




# Impact Report 2022



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# Acknowledgements

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Mates in Mind would like to acknowledge the following, not only for their contributions to our Impact Report but also for their contributions to the six years our charity has been operating. It is only with the support we have received from the following organisations, groups and individuals that Mates in Mind has transformed the workplace mental health of so many across the industry.



## **Board of Trustees**

Steve Hails (Chair), Heather Bryant (retired), Paul Cottam, Nicola Hodgkinson, Mike Robinson, Kevin Myers, Arun Muttreja, Danny Clarke, Allan Wright.

## **Business Champions**

Balfour Beatty, DE Group, Galliford Try, Mineral Products Association, Tarmac, Tideway and VINCI.

## **Partners**

We are grateful to the British Safety Council and the Health in Construction Leadership Group for their ongoing support to our charity and our programme of work.

## **Fundraisers**

Our fundraisers are an essential part of our growing community of support. Without the individuals and organisations who consistently raise awareness and funds in aid of our charity, we would not be able to continue supporting individuals across the UK and improving workplace mental health.

## **Images**

We would like to thank all those who captured and provided us with the images of support used in this report.

## **Donors**

We would like to thank the generosity of all of our Donors.

**Mates in Mind promotes and leads on the promotion and development of positive mental wellbeing within the workplace. Mates in Mind works across industries, focusing on construction, as well as related sectors including transport, logistics, security, manufacturing, and others.**



# A note from our Chair

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2022 has been another busy year for Mates in Mind.

The economic climate and cost of living challenges have added to the anxieties from the pandemic to further increase the vulnerabilities of many of those working in the sectors we support.

Statistics have sadly shown that suicide rates in construction continue to be higher than other industries and have, in fact, increased over the last year. This is despite much greater awareness and the implementation of reactive measures in many organisations. But we know that reactive measures are not the solution. That is why I have been delighted to see the evolution of the Mates in Mind strategy over the last three years and recognition of the need to provide support to organisations to address the causes and develop bespoke programmes, thereby preventing mental ill health and encouraging the creation of positive working environments.

In sharing the results of our 2021 survey we have been able to further promote the need for proactive intervention through several webinars, roundtable discussions and through national TV and radio. We have further broadened our reach through multiple media channels including a billboard campaign which is believed to have reached two million people.

We are still a small charity but have big aspirations. We have committed to further increase our charitable giving through the course of 2023 and beyond to provide support to those in most need.

Early in 2022, I was proud to announce our first patron, Michelle Wiles, who has been an inspiration to us all.

Thank you, Michelle, her daughter Chloe and her son Tom for their courage and determination in creating and sharing Chris' Story and for their continued campaigning to raise awareness of stress at work. We will forever remember Chris and do everything we can to encourage organisations to recognise the issue of stress at work and prevent such tragic outcomes in the future.

I was also pleased to announce the further strengthening of our board with the addition of two new trustees. Allan Wright of Civils and Lintels and Danny Clarke from the National Federation of Builders, they bring a wealth of industry and charity experience to support our future ambitions.

This is my last contribution to the Mates in Mind Impact Report as I step down from my position as Chair after more than six years. So many people have been involved in getting this amazing charity to where it is today.

When the concept of Mates in Mind was first imagined at the Health in Construction Leadership Group back in 2015/16, despite the rhetoric from across the sector, only one organisation stepped forward to help us form the charity and begin the journey. A huge thank you to British Safety Council for their initial and continued financial donations and for giving us open access to group specialists to support the charity.

Thank you to all the senior leaders within construction that recognised the need to improve mental health and wellbeing within the sector and subsequently supported Mates in Mind, directly or otherwise.

Thank you to my fellow trustees, both past and present, for their counsel and guidance, their expert contributions, their passion for improving mental health across industry and their individual time committed to provide support to the charity both inside and outside of the boardroom.

To the Mates in Mind team of dedicated professionals that continue to understand the needs of industry and evolve the support accordingly. None of this would be possible without you all – thank you.

And finally – thank you to all the supporters of Mates in Mind. Please continue to share the message and encourage others to support and do everything you can to create the positive environments that will allow our people to thrive whilst at work.

I am proud to have been a part of the Mates in Mind journey to-date and I look forward to huge success for the charity in the future.



**Steve Hails**  
Chair of the Board of  
Trustees



# A note from our Managing Director

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Throughout 2022, we have continued to build on our established position over the past five years as a key mental health charity within the construction sector whilst also attracting new supporters from other related industries.

