

# Mental health in the workplace

Dear colleague,

COVID-19 has affected all our lives and our livelihoods in profound ways over the last year. The nation has come together to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe, but there has been a cost. The virus itself, and the necessary measures to contain its spread, have triggered feelings of worry, distress, or loneliness for many of us. In response to these challenges, you may have seen that the government has recently published our [COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan](#). This sets out our ambitious, cross-government approach to promoting positive mental health and supporting people living with mental illness to recover and live well.

I care greatly about the health of our businesses, and the impact of the past year on the wellbeing of businesses and individuals; from workers and employees to business leaders and those running their own companies. Through my ongoing engagement with businesses and representative organisations, I have been acutely aware of the impact on those facing financial insecurity, for example. This is of particular concern as we know there is a clear and well-established relationship between financial insecurity and poor mental health.

We also know more broadly that poor mental health costs employers between £33 billion and £42 billion a year, and the UK economy between £74 billion and £99 billion per year. Supporting mental health in the workplace has never been more important, and I fully recognise and value the role that employers play when they take positive action to provide workplace mental health and wellbeing support to their staff.

I wanted to therefore ask for your support. I know many of you have specific tools and programmes in place to promote positive mental health and support individuals, and I would encourage you to take this opportunity to promote this to your membership.

For those organisations that do not have their own resources, we would encourage you to promote some of the existing resources available, such as those being signposted through GOV.UK. These include:

Thank you for your efforts so far on this important issue. Through promoting these resources and guidance for businesses and employers, as well as your own resources, we can improve workplace support, support those individuals who need it, and better tackle the impacts of mental ill-health moving forward.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Scully MP

Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets  
Minister for London

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## [Guidance: Badgers, beavers, otters, pine martens and stoats: how to trap humanely](#)

Trappers of certain species of mammal must use traps that meet international humaneness standards.

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## [New Chief Executive appointed to lead Valuation Office Agency](#)

News story

Jonathan Russell appointed as VOA's Chief Executive.



Following an external recruitment process and approval from the Prime Minister, Jonathan Russell CB has been appointed Chief Executive of the Valuation Office Agency (VOA).

The Valuation Office Agency, an executive agency of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), is responsible for providing the government with the valuations and property advice needed to support taxation and benefits.

Chief Executive and First Permanent Secretary at HMRC, Jim Harra, said:

I'd like to congratulate Jonathan on his permanent appointment as Chief Executive of the Valuation Office Agency. He has led the agency through the challenges of the pandemic, and I am delighted

that he will continue to be part of the HMRC Executive Committee.

Jonathan Russell said:

I am delighted to be confirmed as the VOA's permanent Chief Executive after leading the agency on an interim basis over the last 18 months. I've seen first-hand colleagues' commitment and professionalism and what we can achieve together, even in the most difficult of circumstances. Looking ahead, I'm excited by the opportunities to make a positive difference for customers and colleagues at a pivotal period for the agency.

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## 'Super courtroom' opens in Manchester

Press release

More victims, defendants and witnesses will receive faster access to justice when the first ever 'super courtroom' opens in Manchester today (10 September).



- More suspected criminal gangs can face justice in a larger courtroom
- HM Courts and Tribunals Service triples the size of a courtroom to speed up justice for victims
- Latest step in national effort to tackle the impact of the pandemic on our justice system

Manchester Crown Court has been revamped to create a space that is three times the size of a usual courtroom – allowing for trials with up to 12 defendants, which usually involve gang-related crime such as county lines

drug trafficking, murders, and money laundering.

The trials that require this level of space – known as multi-handers – have built up during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the need for social distancing. The super courtroom will create the space needed to get through these cases at speed, while preventing disruption to other cases in the building.

The court will make best use of HM Courts and Tribunals Service's (HMCTS) rapid rollout of remote technology since the pandemic hit. This means that defendants can continue to appear remotely by video. More importantly, it also makes it possible for vulnerable witnesses and victims to relay their evidence from outside the courtroom, reducing the potential distress caused by being in the same room as the defendants.

Courts Minister, Lord Wolfson QC, said:

This super courtroom is just the latest step in our efforts to tackle the impact of the pandemic on our justice system.

It will get gang-related suspects in front of judges quicker – sending a message to would-be criminals that the justice system stands ready to hold them to account.

We're not stopping here, though, and continue to pursue every option as we reduce delays and deliver speedier justice for victims."

Today's announcement forms part of the significant action taken to ensure the courts can operate at full throttle to recover from the pandemic and tackle delays. This includes:

- modifying 71 courtrooms to hold large multi-hander trials
- setting up Nightingale courtrooms across the country to increase capacity and ensure more trials can be heard – with a commitment to extend 32 courtrooms that deal with criminal trials until March 2022
- working to reopen an additional 60 existing Crown courtrooms following the lifting of most restrictions – including social distancing – in England and Wales
- ensuring there is no limit on the number of days that Crown Courts can sit for this year
- putting in place measures to make over 300 jury trial rooms available to safely run trials
- hosting more than 20,000 hearings using remote technology each week (across all jurisdictions) – a huge rise from a standing start in March 2020.

The impact of these measures is already being seen. England and Wales were among the first major jurisdictions in the world to resume jury trials, while latest figures show the number of outstanding cases has dropped by tens of thousands in the magistrates' courts since last summer. Cases dealt with in the Crown Court remain at around pre-COVID-19 levels, and we're listing

thousands of cases each week.

## Notes to editors

- Manchester Crown Court (Crown Square) has 15 courtrooms. Court 4 has been refurbished and extended to create the 'super courtroom'. The existing 14 other courtrooms will continue to deal with criminal cases alongside this.
- Prior to the expansion of court 4, a 12-defendant trial would have used up two or three courtrooms, sometimes for several weeks.
- Work continues for a second super courtroom site at Loughborough Magistrates' Court. We anticipate this will open in the autumn.
- The rollout of remote technology permits the attendance of parties and witnesses on video, where appropriate and in the interests of justice.
- Plans for more courts to reopen to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic were [announced in July](#).
- The Lord Chancellor recently set out his plan for court recovery in a [speech delivered to the Law Society](#).

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## [Car salesman fails to pass on £750,000 to customers](#)

Steven Edwin Prosser (60), from Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, was appointed a director of Sell Your Car With Us Limited in May 2016. The company sold second hand cars and traded from premises on Hare Street in Buntingford, Hertfordshire.

Three years later, Sell Your Car With Us entered into liquidation in September 2019. The company's insolvency, however, triggered an investigation by the Insolvency Service who uncovered several instances of misconduct caused by Steven Prosser.

Sell Your Car With Us entered into agreements with customers to sell their vehicles for a commission before paying the customers within 14 days of the completed transaction.

Investigators, however, found that at least 48 customers did not receive any returns following the sale or disposal of their vehicles and Sell Your Car With Us failed to return vehicles to customers who requested their cars back.

While Steven Prosser failed to pass on payments to customers after he sold their cars, he transferred more than £125,000 from Sell Your Car With Us' account. Over £52,000 went direct to the used car salesman, £6,000 to a

separate company he was a sole director of, and nearly £67,000 went to third parties connected with Steven Prosser

Steven Prosser sold two of the cars despite knowing the company was insolvent and, on several occasions, either failed to record any of the sales officially in the company's books and records or retain an invoice or bank receipt after a sale. At the date of liquidation, 48 customers submitted claims totalling just over £751,000.

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy accepted an undertaking from Steven Prosser after he did not dispute that he failed to ensure Sell Your Car With Us Limited adhered to the terms and conditions contained within its Sale or Return Agreements in respect of Sellers' vehicles.

His disqualification came into effect on 11 August 2021 and Steven Prosser is banned for 9 years from acting as a director or directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company

Katie Legge, Deputy Head of Insolvent Investigations, said:

Close to 50 people thought they were entering into legitimate agreements to sell their cars through a recognised dealer. But Steven Prosser failed to carry out his side of the bargain and sold their cars, while failing to pass on more than £750,000 to his customers.

Thankfully we were able to uncover Steven Prosser's misconduct and 9 years is a substantial amount of time to be removed from the corporate arena. Steven Prosser's disqualification should serve as a warning that we will bring action against rogue directors who mistakenly believe they can do as they please.

Steven Prosser is from Broxbourne and his date of birth is May 1961.

Sell Your Car With Us Limited (Company Reg no. 10192699).

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on: