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To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Mental Health Awareness Week 10-16 May 2021

'Mental Health Foundation' and 'Healthwatch'

Hosted by the 'Mental Health Foundation', this week 10-16 May 2021, starting today, is Mental Health Awareness Week. The coronavirus pandemic has impacted people in many different ways and this week gives us all the opportunity to think about our own, and other people's mental wellbeing.

'Healthwatch' state that one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year and Mental Health Awareness Week aims to get people talking about their mental health and reduce the stigma that can stop people from asking for help.

The theme this year is 'Nature' and a Mental Health Foundation research report entitled "mental health impacts of the Pandemic" showed that going for walks outside was one of our top coping strategies and 45% of those surveyed reported being in green spaces had been vital for their mental health wellbeing.

As well as continuing to raise awareness of mental health in general, the aim for this week and beyond is to inspire more people to connect with nature and the outside environment in new ways, noticing the impact that this connection can have for their mental health.

Getting out into the countryside, open spaces, parks, reserves, connecting with pastimes, hobbies, interest groups, clubs, associations, charities, good causes etc can have the unique ability to increase creativity, reduce feelings of social isolation and be effective in protecting our mental health, and preventing distress.

The Mental Health Foundation would like people to think about how nature can support their mental health, for example: Is there green space near to you that you could access more often or is there a friend or family member that you have not seen for a long time and could arrange to meet up with them in a local park, rural area or beauty spot?

Mental Health UK's – 5 Ways To Wellbeing

The '**5 Ways to Wellbeing**' are a set of pillars which are key to improving our mental health. They are geared around themes of social connectedness, physical activity, awareness, learning, and giving.

Across the week, those interested can join in by building in some small yet effective activities into daily lives to feel more positive and able to get the most out of life! The 5 Ways are:

1. Connect

Connection is about relating to one another and feeling understood. Speak to the people in your life, be it friends, family, colleagues or neighbours. Build new connections to expand your circles – this could be at work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Developing these connections will support and enrich you every day.

2. Take notice

Take stock of your surroundings, be curious, catch sight of the beautiful. Being in a state of 'mindfulness' has been shown to be associated with a positive mental state. Greater awareness of the world around us helps us see the unusual and notice simple pleasures like the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you're walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be present to your feelings and environment. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

3. Give

Giving encapsulates many things – from showing goodwill and generosity of spirit to giving presents and giving up our time. Evidence suggests that 'giving back' or helping others promotes wellbeing for all ages. Why not do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. You could even volunteer your time with a charity or join an online community to give and receive peer support in equal measure. The key to giving is to look outwards, as well as inwards. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

4. Be Active

Engaging in regular physical activity is known to go hand in hand with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups. Not everyone needs to be a fitness fanatic to boost your wellness through activity. Simply step outside, exercise your green fingers or organise a games night. You could go for a walk or run, cycle or dance. Exercise releases hormones that make you feel good. Most importantly, being active is about discovering a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

5. Keep learning

Learning something new is good for your brain and often exciting for the learner. Trying something different, rediscovering an old interest or signing up for that course you've always wanted to do can also improve our confidence and widen our skillset. Take on a new responsibility at work, do some arts and crafts or pick up an untried recipe. The challenge and enjoyment of learning new things gives a sense of fulfilment that is second to none.

There is further information on "**5-Ways-To-Wellbeing**" plus lots of good Help and a variety of helpful information, support and advice to help you manage your mental health and wellbeing or support someone you know at the **Mental Health UK Website:-**
<https://mentalhealth-uk.org>

"5-Ways-To-Wellbeing" Poster

See attached this useful information and guidance Poster/Leaflet on 5 ways to wellbeing that can be downloaded and printed off for distribution to workplaces.

(Mental Health UK is formed by a coalition of 4 UK Mental Health Charities; 'Re-Think Mental Health' England, 'HAFAL' Wales, 'Support In Mind' Scotland and 'Mindwise' Northern Ireland)

NHS Mental Wellbeing Audio Guides

The NHS has introduced a series of mental wellbeing audio guides people can listen to, to help boost your mood and tackle Mental Health issues. You can listen to them privately, in your own time, to help you through feelings such as anxiety or a low mood. The Audio guides available are:

- Audio Guide: Low mood and depression. In this audio guide, a doctor explains what you can do to help yourself cope with low mood and depression.
- Audio Guide: Anxiety control training. In this audio guide, a doctor explains how you can take control of anxiety.
- Audio Guide: Sleep problems. In this audio guide, a doctor explains what you can do to give yourself the best chance of a good night's sleep.
- Audio Guide: Low confidence and assertiveness. In this audio guide, a doctor gives you tips to help build your confidence.
- Audio Guide: Unhelpful thinking. In this audio guide, a doctor helps you to replace negative thoughts with more positive thinking.

