The Thrive Standard

## A guide for employers

42ND STREET

Introduction

In 2017, the Government commissioned the 'Thriving At Work' report. This report suggests a number of core standards to help better manage mental health in the workplace.

These standards include: a mental health at work plan, promoting communications and open conversations by raising awareness, reducing stigma, and to provide a mechanism for monitoring actions and outcomes.

In 2020, we released our THRIVE report, which is written by young people, with lived experience of mental health conditions.
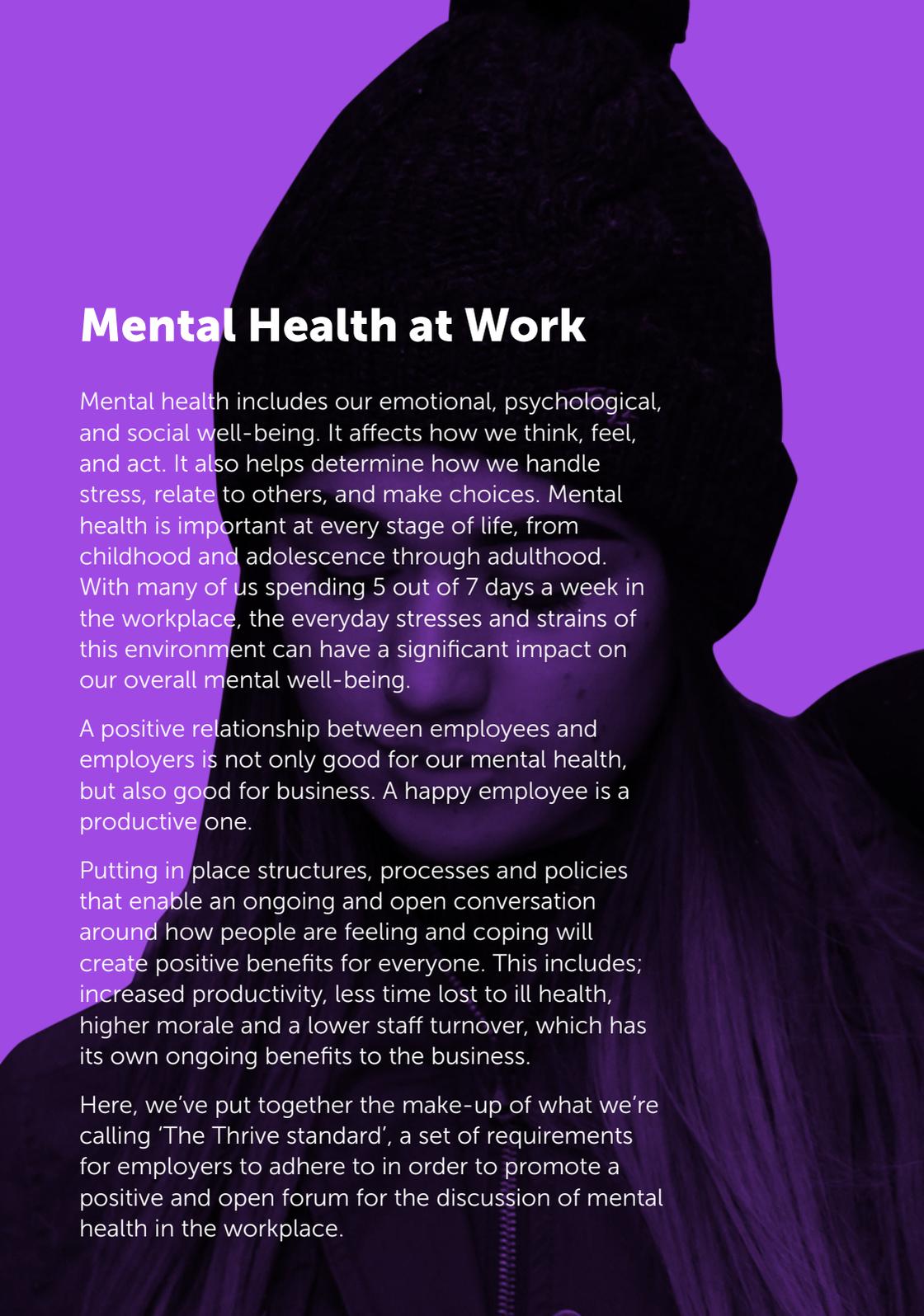
Mental Health at Work

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. With many of us spending 5 out of 7 days a week in the workplace, the everyday stresses and strains of this environment can have a significant impact on our overall mental well-being.

A positive relationship between employees and employers is not only good for our mental health, but also good for business. A happy employee is a productive one.

Putting in place structures, processes and policies that enable an ongoing and open conversation around how people are feeling and coping will create positive benefits for everyone. This includes; increased productivity, less time lost to ill health, higher morale and a lower staff turnover, which has its own ongoing benefits to the business.

Here, we've put together the make-up of what we're calling 'The Thrive standard', a set of requirements for employers to adhere to in order to promote a positive and open forum for the discussion of mental health in the workplace.

The Thrive Standard

Actioning these **9** standards are the key building blocks to creating a culture in your business that has your employees mental health at the forefront.

1 – A Mental Health Policy
The World Health Organisation believes a mental health policy in the workplace benefits well-being, presence and production.

2 – Mental health training programs
Knowledge is power, and it is important that you and your team are aware of best practice and support in offering your employees the best possible environment for their mental wellbeing

3 – Proactive approach
If mental health is an integral part of the workplace it makes it an everyday thing. For example bringing it into Interviews, reviews, team meetings, general chat reduces the stigma. Put mental health into all aspects of the business and 'normalise' it – make it part of your culture.

4 – Encourage & facilitate open conversation
This follows on from point 3. If mental health is tucked away, it creates a stigma, and there are negative connotations that become attached to it. By bringing mental health out, into the everyday of your business and communicating about it openly, you remove that stigma and people will feel empowered to share their burdens and feelings, in confidence, of course. You can then work together to address and overcome any issues.

5 – Flexible working
Flexibility means different things to different people, and all industries have different challenges. At the very minimum, employers should look to offer 'reasonable adjustments' in order to support their employees' mental wellbeing.

6 – Mental health days

Mental health is similar to physical health, and occasionally, as our bodies need to recover, so too does our mind. This is a simple policy – allow employees to take time off for their mental health, in the same way, and on the same terms as they can take sick leave.

7 – Give your employees time

It's important that employees are given the time to complete their jobs to the best of their ability and this includes time to step away from day to day duties in order to reflect on and discuss important issues that, if unaddressed could become bigger problems.

8 – Lead by example

Take it upon yourself and your management team to pick up the mental health mantle. Gentle check-ins with staff to make sure they're OK. Sharing your own concerns and challenges will create empathy and show it is OK to not be OK, and to talk about it. Take the first steps and your team will follow your example.

9 – Be positive

In a nutshell, put plans in place to make people feel good at work. Regular breaks, free tea, coffee and biscuits, notice boards with fun info on, team building exercises – create a culture of happiness and positivity. And smile. Smiling is free. And infectious.

Resources

Mental health is a complex thing, but there's loads of information, resources and help out there for businesses and individuals to help us understand it, and put plans in place to improve it.

42nd Street is an innovative Greater Manchester young people's mental health charity with 40 years' experience of providing free and confidential services to young people who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health and emotional wellbeing.
www.42ndstreet.org.uk

Sanctus wants to make it easy for employees to talk to professionals about their mental health. Their mission it to create a world where mental health is viewed the same as physical health. One day, we're going to put the world's first mental health gyms on the high street.
www.sanctus.io

Mind provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. We campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding.

Training

We've listed some of the courses available on our website visit **thrivestandard.co.uk/resources** to get more information.

The Thrive Report

As a group of young people, we were concerned about mental health in the workplace so we decided to conduct research into the issue to get some real insights.
This culminated in the creation of the Thrive Report.

Our research identified 3 three main themes that young people felt were required in order to creative a positive workplace. These themes were identified and defined as;

- **Support**
- **Flexibility**
- **Workplace culture.**

In the report, we review each of these themes and, from the responses we gathered and further desk research, we created a set of recommendations that employers should follow in order to ensure they are doing all they can to enable young workers to thrive in their place of work.

The facts and stats the report highlighted are stark and show the real need for those who employ people to recognise their role in their workers mental health and to give them the tools and the confidence to engage with their employer and have open and honest conversations about their mental health in order to reduce any chance of their work life contributing to any negative impact on their mental wellbeing.

You can read the full report, with all the recommendations and details at **thethrivestandard.co.uk**

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