

Mental Health First Aiders

Employer: AkzoNobel

Area: BHAW

Theme: Stress and Mental Health



Provide :

Improved Mental Health Awareness across the site.

Alex Wardle, Shirley Spoons, Eliot Harrigan, Jamie Wilson, Mick Keen, Michelle Neale, Jeff Potts, Kevin Rowell, Ian Lawton, Dan Hume, Simon Nicholson, Donna Armstrong, Clare Gordon.

Base case

- There had been an increase in team members suffering from mental health concerns. Colleagues were concerned for their workmates and wanted to do something to help.
- Employees were sharing mental health concerns with line leaders. There was no opportunity or outlet to provide support at an early stage.
- We looked at the increased sickness and absence rate due to mental health concerns, as well as our annual Health Needs Analyses Survey which highlighted mental health needs as a primary concern.
- Team members now have greater awareness of the support available for those suffering from



mental health concerns. We also have 13 dedicated Mental Health First Aiders who are identifiable and ready to provide support to their colleagues on site.

- Mental Health First Aiders are spread throughout the teams. We will ensure that our mental health first aiders maintain their level of training, monitoring the training expiry dates and offering the opportunity to become a Mental Health First Aider to employees on an annual basis.

“This team have volunteered to complete training to be mental health first aiders. Over the past 18 months, mental health concerns have become more prevalent so the skills that have been learnt will support and signpost our teams as early as possible when concerns arise. These skills could be invaluable at work or at home in crisis situations and could be the difference between life and death.” Stephen Burn, HSE Specialist

Impact:

- Our site now has far greater awareness of our mental health needs. Our mental health first aiders are utilising their training and supporting their colleagues.
- As a response to our increased mental health awareness, one of our process technicians asked to share information with his shift concerning suicide awareness. Andy Hodgson led a well researched talk-in on a very personal subject. This was a superb example of care for his colleagues and the ultimate demonstration of our cultural principles here in Ashington.
- Achieve the following:
 - Management procedure in place for health support.
 - Our teams are more engaged.
 - Line Leaders have an avenue of support from our mental health first aid team.
 - We have seen a reduction in our sickness/absences due to mental health concerns. Those who are returning to work after a mental health absence have a support network in place.

AkzoNobel Ashington submitted our Mental Health First Aiders initiative for our AkzoNobel Global TakeCare Awards 2022. We were delighted to discover that we won and hope more AkzoNobel sites will follow our lead in promoting mental health awareness throughout our teams.

“As one of our sites Mental Health First Aiders I wanted to do something for my shift mates. I am passionate about promoting suicide awareness, and so I gave a presentation to my colleagues sharing important information about this serious issue. You never know what people are going through, and it is essential people know they can ask for help.” Andy





Hodgson, Shift Engineer B Shift."

"Our Mental Health First Aiders are always available to our teams to provide support and a listening ear. Our employees know that they are there to talk, and they want to help in any way they can. Sometimes it's just good to be able to talk." Shirley Spoons, Production Manager "

