# Delivering behaviour change in the workplace

time to change
let's end mental health discrimination

## Impact series

# Introduction

Time to Change is a growing social movement working to improve the way we all think and act about mental health problems. By supporting people to be more open about mental health, to talk and to listen, we aim to end the stigma and discrimination faced by those of us with mental health problems.

We work with employers to help workplaces open up to mental health and challenge stigma and discrimination. This is part of our wider programme of work to change attitudes and behaviours to mental health problems in settings such as schools and communities, and through our social marketing and communications.

We encourage and support employers to create a more open and understanding culture around mental health problems in the workplace.

**We do this by:**

- **Encouraging organisations to make a public commitment** – we want organisations to shout about the positive changes they're making as a result of signing the Time to Change Employer Pledge, and inspire other organisations to make that same commitment.

- **Empowering Employee Champions** – we support colleagues at all levels of the organisation to work collaboratively to drive forward their organisation's Action Plan and embed change.

- **Working with employers** to **create robust action plans** – we ensure that organisations are creating clear, deliverable strategies to improve the way they approach mental health.

- **Providing the tools to deliver lasting change** – we provide pledged employers with a comprehensive package of support including training, events, resources and consultancy.

**The Time to Change Employer Pledge** is a commitment to changing how workplaces think and act about mental health and is underpinned by a 12-month Employer Action Plan, which we support employers to create.

We want to see a meaningful shift in the way organisations approach mental health when they sign the Employer Pledge. Our work with employers has been developed in line with two behaviour change models, Kotter's Eight Step Change Management Model[1] and Behavioural Insights' EAST framework[2] , and is guided by Time to Change's eight strategic programme objectives:

1. Employees have increased social contact with people who have a mental health problem

2. It becomes normal to be open about mental health in the workplace

3. Employees have an increased awareness and understanding of mental health

4. There are increased rates of disclosure of mental health problems in the workplace

5. There are increased rates of confidence to disclose in the workplace

6. Employees are treated fairly and supported by their employer and colleagues when they disclose

7. Employees are empowered to tackle stigma, including by sharing their experiences

8. Employers understand the value of tackling mental health stigma and discrimination

1. Kotter J., 1996., Leading Change. Boston: Harvard Business School Press

2 https://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/BIT-Publication-EAST_FA_WEB.pdf

> **"As conversations around mental health began to happen, we started to see just how many of our people were affected by it in some way. Lots of our people, from the Executive Management level right through the organisation have shared mental health challenges that they have faced or continue to face. This, in turn, has encouraged others to either share their story or seek support."**

Jemma, HR Director at SSP Limited

**Encouraging organisations to make a public commitment**

**We encourage employers to sign our Employer Pledge to make a public commitment to improve the way they approach mental health in their workplace.**

Our experience tells us that when employers make a public commitment in this way they have a greater motivation to deliver change. In addition, it inspires other employers to look at their own attitudes and behaviours towards mental health and potentially sign the Pledge themselves.

We understand that tackling mental health discrimination and stigma in the workplace can be a daunting task.

Our research tells us that by building an employer's confidence to deliver activities and interventions that are likely to result in change, they are able to create a workplace culture where people can be open about mental health.

Our support and resources have proven invaluable to organisations hoping to achieve embedded behaviour change in the workplace, ensuring this is owned and led by them.

# Working with employers to create robust action plans

**We work closely with employers to develop their individual Action Plan as part of the Employer Pledge process. We know that to achieve lasting cultural change, employers need to commit to a plan of measurable activity to address how their workplace thinks and acts about mental health.**



Our current Action Plan template is built upon the core standards outlined in the 2017 Thriving at Work Report[3] and provides a framework for organisations to consider the interventions they can deliver to help tackle stigma and discrimination around mental health.

Our research shows that buy-in at all levels is important, so the format is designed to be easy to share and communicate across an organisation.

Our experience tells us that establishing an on-going commitment to change is vital to achieving a lasting impact on workplace attitudes and behaviours, so each Action Plan is anchored with meaningful organisational policy change. We embed change from the top down, ensuring that senior leaders understand the value of tackling mental health stigma and discrimination.

