



# Building Healthier Workplaces Together this Men's Health Awareness Month

November is Men's Health Awareness Month, and with it brings a great opportunity to put particular focus on the wellness of your male staff in your workplace.

With many of us working from home, the tell-tale signs of men struggling both mentally and physically are becoming harder to spot. And, men in particular, are less likely to share how they are feeling with other people.

## Mental health and Suicide

It is a sad reality that men tend to suffer alone. A survey of 1,000 men in the UK showed that, although 77% of those polled had suffered with symptoms of common mental health conditions such as anxiety, stress or depression, 40% had never spoken to anyone about their mental health.<sup>1</sup> And the biggest cause of mental health issues? Their lives at work (32%) saw the biggest reason for poor mental health.<sup>2</sup>

It is common knowledge now too that suicide is disproportionately a men's issue. Research from within in England and Wales shows that men die by suicide at a rate three times more often women and nearly 12 men lose their lives to suicide every day.<sup>3</sup> With men aged 50-54 years found to have the highest suicide rate.<sup>4</sup>

And, the statistics get worse. Researchers estimate that up to 60% of people who die by suicide have major depression.<sup>5</sup> Despite this, only 36% of NHS referrals for psychological therapies are for men.<sup>6</sup> The link is clear. Men are in urgent need of much needed support with their mental health and what you can do to support them in the workplace has a clear impact on their health and future.

## Men and Cancer

As well as suicide, testicular and prostate cancer are other well-known men's health concerns. And the most recent research has found that - not only is prostate cancer the most common cancer in men; 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed within their lifetime<sup>7</sup> - but it has become the most common cancer in England. Prostate cancer has had a massive 25% increase in cases between 2019 and 2023.<sup>8</sup> This mainly is due to the lack of screening during the pandemic leading to a rush of late diagnosis for many men.

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<sup>1</sup> [Men's Mental Health: Why 40% of men won't talk about it - Priory](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Men's Mental Health: Why 40% of men won't talk about it - Priory](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Men's Suicide Stats | Understanding Higher Rates Among Men](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Latest suicide data | Suicide facts and figures | Samaritans](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Men's Suicide Stats | Understanding Higher Rates Among Men](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Key Statistics about Men and Mental Health - Counselling Directory](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Prostate Cancer UK | Prostate Cancer UK](#)

<sup>8</sup> [It's a fact: prostate cancer now the most common cancer in England | Prostate Cancer UK](#)



On the other hand, testicular cancer accounts for approximately 1% of all cancers in men. While rare it is still important to highlight with staff. Although rare it is still the most common form of cancer in men between the ages of 15 and 35; a large proportion of the workforce.<sup>9</sup> Luckily, it's a highly treatable cancer especially if caught early.

Luckily, all three of these men's health issues can be prevented if spotted early enough and giving the screening, treatment and support they require. So, with Men's Health Month upon us what can businesses do to support their employees in such significant areas?

### Get staff self-checking

There are plenty of online tick box questionnaires that work as a quick and easy exercises to engage the men in your office to take the first steps with their health. Of course, make sure you pick a reputable provider. We've listed some below.

The World Health Organisation has a thorough online questionnaire for depression: [WHO STEPS Depression Self-assessment Tool](#)

Prostate Cancer UK's self-assessment is less than 30 seconds long to complete: [Check your risk in 30 seconds | Prostate Cancer UK](#)

Charity, Testicular Cancer UK has a handy self-examination video that's less than two minutes long: [Testicular cancer | how to check testicles | self exam](#)

### Remind staff of your Employee Assistance Programme

If you have a Group Life or Group Income Protection policy in place, it is likely to have an Employee Assistance Programme within it. Make sure to sign post this benefit to your employees virtually via your intranet as well as physically in areas of high footfall.

### Offer onsite health screenings and assessments

Many men skip routine check-ups yet these assessments can pick up key markers for a lot of conditions to prompt staff to seek further investigation. Companies such as Check4Cancer and Bluecrest have cost effective screening options. Depending on the take up, they can come to your place of work to carry out the assessments. There are other health screening and assessment providers out there too. Reputable providers like BUPA, Nuffield and AXA for example; however, they tend to carry out assessments at their own clinics/hospitals.

### Create your mental health policy

If you don't already have one, then it's time to create a company mental health policy. Having such a policy in place demonstrates a commitment to supporting employees' mental wellbeing and makes an unspoken topic for many men, visible.

If you already have one, look at your policy with fresh eyes to make sure it answers any questions or queries. Using male-centric policy development can add to your policy by addressing the unique

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<sup>9</sup> [About TC – Testicular Cancer Society](#)



barriers men face in seeking help that are largely rooted in traditional masculinity norms and social stigma.

Finally, make sure it's shared with all staff regularly and easily accessible.

### Challenge masculinity norms in the workplace

With men less likely to share personal or physical health issues, having male leaders who prioritise health and openly share stories can change a company culture. Representation is powerful as are shared experiences. Fostering an open dialogue from the top down can help to dampen societies 'toughen up' expectations on men.

### Final thoughts

Brilliant charities like Movember have helped bring men's health to the forefront in recent years. As such, society's awareness on the importance of men's physical and mental health is growing. Employers have a pivotal role to play, not just in supporting their staff but challenging cultural norms around masculinity and health for everyone. It's up to clubs, businesses and families to keep that momentum going. By regularly discussing specifically male-centric health issues we can banish the stigma around men's health in our organisations and society as a whole.

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