention.

How can a prevention culture support your workforce?

By creating an open and inclusive culture, employers can empower their workforces to have difficult but important conversations about mental health and suicide.

If a workforce is supported with the awareness and understanding of how and where they can get support, in an environment where they do not feel judged or restricted by stigma, they will feel more able to get the support they need.

A workplace culture where conversations are encouraged, and mental health and wellbeing are being proactively supported by employers, can be crucial in tackling the complex challenges of mental ill-health and suicide prevention.

We have witnessed this through the work we have done with our Members. Conversations like Patrick's can be critical to the lives of individuals throughout workforces.

"When I was asked to share my story and read it across sites and the company...it opened up a lot of conversations. I found a lot of people coming to me with their own stories and telling me how they were relieved that they had someone to talk to who understands."

Patrick, Site Manager and Mates in Mind Member

It doesn't matter where your organisation is on its mental health journey – whether you have never thought about it, have done some training or don't know if there's more you should be doing – Mates in Mind is here to help.

How to create positive mental health in and through work

Implementing a continuous and comprehensive approach can help reduce the likelihood of individuals reaching a crisis point, as supporting positive mental health in and through work becomes an integral part of everyone's role. Therefore, we recommend the following steps:

1. **Management:** Gaining management buy-in is an essential first step in ensuring that mental wellbeing is integrated into the organisation.
2. **Assessment:** Assess the current situation, identify any gaps in provision, and determine necessary changes.
3. **Targets:** Define your vision and plan how to achieve it.
4. **Education:** Provide the entire workforce with the skills, knowledge, tools and confidence to create a peer support network, which will contribute to building a safer workplace for everyone.
5. **Support:** Offer relevant provisions to enable employees, supply chains, and contractors to access the support they need when they need it. For SMEs, reaching out to main contractors or trade bodies to extend support provisions is encouraged.

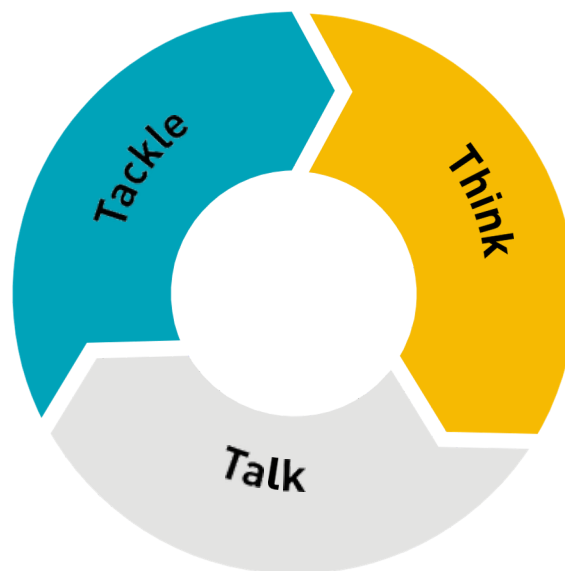
To ensure the success of your strategy, it is important to:

- **Communicate:** Provide relevant, timely, and accessible communication materials to the workforce, demonstrating an open and supportive culture to address the stigma of mental health and encourage conversations. Free posters and resources are available on our website: <https://bit.ly/MinMHowWeHelp>
- **Mentoring:** create peer support networks across the organisation, supply chain, contractors. The aim is to educate and support all employees, as well as exchange and develop ideas to gain the all-important buy-in from the wider organisation etc.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** as part of an inclusive culture, it is important that the diverse workforce know that their needs – physical, mental, financial, religious, physiological etc. – are known, understood, respected, valued and integrated.
- **Policies:** ensure you have the right policies in place, and that they are regularly reviewed and updated as circumstances change.
- **Values:** to work, the beliefs and values must be exhibited by all employees, including calling out any examples of someone exhibiting inappropriate behaviours.
- **Environment:** Limit access to means of suicide at work.
- **Progress:** Review the above stages at least every two years to evaluate the current situation, demonstrate progress, and identify new targets for the future.
- **Reporting:** Provide the Board with regular updates on amalgamated and anonymised employee mental health, and progress against plan for improving organisational mental health.

A 3Ts approach to supporting your workforce

When addressing suicide and mental ill-health in your workforce it is important to take a joined-up approach. Both mental ill-health and suicide are highly complex issues, impacted by a number of factors from across an individual's life.

Therefore, we have developed an Employers Action Plan to enable employers to change the way they **think, talk and tackle** mental health within their organisation. By taking this joined-up approach employers can support the positive mental wellbeing of their employees in and through work.



Our Employers Action Plan explores how you can use our 3Ts approach to develop a preventative culture, taking action to improve mental health and preventing suicide.

Employers Action Plan: creating a culture of prevention

Think

General awareness

By improving general awareness about mental ill-health and suicide, organisations can begin to challenge the stigma around the topics. How can you help?

- Displaying awareness posters.
- Making your workforce aware of the facts around mental ill-health and suicide.
- Making your workforce aware that there is always support available to those who need it.

Talk

Start the conversation

Depending on the context of your discussion, there are many ways the conversation can be started in work. How can you help?

- Team meetings.
- Toolbox talks.
- Presentations or briefs.
- Conversations with line-managers.

Discuss the topic using sensitive and inclusive language

- Ensure communications are inclusive of those across your workforce, regardless of: gender, culture, religion, race, sexuality etc.
- Ensure that the language you use is considerate of those who might be impacted by the topic, including: those who have been bereaved by suicide, or individuals who may need support themselves.

Lead by example

When seeking to drive a meaningful change, it is crucial that those at a director/manager level within an organisation show that they are actively supporting good mental wellbeing in the context of work. How can you help?

- Discuss mental health and suicide prevention with others within management and leadership roles.
- Attend briefings and talks organised to discuss and tackle the issue.
- Attend managers' training to equip yourself with the tools and understanding necessary to support individuals within your workforce.

Tackle

Access to, and signposting available services

By making sure you are clear what benefits and support are available directly to staff or workers in your organisation or elsewhere. How can you help?

- Signposting to internal support: making people aware of your organisation's workplace mental health policy; access to Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and individuals within the organisation that are championing this issue.
- Signposting to external support services such as: confidential helplines, resources and organisations.

Training

By attending training, individuals can develop the necessary understanding and skills to help support how they think, talk and promote better mental health. Individuals from across all roles within an organisation can benefit from training, such as:

- General awareness training.
- Manage the conversation training.
- Mental Health First Aid training.

How can we support you with your plan?

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

Our dedicated team of Programme 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**.

If you want to speak to someone about this pack or any other queries, please contact your Programme Manager or the team.



020 3510 5018



support@matesinmind.org

Let's talk

summarises how Mates in Mind supports you and your organisation

Mates in Mind works with you to



Post-Suicide Response Guide

Whilst we advocate for the creation of workplace cultures that emphasise prevention, we know that deaths by suicide may still occur. Therefore, in order to support organisations through that challenging time, we have created a Post-Suicide Response Guide and accompanying infographic.

The guide has been created to assist employers, including HR teams and managers, to support individuals following the loss of a colleague to suicide. Although no two instances of loss are the same, this guide aims to provide recommendations for responding to suicide which are flexible, person-centred, and empathetic. Through being prepared, businesses can create workplace environments where everyone feels supported at all times.

The guide can be downloaded from the resources page on our website:
<https://www.matesinmind.org/training-and-resources/information-and-resources>.



Disclaimer:

Mental illness is diagnosed by a healthcare professional such as a doctor. This guide does not provide medical advice or replace a professional health crisis intervention in the work place.

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