Our work has resulted in a greater charitable impact, with the launch of our free 24/7 'BeAMate' text service at the end of the year to provide people with an anonymous and accessible service to reach out to if they are struggling, once the barriers and stigma surrounding discussing their mental health have been broken down. We have also concentrated on raising awareness of the importance of prevention to support the commonly seen tertiary measures, but an overreliance on these safety nets can detract from a proactive approach to assessing and removing risks that could impact negatively on someone's mental health.

We are also proud to have introduced a greater collaboration through new partnerships sharing our work across the industry, for example as the charity partner for UK Construction Week, London Build and as the nominated charity for several awards events.

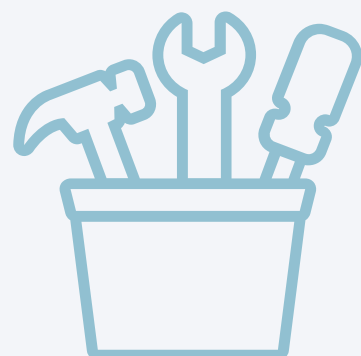
Our work to make the much needed difference within construction saw us feature in the [APPG Men & Boys report](#) to raise awareness of the factors that can be addressed. Our work with procurement frameworks, HSE Working Minds campaign and Ministers has resulted in greater visibility of our work and the influence that working collaboratively can bring.

Our work would not be possible without the incredible fundraising undertaken by our supporters. With particular recognition going to Civils & Lintels, Keylite and Structure Tone London for their wide range of events involving their teams throughout the UK.

As a team, we remain committed to working with our supporters and champions in making the difference across the industry - where mental health is positively impacted, with workplaces that feel inclusive and supportive and where people are not made ill through their work.



**Sarah Meek**  
Managing Director



# A note from our Patron

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It has been an incredible, honourable, and rewarding year as Patron for Mates in Mind. To be given this opportunity and be part of the charity's journey to advocate the important work they do to spread awareness and break down the stigma regarding poor mental health in the construction industry. I do believe together we can make the change and educate for early intervention and prevent someone reaching crisis point if they are struggling.

Workplace stress and mental ill health are not going away anytime soon. Companies need to acknowledge the issues and the duty of care they have in the industry; this should be at the forefront of their objectives. I do feel there is still more action needed which will ultimately save lives and I am pleased to be part of this messaging to hopefully help others.. We must not get complacent, mental health is just as important as physical health, look out for each other and encourage talking.

In March 2022, I was kindly asked by Mates in Mind to be part of the BBC One Morning Live feature and share my husband Chris's story to help raise awareness. This was something completely out of my comfort zone to be on camera and talk about the devastating heartbreak when we lost Chris who took his own life due to stress at work in April 2019. As difficult as it was, I wanted to do it and knew I could make a difference and hopefully raise awareness and ultimately saves lives.

As Patron, I was invited to talk about mental ill health issues in the construction industry on various platforms such as speaking at numerous fundraising events which raised generous funds with all proceeds going to Mates in Mind. In addition to this, I was given the chance to contribute to an article in the Metro on World Suicide Prevention Day, to reiterate the shocking statistics of suicides within the construction industry– my husband being one of them.

To conclude 2022, one of the biggest highlights was to present the inaugural Wiles Award in memory of Chris to Steve Martin who has been a great advocate of Mates in Mind and sharing the incredible work they do. It was an absolute honour and memorable evening where I had all my family with me to share this moment.

For 2023 and beyond, I would like to continue the message that awareness and prevention are key. We all need to prevent someone from getting to the point Chris did. Organisations need to be proactive in their approach concerning their employees and mental health awareness. They need to take the training, not only for spotting the signs in their colleagues but also in themselves. This training also needs to start from the top, from the CEO to the 'boots on the ground'. Every employee needs to have a reassurance that their peers will understand when they are struggling.



**Michelle Wiles**  
Patron



# Our Mission

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We are a leading, registered UK charity which enables organisations, of any size, to improve their workforces' mental wellbeing. We do this by providing the skills, clarity and confidence to employers on how to raise awareness, improve understanding and address the stigma of mental ill-health.

We focus on creating cultures of support in workplaces to create honest, open dialogues between members of staff. Additionally, we work to advance the education and understanding of employers, other organisations and the general public around mental health. Working alongside our partners, business champions, sector leaders and growing community of Supporters, we are delivering effective change across UK workplaces to create cultures of prevention so employees feel supported at the point of need.

We are supporting organisations to help individuals across their workforces, including the hardest to reach groups. Our work enables organisations to proactively take action, using a bespoke programme and a holistic approach, to positively transform their workplace.

Our programme of support is based upon a joined-up and holistic approach to mental health. It enables organisations to improve their awareness and understanding of the topic through a range of training courses, communications materials and tools, as well as the dedicated support and guidance which employers need to embed long-lasting change.

We are enabling workforces to understand how, when and where they can get support, in addition to addressing the stigma which often creates a barrier to sharing personal challenges.

## Let's talk

summarises how Mates in Mind supports you and your organisation

### Mates in Mind works with you to



# Our Research

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Following publishing our preliminary findings in 2021 of our major study of the mental health of self-employed construction workers and those working in small firms, in 2022 we published our full findings of the report.

The report showed that intense workloads, financial problems, poor work-life balance and Covid-19 pressures on the supply of materials were combining to significantly raise stress and anxiety levels. The report also included a small number of follow-up interviews with survey respondents exploring the drivers of mental health, sources of work pressure, distress and anxiety, their coping mechanisms and factors which trigger help-seeking behaviour. We also explored the best ways to provide support for those experiencing mental health problems.

Overall, [almost a third of our respondents had a GAD7 anxiety score which signified 'severe' anxiety](#), with a further third in the 'moderate' anxiety category and the remainder in the 'mild' anxiety group.

Almost half of our respondents reported that they found ['talking about my mental health extremely difficult'](#) and almost 70 per cent agreed that ['that there is a stigma about mental health which stops people from talking about it'](#).

Concerningly, those respondents with 'severe' anxiety also reported a significantly lower willingness to both seek help and to provide it to others.

The survey highlighted both the high prevalence of 'severe' and 'moderate' anxiety in this population of self-employed construction workers and the multiple barriers they face in speaking about and seeking support for their wellbeing. Underpinning these findings are a number of sub-themes which need to be acknowledged and addressed by those working to improve mental health outcomes for these workers:

A significant minority of respondents reported that they had taken non-prescription drugs as a result of their anxiety (16%) and 13 per cent told us that they had considered self-harm.

One concern from our data is that only a minority of respondents had sought help from their GP (18%) and only 13 per cent had received counselling or therapy.

Stigma and self-stigma relating to mental illness is strong in this group, as is the notion that improving resilience and coping, is preferable to treatment or support.



**"I sometimes see leaflets or adverts about mental health, but I always think that they're for other people and not me. It's taken me a while to accept that I sometimes struggle with my anxiety, but I don't think of myself as ill enough to need help from a doctor or whatever. I was brought up not to make a fuss and to just get on with things, which is probably not the right thing to do nowadays, is it?"**

Survey respondent

**"I've always thought that, even though this job is hard, you had to show that you can cope with the pressure and never admit that you're struggling a bit. You don't want people to think you're a bit 'flaky' or that you can't be relied on. So you keep quiet and soldier on, don't you?"**

Survey respondent

## **The Facts**

An independent study we conducted with Opinium showed that 68% of the public are not aware that there is a mental health problem in the construction sector and that there are 507 suicides per annum within the industry, with 49% being unaware that there is a stigma on sites which stops workers from talking about it.

**"It is rife and serious. My husband is an incident manager for a large construction project. It seems the managers do not take the problem seriously. There is a lack of support and understanding"**

**"This should not be a taboo, people should feel empowered to speak up. Construction is core to growth and investment so if mental health is an issue then this must be addressed otherwise risk a loss or reduction of workforce which will have long term effects to future growth."**

**"I work with a lot of people within construction in trying to support them with their mental health; I believe they have been taught that they must be strong physically and mentally and are ashamed of their depression, anxiety, BPD etc."**

# Apprentices

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We work with a number of colleges offering construction related courses across the UK, as well as facilitating workshops for students to raise awareness of mental health. From practical self help to training and tutoring sessions to prepare them for entry into the industry. In these sessions, they can learn to spot the signs of declining mental health in themselves and others.

We also support the staff to deliver these sessions as part of the ongoing curriculum. Our courses have an overwhelmingly positive response from both the employers who facilitated our delivery and the apprentices who participated – and the results showed a significant improvement in a number of the measures of understanding and confidence around the topic.

With the support of B&CE's Mowlem Award, we sought to develop a training course to raise awareness of mental health in construction apprentices as part of the wider Mates in Mind programme.

The initiative aimed to increase awareness of mental health and confidence amongst apprentices in knowing where to seek support themselves, and how to reach in and manage that difficult conversation about mental health. Through our work, we wanted to create a legacy for apprentices futures, as approximately 35% of apprentices go on to run their own business.

The course had an overwhelmingly positive response from both the employers who facilitated our delivery and the apprentices who participated – and the results showed a significant improvement in a number of the measures of understanding and confidence around the topic.

These courses are available for industry sponsorship at local level - to show that you care in your local community and demonstrate ESG through our work.

**"This is a great initiative because the apprentices are just starting their career and I expect as a result of their training they will be supporting the mental health of themselves and their teams for the next 40-50 years."**

**Tutor**

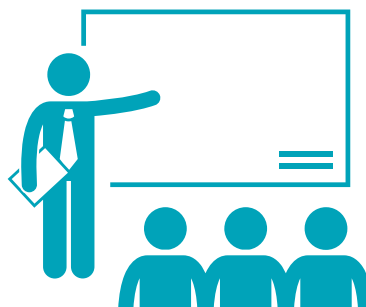
**"Extremely beneficial. Should be more widely shared within organisations. Education enables people to feel they can talk about how they are actually feeling."**

**Apprentice**

# 2022 in Numbers



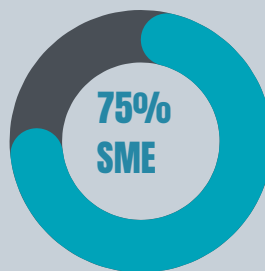
**69 New  
Supporters  
joined**



**333 Training  
Sessions  
delivered**



**44,000 New  
Employees  
reached**



**The proportion  
of SME vs large  
organisation  
supporters**

## The Impact of Our Start the Conversation Course

Start the Conversation is a training course provided by Mates in Mind teaches employees across all levels of a business about how to start conversations around mental health in the workplace. The course is designed to help individuals identify the signs and symptoms of common mental health issues and provide them with the skills and confidence to have supportive conversations with their colleagues who may be struggling with their mental health.

*Almost 60% had not participated in any kind of mental health training service before.*

*81% of people felt more comfortable talking about their mental health after the training.*

*91% felt more confident about the role they could play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of those around them.*

*88% felt more aware of the externally available support services*

*90% felt more comfortable to approach someone if they noticed changes in a colleague with concerns of their wellbeing.*

# Highlights of 2022



We were very excited to announce that Michelle Wiles joined Mates In Mind as our very first Patron of Mates in Mind.

The Wiles family have been incredible supporters and advocates of Mates in Mind in memory of Chris, Michelle's husband, for the last few years. They have done excellent work raising awareness of mental health issues that can be caused by stress at work and we are honoured and delighted that Michelle joined the Mates in Mind team in this ambassadorial role.

We were thrilled to have received increased media attention in 2022. We were delighted to be featured on BBC Morning Live, BBC Radio One, and in Metro, and are grateful for the opportunity to raise awareness of the critical issue of mental health in the construction industry. This increased exposure allows us to reach a wider audience and reinforces our commitment to supporting workers in the industry who are struggling with mental health challenges.



In 2022, we launched the "Anyone Could Be Struggling" campaign in response to the fact that those in the construction industry often do not discuss their mental health. This campaign aimed to raise awareness of this issue by showcasing anonymous submissions from individuals in the industry to demonstrate that anyone could be struggling, regardless of their position or outward appearance.





Mates in Mind was proud to lead a parliamentary drop-in session in December to help Members of Parliament understand the urgent need for improved mental health support in the construction industry. Our team provided valuable insight and expertise on the mental health challenges faced by construction workers, and highlighted the crucial role that employers, policymakers, and other stakeholders can play in promoting mental wellbeing in the workplace.

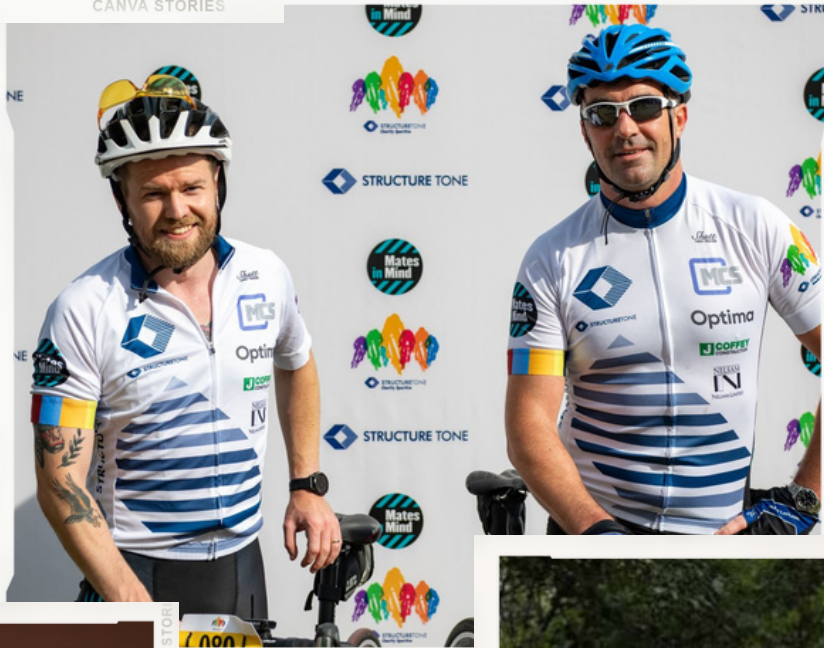
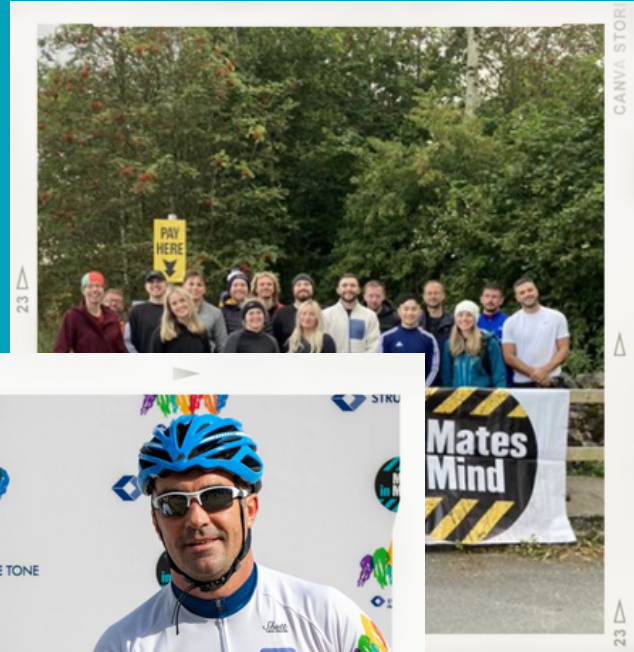
After three years, we were delighted to have our first in-person Impact Awards since the pandemic. The awards recognise and celebrate the achievements of individuals, organisations, and businesses in promoting positive mental health practices and creating mentally healthy workplaces.



We were delighted to be the lead charity partner at several events in 2022 after emerging from the challenges of the pandemic, it was so valuable to have these face to face interactions with those in industry to discuss the importance of mental health support at work.

# Our Fundraising Community

At Mates in Mind, we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our incredible fundraisers who have gone above and beyond to support our mission. From those who have taken on skydives to those who have completed gruelling cycle charity sportives or climbed up mountains, your support and dedication have allowed us to continue our vital work of raising awareness and providing mental health support to those in need. Thank you for being such an important part of our community and helping us to make a difference.







CNVFILLM FF1

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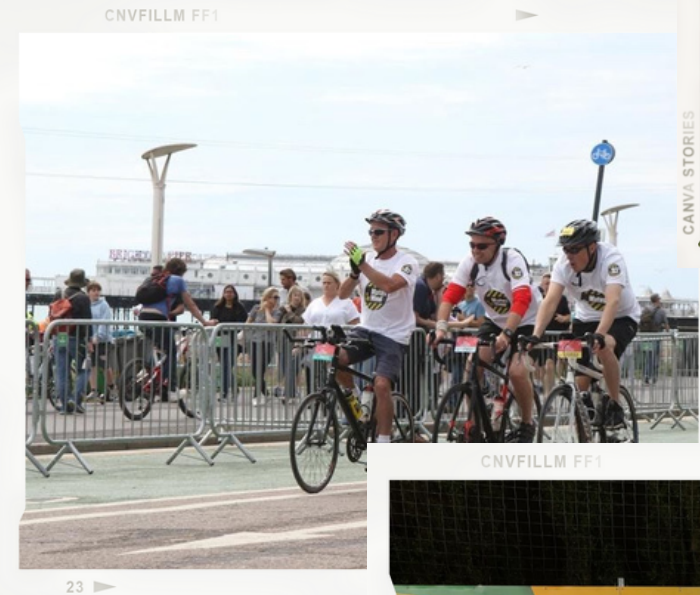
CANVA STORIES



CANVA STORIES

CANVA STORIES

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CNVFILLM FF1

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CANVA STORIES

# Successes in Industry

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## UKATA

UKATA has been a committed supporter of Mates in Mind for the past five years, working towards raising awareness and breaking the stigma of poor mental health in the construction industry. UKATA has appointed a wellbeing ambassador and director to oversee occupational health and wellbeing in the workplace.

By dedicating time at team meetings to "start the conversation," UKATA has broken taboos and addressed topics such as menopause, encouraging individuals to share their experiences and practical tips to help spot signs of mental health issues. As a result of these efforts, UKATA has seen an increase in staff retention and a reduction in sickness absence, as well as an improvement in stress levels and work-life balance among staff members.

## FARRANS

Several years ago, Farrans identified a gap in support for their employees, and feedback from managers revealed that employees were open to conversations around mental health but lacked the necessary training to manage potential situations arising from those conversations.

Farrans recognised this challenge of mental health in the workplace and wanted to create a supportive environment where employees could talk openly about their mental health and seek help if needed. The company signed up to become a Supporter of Mates in Mind

Farrans embraced the Mates in Mind programme and integrated it into their health and safety policies. The company also went a step further by incorporating actor-led training sessions, which helped to create a more engaging and interactive learning experience.

As a result of their mental health programme, Farrans now has a trained mental health first aider present at all of their offices and almost all of their sites. In addition, over 90 of their employees are trained in how to have a conversation with their colleagues about mental health. This training has given employees the confidence to seek help and support when they need it.

By creating a supportive environment for their employees and promoting positive mental health, Farrans Construction is setting an example for other companies in the construction industry to follow.





Keylite Roof Windows (Keylite) launched its 'Keep It Up' challenge in 2022, urging merchants, installers, and trades across the construction industry to participate and raise funds for Mates in Mind. The challenge required participants to record themselves doing as many keepie uppies as possible and sharing the video on social media, along with nominating a friend using the hashtag #KeepItUp.

The campaign included Welsh Rugby Union star Shane Williams, Women's Rugby World Cup winner Rachael Burford, and GAA Football All-Star Cathal McShane.

Keylite Sales Director Merchants, Jonathan Boland emphasised that the initiative brings fun and personality to trade counters while raising funds and awareness for Mates in Mind. Keylite aimed to raise as much money as possible for the charity, while encouraging mental health conversations among workmates.

In 2022, Keylite's 'Kick It With Keylite' initiative raised £20,000 for Mates in Mind, and the company plans to continue supporting the charity in 2023 .



# Balfour Beatty

Balfour Beatty are proud of the progress they have made on mental health through our ongoing partnership with Mates in Mind. Start the Conversation training has given over 12,000 colleagues the skills and confidence to successfully address the stigma surrounding mental health and to positively intervene to assist those struggling with their mental health.

The partnership continues to develop as they now look to collaborate with Mates in Mind to look at how we can proactively support positive mental health within our business.

Balfour Beatty were aware that health rarely got the same focus as safety within the construction industry. Therefore, they became a founder member of the Health in Construction Leadership Group in 2015 to help drive the health agenda. As a consequence, they actively engaged in the development of the Mates in Mind programme in 2017 and partnered with the charity to trial mental health training programmes. However, they are aware of the challenges still facing the industry and are committed to supporting Mates in Mind to help tackle them.

Balfour Beatty has delivered mental health training to colleagues across the business including 12,000 start the conversation sessions which we have reinforced with the bespoke Listen, Support, Signpost sessions that was developed with Mates in Mind. They have also trained over 500 mental health first aiders (MHFAs) and have developed trauma support training to provide post-incident mental health support for colleagues.

Balfour Beatty's MHFAs help to promote an open, positive culture surrounding mental health which is driving positive cultural change across the business and is helping to ensure that mental health is treated in parity with physical health and woven into the fabric of the company.

Since implementing the Mates in Mind programme, Balfour Beatty have observed a positive cultural shift within the organisation.

They were delighted that in a recent employee survey, 94% of employees said that they felt cared for at Balfour Beatty. However, more recently, they saw tangible evidence of positive change surrounding attitudes towards mental health as they recorded unprecedented levels of engagement in their Mental Health Awareness Week activities.

Over 1400 people attended four live webinars led by senior leaders and more significantly, colleagues in the audience came forward and shared their own stories and experiences with us, a testament to the open, trusting environment they strive to achieve every day in the workplace. Overall, they had engagement of over 3000 people in this week alone, which plays a part of their ongoing commitment to mental health.



ADT Workplace is a 100% employee-owned business that takes pride in supporting its employees through difficult times. As part of this commitment, the company became a member of Mates in Mind. In 2022, ADT Workplace launched the ADT Wellplace program to prioritise the mental and physical health and wellbeing of its employees. The program aimed to engage with both office and site-based workers and eliminate the stigma surrounding asking for support. The programme was designed to offer different types of support to cater to the diverse demographic and personality types within the company.

The program utilised resources from Mates in Mind to equip the team with additional skills, knowledge, and tools to competently tackle mental health in the workplace.

The success of the program was reflected in the company increasing annual leave allowance, updating the hybrid working policy, training 10% of colleagues including the full SMT, to become certified Mental Health First Aiders, and creating new communication channels to keep staff informed. The program delivered Start the Conversation training to 60+ employees, and provided EAP Access to 100+ site-based contractors and in 2022, ADT Workplace won the Best Workplace Mental Health Team award for the second year running, and were also Highly Commended in the Senior Leadership Engagement category at the Mates in Mind Impact Awards.

To further support the mental and physical wellbeing of its employees, the company undertook its very first employee feedback survey, which included questions on the health and wellbeing support and employee engagement activity. The results of the survey have been analysed, and an action plan set out by the senior management team.

The company plans to continue the success of the ADT Wellplace program by committing to an increased health and safety budget and ongoing financial support. The Head of HSEQ and Support Services was appointed to head up employee mental and physical wellbeing as part of their job role.

By investing in mental health support and creating new communication channels, the company has demonstrated its commitment to the physical and mental health of its employees. Through the implementation of the program, the company has seen noticeable improvements in its workforce's health and wellbeing, and this has translated into a more engaged and productive workforce.



# Looking to the future

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In 2023, we remain committed to promoting and supporting mental health within the construction sector and related industries.

Fundraising is crucial to our increased charitable support within the construction sector and wider related industries, encompassing the supply chain and SMEs. With the support of our partners and Supporters, we aim to raise awareness about mental health and its impact on individuals, families, and businesses. By engaging with companies across the UK, we can secure more funds to support our programs and services and also raise awareness of the importance of positive mental health in the workplace.

Campaigning for change is another important aspect of our work at Mates in Mind. Our aim is for workplaces to create a culture of openness and support for individuals who may be struggling with mental health issues. We believe that by addressing mental health at an early stage, we can reduce the risk of further complications and improve outcomes for individuals and their employers if they are approaching the point of crisis.

Working with industry champions is also an essential part of our strategy at Mates in Mind. By promoting peer to peer endorsement of the Mates in Mind model, we can encourage more individuals and businesses to get involved and support our mission.

We aim to create a community of advocates who are passionate about promoting mental health and well-being in the construction sector and related industries.

Finally, we recognise the importance of supporting the mental health awareness of apprentices as they transition from the classroom to the workplace. We understand that this can be a challenging time for young people, and we want to ensure that they have the resources and support they need to thrive in their new roles. Through our partnerships and programs, we aim to provide apprentices with the tools they need to manage their mental health and well-being effectively. We want to grow this programme across the UK and seek funding and industry sponsors to support local colleges and this upcoming workforce to create a culture change around mental health.

In summary, in 2023 and beyond, we remain committed to promoting mental health and well-being in the construction sector and related industries. By focusing on fundraising, campaigning for change, working with industry champions, to influence change and strategic direction, and supporting apprentices, we believe we can make a real difference to the lives of individuals and the wider community.



# Contact us



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