

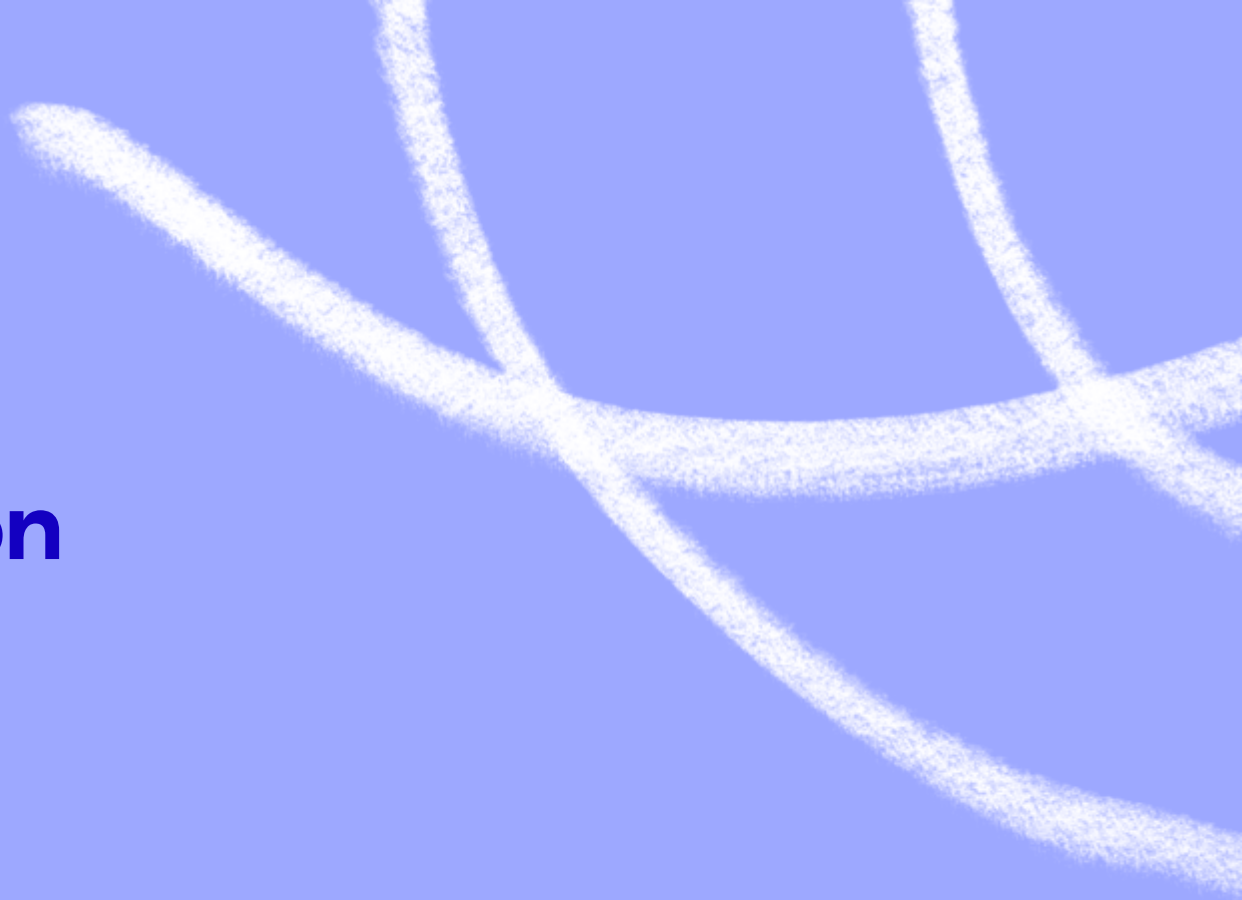


Leeds Mindful Employer Network

Annual Report 2024 – 2025



Introduction



Who we are and how we work

Established in 2013 The Leeds Mindful Employer Network brings local employers together to champion positive mental health at work. It is a unique offer to Leeds, putting the city at the forefront of initiatives to promote workplace mental health and wellbeing.

