



happier@work

briefing note 3: 'Creating Space for well-being'

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In November 2011, 7 staff teams from across King's Health Partners' began working with a small group of KHP staff from a range of disciplines including clinical services, HR, occupational health and mental health promotion, to identify some of the key factors that influence staff well-being in the workplace.

Through this careful and collaborative process of exploration, a very clear and compelling picture of working life across King's Health Partners was built up. Using the findings from this initial exploration, the **happier@work** initiative was developed. Funded by NHS London, this pilot programme focused on improving staff well-being while responding to the challenging realities of NHS working life.

Some of the findings from this process of discovery were pretty obvious. King's Health Partners employees are caring, compassionate and highly motivated - but in relation to workplace well-being, many are struggling to cope with high levels of work-related stress that often spills over to home life.

In response, the **happier@work** initiative has provided a series of activities for staff, including stress awareness workshops, mindfulness training and mental health awareness support for line managers.

Creating space for well-being

The initial exploration also identified another key area relating to staff well-being where there is, quite literally, 'room' for improvement: the physical spaces we work in.

In response, the **happier@work** initiative is now working with 3 of the original 7 KHP staff teams to explore how changes to the workplace physical environment might improve staff well-being. '**Creating space for well-being**' brings together artist-in-residence, Barbara Asante, with NHS staff from three clinical services to develop and implement a plan to improve the 'workspace'.

Each team has identified a specific challenge in relation to their particular physical environment, with the help of a **Mental Well-being Impact Assessment (MWIA)**. These challenges will act as the focus of collaboration between staff and the artist-in-residence.

To improve their working environment, each service will draw on design expertise to develop a plan of workspace improvements which might involve the use of colour and light, the introduction of art work, or the reorganisation of space and equipment - to make work spaces more user-friendly and enable more positive interaction with other staff, patients and the general public.



What happened next?

The teams began working with the artist-in-residence in May 2013

The initiative is divided into seven stages:

- Stage 1: Artist familiarisation - findings from teams' Mental Well-being Impact Assessments
- Stage 2: Fieldwork - visits to the three pilot locations and consultation with staff
- Stage 3: Collation of material and ideas for presentation to staff collaborators
- Stage 4: Presentation of materials; working with the staff in the three pilot locations to co-produce a plan for workscape improvements
- Stage 5: Development of ideas, continuing discussions and finalisation of plans, and discussions with NHS Estates on implementing the planned changes
- Stage 6: Finalisation and implementation of improvement plans
- Stage 7: Review and Legacy - final evaluation

If you'd like to keep up-to-date with **happier@work** developments, please register your interest by emailing your contact details to

hello@wheelofwellbeing.org

Workplace Well-being: The Bad News...

Work-related stress, anxiety and depression are the most frequent cause of days off work - 9.8 million days lost in UK in 2009/10 (Health and Safety Executive, 2010)

- UK businesses lose £1035 a year for every person they employ as a result of mental health problems (NICE, 2009)
- Mental health problems cost UK businesses £28.3 billion per year (NICE, 2009)

...and the Good News

There's a lot we can do. According to the Department of Health (2011):

- Early detection and treatment of depression at work saves £5 for each £1 spent
- Mental health promotion at work saves £10 for each £1 spent after 1 year

KHP's **happier@work** programme has taken this evidence as a starting point to co-design innovative and cost-effective solutions to improving well-being at work.

Why **happier@work**?

There is compelling body of international evidence that links our happiness with longer lives, better mental and physical health, stronger relationships and a range of other psychological, social and economic benefits. While it is slowly finding its way into public policy, another growing body of evidence is showing that people who experience more positive emotions at work demonstrate better performance, less absenteeism and more positive relationships with colleagues.

In the US, Professor Barbara Frederickson's research into high-performing business teams has gained international attention because of the powerful links it has discovered between high levels of positive emotions and more creative problem-solving, improved performance, better team communication and greater resilience in times of adversity.

In addition, research is showing that people who are more satisfied with work are more likely to help others – and their organisation – outside their regular job roles.