

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP  
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions  
Department for Work and Pensions  
Caxton House  
Tothill Street  
London  
SW1H 9NA

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care  
Department of Health and Social Care  
39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

5 July 2019

Dear Amber and Matt

Modern society and the world of work is changing rapidly, bringing new challenges for our physical and mental health. After minor illnesses, mental health and musculoskeletal conditions are the two biggest causes of workplace absence accounting for over 43 million lost working days per year.

We spend a third of our lives at work, so employers have an important role to play to help workers stay healthy. Having a supportive employer can make a real difference to someone dealing with a musculoskeletal or mental health condition. Crucially, four in five UK workers say that support from their employer could help them recover quicker.

But there is more that we can all do. Research conducted by the John Lewis Partnership reveals that by working together, government and industry can unlock £38.1bn for the UK economy by 2025 through fast access to psychological and physical therapies for employees grappling with a musculoskeletal or mental health condition.

The Working Well Coalition is a new and growing group of employers, MPs, policymakers, charities, trade bodies and think tanks. We recognise that different types of businesses will have different approaches to health and wellbeing but together we are committed to do more to improve the health of the nation's workers.

To achieve this we all need to play our part:

- 1) For business - take a leadership role in promoting good physical and mental health at work. Business can be a force for good in society and we want to do more to support other employers, large and small. We want to galvanise others behind the business case for action and work in partnership with our public services to promote a healthy society.
- 2) For government - we would like the government to go further, by simplifying the existing system and making all occupational health related services a non-taxable benefit in kind. This would incentivise businesses, where they are able to, to widen access to early help and support for more employees.
- 3) Together - explore how we draw together new and existing practical advice on both physical and mental health to help both large and small employers, building on existing good work. Many employers want to invest in health and wellbeing but don't know where to start.

We welcome the Prime Minister's commitment to consult on new measures to help employers better support those with health conditions in work. This is the perfect opportunity to spark a revolution in workplace health and wellbeing. A healthy society underpins a healthy economy and we hope that this can be the start of a new dynamic partnership between government, employers and charities to support the physical and mental health of our 32.7 million workers.

Yours sincerely

Tracey Killen, Director of Personnel - John Lewis Partnership

Dr Liam O'Toole, Chief Executive - Versus Arthritis

Louise Harry, Health, Safety and Environment Director - Siemens

Julian Hitch, Director of Wellbeing - Leon.

Martin McTague, Chairman of Policy and Advocacy - Federation of Small Businesses

Peter Cheese, Chief Executive - CIPD

Haydn Williams, Chief Executive - British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

Nick Pahl, Chief Executive - Society of Occupational Medicine

Dr Paul Litchfield, Chairman - What Works Centre for Wellbeing

Sarah Hughes, Chief Executive - Centre for Mental Health

Katrina Parsons, Human Resources Manager - LSI Architects

Dr Scarlett Brown, Director of Research and Policy - Tomorrow's Company

Sarah Newton, MP for Truro and Falmouth

Rt Hon Frank Field, MP for Birkenhead and Chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee

The Baroness Walmsley, Co-Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Peers