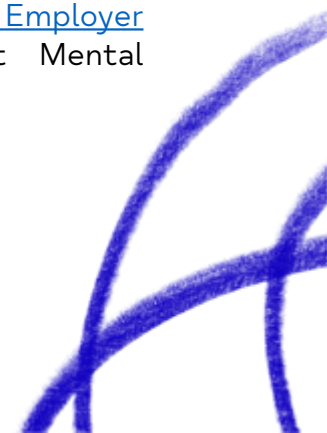
The Network is commissioned by Leeds City Council (Public Health) and led by Leeds Mind in partnership with a Steering Group of local employers and strategic partners.

Leeds Mind employs a Mindful Employer Coordinator to manage all aspects of day-to-day running of the network. This includes coordinating the Steering Group and all marketing, communications, engagement, partnerships, support, events, planning, monitoring and reporting activities.

All local employers/business owners (and their employees) in Leeds and West Yorkshire (if employees live/work in Leeds) can enjoy free membership of Leeds Mindful Employer Network.

Network members gain access to regular free communications, events, information, resources and one-to-one support to help improve their approach to mental health and wellbeing at work.

They are encouraged to make a public commitment by signing the NHS backed [Mindful Employer Charter](#) for Employers Positive about Mental Health.



Our Steering Group

The Mindful Employer Steering Group supports the aims of the initiative by:

- Overseeing the general direction, priorities and workplan of Mindful Employer in Leeds
- Providing a forum in which to discuss the initiative's future development
- Determining clear objectives for embedding the Mindful Employer agenda in Leeds

Seeking to reflect the full diversity of our local business community, the Steering Group includes representatives from a wide range of industries and sectors as well as several of our strategic partners.

Operating with very limited resource, the success of the Network is underpinned by effective and efficient city-wide co-production, collaboration, and peer support. We're grateful for the dedication and commitment of our Steering Group. We also hugely appreciate unwavering support from colleagues at all levels of Leeds Mind and other partners such as Leeds City Council, LYPFT, Touchstone and Forum Central to name but a few. The initiative also benefits massively from collaboration with and support from a number of very active employer members across the city from a variety of sectors and industries.



2024 – 2025 Priorities

Workplan Priorities

We will help to reduce health inequalities across the city by supporting employers to:

- Create mentally healthy workplaces enabling all people to thrive in new post-pandemic ways of working
- Engage with, help and provide useful guidance and signposting information to employees impacted by political change, discrimination, prejudice and continued Cost of Living challenges

Business Engagement

Our engagement will focus on businesses of all sizes who:

