



Blackpool Transport - Mental Health First Aiders (Be the Shoulder)

Who we are

A local, award-winning bus and tram operator serving the Fylde Coast with a high frequency bus network linking Lytham, St Annes, Blackpool, Bispham, Fleetwood, Cleveleys and Poulton. The network is a cost-effective way of travelling around the Fylde Coast area, with high visibility, accessible, environmentally friendly buses and easy to follow timetables to make your journey easy and pleasurable. The Blackpool tramway runs for 11 miles along the coast using modern, light rail trams.

Overview and objectives

Mental Health in the workplace is a key focus for Blackpool Transport and the health and wellbeing of our colleagues, a priority. We wanted to create a network of support throughout the business that gave colleagues a confidential 'shoulder' to lean on if they needed help.

Approach

In late 2018, we created a well-being community named 'Be the Shoulder'. Employees from a cross-section of departments volunteered to become Well-Being Ambassadors using the acronym BTS - "Be the Shoulder" to directly link to our business name. We trained 70 well-being ambassadors to support any employees who have any issues relating to their well-being. We built a community structure, consisting of 2 Executive Champions, a Wellbeing Co-ordinator, 4 Mental Health First Aiders and our team of enthusiastic and passionate Ambassadors.

Results

The Wellbeing Co-ordinator designed a comprehensive toolkit for the community containing essential tips for "being the shoulder" and helpful signposting information. Our Ambassadors each wear a "BTS" badge which is immediately identifiable and allows employees to recognise at a glance who they can speak to discreetly in confidence.

Quiet spaces were created for our employees if they need to talk to someone or simply have somewhere to take some time to reflect and feel calmer.

In addition to the bespoke Ambassadors we began wider conversations within our mandatory driver CPC training enabling us to have a company-wide discussion about mental health, the stigma which can be attached, and the importance of recognising your own mental well-being.

Conclusion

The approach we have taken has enabled us to continually improve and provide the best possible working environment for our employees. Working with all departmental Ambassadors and Champions, we have identified key services for our colleagues, ensuring that these are clearly signposted alongside our 'in person' support. We work with other organisations including the Transport Benevolent Fund and Canada Life (and affiliate programmes) to provide information and advice to employees looking for support.