

Maintaining a successful mental wellbeing programme

Yorkshire Building Society (YBS) is the third largest building society in the UK. YBS is proudly part of the Mindful Employer Leeds Network and backs the YEP #SpeakYourMind campaign to help make Leeds mentally healthy.

ABOUT YORKSHIRE BUILDING SOCIETY

INDUSTRY

Financial Services

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

3,700

OFFICE LOCATIONS

10 regions across the UK – split across office, branches and contact centre divisions

AVG. AGE

40

MALE - FEMALE RATIO

35:65

1 Start with 'Why'

YBS is committed to supporting colleagues to think and act about mental health in the workplace because *“colleagues play a vital role in everything we do; in return we want to make sure that they feel respected, valued and proud to work for Yorkshire Building Society.”* – Sarah Moore, Wellbeing Lead, YBS.

With the growing pressure on healthcare services and conversation around mental health in the media, an organisation’s responsibility to offer support has increased dramatically in recent years. Mental wellbeing wasn’t a conversation topic at YBS before starting the wellbeing programme, but the analysis of 3rd party insurer and EAP data, along with employee feedback, highlighted that there was a profound demand for more information on the subject. The stigma attached to mental ill-health, as well as the perceived risk of disclosure, was something that YBS knew couldn’t be overcome right away and would require an ongoing strategy to help change perceptions.

2 Cover all bases

“We established a comprehensive wellbeing programme focusing on mental, physical and financial health which aims to help our colleagues stay well, and to support them when they’re not.”

— MICHELLE ELSWORTH, YBS TOTAL REWARD LEAD



Time to change



Intranet hub, financial, mental, physical wellbeing



Mental health awareness



Unmind

YBS began by signing up to the Time to Change pledge in 2017. They launched a ‘My Wellbeing’ intranet hub — a ‘one-stop-shop’ highlighting all the resources available. 100 colleagues participated in mental health & resilience workshops, and a bespoke ‘managing mental health at work’ training programme was developed for managers in conjunction with the Mental Health Foundation, which was piloted by 80 of their colleagues in Leeds. As part of this Year 1 strategy, they also launched Unmind as a digital support platform.

To support programme adoption, YBS ensured that they had leadership buy-in, but they also empowered key champions across the business to develop bottom-up engagement amongst colleagues. Wellbeing tools were readily promoted and cross-referenced across the business to highlight helpful features and the advantages of their use.

3 Well 'doing'

Wellbeing isn’t static, and it’s key to remain proactive and flexible; always looking for the next step in providing organisational support. YBS’s initial framework started a conversation and helped to increase mental health awareness, as well as providing the resources necessary to support colleagues. The focus now turns to encouraging more proactive use of services, providing further education on various mental health topics and continuing to embed wellbeing within

all areas of the organisation. Weaving mental wellbeing into YBS's culture has taken many forms: ensuring that offering support is part of a manager's role, and that managers themselves are supported, demonstrating how wellbeing links with YBS's D&I approach and integrating mental health campaigns amidst internal communications. Within this, there still lies a challenge: highlighting the importance and relevance of mental wellbeing outside of mental ill-health.

YBS have used the following approaches to help address this and appeal to a wider audience:

- Sharing colleagues' stories (including positive self-care tips).
- Using calendar opportunities to contextualise mental health and show relevance to all colleagues. Communications piggy-back off various events throughout the year, such as Time to Talk Day in February and Mental Health Awareness Week in May. Topics that position mental health as an everyday part of life (for example, sleep) and highlighting the benefit of proactively looking after it are also key for engagement.
- Expanding the provision of mental health training to 300 managers following a trial in 2017, in conjunction with the Mental Health Foundation, has increased mental health awareness, reduced stigma, and increased confidence in both talking about mental health and offering support.

Step-by-step, the wellbeing strategy is becoming apart of YBS's lifeblood.

4

Remember your why

YBS recognises the importance of measurement to assess the ongoing value and relevance of its resources for colleagues and the business. They evaluate individual service usage and run surveys to readdress the wider programme. Since launch, YBS has seen 1150 colleagues complete the Mental Health Foundation Awareness e-learning course, 40% of the workforce register with Unmind, and they have noticed an increase in self-service — suggesting empowerment and proactivity. As well as the quantitative data and anecdotal feedback, highlighting individual impact has been hugely important in measuring success.



“We have some amazing resources as a group. I've been lucky enough to trial the new Mental Health e-learning module and it's marvelous! I've also taken part in a Q&A session around mental health which was really helpful. For me the thing that has made the world of difference is Unmind. It is seriously incredible, I use it every day and it's changed my life. I urge you to have a look at the resources we have as a group because we are extremely lucky to have them. Not all employers take mental health seriously” — YBS COLLEAGUE

YBS's holistic and ever-evolving approach is diverse and inclusive. Importantly, it hasn't been implemented as a detached policy. YBS recognises the cultural influence on mental health and the important roles management play in facilitating access to and engagement with their resources. All their efforts have been honoured with two recent accolades — winning the Best Mental Health Initiative — Large Company at Legal & General's 'Not a Red Card' awards and the Best Mental Health Strategy at The REBA Wellbeing Awards.



“We're passionate about everyone getting the right support at the right time and a organisations like YBS are paramount to making this a reality. YBS are truly committed to creating and sustaining a healthy, happy and very human organisation. It's been a privilege to partner with them to empower employees to take positive and proactive steps towards improving their mental health.”

— UNMIND CEO & CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, DR NICK TAYLOR



Users who have completed the Unmind Learning & Development programmes focused on mental health literacy, communication and supporting others, have seen an average improvement score of **33%** in their understanding of the subjects.