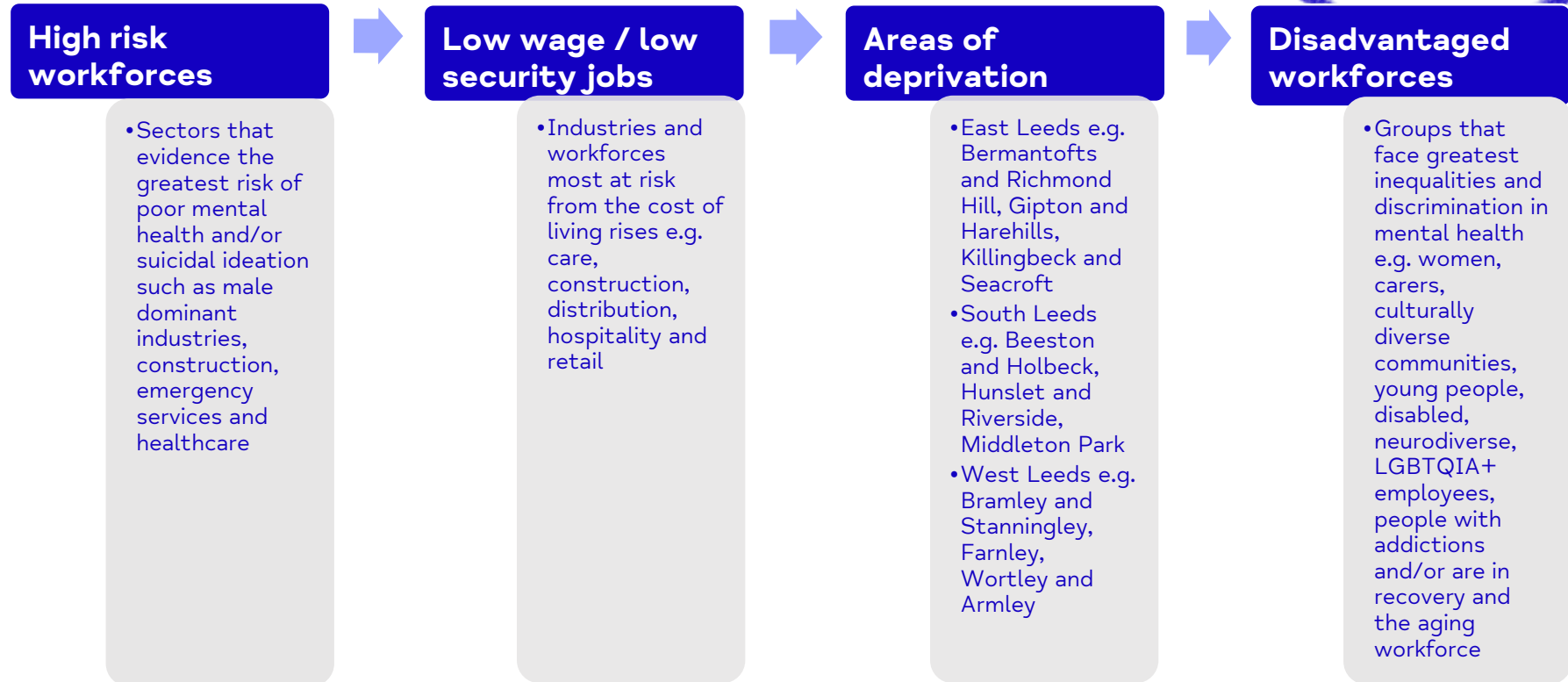
- offer low wage/low security jobs
- are in an area of deprivation
- have disadvantaged/high risk workforces*

Diversify Membership

We will continue our mission to diversify our membership to ensure our network reflects the full diversity of our local business community

*More detailed engagement focus information can be found on Slide 5

Detailed engagement focus



Abstract white lines, possibly representing a stylized wheel or a network, are drawn on a solid blue background. The lines are thick and have a slightly textured, chalk-like appearance. They intersect and curve across the upper right portion of the image.

Steering Group Highlights

2024 – 2025

This year saw strong, active engagement from our Steering Group, which now includes 19 active employer committee members representing a broad cross-section of sectors and industries. We held four hybrid Steering Group meetings, hosted by employer members and continuing the shorter, more dynamic, discussion-led format introduced last year. Attendance improved notably, with an average of 10 members attending in person and 5 joining online. We welcomed four new members to the group: the People Lead at Answer Digital, the Director of Enable Disability and Inclusion Consultants, the Head of Wellbeing at Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, and the Mental Health Ethnic Inequalities Lead at Leeds City Council. During the same period, we said goodbye to representatives from Irwin Mitchell (on sabbatical), Colas (no longer operating in Leeds), and Hippo Digital (whose representative will continue their involvement from April 2025, representing a new employer, The Sustainability Community).





It's great to collaborate with like-minded professionals and share best practices, but most importantly for me, joining the Steering Group is about driving positive change. I wanted to contribute to shaping strategies to help all employees within the region. For Abraham Moon & Sons, it ensures we keep up to date and do our best for every team member.



**Steering Group member - Claire Burns,
People Director, Abraham Moon and Sons**

Six Steering Group members contributed directly to our bi-annual conference through their work in the Conference Working Group, helping to plan and deliver the event. In addition, seven members presented at the conference, three volunteered on the day, two exhibited, and one hosted the event at Leeds Beckett Carnegie School of Sport. Beyond the conference, one member organisation hosted a network-wide webinar on bereavement, and four others presented at in-person events. Five members joined the PHIRST Evaluation Stakeholder Group, playing a key role in supporting the external evaluation of the network, with results expected in Q4 2025–26.

All Steering Group members contributed to shaping our priorities, refining our engagement strategy and communications, and connecting us to new potential partners and employers. A continued focus has been placed on increasing diversity and representation within the Steering Group, and we made meaningful progress this year through the recruitment of new members from underrepresented groups and target sectors. This growing diversity brings a wider range of lived experience, insight, and perspective to our work — which is essential for ensuring the network remains relevant, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the full employer community in Leeds and West Yorkshire.





The energy, time, and ownership shown by Steering Group members this year — across events, strategy, and outreach — reflects their ongoing commitment, passion, and genuine buy-in to the shared mission of creating mentally healthy workplaces for all, across the city of Leeds.



**Leigh Staunton, Mindful Employer Project
Coordinator, Leeds Mind**

Steering Group Committee 2024 – 2025

Business/organisation	Representative role	Sector	Industry
Abraham Moon & Sons	HR/Senior Management	Private	Manufacturing
Answer Digital	HR/Manager/Team Leader	Private	Business Consultancy/Coaching
Being You Leeds	Operations/Technical/Service Delivery	Voluntary	Community Advice and Support Services
Colas	Operations/Technical/Service Delivery	Private	Construction
Enable Disability and Inclusion Consultants	Senior Management	Private	Business Consultancy Coaching
Everyday Something	Manager/Team Leader	Private	Design/Architecture
Full Circle Funerals	HR/Senior Management	Private	Funeral and related activities
Harrison Spinks (x2 members)	HR/Senior Management	Private	Manufacturing
Hippo Digital	Operations/Technical/Service Delivery	Private	Scientific/Technical/ICT

Business/organisation	Representative role	Sector	Industry
Hollybush Primary School	Senior Management	Public	Education
IETG and 40SEVEN	HR/Senior Management	Private	Other
Leeds City Council (x3 members)	HR/Senior Management Operations/Technical/Service Delivery	Public	Civic Services
Leeds Beckett University	HR/Senior Management	Public	Education
Leeds Mind (x3 members)	Senior Management Manager/Team Leader Operations/Technical/Service Delivery	Voluntary	Community advice and support services
Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	Senior Management	Public	Health/care
Money and Pensions Service	Manager/Team Leader	Public	Publicly Funded Financial Guidance body
Oakland Group	Senior Management	Private	Scientific/Technical/ICT
Perform Partners	Senior Management	Private	Business Consultancy/Coaching
Touchstone	Senior Management	Voluntary	Community advice and support services



Key Achievements

2024 – 2025

✓ **Network Growth and Engagement**

136 individuals from 109 different businesses and organisations joined the network. We delivered four network events, which brought together 149 attendees representing 92 unique organisations. In addition, we held 30 one-to-one meetings with employers, offering tailored support and engagement.

✓ **Charter Signatories**

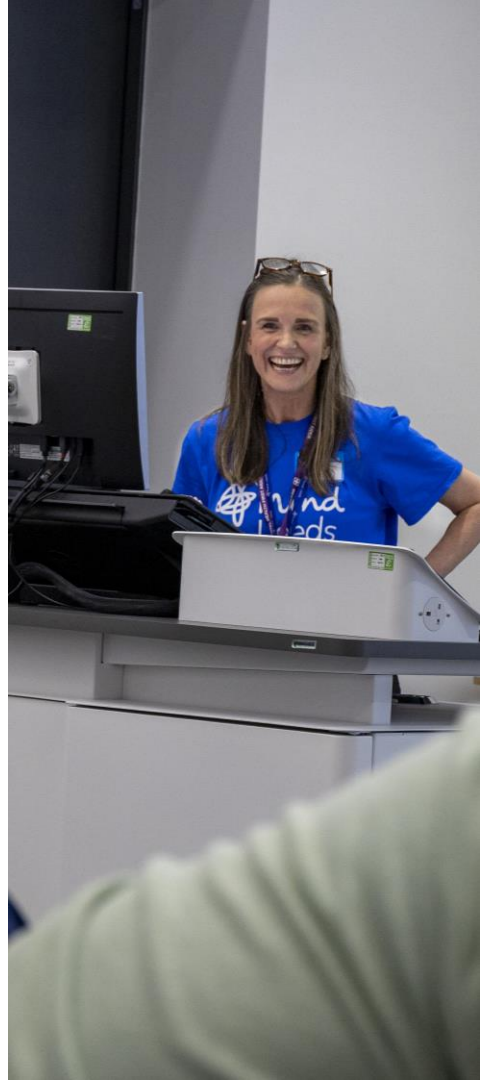
Engagement with the Mindful Employer Charter remained strong, with 22 new employers signing up as Charter signatories. A further 65 employers renewed their commitment by updating their signatory status.

