



A message to WSW members on Mental Health day

09 Oct 2020

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This World Mental Health Day, GMB Wales and South West wants to thank the thousands of workplace representatives who work so hard for our members every day. They ensure that workplace policies and procedures take mental health into account and support employers to talk about mental health openly and transparently with members to provide a supportive structure.

Mental health will impact 1 in 4 of us at some point in our lives and in truth is that figure is likely to be higher.

In recent times GMB has worked to develop resources for our workplace representatives, in particular those reps who focus on health and safety, to better understand the issues around a too often taboo subject. GMB takes the mental health of our members, extremely seriously. As a union we want to be able to represent our members and the workforce, and that includes the challenges that members face everyday in the workplace.



Mental health is priority for this union.

Our representatives ensure employers carry out strenuous stress risk assessments and enable reasonable adjustments for members who are suffering with their mental health. Our reps are trained to step in when concerns need to be raised about the health and wellbeing of employees, or when an employer is not taking the mental wellbeing of staff seriously.

Lots of this work goes on quietly behind the scenes, but can have huge consequences and is a huge benefit for GMB members, demonstrating the need for trade unions to be operating in modern workplaces.

The Covid19 crisis has demonstrated how fragile our working patterns are and how many employers, who once upon a time couldn't stand the thought of flexible working and home working, have now been dragged into the modern era.

But whilst there are advantages to the new arrangements, there are also potholes.

On the one hand, we welcome the flexibility this brings our members. But on the other, we know that many of our members are struggling with the new way of working. Long hours, isolation and a feeling of helplessness have become all too familiar friends for many people during this crisis, and that a balance needs to be struck.

Now more than ever before is the time for us as a society to have the discussion to ensure the mental health and wellbeing of people up and down the country is placed firmly on the agenda.

But for people who are struggling we are here to support you. As well as pointing you toward organisations that can help you through some of the lowest dips on the "Coronacoster", within the Union we have active self-organised groups like Shout! and our Womens Network which focus on protected characteristics.

These groups provide a safe space for people to talk openly about their mental health and where friends can be made/the camaraderie and support of others can be sought. We also have a dedicated team of reps, officers and members who are more than happy to lend an ear.

Even when we are apart, you can still find a sympathetic ear at GMB, trust me.

Arron Bevan-John

Chair LGBT Shout! GMB Wales and South West