[3] Thriving at work: The Stevenson / Farmer review of mental health and employers, October 2017

# Empowering Employee Champions

As well as buy-in from senior leadership, we have seen that Employee Champions are key to embedding meaningful, lasting change in workplaces. We work with employers to recruit Champions from among their staff and run a variety of Employee Champion training sessions, empowering Champions to lead activities and drive forward their organisation's Action Plan.

Our Train the Trainer programme enables workplaces to support employees to become Champions, creating a more sustainable network for change.

Employee Champions help to create opportunities to start conversations about mental health, dispel myths, and make it easier for their colleagues to seek support if they need it. We know that sharing personal experiences of mental health problems is a powerful way to challenge stigma, especially when they're shared at all levels of the organisation, for example from senior leaders.

This is why we encourage Champion-led activities that give staff opportunities to share their personal experiences of mental health problems, helping to create a more open culture around mental health in which people feel more confident to disclose.

Across England, we have supported employers to recruit, train and support 3,874 Employee Champions, 80% of whom identify as having lived experience of a mental health problem.

"Being a champion has enabled me to be me…I feel like I don't have to hide my mental health struggles and now use them to help others."

Catherine Oinonen, Employee Champion at Kirklees Council

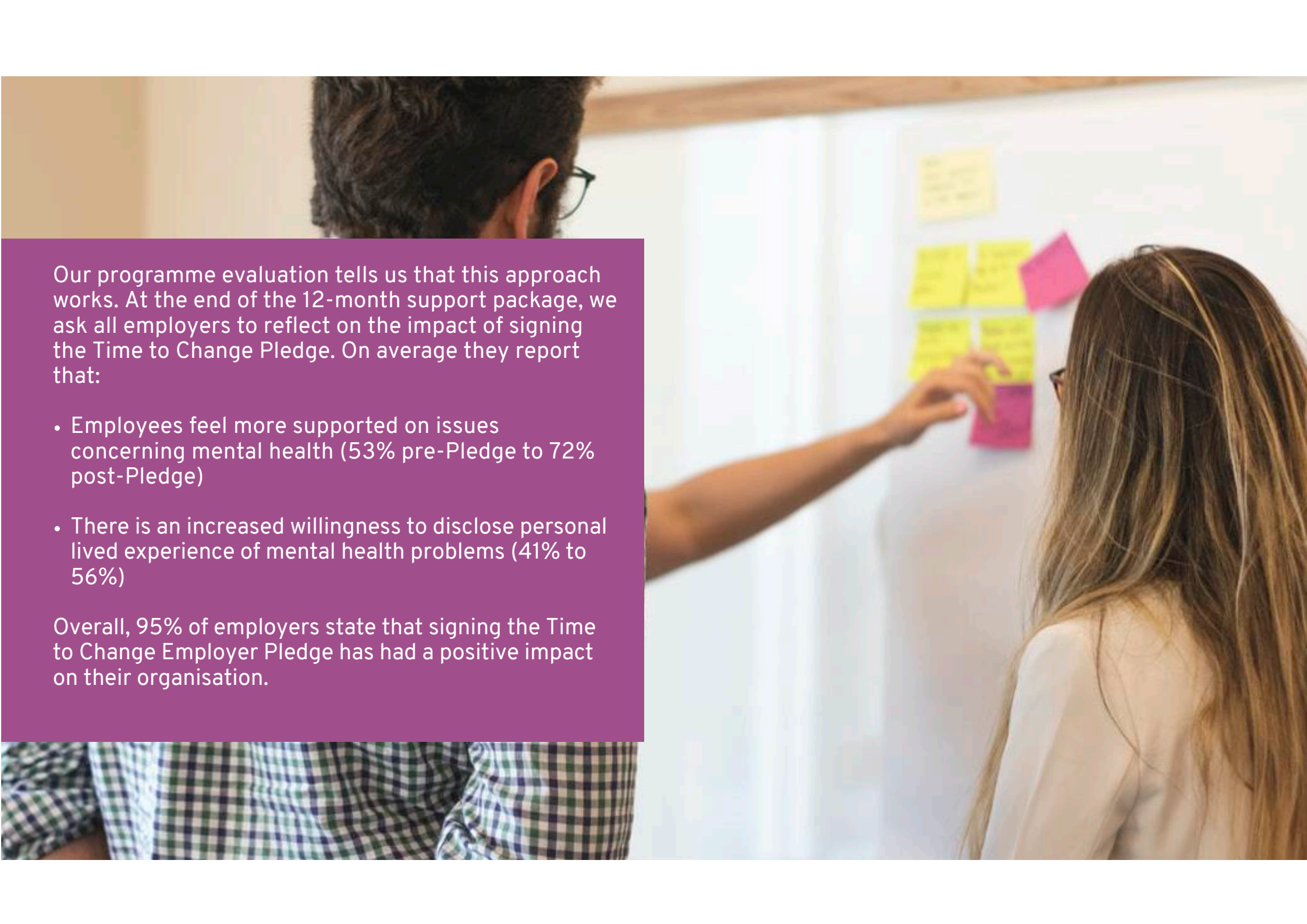**Providing the tools to deliver lasting change**

