

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT A MALE DOMINANT AND/OR REMOTE WORKFORCE: A COLAS CONSTRUCTION CASE STUDY

MAY 2024



WE OPEN THE WAY



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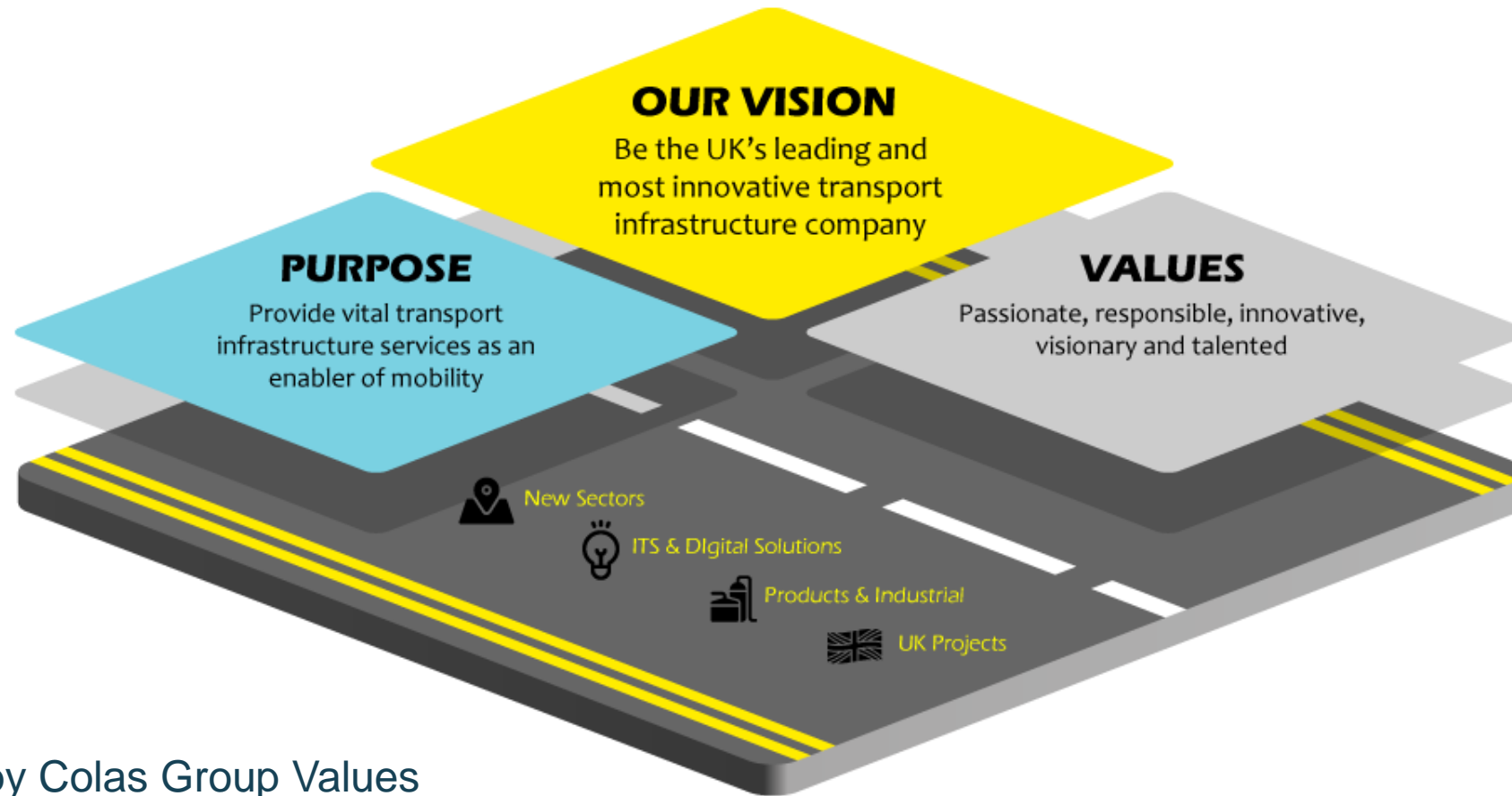
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ABOUT US

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Underpinned by Colas Group Values
CARING | SHARING | DARING



COLAS LEEDS

- MAIN CLIENTS LEEDS CITY COUNCIL / NATIONAL HIGHWAYS, WEST YORKSHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITIES
- HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS, DELIVERY CIVILS SURFACING AND TM
- EACH WEEK WE HAVE BETWEEN 140-160 MALE OPERATIVES WORKING DIRECTLY FOR COLAS OUT ON THE ROADS
- WE HAVE 2 MAIN SME SUBCONTRACTORS, RS CIVILS AND FALLELLY THEY HAVE APPROXIMATELY 10-15 MALE OPERATIVES WORKING ON COLAS SITES
- CURRENT ACTIVITY: TCF / ACTIVE TRAVEL / TRAFFIC ENGINEERING / MAINTENANCE / NH



MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND WHERE WE STARTED



We needed help

Where did we start??

