



BLOG.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING



Taking a positive approach to mental health at work...





Britain's economy depends on healthy workers – both physically and mentally – which is why by ensuring your staff are well-supported, you will be able to enhance employee wellbeing, performance, safety, as well as project delivery and workflow...

Mitigating risk is at the heart of every aspect of life on the railway; especially given atypical working patterns such as long hours, shift work, risk of exposure to traumatic incidents and constant workplace safety. With this in mind, the Railway Mental Health Charter was revised in May 2024 to serve as a key framework for leaders to develop their own strategies to support mental health and reduce workplace stress.

Industry leaders are taking note of its five pillars for improving mental health which focus on senior leadership commitment and employee consultation, understanding your organisation's unique needs, addressing stigma, providing a healthy workplace and providing support. In fact, the findings from the Railways Safety and Standards Board's health and wellbeing performance indicators consistently show mental health as the highest-ranking reason for self-reported sickness absence in the rail industry.

As the sector rises to the challenges of integrating new technologies, managing the skills gap, maintaining the existing infrastructure and meeting green targets, we are all feeling the pressure, so improving access to resources to support our mental health is crucial. As the workforce ages in line with the general UK population, we must note that NSAR reports that the average age of railway workers is 45 and be mindful that suicide is the biggest killer of British men under 50.

In addition to supporting the thousands of staff who seek to prevent tragic loss of life on the railway, we must also take steps to protect our valuable employees in this age group too. The RSSB has flagged that the rate of suicide in the rail industry is 1.6 times higher than any other sector, given the number of risk factors that may pose challenges to mental health. The Samaritans highlight that loneliness is a very significant cause of the high risk for men in midlife so having strong working relationships, support networks and advocating for better mental health needs to be industry wide.

The entire team at Railsafe Group believe in leading by example and with that, believe taking care of employee mental health is a foundational part of safety and project delivery. We always put safety at the forefront of our projects to ensure that we mitigate risk wherever possible, and control works in hazardous environments. As part of our commitment, we have signed the 'Charter for Employer Positive About Mental Health'.



By signing the charter, Railsafe Group has made a public declaration of our desire to support the mental health of our staff throughout our organisation, as well as demonstrate this in the learning and training we offer such as RQF-accredited health and safety courses.



RSG is also proud to be accredited as a Mindful Employer, as part of its ongoing commitment to being a positive and productive workplace. Established in 2004, Mindful Employer UK is a UK wide initiative run by Devon Partnership NHS Trust which facilitates access to professional workplace mental health training, information and support.

By embedding mental health support in our Employee Assistance Program our team leaders and managers have peace of mind, knowing that we can assist our people quickly and efficiently depending on their individual needs. In fact, we have signed up to the Railway Mental Health Charter and see it as a working document which aims to safeguard and protect everyone in our community and teams we partner with.

As industry leaders dedicated to training and supplying safe reliable labour to the rail infrastructure, we stand ready to assist our peers in creating mentally happy and supportive workplaces. Our experts find that holding regular awareness days are a great way of naturally starting sensitive conversations and making it easier for staff to support colleagues or take the first step in asking for help themselves.

In addition to our RQF-accredited health and safety courses, we deliver Professional/Safety critical courses with an emphasis on preparation and mentoring for new entrants to the industry so that personnel are fully covered in a number of railway competencies ahead of deployment. The latest addition to our training team, Pete Sutton, has a wealth of experience in supporting mental health and has a Quallsafe Level 3 Award in Mental Health First Aid in the Workplace (RRQF).

Railsafe Group senior management, operatives, and expert trainers fully understand that training your team in-house may be more appropriate for your organisation's needs and they are available to support you with bespoke remote or in-person packages to support your existing mental health initiatives as required, so please don't hesitate to get in touch!


We're on a mission to support better mental health throughout the UK rail industry!




TAKING A POSITIVE APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH

To find out more, please visit www.railsafegroup.co.uk

Thanks for reading!

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