

News story: Time to Talk about mental health

Approximately 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental health problem at some point in life.

For an organisation as large as Sellafield Ltd, that means that around 4000 employees will encounter issues with their mental health.

To mark 'Time to Talk' Day, Euan Hutton from Sellafield Ltd talked to employees about his experiences.

The culture of silence associated with discussing mental health makes these issues worse and opening up to a colleague or friend is often the first step to recovery.

From now on, I am encouraging everyone to open up to talking about mental health. To managers and team leaders: create the environment for open conversation on this topic and reassure your team that they will not be judged for reaching out. To everyone in the organisation: look out for your team mates; step in if they don't seem themselves or if they are behaving differently and let them know you're there for them.

I'd never ask anyone to do something I wouldn't do myself...so here goes nothing.

In the past I've had issues with one of my kidneys which I've had treatment for. It comes up in conversation sometimes, and I've always been happy to talk about. I've got a bit of arthritis in my ankle which I've openly talked about, it's painful. It is as a result of breaking my ankle playing rugby when I was younger.

These are health issues which aren't exactly public as such, but which I'm certainly comfortable talking about openly.

What I have struggled to talk about openly is that in 2012, not long before I came back to work at Sellafield, I had counselling to help me deal with stress and anxiety.

I had the counselling because I was ill. It was medical treatment for an illness. Just like my kidney and my ankle.

On the face of it I didn't have anything to be anxious about. I was doing okay at work, I'm happily married and have three great kids and a loving family. I'm not unique or special. But I was ill. I needed help and treatment, and I got it, and I got better.

Mental health is the same as physical health. Any one of us can be affected at any time. We don't choose it, it chooses us.

That's why we're encouraging people to talk in the workplace, and directing people to where more help is available.

[News story: Education Minister unveils new support for schools](#)

A new service offering schools advice on how to get the best value for money when buying support from businesses has been launched by the Department for Education.

The new scheme – which is being trialled initially in the north-west and south-west – will provide free advice and guidance to schools looking to procure services from local or national businesses. This could include catering, cleaning or technology support.

School Systems Minister Lord Agnew said:

Academic standards are rising, with 1.9million more children now in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 and nine out of ten schools given this rating at their latest inspection. We know that how schools use their money is important in delivering the best outcomes for pupils and this new service will help School Business Professionals to make better financial decisions. It builds on our wider package of support to help schools to be more cost effective, with the aim of ensuring every child can access a world-class education.

The service is free for schools in the chosen regions to join immediately, with service delivery beginning from today (1 February) offering:

- expert advice and guidance on buying;
- template documentation for buying;
- help with complex contracts, particularly services such as catering, cleaning, premises and technology services;
- promotion of local collaboration, where there is an opportunity to reduce costs on areas such as learning resources and administrative supplies;
- market intelligence; and
- contract management support.

This service will add to the existing range of government tools, information and guidance already available to schools as part of our plans to help them improve their efficiency and save £1bn on non-staff spend in schools by 2019-2020.

It is part of the Department for Education's drive to ensure every child has the opportunity to make the most of their lives, no matter where they live or their background.

The new initiatives build on the work already being done by the department to support schools to improve their financial health and efficiency. This includes:

- a top 10 planning checks for governors. This checklist sets out key metrics for school and academy governors to help make sure schools manage their resources efficiently; and
- team of school efficiency advisors who provide expert support to the schools that need them most.

Interested schools can find out more [here](#)

Schools in other regions around the country are not able to apply currently, but can look for support from their local School Business Professional Network instead. The Networks provide opportunities to share good practice and knowledge and can provide the opportunity to potentially save money, for example joining together to bulk purchase.

[Press release: New government backed advisory panel commits to help eradicate rough sleeping](#)

Leading experts from homelessness charities and local government met for the first time today as part of the government's new rough sleeping advisory panel and committed to work together to help eliminate rough sleeping within a decade.

The new panel chaired by Homelessness Minister Heather Wheeler will help develop the national rough sleeping strategy to halve rough sleeping over the course of the Parliament and eliminate it altogether by 2027.

Made up of experts, charities and local government, the panel will draw on their considerable experience and individual successes to support the upcoming Ministerial Taskforce. This will bring together ministers from key departments to provide a cross-government approach to preventing rough sleeping and homelessness.

The panel members agreed key priority areas including what works best in terms of prevention such as housing-led approaches and the most effective ways of intervening with someone already experiencing rough sleeping.

Following the first panel meeting, Heather Wheeler said:

We cannot accept rough sleeping as a stubborn problem that will always be with us.

That's why we are providing over £1 billion of funding, supporting those who are homeless and rough sleeping and bringing in the most ambitious legislation in decades that will mean people get the support they need earlier.

Tackling homelessness is complex, but no one should ever have to sleep rough.

The new panel is clear we need to act swiftly to realise our shared determination to help the most vulnerable in society and eliminate rough sleeping for good.

The panel will meet monthly and will report back to the Taskforce in the summer with a series of recommendations.

Among the key themes the panel will pursue are:

- Prevention activity to stop people from rough sleeping in the first place.
- Programmes and interventions to target both the drivers of rough sleeping and support vulnerable people at risk of rough sleeping.
- Recovery and long-term support to help people maintain sustainable tenancies.
- The role of wider society, business, the voluntary sector and the general public to tackle street culture.
- Better data and clearer accountability to ensure the right structures are in place at the local and national level.

Government action to date on tackling homelessness and rough sleeping

- As part of the £1 billion of funding we are providing £315 million to local authorities for their work on homelessness, and an additional £402 million in Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding, which local authorities can use to work more strategically to prevent and tackle homelessness pressures in their areas.
- Government has also provided funding for the 'No Second Night Out' approach which identifies new rough sleepers and helps them off the streets immediately. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has funded its national roll-out through the £20 million Homelessness Transition Fund and most local authorities have committed to the programme.
- Announced £28 million for 3 Housing First pilots in Manchester, Liverpool and the West Midlands. The pilots will support long-term rough sleepers off the streets and help them to end their homelessness.

Individuals will be provided with stable, affordable accommodation and intensive wrap-around support. This will help them recover from complex health issues, for example substance abuse and mental health difficulties and sustain their tenancies.

- Government is investing £9 billion to build more social housing, including council homes. This government is committed to fixing the broken housing market and our Housing White Paper sets out measures to do just that.

Members of the Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel

Chair

- Heather Wheeler, Minister for Housing and Homelessness, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Homelessness sector

- Jon Sparkes, CEO Crisis
- Polly Neate, CEO Shelter
- Jeremy Swain, CEO Thames Reach
- Howard Sinclair, CEO St Mungos
- Jean Templeton, CEO St Basil's
- Rick Henderson, CEO Homeless Link

Mayors

- Andy Street, Conservative Mayor for West Midlands
- Andy Burnham, Labour Mayor for Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- James Murray, London Deputy Mayor for London Housing and Residential Development

Local government and Housing Federation

- David Orr, CEO National Housing Federation
- Mark Lloyd, CEO Local Government Association
- Mark Meehan, Director of Housing for Croydon and Chair of the London Council Housing Needs group
- Gillian Douglas, Bristol City Council
- Cathy Hadfield, Cornwall Council

International expert

- Peter Fredriksson, advisor on Housing First to the Finnish Government

Sector experts

- Lord John Bird, founder of the Big Issue
- Brooks Newmark, previous Minister for Civil Society

Background

Terms of reference

The government aims to halve rough sleeping over the course of the Parliament and eliminate it altogether by 2027.

The Minister for Housing and Homelessness, Heather Wheeler, will chair the Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel which will support government to produce a national rough sleeping strategy. The strategy will take action to reduce rough sleeping now, and ensure the structures are in place to eliminate rough sleeping by 2027.

Over the coming months the Advisory Panel will:

- meet with the Minister for Housing and Homelessness on a regular basis to advise on how we can reduce the numbers sleeping rough
- support the senior Ministerial Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Reduction Taskforce
- support the rough sleeping team in MHCLG to develop and test policy options
- test approaches, share feedback, best practice and studies from across the sector to inform policy development

Rough Sleeping is a chronic issue and the Advisory Panel will consider a wide range of interventions to ensure we take action now. The Panel will also look at how the government can embed integrated systems in the long term to ensure that no one has to sleep rough. The review will take into account the experiences and successes of previous interventions, and highlight good practice.

The following lines of inquiry will be pursued:

- Prevention activity to stop people from rough sleeping in the first place.
- Programmes and interventions to target both the drivers of rough sleeping and support vulnerable people at risk of rough sleeping.
- Recovery and long-term support to help people maintain sustainable tenancies.
- The role of wider society, business, the voluntary sector and the general public to tackle street culture.
- Better data and clearer accountability to ensure the right structures are in place at the local and national level.

[**News story: Huge new Atlas aircraft**](#)

hangar opened by Defence Minister

A £70 million hangar large enough to contain three of the RAF's new Atlas transport aircraft at the same time was officially opened by Defence Minister Guto Bebb at RAF Brize Norton today. Crown copyright.

The Atlas maintenance, repair and overhaul facility, which covers 24,000 metres squared and is 28 metres high, is now fitted out and fully operational in support of RAF transport operations all over the world.

Minister for Defence Procurement Guto Bebb said:

From deploying troops and armoured vehicles to a war zone, to getting vital support to humanitarian disasters, our Atlas fleet plays a global role and it needs a home to match.

This huge hangar provides exactly that, and will see Brize Norton ready our Atlas fleet for action wherever they are needed in the world.

A £70 million hangar large enough to contain three of the RAF's new Atlas transport aircraft at the same time was officially opened by Defence Minister Guto Bebb at RAF Brize Norton today. Crown copyright.

The hangar was built under Defence Infrastructure Organisation contracts and has cost approximately £70 million including fit-out work, with activity on the facility ramping up since late 2016 when it was handed to Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement organisation.

The hangar is designed to make Atlas maintenance easier, safer and more efficient. The internal layout is the result of extensive feedback from support delivery teams and has been designed to be highly adaptable with easy access to specialist tools and equipment.

Support for the UK's Atlas fleet is enabled through a £410 million agreement between DE&S and Airbus Defence and Space – part of the UK's ongoing commitment to the Atlas programme which is sustaining 8,000 jobs across the national supply chain.

RAF Atlas aircraft, a familiar sight in the skies above RAF Brize Norton where they are based, recently formed part of the UK's relief response to Hurricane Irma in the Caribbean where they made shuttle flights from Barbados to destinations across the region to deliver key support, including to the British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos and Anguilla.

Defence Equipment and Support Director Air Support, Adrian Baguley, said:

The Atlas programme is delivering a world-class fleet for the RAF, offering the UK next-generation transport and airlift abilities for operations all over the world.

Expert support on the ground in the UK is an essential part of that capability and this new facility will ensure that work continues for decades to come.

The aircraft can carry up to 37 tonnes over a range of 2,000 nautical miles. It is able to deploy troops and equipment between and within theatres of operation either by parachute or by landing on short, potentially unprepared airstrips.

Atlas can also carry armoured vehicles, drastically reducing the time it takes for a deploying force to be ready to fight. For humanitarian roles, it is capable of deploying mobile cranes, excavators and large dump trucks for disaster relief operations— for example clearing earthquake sites.

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Wing Commander Ed Horne, the Officer Commanding 70 Squadron RAF which operates the UK's Atlas aircraft said:

This new hangar provides us with a world-class maintenance facility to match the world-beating capability of the Atlas aircraft.

The UK has ordered 22 Atlas aircraft for the RAF, 18 of which have been delivered. The entire fleet is due to be delivered by 2022.

A £70 million hangar large enough to contain three of the RAF's new Atlas transport aircraft at the same time was officially opened by Defence Minister Guto Bebb at RAF Brize Norton today. Crown copyright.

[News story: VOA Accounts Payable moves to HMRC Financial Shared Services](#)

From 1 March 2018 the VOA Accounts Payable function will transfer to HMRC Financial Shared Services.

What this means for you:

From 1 March 2018, all payments and related documents from the VOA will be

issued by HMRC, and HMRC will be your first point of contact for any payment queries.

The Accounts Payable email addresses will be:

Our bank account or other details will not change.

Also from 1 March 2018, we will correspond with you electronically instead of by post. Please contact HMRC at accountspayable.voqueries@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk if you wish to amend your contact details.

These changes are automatic and you do not need to do anything.