✓ **Flagship Event**

Our bi-annual conference welcomed 200 attendees from over 100 different businesses and organisations, offering a key opportunity for connection, learning, and collaboration.

✓ **Social Media Growth**

We experienced strong growth on LinkedIn, gaining 292 new followers on the Mindful Employer Leeds page. This brings our total follower count to 585, further expanding our reach and visibility.



✓ Case Studies, Communications and Resources

We produced 14 employer case studies in collaboration with organisations from a wide range of sectors, alongside 4 practical employer resources to support workplace mental health. Communication and content remained a priority, with 12 newsletters and 27 blogs published throughout the year. Our 10 Steps Toolkit resource was viewed 5750 times this year, demonstrating its continued relevance for employers. Our work also featured in 4 media stories, helping to raise the profile of Mindful Employer Leeds.

✓ Steering Group and Strategic Input

Three new employers—Answer Digital, Enable Disability and Inclusion Consultants, and Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust—joined our Steering Group, strengthening our strategic direction and widening the diversity of the group in line with priorities. The Mental Health Ethnic Inequalities Lead at Leeds City Council has also become a committee member, strengthening our connection with the work of [Synergi Leeds](#).



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Network Growth and Engagement

2024 – 2025

During this period, 136 new members joined the network from 109 different businesses and organisations, delivering an exceptional 545% of the KPI benchmark.

Notably, 49% of these new members represented employers with high-risk or low-security/low-wage workforces, such as those in catering, community support services, construction, health and care, hospitality, retail, and transport.

Additionally, 24% (32 members) are based in areas of deprivation within Leeds, reflecting a strong focus on equity and targeted outreach.

We also held 30 one-to-one meetings with employers — achieving 300% of our KPI target — with 51% of these meetings involving employers from our priority engagement areas.



1:1 employer support provided on...

Understanding the benefits of our network

Improving employee engagement

Identifying peer support opportunities

Effective bereavement support

Gaining feedback from employees

Financial Wellbeing

Creating wellbeing spaces for employees

Raising awareness and tackling stigma

Wellbeing Action Plans

Implementing the 10 Steps Toolkit

Signposting to other local networks and partners

Introducing wellbeing champions and MHFAs

Becoming Charter Signatories

Creating Mental Health Strategies

Wellbeing provisions for growing teams

Wellbeing for intergenerational workforces

Supporting remote, male dominant workforces

Creating inclusive workplace cultures





The network offers us great newsletters, access to training and inspiration and ideas. It's great to link up with others at conferences and events. The network's got a great Tribe Vibe and it's fab to be able to cascade information and ideas and see teams develop the ideas and run with them.



**Mia A Cameron, Senior Manager,
Turning Lives Around**

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Mindful Employer Charter Signatories

2024 – 2025

Mindful Employer Charter Signatories

During this period, 22 new employers across Leeds and West Yorkshire signed the Mindful Employer Charter. Of these, 7 are based in priority business engagement areas of deprivation in Leeds, and 12 represent sectors with high-risk or low-security/low-wage workforces. New signatories in Leeds include GIPSIL and Northpoint (Health and Social Care), The Fenton Leeds (Hospitality), JCT600 Ltd (Retail), and Axiologik (Technology, Media and Communication), reflecting growing cross-sector commitment to workplace mental health in the city.





Getting so much value from Mindful Employer Leeds and the networking events. It's truly exciting to see our business take the next step by committing to sign the Mindful Employer charter to uphold our wellbeing commitments. Looking forward to what happens next!



