**Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Growing social awareness around the significance of poor wellbeing and mental health, including its impact on physical health, has led Smurfit Kappa to shift the needle and create and roll out a Mental Health and Well-being Strategy.

Smurfit Kappa launched its strategy in April 2019 with the full backing of the UK Senior management team.

“Empowering colleagues to take personal responsibility for maintaining and improving their own wellbeing is a cornerstone of our approach to Health and Safety. In reality the training we have provided means that colleagues now feel more confident to ask for help, to support one another and to signpost further appropriate help when the assistance of a supportive friend is not quite enough. It’s creating such a buzz in the business, it’s tangible.” Trudy Rush UK HR Director

The aim of the strategy:

* **Promote** a range of health and wellbeing activities which focus on physical, mental and social health
* While **empowering colleagues** to take personal responsibility for maintaining and improving their own wellbeing

As part of the strategy, the company have chosen to focus on the Workplace Wellbeing Charter[(https://w](http://www.wellbeingcharter.org.uk/))ww[.wellbeingcharter.org.uk/)](http://www.wellbeingcharter.org.uk/)) as the foundation for review of 8 topic areas.

*“Most of us know of someone with a mental health issue and are aware it can happen to anyone at Smurfit Kappa UK. “We all want to support, but often aren’t sure how to.” Jackie McDermott, Head of Engagement and Communication*

To implement the strategy we needed to identify a partner who we could work with who shared the same values and beliefs as we have. We identified and invited everyday people [(https://w](http://www.wellbeingcharter.org.uk/))ww. [everyday-people.co.uk](https://www.everyday-people.co.uk/)) to be our preferred partner.

**What have we achieved since the launch in April 2019?**

* Established a UK Health & Wellbeing Committee.
* 262 Mental Health First Aiders trained (All sites) – All Volunteers.
* 415 Mental Health First Aid Champions (All sites) trained.
* We have reached out to all of our UK and Ireland sites.
* Local sites have established active mental health and wellbeing committees.
* Bi Monthly support sessions for our Mental Health First Aiders.
* Regular tool box talks with colleagues.
* Dedicated Mental Health and Wellbeing noticeboards
* Mental Health and wellbeing community intranet with resources that can accessed. And on line support.
* Mental Health First-Aiders also set up ‘Let’s Talk’ rooms on-site where people can talk about their problems in confidence.

Our Mental Health First-Aiders have been taught how to spot early problems, approach people, create safe spaces, and signpost colleagues to appropriate services.

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Our Mental Health First Aiders have chosen the green ribbon logo, and this is openly communicated included on posters and noticeboards to identify them.

Prior to launching our strategy, there was some confidential provision in place via the Lifeworks Employee Assistance Programme, however since the strategy launch there has been a significant increase in the use of the Lifeworks EAP.

*“Our strategy is already benefitting colleagues,” a significant number of colleagues have received support from a Mental Health First Aider – it’s definitely helping to reduce stigma and allow colleagues to quickly access vital help” Jackie McDermott, Head of Engagement and Communication*

*“I’ve seen people less afraid to tell me they are struggling. If that’s it, if that’s all we achieve, honestly, it’s enough.” – Michelle Knight, HSQE Manager*

During the Covid-19 outbreak, with the support of everyday people we have continued to support colleagues with a variety of learning & communication interventions promoting mental health & wellbeing for all colleagues across the business.

*“At Smurfit Kappa we are committed in creating and promoting a culture of positive mental health and wellbeing which is actively encouraged and visible throughout the company, this approach will impact on colleague’s physical health and many other aspects of people lives.*

*Many common life events such as illness, bereavement, relationship problems, and financial worries can affect our mental wellbeing. We want to support our colleagues who have to cope with the stresses such as this and help colleagues get the right level of professional help where needed.” Nigel M Elias UK HSE Manager*