**Our research tells us that to create lasting, meaningful change, it's vital to equip employers with the right tools.**

We provide pledged employers with a comprehensive 12-month package of support and resources. This enables organisations and Champions to deliver tried and tested activities that are ready-to-go, embedding clear learning outcomes and key messages.

We know how inspiring companies find hearing from other organisations about their Employer Pledge journey, particularly those in similar sectors, which is why we provide companies with case studies, along with information and activity ideas to mark key dates in the mental health calendar.

Throughout the year, we run Employer Masterclasses and Champion Networking events to create further opportunities for workplaces to learn from each other and share best practice.
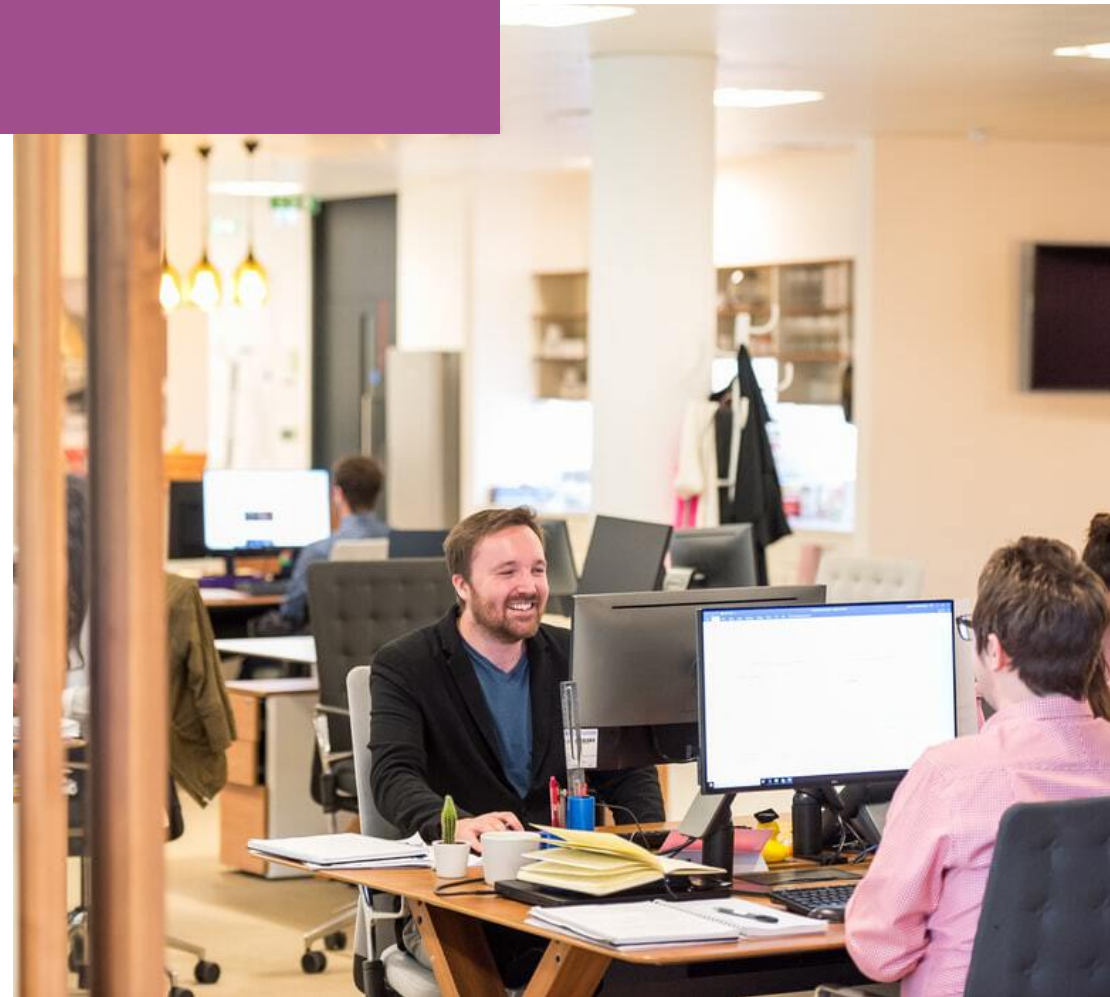
Our programme evaluation tells us that this approach works. At the end of the 12-month support package, we ask all employers to reflect on the impact of signing the Time to Change Pledge. On average they report that:

- Employees feel more supported on issues concerning mental health (53% pre-Pledge to 72% post-Pledge)

- There is an increased willingness to disclose personal lived experience of mental health problems (41% to 56%)

Overall, 95% of employers state that signing the Time to Change Employer Pledge has had a positive impact on their organisation.

# Case study

User Conversion

**User Conversion is a conversion optimisation agency made up of 26 specialists and based in the heart of Manchester.**

Before signing the Time to Change Employer Pledge, User Conversion had small pockets of people who openly talked about mental health across the organisation, but no consistent approach.

"We didn't have a plan, we didn't have consistency, but we did have a real belief in the importance of ensuring that as a business we were supporting the mental health of our team," says Beth Lang, Head of Operations.

Signing the Employer Pledge enabled User Conversion to become more consistent in monitoring employee wellbeing and to involve its workforce in improving mental health in the workplace.
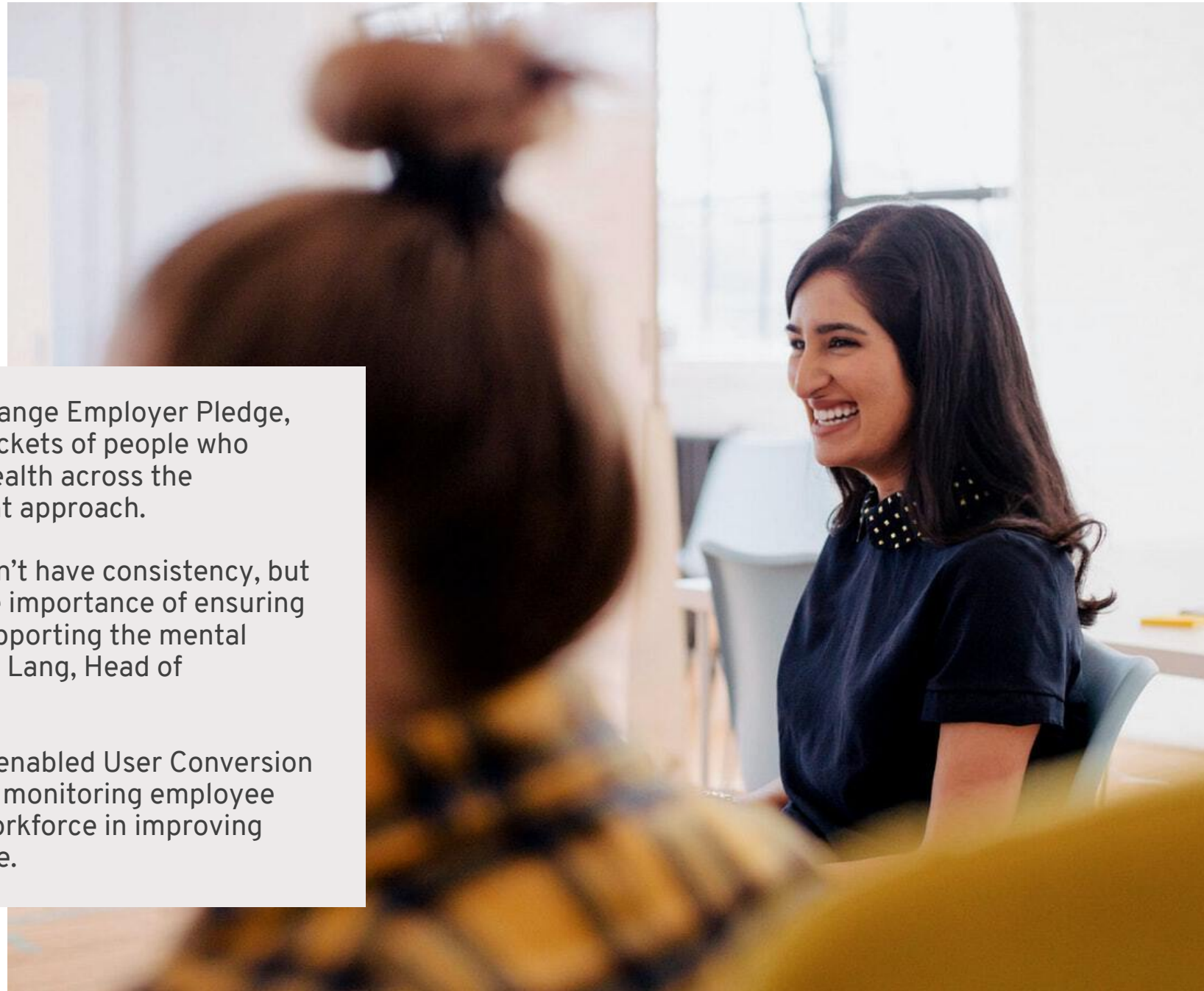
A strong network of Employee Champions has been integral to this transformation. Over a third of User Conversion's employees have volunteered as Champions, sustaining the momentum of the Employer Pledge with a busy programme of activities. These have included a myth-busting 'lunch and learn' about therapy and a creatively titled session, "What the f*** is mindfulness?".

To mark Blue Monday, Champions wrote a handwritten note of appreciation to every colleague. This was so popular that it has become a permanent tool to recognise employees for their strengths outside of formal structures.

User Conversion has also implemented formal interventions to tackle stigma and discrimination, introducing more flexible and remote working and regularly monitoring staff wellbeing through a quarterly survey.

Since signing the Employer Pledge, mental health no longer feels like a taboo subject at User Conversion. The increased openness around mental health has also changed how employees report absences.

When one colleague shared their personal experiences of a mental health problem in an internal blog, another team member felt able to disclose that they had been using flexible working to conceal therapy sessions. Thanks to the cultural shift around mental health, they felt able to add the appointments to their work calendar.

The structured plan offered by Time to Change's Employer Pledge, combined with the flexibility of User Conversion's young and innovative business, has enabled them to rapidly transform their approach to mental health in the workplace.



**"**

# It helps massively that all this stuff isn't 'top down' anymore – rather, a team of peers is championing it internally.

Beth Lang, Head of Operations at User Conversion

# Our top takeaways

**Here are our top tips if you're looking to deliver behaviour change in the workplace:**

## 1. Tailor your approach

Every organisation is different, so make sure that action plans can be tailored to the specific needs of each employer.

## 2. Provide the tools

Equip employers with ready-to-use resources and activity ideas that can be easily rolled out. Case studies are a great way to provide inspiration and encourage action.

## 3. Embed lasting change

Secure senior leadership buy-in and a public commitment to deliver change, and make sure that meaningful policy change is part of that commitment. Encourage organisations to own and embed behaviour change work, to ensure that it continues beyond your support.

## 4. Build a network of Champions

Empower staff to lead activities and influence decision-making. Ensure that they have access to information, resources and the tools they need to build their confidence and inspire others. If you have the resources, facilitate "Train the Trainer" training to help support sustainability.

Thank you for reading