- 2018 a highways operative died by suicide, this impacted the people that knew him.. But we did nothing in response to this
- 2020 a Site Manager, took some time off work due to work stress, during his return to work interview he told me he wanted to 'take his own life'
- 2021 another Colas operative died by suicide – this impacted us in a big way as we all knew him very well
- One of our sub-contractors came to see me, asking. I need help! One of my guys has told me he wants to take his own life and I don't know what to do...
- RS Civils lost 2 guys from suicide
- We had no comms out, no-one was talking about the issue and it felt like it was 'blissful ignorance'
- **Something needed to change, we as a BU needed support and to develop a strategy providing us with the confidence and ability to support people with mental health issues**

Corporate Stance

The company had a Mental Health First Aid campaign and corporate partnership with Mates in Mind, plus an external resource METLIFE to refer people to if they wanted counselling.

The strategy felt 'far away' from the workforce. We felt a more localised approach would be better.

Your wellbeing matters

Take control with MetLife's Wellbeing Hub

In today's busy world finding the right kind of support and services that we need can be time consuming, not to mention expensive.

MetLife's Wellbeing Hub can help you feel in control, whether it's affecting you directly or a loved one in your household, who are also able to access the service for free!

To see how the Wellbeing Hub can help you take control of your wellbeing, visit healthassuredexp.co.uk or call 0800 389 0285

The services cover the three core areas of wellbeing. You can get help with:

- 1. Financial Wellbeing**
We know that 34% of employees are distracted at work due to financial worries.¹ Legal professionals can provide support on a range of financial issues, including:
 - Debt
 - Credit card consolidation
 - Pensions
 - Living on reduced income
 - Managing your money
- 2. Mental Wellbeing**
You can speak to a qualified counsellor² and benefit from up to six face-to-face counselling sessions³ to help with issues such as:
 - Depression
 - Child support
 - Bereavement
 - Anxiety and panic attacks
 - Stress
 - Relationships
- 3. Physical Wellbeing**
As well as keeping fit and healthy, we can help you with access to registered nurses.⁴ They can help with:
 - Aches and pains
 - Heart health
 - Quit smoking
 - Exercise and eating well
 - Travel advice
 - Terminal illness

How to access wellbeing support

- Call Freephone 0800 389 0285
- Download the Health e-hub app from the App store or Google Play
 - Username: Wellbeing
 - Password: Hub
- Visit the online portal at healthassuredexp.co.uk
 - Username: Wellbeing
 - Password: Hub

Complete your own Health Risk Assessment (HRA)

1. Login to the Online portal
2. Locate the Health Risk assessment under 'Wellbeing Resources'
3. Create an account using your employers unique code

Here is a free template for the code to be added

Free text box

INNOVATION CHALLENGE

OUR FIRST STEP



From Global to Local: The Colas Group is a worldwide organisation with over 55 thousand employees. We bring Global expertise and combine it with local knowledge to build better environments for our communities

This innovation challenge was put to our supply chain, in order to find strategies at ground level that would work.

Several innovations were progressed as part of the strategy with a specific focus around mental health, due to the high rates of male suicide in Leeds and our own experiences of suicide in the work force

This was a well developed idea and involved us linking up with 'Andy's Man Club'.



ANDYS MAN CLUB – PRESENTATION DAY

OUR NEXT STEP



Andy's Man Club came to Colas, we held presentations at all of our sites and our depots throughout the day.

We stopped work on site and dedicated a couple of hours to ensure ALL can attend.

- Inspiration amongst the team
- Sense of purpose
- Provided a platform to talk
- MHFA
- Mental Health champions
- We finally started talking about Mental Health and asking each other (are you ok?)

I am please to say some of our team are continually using AMC services

MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY

PUSHING THE AGENDA ON

- People had started talking, so we started to think how we could do more as an employer, so we reached out to Leeds Mind for support
- Leeds Mind supported Colas in putting together a Mental Health strategy for the Leeds Business Unit
- The strategy is reviewed annually
- Forms part of our operating procedures

Our Vision :

Our Mission:

CORE OBJECTIVES:	1. Strategy: We commit to understanding and responding to regional drivers and priorities.	2. Delivery: We commit to embedding a multi-faceted MH provision across our depots and construction sites.	3. Behavioural Change: We commit to proactively driving culture change in how we discuss, influence and manage the Mental Health of our workforce.
RATIONALE	Research: Yorkshire/Humberside has highest male suicide rate in the UK. Leeds male suicide is disproportionately high (male: female ratio of 5:1 against UK 3:1). CIOB research identifies Built Environment as having 2 nd highest suicide rate. Pressing need for employers to tackle poor MH/suicide.	Ability to act as a central pivot to drive change: Colas has developed strong working relationships with our workforce, our suppliers and public/third sector providers. Leeds Contracting is ideally placed to drive a holistic approach and robust regional strategy to enable a mentally healthy workplace.	Culture of acceptance and support: We will embed MH awareness into our day-to-day operations through regular insight sessions. In collaboration with our local partners we will develop and deliver a initiatives to promote positive mental/physical health and wellbeing.

MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY

PUSHING THE AGENDA ON

<p>ACTIONS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use local partnerships (Leeds Mind, Colas Suppliers, Mindful Employer Network, Leeds CC Public Health Directorate) to understand and respond to local needs in a collaborative, joined-up manner. • Demonstrate visible leadership, and shape regional strategy through participation in Mindful Employer Network and Mindful employer Steering Group. Colas brings sector and gender diversity to this group (which represents circa 400+ employers in the region), which is comprised mainly of public-sector bodies. • Support Mindful Employer Network's events and digital campaigns to ensure local awareness of MH provision in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use internal events (such as coffee mornings), visual campaigns and Toolbox Talks to promote supportive services • Continue to train our personnel and supply chain, to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to discuss MH sensitively, and to support themselves and their colleagues. • Increase number of trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) across depots and sites from XX to XX • Provide personnel with access to MH support via partnership with Andy's Man Club (5 members of Colas' team and supply chain have used the service to date) and Mates in Mind. • Develop strategies for extending provision to supply chain, and stakeholders (charities, SMEs, members of the public). • Develop over-arching Comms Strategy to maximise internal/external awareness of provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run internal awareness sessions in partnership with Mates in Mind, Andy Man's Club and Leeds Mind to promote a positive and transparent MH culture. • Senior leaders to continuously reinforce MH awareness and 'Ok not to be OK' ethos • Management to signpost team to further sources of advice/support. • Provide coffee mornings and non-work related team activities (5-a-side, team outings etc.) to promote positive physical and mental health. • Ensure newsletters, literature and visual awareness tools (posters, site notice boards etc.) promote MH awareness. • Continue promoting open dialogues around MH issues
<p>CORE FOUNDATIONS</p>	<p>Leadership team to drive consistent focus across projects and depot activities.</p> <p>Sustained collaboration with aligned public and 3rd sector partners.</p> <p>Robust capture and reporting of activities / impacts using National TOMs framework.</p>		

SUPPORT NETWORK

WHAT SUPPORT DID WE NEED...

- Leeds Mind supported us putting together our mental health strategy
- The Mindful Employer Network – linked us up with support teams such as the suicide bereavement service
- Leeds Mind Steering group enables us to discuss ideas/thoughts and share best practice, they shared our story through Yorkshire Evening Post
- Andy's Man Club – provided on site presentations / posters and comms materials
- The suicide bereavement service provided on site presentations, and shared experiences which generated talking points in our group sessions
- Mindful employer video – material used to cascade
- MindWell – provided us with comms material



THE STRATEGY INCLUDES

WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO NOW THAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH



> MH Champions

- Staff started to step forward wanting to do more
- Some of the team became our MH Champions, and leading support groups and walks in their spare time



> ANDY'S MAN CLUB

- All comms issued out to our work force have the AMC it's ok to talk logo
- Sites are taking their own initiative and arranging presentations regularly throughout the year



> MHFA TRAINING

- The operative / manager approach was not working
- We adopted a peer to peer approach
- 16 operatives trained
- Provides a more accessible support network

PROJECTS LEEDS



> CHAT CLUB

- Monday mornings 7am, chat club is held
- Open to everyone
- Discuss anything, we just ask it not to be work related
- Its important that people feel free and open to talk



> BIODIVERSITY / WELLBEING HUB

- Group project to build a planter and fish pond as our 'biodiversity pledge'
- We found this area to be used as a location where people gather to talk at the end or start of shift
- Stress relief
- We created a wellbeing hub



> VOLUNTEERING LCOB

- Volunteering days done with Civil Engineering students form LCOB
- In sight to how the College are tackling mental health
- Sharing of best practice
- Talk to young people and to make mental health awareness something normal to talk about

