



Mental  
health &  
wellbeing

ben

Support for life

# Work and Mental Health



*Stress and mental ill-health are among the most common causes of long-term absence in the UK<sup>1</sup>. More and more employers are recognising the need to have an employee wellbeing programme in place, but 56% don't feel they have the right training or guidance<sup>2</sup>.*

If you are living with a mental health condition and working you may experience concern about its impact on your job. However as an employee you do have rights, so it is important you seek advice and support to understand what these are.

## Telling your manager

If you are living with a mental health issue and working then the choice is yours whether to tell your manager or not. It depends on whether you feel comfortable enough to discuss this.

When you decide to tell your boss you may want to think about telling them in private, preparing what you want to tell them beforehand and thinking about what support you need to function as well as possible whilst at work.

If your employer runs an employee wellbeing scheme there may be help available, whilst creating a framework to enable you to stay in work.

<sup>1</sup>CIPD - absence management report 2015

<sup>2</sup>Mind - taking care of your staff

<sup>3</sup>Gov.uk - definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010

## Absence

If you feel too unwell to work, you may need to take time off sick. If you're off work for more than 7 days due to sickness, you'll need a "fit note", otherwise known as "sick note". Hospital doctors or GPs can provide a fit note.

If you are off sick for four or more days in a row you may qualify for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). This will be paid by your employer for up to 28 weeks. Your employer may have its own sickness payment policy you would have to check this on your contract of employment.

There are protections in place for people living with 'protected characteristics'. It is important you understand whether your diagnosis means you have these additional rights as an employee.

See our other mental health fact sheets for tips and support sources to help you get better.

## Protected Characteristics

- Age
- Being/becoming transsexual person
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave
- Disability
- Race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

## Return to work

Once you feel ready to return to work talk to your GP as they may be able to give advice as part of your fit note. The fit note includes space for your GP to suggest ways your employer can help you to return to work. It may be useful to arrange a phased return to work, this would assist you with getting up to date with what has been happening in your absence.

Get in touch with your manager to discuss a return to work plan. Your employer may have to provide 'reasonable adjustments' to help you to do your job. Make sure that everyone involved agrees with the plan. Depending on your circumstances 'reasonable adjustments' (see links below), may include options such as working flexible hours, support from a colleague/buddy, a place to take a break when needed or adjustments to the work tasks.

Schedule regular catch ups with your boss to discuss how you are getting on.

## Further sources of help

- Disability rights  
[www.gov.uk/rights-disabled-person/overview](http://www.gov.uk/rights-disabled-person/overview)
- Financial help for disabled  
[www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled](http://www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled)
- Mental Health Foundation  
[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)
- Mind  
[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)
- Practical guide to 'reasonable adjustments' from the Time to Change website  
[www.time-to-change.org.uk/your-organisation/support-workplace/telling-my-manager](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/your-organisation/support-workplace/telling-my-manager)
- Rethink mental illness  
[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)
- BEN Benefits Fact Sheet
- BEN Living with Mental Health Fact Sheet

[www.ben.org.uk](http://www.ben.org.uk)

f /BenSupport4Auto

t @BenSupport4Auto

**Free, confidential helpline:**  
**08081 311 333**

Ben - Motor and Allied Trades Benevolent Fund. Lynwood Court, Lynwood Village, Rise Road, Ascot SL5 0FG. A charity registered in England and Wales (no.297877) and Scotland (no.SC039842). Registered with the Homes and Communities Agency (no. LH3766).

**ben**  
Support for life