

## ISO Quality Services: Mental Health Initiative

After a talk by a mental health expert in 2018, the idea of a 3-month trial of optional free monthly 1:2:1 sessions for staff with a mental health nurse was put into place with the support of the MD.

A number of communication methods were used to promote the sessions including face to face communication, e- newsletter and emails to ensure each member of the team was aware of the initiative and their entitlement (appointments during paid working hours, schedules could be moved to suit part-time staff, open to all staff). Sessions were hosted in the new relaxation room with refreshments on tap.

In addition to this, a one day Mental Health First Aid course was delivered to the management team to support managers in understanding mental health conditions and help them to take a more confident approach to difficult conversations. The directors and managers have also introduced the topic into informal chats, such as those held whilst making a cup of tea or over lunch.



There was an overwhelming uptake of 1:2:1 sessions with 79% of staff signing up, leading to the arrangement of additional sessions. Feedback from staff was very positive and an analysis of the company's quarterly individual rocks (objectives which help achieve their strategic goals) indicated an improvement in productivity. The company also asked staff to rate the initiative amongst 16 other staff benefits (figure 1) and the mental health sessions were rated sixth out of 16 benefits, beating holiday buy-back, teambuilding activities and earning commission opportunities.

The positive feedback and outcomes prompted the MD to continue with the sessions following on from the pilot as well as sharing the approach with other businesses and promoting the opportunity for discounted sessions with the mental health nurse for family members. The impact of the initiative has been recognised by HR, senior staff and the chairman as well as amongst staff members across the company.

QSL ISO QUALITY SERVICES LTD. BS EN ISO	 FLEXIHOURS	 ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS	 TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT OPPS	 BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS	 MENTAL HEALTH SESSIONS	 UNPAID LEAVE
% EMPLOYEES TAKING UP	100%	93%	100%	71%	79%	57%
EMPLOYEE IMPORTANCE SCORE (1-10)	9.43	9.29	9.07	8.70	8.57	8.57

***“In short, mental health should not be feared, nor should it be ignored within the working environment. It is something to be recognised and supported by employers going forward. I hope that what we are doing here is proof of that.”***

*Figure 1 (left): Employee take up and scoring of the top six staff benefits*