RESULTS / OUTCOMES

HAVE WE SEEN A DIFFERENCE

- Reduction in short term sick days
- 5 directly employed and 3 from our S/C using AMC services
- Our site teams are displaying the support networks on all of our welfare facilities
- The 'chat club' is full every Monday
- The wellbeing hub is used and we are in the process of adding more to other operational depots
- Our management team are confident to know how to deal with people suffering with mental health issues
- Colas Business Manager said:
 - *"Through all the vehicles of opening up locked up feelings such as AMC, Chat Club, MHFA to name a few, and the innovative approach to engaging the communities we work in, I have noticed a step change in the openness of our teams. We are showing a much more caring and empathetic approach to our day to day contact".*
- We have developed a culture of 'its ok to talk'

Awards

- Constructing Excellence regional awards winner
- Constructing Excellence national awards highly commended
- Highways Hero's awards winner
- Passionate People internal awards
- It is important to ensure that people are recognised for their efforts

'Every life lost to suicide is one too many': Leeds firm urges businesses to put workplace wellbeing at top of agenda after loss of colleague

A Leeds boss has opened up about his firm's experience of losing a colleague to suicide in the hope of encouraging other businesses to put workplace wellbeing high on their agendas.



Employees at Colas, which now plays an active role in the Leeds Mindful Employer Network.



FURTHER IMPACT

LEEDS SOCIAL VALUE – MEANINGFUL AND EMPATHETIC

- Colas Social Value steering group – linked us up to St George's Crypt and Leeds City Council Leaving Care Team



My job at Colas has given me responsibility and the ability to stand on my own two feet, I'm **independent for the first time in life**. I enjoy the work, the relationships I have with colleagues and working hands on.

Will, Growing Rooms -
Reintegration to
Employment Programme



I'm enjoying **learning new aspects of a different career**, great guys to work with and lots to learn. I'd like to be a black hat one day and am going to look into apprenticeships.

Josh, Care Leaver - Reintegration
to Employment Programme

COLAS REINTIGRATION TO EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

- Designed alongside Growing Rooms – St George's Crypt
- Confidence we have the necessary tools to deal with vulnerable people
- Empathetic and flexible around benefit limitations and confidence of the individual
- Works at the pace of the candidate, towards a full-time role at the right time for them
- Pays Real Living Wage
- Being rolled out in other Colas BU's

CARE-LEAVERS ROLL OUT

- Leeds Leaving Care Team
- Safeguarding policy updated with LCT
- Bespoke 'employee support plan' developed to risk assess personal circumstances – attachment disorders, practicalities etc.
- Access to Trauma Led Employer training
- Utilise skills from Mental Health training to support care leavers

BESPOKE TRAINING

- Working with LCT to develop construction/private sector TLL training
- Active Bystander training – to support vulnerable road users and staff
- Involvement in progressive masculinity work with LCOB
- Safeguarding training for front line staff

CHALLENGES

OUR INDUSTRY IS EVER CHANGING

- 2023 has been a difficult year for the 'Construction Industry' hyperinflation, the cost of energy and availability of resources has impacted profitability
- 2023 losses has resulted in a companywide restructure
 - Redundancies
 - Closing of operational depots
 - Cutting overhead costs
- Focus on 'cash cash cash'
- Turbulent times are impacting our teams and workforce
- Security of jobs and longevity of our contracts are an issue now

What areas do we need to focus on

- People, we have found it is the people that drive these initiatives
- People relationships, are key and these need to be retained
- Confidence / trust,
- Job security



Reintegration to Work Programme

- Substance addiction within our workforce
- Ongoing support, external sessions
- Trauma lead leadership
- Updated policies / procedures
- Maintaining a supportive work force has been difficult with the loss of staff

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE FOR COLAS

WHAT DID WE LEARN

- 2024 update our Mental Health Strategy for this year
- Continued development of SV initiatives, internal working group has been set up to ensure engagement of all
- Create champions amongst the team to run with their own initiatives, develop 'intent' to make a difference
- Focus on cash profitability to ensure job security
- Steady the ship
- To know my team better, have the conversation to see if someone is ok
- Develop our knowledge of supporting individuals who have suffered from 'trauma' as an employer
- Share our experiences with others, develop other BU's
- Work closely with LCOB to share our knowledge, grow a culture of 'its ok to talk'
- Cones book to be launched very soon
- Continue with Leeds Mind Steering Group
- Newer Networks (ATW/SI)

What have we learnt?

- Needs to be lead from the top
- Flexibility is key
- It takes time to change a culture, some people will resist the change
- Develop others to lead and support their thoughts
- Adapt and be flexible to change the way you do things
- Listen to others, and utilise any offered support
- Keep the momentum
- Communicate regularly
- Refresh the agenda
- Help/support for MHFA – **very important**



QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU

