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Our Ref: PO10/24

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

UK National 'Time To Talk Day' 2024 – Post Office Ltd

Further to LTB's 41/24 and 44/24 and our correspondence with the employers, Post Office Ltd shared with us their communication to the POL workforce supporting 'Time To Talk Day' 2024, (which belatedly arrived today). However, on the plus side, I'm pleased to report to all CWU POL Reps and Health & Wellbeing Ambassadors and Branches that the Post Office Ltd Health and Safety Director Martin Hopcroft has confirmed to the CWU Health, Safety and Environment Department that across Post Office Ltd, the organisation was recognising the national 'Time To Talk' Campaign, driving the importance of having open wellbeing conversations each and every day, ongoing.

The Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors, CWU Reps, First Aiders and members have received the comms and been asked to drive local activity, working with the workforce in the Units, signposting the workforce to the '**Workplace Wellbeing**' Website and helping employees understand the importance of having open mental health conversations and accessing the early support when its needed.

The POL Workplace Website 'Healthy Mind' Introduction states: - *"We often take our mental health for granted, but like our physical health, if we neglect it we can experience problems and even become unwell. Our mental health affects how we think, feel and cope with life's natural ups and downs. On this page, you will find some resources to help support your mental health."* The **"No Health Without Mental Health"** policy defines mental health as "a state of mind and body, feeling safe and able to cope, with a sense of connection with people, communities and the wider environment. Mental health, physical health, and emotional and social health are all linked, meaning that a mental health issue is also likely to affect the other areas of your health. There are Six self-help tips for seasonal affective disorder (SAD) plus videos, advice, guidance and resources available on the site."

POL CWU Reps and members can also access a whole host of support material on the 'Healthy Mind' Post Office Ltd Workplace Wellbeing Website at:

<https://postoffice.workplacewellbeing.com/healthy-mind/>

Find out more about: ['Time to Talk Day' there also and get involved.](#)

Reach out to friends, family members, or colleagues and ask how they're doing. Let them know you're there to listen and support them. The more conversations we have, the better life is for everyone.

If Post Office employees need support with mental health issues there are 'Mental Health Ambassadors' in Post Office Ltd, CWU Reps and 'Mental Health First Aiders' - ready to support. They do not act as therapists but are equipped to reassure and support colleagues in a caring and non-judgemental way and signpost people to appropriate [professional help where required.

For those in distress there are Helplines: - POL Employee Assistance helpline on 0800 6888 777 and alternatively there are the nationwide Mental Health Charity Helplines like Samaritans 24/7 Helpline: call 116 123 and MIND: 0300 123 3393 and ReThink Mental Health: 0800 801 0745.

About Time to Talk Day:

As detailed in LTBs 41/24 and 44/24, '**Time to Talk Day**' is held at the beginning of February every year. It is about helping people, workers, groups, communities etc. to come together to start to generate mental health conversations across the nation on the day but importantly to keep it going beyond that.

Taking place on Thursday 1st February 2024, it is a day that friends, families, communities, and workplaces and colleagues are encouraged to come together to talk, listen and help change lives. Time to Talk Day is the perfect opportunity to start a conversation about mental health.

We are again supporting the 'Time to Talk Day', national campaign which spotlights the importance of having more open, honest mental health conversations, encouraging people to have those conversations about how they're feeling and to help combat the stigma that still exists around mental health plus seeking help and support.

We want to support the campaign's aims which is to give everyone the opportunity to come together to talk, listen and change lives. People talking about their mental health and how they are really feeling can be difficult. But talking is crucially important! Mental Health charities and experts continually emphasise the point that the more conversations we have, the better life is for everyone.

Talking about mental health isn't always easy and sometimes it's even harder to say how you really feel. Sometimes it's easier to just say we're 'fine' than to open up. But an open conversation can be the first step towards better mental health and conversation has the power to change lives.

We know that mental health stigma has no place in the workplace – and yet, it continues to be a problem for workers. Speaking to workers about their mental health and creating a culture where people can talk openly will not only get the best out of people, but the different insights people can give can actually help achieve personal and organisational goals.

And sometimes it takes the effort and enthusiasm of the Union and workforce for employers and operational managers to sit up and take notice.

Run by the UK charities 'Mind' and 'Rethink Mental Illness', the day raises awareness of the importance of open conversations around mental health.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) reported that nearly two million workers in Great Britain reported suffering ill-health as a result of their work in 2022/23, with around half these cases due to **stress, depression or anxiety**.

As well as workers who report mental ill-health, there may well be many individuals who have experiences and symptoms that employers are not even aware of.

Talking about mental health with work colleagues/Union members can be challenging, particularly as many worry about the stigma and prejudice that may come as a consequence of sharing their issues. If this results in workers not seeking the support they need, it can create more complex health needs. LTB 44/24 offers advice and useful guidance and tips from the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) on starting those conversations. Further detailed information is contained in LTB 41/24.

Attachment:

- POL Time To Talk Day Communication

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

Time To Talk Day

Time to Talk Day is the nation's biggest mental health conversation. Happening every year, it's a day for friends, families, communities, and workplaces to come together to talk, listen and change lives. Time to Talk Day 2024 will take place 1 February 2024. Time to Talk Day is about us all being open to the idea of talking – we all have mental health, and by having conversations about it we can help ourselves and others.

The theme for this year's campaign is '**what I really mean**'; highlighting the words we say don't always reflect what's going on beneath the surface. Talking about mental health isn't always easy and sometimes it's even harder to say how you really feel. Sometimes it's easier to just say we're 'fine' than to open up. But an open conversation can be the first step towards better mental health and conversation has the power to change lives.

Please remember these key points:

- 1 in 4 of us will experience a mental health problem in any given year.
- Too many of us are made to feel isolated, worthless and ashamed because of this.
- The combination of a relentless news cycles and cost of living crisis is only making it harder to look after our mental health.
- Talking openly and honestly about our mental health is good for our wellbeing and helps bust myths and break down barriers.
- Listening without judgement when someone opens up to you has the power to change a life.

Find out more here: **Time to Talk Day: get involved**

Reach out to friends, family members, or colleagues and ask how they're doing. Let them know you're there to listen and support them. The more conversations we have, the better life is for everyone.

If you need support with mental health issues we have Mental Health Ambassadors at Post Office, ready to support. They do not act as therapists but are equipped to reassure and support colleagues in a caring and non-judgemental way.

- Find out more about our [Mental Health Ambassadors](#)
- Remember that you can also call our Employee Assistance helpline on 0800 6888 777.

You can also access a whole host of support material here [Healthy Mind | Post Office \(workplacewellbeing.com\)](#)