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World Mental Health Day 2018 – 10th October 2018:

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Introduction

10th October 2018 marks the 26th annual **World Mental Health Day**. In 2017 it was focused on '**mental health at work**'. The theme for 2018 is '**Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World.**'

World Mental Health Day, presented by the '**World Federation of Mental Health**', is the annual global celebration of mental health education, awareness and advocacy. World Mental Health Day is observed on 10 October every year, with the overall objective and goal of raising awareness of mental health issues and mobilizing efforts in support of better mental health. Each of us can make a contribution to ensure that people dealing with problems concerning mental health are supported and can live better lives with dignity.

Each year we, the CWU supports this important awareness day, founded by the '**World Federation of Mental Health**' to join people together across the world to campaign for change around mental health.

This year's theme couldn't come a moment too soon - mental health issues such as stress, depression and anxiety are the biggest cause of sickness absence in our society. Employers increasingly need to recognise mental health as a vital part of a healthy, productive working environment.

So this World Mental Health Day, we're supporting the call for organisations and employers to take a look at their wellbeing strategy and take steps to improve the mental health of their workplaces and work with the Union to create healthier workplaces with sustainable policies.

During our adult lives, a large proportion of our time is spent at work. Our experience in the workplace is one of the factors determining our overall wellbeing. Employers and managers who put in place workplace initiatives to promote mental health and to support employees who have mental disorders see gains not only in the health of their employees but also in their productivity at work. A negative working environment, on the other hand, may lead to physical and mental health problems, harmful use of substances or alcohol, absenteeism and lost productivity.

Depression and anxiety are common mental disorders that have an impact on our ability to work, and to work productively. Globally, more than 300 million people suffer from depression, the leading cause of disability. More than 260 million are living with anxiety disorders. Many of these people live with both. A recent WHO-led study estimates that depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy US\$ 1 trillion each year in lost productivity.

To help mark the occasion, we're raising awareness of what can be done to ensure that people with mental health problems can live with dignity. **This is not just about this one day, which is a focal point. This is very much an ongoing issue of importance.**

Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World

The WFMH in launching this year's campaign state that for young people, the early years of adulthood are a time of life when many changes occur, for example changing schools, leaving home, and starting university or a new job. For many, these are exciting times. They can also be times of stress and apprehension however. In some cases, if not recognised and managed, these feelings can lead to mental illness. The expanding use of online technologies, while undoubtedly bringing many benefits, can also bring additional pressures, as connectivity to virtual networks at any time of the day and night grows. Many young people are also living in areas affected by humanitarian emergencies such as conflicts, natural disasters and epidemics. Young people living in situations such as these are particularly vulnerable to mental distress and illness.

Half of all mental illness begins by the age of 14, but most cases go undetected and untreated. Among young people, depression is the third leading cause. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds. Harmful use of alcohol and illicit drugs is a major issue in many countries and can lead to risky behaviours and eating disorders are also of concern. Fortunately, there is a growing recognition of the importance of helping young people build mental resilience, from the earliest ages, in order to cope with the challenges of today's world. Evidence is growing that promoting and protecting adolescent health brings benefits not just to young people's health, both in the short and the long-term, but also to economies and society, with healthy young adults able to make greater contributions to the workforce, their families and communities and society as a whole.

Much can be done to help build mental wellbeing from an early age to help prevent mental distress and illness among adolescents and young adults, and to manage and recover from mental illness. Prevention begins with being aware of and understanding the early warning signs and symptoms of mental illness. Parents and teachers can help build life skills of children and adolescents to help them cope with everyday challenges at home and at school. Psychosocial support can be provided in schools and other community settings and of course training for health workers to enable them to detect and manage mental health disorders can be put in place, improved or expanded.

Investment by governments and the involvement of the social, health and education sectors in comprehensive, integrated, evidence-based programmes for the mental health of young people is essential. This investment should be linked to programmes to raise awareness among adolescents and young adults of ways to look after their mental health and to help peers, parents and teachers know how to support their friends, children and students. This is the focus for this year's World Mental Health Day.

The problem and dilemma

One in four adults and one in ten children are likely to have a mental health problem in any given year. This can have a profound impact on the lives of tens of millions of people in the

UK, and can affect their ability to sustain relationships, work, or just get through the day, to sustain relationships, and to maintain work.

The stigma attached to mental health causes a damaging, albeit ill-informed, attitude to exist among some people making it more difficult for those affected to seek and pursue help.

It is estimated that only about a quarter of those people with a mental health problem in the UK receive and undergo ongoing treatment. By stark contrast, the vast majority of people affected with these problems are left grappling with mental health issues on their own, faced with a variety of issues, ranging from isolation to uncertainty, seeking help or information, and dependent or relying on the informal support of family, friends or colleagues.

How can we challenge this?

World Mental Health Day helps focus on confronting this stigma through facts. Facts that help us understand patterns of mental health problems, their causes and solutions. Facts that help us break down barriers in seeking help and support.

What is the long-term answer?

The best way to deal with a crisis is to prevent it from happening in the first place. For example, by raising awareness, providing the right information, guidance and support as well as guidance and support in childhood and adolescence, the chances of developing mental health problems can be reduced for millions of people over a lifetime. This focus on prevention is in part about what we can all do to safeguard our wellbeing, but is also about tackling the social and economic inequalities that can lead to a higher prevalence of mental health problems.

How can you help?

The World Mental Health Day message is the belief that effectively supporting people, family, friends and work colleagues, **of all ages**, experiencing mental health problems is on target to become one of the greatest public health challenges of our time. Stigmatising and discriminatory treatment can be particularly distressing when a person is experiencing a health crisis. We all have mental health and by failing to treat people with mental health problems with dignity we make it more difficult to ensure that everyone takes steps to safeguard their wellbeing and to seek help, as it can lead to self-stigma, low confidence, low self-esteem, withdrawal and social isolation.

Raising Awareness

The best way to deal with this stigma is through facts and a better understanding of mental health problems. From identifying the causes, pinpointing solutions, and ultimately recognizing that we are really dealing with medical issues. Please review and help spread the news about **World Mental Health Day 2018**. Actions that prevent mental health problems and promote mental health are an essential part of the efforts to improve the health of the UK and to reduce health inequities

Attachments:

- MHF - How To Look After Your Mental Health
- MHF - How To Manage and Reduce Stress
- MHF - How To Overcome Fear and Anxiety
- MHF - How To Support Mental Health At Work
- Green Ribbon Pin Badge Image

(Hard copies Mental Health Foundation (MHF) Booklets/Guides can be ordered singularly or in bulk from the MHF at:- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications>)

Green Ribbon Pin Badges

Order your green ribbon badges for World Mental Health Day to raise awareness and support good mental health for all. All proceeds go towards the MHF's vital work, focused on finding and addressing the sources of mental health problems.

The green ribbon is the international symbol for 'mental health awareness'. By wearing a green ribbon pin badge, you'll be joining the growing movement for good mental health for all. Orders will arrive within 10 working days.

(Order at:- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/green-ribbon-pin-badges>)

The World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH)

The World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) is the only international multidisciplinary, grassroots advocacy and education organization concerned with all aspects of mental health. It was founded in 1948 to advance, among all people and nations, the prevention of mental and emotional disorders, the proper treatment and care of those with such disorders, and the promotion of mental health. WFMH has been an NGO in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1963 and is in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and in formal association with the UN Department of Public Information (DPI). Further information from the WFMH Website at: <https://wfmh.global/>

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

"There is no health without mental health"

Supporting Organisations:

