

Royal Mail: Mental Health Programme

Creating a multi-modal learning programme for up to 135,000 employees, to support Managers' and colleagues' mental wellbeing.

Why

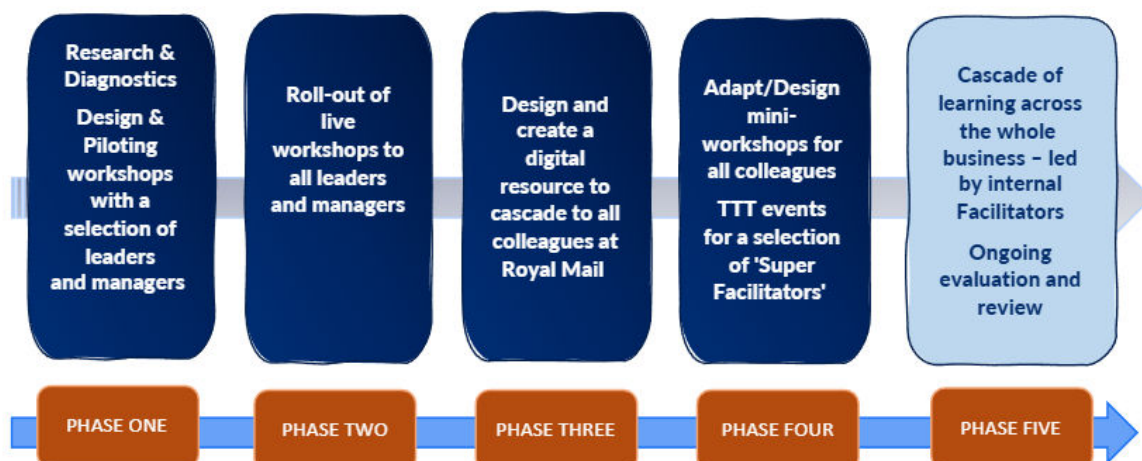
In 2023, Steps was approached to partner with Royal Mail in creating a 'big and bold' Mental Health Learning programme. This was post-covid, a challenging time for colleagues who were essential workers, followed closely by the cost of living crisis as well as industrial action. All of which contributed to absence relating to stress and mental health.

Fiona McAslan – Head of Wellbeing: "Putting our people at the heart of everything is our number one priority. We're not an organisation who makes things; we're an organisation who delivers each and every day to all addresses across the UK. So it's incredibly important we support the wellbeing of each and every one of our colleagues. Our people have been through an incredibly tough few years, and we're now looking at a significant period of transformation. Keeping our people fit and well is key to all of this."

Alongside a review of ways of working, our bespoke programme would **raise awareness** of Mental Health and how it manifests in the workplace, **improve comfort and confidence levels** in talking about Mental Health, and reinforce the availability of the existing support and resources within Royal Mail.

What

The learning solution we brought to Royal Mail was based on a 5-phase approach, to generate sustained engagement in the programme.



As with all Steps programmes, **Phase 1** started with an **initial scoping meeting** with key stakeholders from Royal Mail and the Steps project team to review the drivers behind the programme, the desired outcomes and changes and the key measures of success. This was followed by a deep period of **research and diagnostics** involving focus groups, site visits across the UK and online surveys. This research was critical in helping us to create a credible learning programme, relevant to people at Royal Mail and reflecting their real workplace challenges.

In **Phase 2**, we drew on the key themes from the research to design a **live workshop**, which was rolled out to all leaders, line managers and Wellbeing Ambassadors across the business. Over a 5-month period we reached more than 5000 people. The workshop covered:

- What is Mental Health?
- Spotting the signs of mental ill-health in a team member or colleague
- How to have conversations about Mental Health
- Tools, tips and models for effective conversations on Mental Health, and for self care
- Where to go for further support and resources

“Equipping our managers to be able to identify signs of poor mental health, have meaningful and supportive conversations and confidently signpost, was at the heart of this programme.”

- Fiona McAslan, Head of Wellbeing Royal Mail

Rosenthal, alongside actor-facilitators who brought the learning to life via engaging **drama-based scenarios**. We worked with large groups (150-200) so we ensured that there was high engagement via discussion groups, Slido voting and questions, interaction with the characters and reflection. In **Phase 3** - the aim was to cascade learning to all colleagues at Royal Mail through **3 digital resources**:

- A **self-led E-learning** to be used by leaders and managers to deepen or refresh their learning and knowledge of mental health and as a resource for induction of new colleagues
- A series of 5 short, engaging, **easy to run modules** on the topic for internal Facilitators to deliver in workshops and team meetings for all colleagues
- An **adaptation of the live workshop** using video scenarios, so it can continue to be delivered in-house for new managers and Wellbeing Ambassadors

Drawing on the research and the live workshops, our in-house media team designed and produced a series of high-quality **bespoke video dramas**, reflecting a wide range of roles, people, locations and situations across Royal Mail. We also produced **factual content** including interviews with leaders and colleagues and documentary style content.

These videos were then used as a core part of the digital resources, to ensure that the learning remained engaging and practical.