The Audio Guides are at:- <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/>

The NHS Mental Health website has other useful guides, tools and activities such as:

- 10 Stress Busters
- Exercise for Depression
- 5 Steps to Mental Wellbeing

Depression and Anxiety Mood self-assessment quiz:

When it comes to emotions, it can sometimes be hard to recognise or admit we're not 100%. If you're not sure how you're feeling, you can try the NHS [mood self-assessment](#). If you're 16 or over, this depression and anxiety self-assessment quiz can help you better understand how you've been feeling recently. With each question, think about how you've been feeling over the last 2 weeks. The quiz is at:- <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/depression-anxiety-self-assessment-quiz/>

MHFA Address Your Stress Toolkit

In 2018 Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England launched their "Address Your Stress Toolkit" to support that year's campaign and the Toolkit remains a useful resource. This included a set of practical resources designed to help people better understand and manage stress. The toolkit is still available to those wishing to use it on the above link. "Address Your Stress Toolkit" is available at:- <https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/address-your-stress/>

MHFA "supporting your mental health whilst working at home" Video

Mental Health First Aid England (MHFA) have produced a short video 'supporting your mental health whilst working at home' which is available on the following link: <https://mhfaengland.org/remote-working-resources/everyone/>

MHFA 10 Keys To Happier Living

See attached this useful information and guidance packed Poster/Leaflet that can be downloaded and printed off for distribution to workplaces.

PHE 'Every Mind Matters Campaign'

This campaign was launched to support the nation's mental health, as half of adults say they are more worried during this current lockdown than at the start of the pandemic and lockdown in March 2020.

A new survey, commissioned by Public Health England (PHE) at the start of the current government restrictions, reveals the impact coronavirus (COVID-19) has had on adults' mental wellbeing across the country.

The research found that almost half (49%) felt that the pandemic has impacted negatively on their mental health and wellbeing (53% of women and 45% of men). Of those surveyed, significant proportions of the population said they had been experiencing more anxiety (46%), stress (44%), sleep problems (34%) and low mood (46%) over the course of the pandemic. The following were the most common reasons people thought the lockdown had negatively impacted their mental health:

- 56% missing friends and family; and loneliness 33%.
- 53% uncertainty about the future; with financial and employment worries 27%.
- 53% worried about family's safety and health.

However, at the same time 3 in 5 (60%) of those asked say they feel hopeful about the future. Many adults (75%) reported that they are planning to take or have taken steps to look after their mental wellbeing, with exercising regularly (32%) eating well (29%) and talking more to family and friends (28%) being the main actions.

To support people during this time, PHE launched a nationwide "Better Health - Every Mind Matters" campaign to support people to take action to look after their mental health and wellbeing and help support others such as family and friends. The campaign encourages people to get a free [NHS-approved Mind Plan](#) from the "Every Mind Matters Website". By answering 5 simple questions, adults will get a personalised action plan with practical tips to help them deal with stress and anxiety, boost their mood, sleep better and feel more in control. Over 2.6 million Mind Plans have been created since it launched.

The "Every Mind Matters Covid-19 Hub" also includes practical tips and support on how adults can deal with uncertainty, how to cope with money and job worries and how to look after both their own and their family's mental wellbeing while staying at home.

The campaign is supported by a coalition of leading mental health charities, including 'Mind', 'Samaritans', 'Young Minds' and 'Rethink Mental Health'.

- The Every Mind Matters Website is at: - <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>
- To get an Every Mind Matters Mind Plan By Answering 5 Questions in an 'Interactive Quiz' go to:

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/your-mind-plan-quiz/>

Royal Mail Group

Royal Mail Group the largest employer of CWU Grades is initiating a comprehensive awareness and information campaign during Mental Health Awareness Week covering the Occupational Health support package for the workforce and signposting workers to a number of support organisations and charities. The RMG First Class Support service is completely confidential and independent. RMG workforce members can Visit: 'www.rmgfirstclasssupport.co.uk' or download the 'Lifeworks' app to access health assessments, tailored support programmes and content. RMG employees can call 0345 266 5060 or use the online chat facility via the website or app if they would like to talk to someone about any physical or mental health-related matter, for lifestyle advice, or for direct access to 'free' counselling treatments. New users of

the website or app can sign up using a unique invitation code, which is 'RMG-' and their payroll number, for example RMG-12345678. The "Feeling First Class – Mental Health" support and advice is on the Health and Wellbeing Intranet pages, and the page includes stress guidance, support and training as well as signposting to internal and external mental health support services. The RMG - Rowland Hill Fund: Tel: 0345 600 4586 Website: www.rowlandhillfund.org offers financial aid to colleagues, pensioners and their families in times of need. See attached RMG Mental Health Awareness Week information. Neyber: Through Royal Mail Group's 'My Bundle' is a financial wellbeing option where RMG employees can access debt consolidation loans and financial education. Visit: 'mybundle.royalmail.com'.

Shout 85258

Shout 85258 is a free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope. The charity Shout 85258 launched publicly in May 2019 and since then they've had more than 500,000 conversations with people who are anxious, stressed, depressed, suicidal or overwhelmed and who need immediate support. As a digital service, Shout 85258 has become increasingly critical since Covid-19, being one of the few mental health support services able to operate as normal at this time. Shout has 2,300 empathetic, trained volunteers who take conversations with texters, listening and supporting them to get to a calmer place. Shout Clinical Supervisors oversee and monitor the real-time support and conversations 24/7. Clinical supervisors can escalate texters to the emergency services via a direct line if they are deemed at imminent risk. The most common issues which emerge during a conversation are: suicide (34%), depression (34%), anxiety (32%), relationship (27%), loneliness (18%) and self-harm (15%).

Samaritans

If you're struggling or in distress - It's best to speak to someone now. The Samaritans Helpline runs 24/7 and you can **call 116 123** if you want to talk to someone now.

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Website: <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>

Get involved

The Mental Health Foundation and MHFA want Mental Health First Aiders, Trade Union Reps, Mental Health Ambassadors and Champions to support the Mental Health Awareness Week campaigns and to make the most of the information and toolkits provided during Mental Health Awareness Week and beyond. The CWU Health Safety and Environment Department is joining with MHFA England, Mental Health Foundation, Mind, Young Minds, Re-Think Mental Health, Time To Change, Shout and the Samaritans in supporting Mental Health Awareness Week. We are therefore encouraging Reps to get involved with the campaigns within the Union, as well as with friends, family and colleagues, bearing fully in mind the obvious limitations this year due to the Coronavirus/Covid-19 Pandemic Lockdown situation. This effort and initiative doesn't end after this week and we would encourage Branches, Reps and Regions to organise campaigns on an ongoing basis using the resources available.

CWU Mental Health Strategy

Steve Jones NEC member and Chair of the CWU national 'Mental Health Strategy Project Team' issued the following message today at the start of Mental Health Awareness Week:

"A major component of the CWU Mental Health Strategy is to build support for the 700 or so Reps that have had Awareness or Mental Health First Aid training. Last year each region nominated a 'lead' to help deliver this as well as assist in building a mental health strategy within their respective regions. We have set up a national network for the 'leads' and we are currently increasing this support from 1 to 2 per Region. So far a number of 'Stress Workshops' and discussions with Regions and their Executives have been held. Each of these initiatives have been received with huge support and enthusiasm. It is evident that mental health is a massive issue which touches the lives of all of us in one way or another, the pandemic has brought this into sharp focus. I would like to give a massive thanks to all of our



Reps for the magnificent job that they are doing in supporting fellow members in increasingly difficult times. The most important message I can give is don't suffer in silence."

Useful Contacts:

- **Mental Health Foundation:** <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk>
- **Shout Mental Health** Text Service is a free, nationwide, 24/7, text based service. [Text "Shout" to 85258.](#)
- **Mind:** Information and Guidance around managing your mental health and wellbeing at this time. **Call 116 123** Email: jo@samaritans.org Website: <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>
- **Rethink Mental Illness:** Resources for looking after your wellbeing and managing your money during the Covid-19 outbreak. **Call: 0808 801 0525 or visit** <https://www.rethink.org>
- **Stepchange:** Offering expert, tailored advice and practical solutions to problem debt, to contact the UK's leading debt charity **Call 0800 138 1111 or visit** www.stepchange.org.
- **National Domestic Abuse helpline:** is available, including for concerned friends. **Call 0808 2000 247** 24 hours a day or visit www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk.
- **Cruse Bereavement Care:** **Phone: 0808 808 1677 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)** or visit <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>
- **Support in Mind Scotland:** **Phone: 0131 662 4359** (Monday to Friday 9am and 5pm). Email: info@supportinmindscotland.org.uk Website: <https://www.supportinmindscotland.org.uk>
- **MindWise Northern Ireland:** **Phone: 0808 802 0020** Email: covid19@adviceni.net Text: **ACTION to 81025** Website: <https://www.mindwisenv.org>
- **Hafal Wales** **Tel: 01792 816600** **Email: hafal@hafal.org** Website: <https://www.hafal.org>

Together, we can realise our shared vision of where anyone affected by mental illness can get the appropriate support and care to live healthy, fulfilling lives. Help us spread the word through awareness raising and continue to amplify the message of "You Are Not Alone."

Attachments:

- Mental Health UK – '5 Ways To Wellbeing Poster/Leaflet'
- Mental Health First Aid (Eng) – '10 Keys To Happier Living' Poster/Leaflet
- Mental Health Foundation – Mental Health Awareness Week Poster
- RMG – Mental Health Awareness Week – Briefings & Poster

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer



Mental Health
Awareness Week
2021

Mental Health Awareness Week starts today

Join the movement. Connect with nature. Get involved.



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