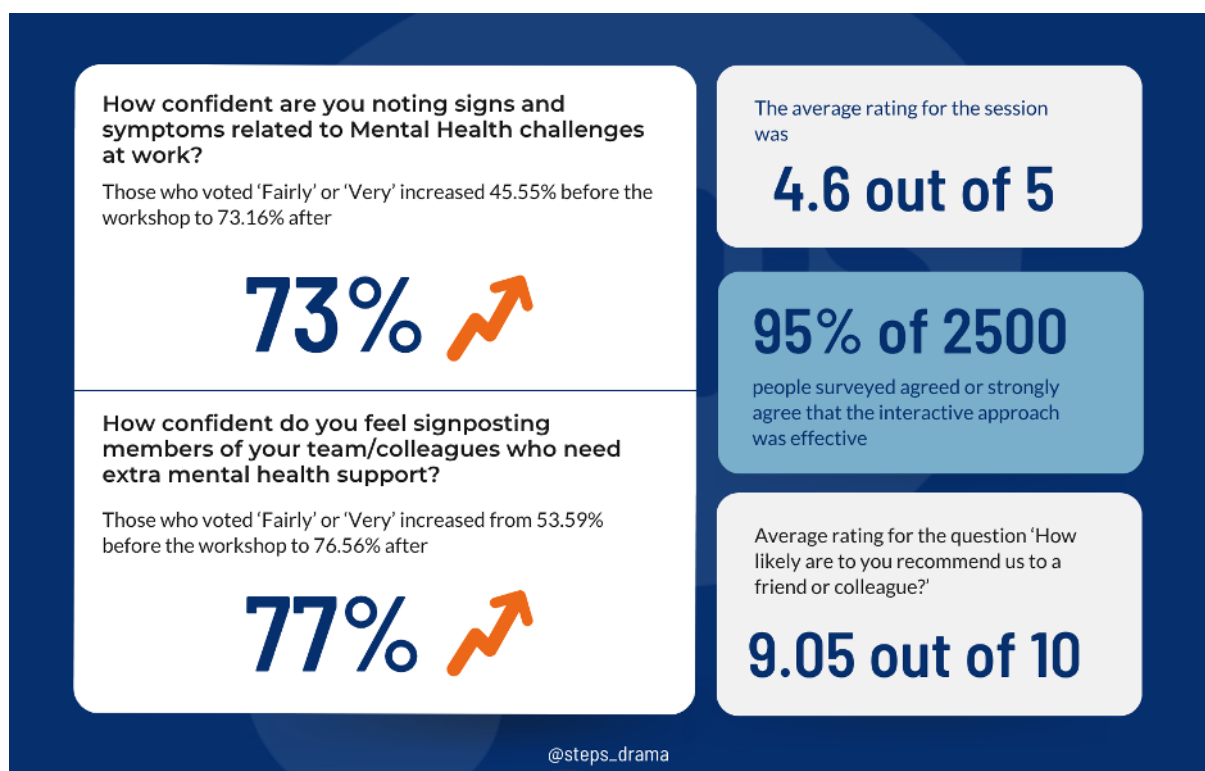
In **Phase 4** – we ran 4 **Train the Trainer workshops** upskilling 24 inhouse facilitators to continue to run the live workshops for managers and Wellbeing Ambassadors – empowering Royal Mail’s employees to become mental health champions within their teams to create long-lasting change.

“Steps took the time to understand us as an organisation – what would work well in connecting with our managers. The delivery of the programme using drama is something new in Royal Mail and the level of engagement was exceptional as demonstrated by the feedback measures. There is something quite special about ‘holding the mirror up’ to people so they can reflect on their own behaviours and actions and give them practical tools and advice going forward.”

- Fiona McAslan, Head of Wellbeing Royal Mail

Outcomes

The impact of the programme was far-reaching, with significant evidence to show that we achieved our objectives of improving comfort and confidence levels in talking about Mental Health and in spotting signs of mental ill-health in oneself and others.



“It was completely different to anything we’ve done before. The use of actors to bring our work environment to life and then to watch it and have an engaging conversation about what people were seeing provoked a lot of learning.”

- Ricky McAulay, UK Operations Director Royal Mail

Giving them practical experience at those live workshops I thought was first class and really put us on a trajectory for the future.”

- Alistair Cochrane, Chief Operating Officer Royal Mail

As the programme continues to be rolled out through team talks and as digital resources are used, we will continue to gather feedback data, to measure and understand the long-term impact on workplace productivity, engagement and job satisfaction. The first level of qualitative and quantitative evaluation indicates exceptional progress towards normalising Mental Health discussions at Royal Mail.

Employing an iterative and multi-faceted approach gave us the opportunity to improve the programme as required based on feedback, ensuring that managers and colleagues were being sufficiently supported throughout the process and better placed to sustain and embed awareness and discussion around mental wellbeing.

Our work with Royal Mail in Mental Health, adds to our breadth of experience delivering large scale projects on this topic, in the public and private sectors. Their excellent partnership has contributed to our continued growth and success creating meaningful and impactful learning programmes in this space.