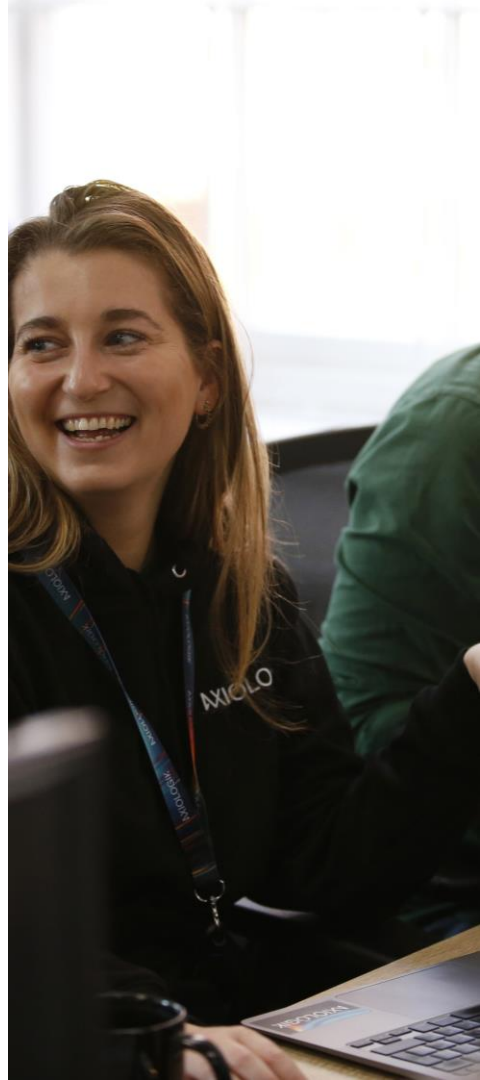
**Nicola Tordoff-Sohne, Head of
Colleague Experience, JCT600 Ltd**

Axiologik's story

"I'm Cat Hardy, Talent Partner at digital consultancy, Axiologik. I loved meeting the Mindful Employer Project Coordinator and going through everything that the Network does. I left that meeting with about 15 links to different groups that support employers and employees, and so much advice! It's honestly great to have a network of people who are making mental health and wellbeing a priority within the workplace that I can go to with questions and ask for hints and tips. Everyone is so helpful and friendly!

The consultancy world can often be a demanding and ever-changing environment with pressure from all sides. We really value everything our teams do as we know they are often juggling a lot of different things, both inside and outside of work. We want to ensure everyone is looked after and cared for in the right way, best suited for them. Work pressures can often spill into home life, which is another reason why we wanted to prioritise mental health and encourage people to switch off and take care of themselves when they aren't working. We want our people to feel valued and know that they are in a safe, productive space where they have support and advice if they need it.

As someone who has suffered from burnout previously (in my old roles), staff wellbeing was something I wanted to be involved in. I work through initiatives which support mental and physical wellbeing, take part and give feedback on our learning platform which has a variety of courses related to wellbeing, and I attend events, workshops and training courses in Leeds to bring back ideas to implement into Axiologik. There's a lot of research that goes into this but it's the best feeling when an idea comes to fruition!"



Becoming a Mindful Employer

“Axiologik signed the Charter because we want it to be recognised in the market, as well as by our teams, that we take mental wellbeing seriously to ensure we continue to build on the ideas already implemented.

This is an important topic for us and shouldn't be brushed under the carpet. We need to be showing that it's OK to discuss these things and that we are only human. We want to remove the stigma associated with discussing mental wellbeing, it's a chance to build self-awareness and educate our workforce, and that should only ever be seen as a positive. The Mindful Employer Charter was the best place to start in having these open conversations and sharing resources/materials with our staff.

I think our openness and willingness to implement and action ideas from the Axiologik people is incredible in itself.

Our priorities will be working with the Leeds Mindful Employer Network to expand and implement new ideas, as well as attending events, seminars and workshops. We'll also be putting together some Lunch and Learns prioritising mental health and wellbeing, as well as sending out a Wellbeing Survey. We're hoping to hear more ideas from the Axiologik staff in terms of what they would like to see from us, so we can build an action plan for the new year.”



Renewed Charter Signatories

To remain a Charter signatory, employers complete a self-assessment review and renew their fee every two years. This reflective process helps highlight progress, identify areas for improvement, and provides tailored feedback and support.

In the 2024 – 2025 period, 65 employers renewed their Mindful Employer Charter status, including 13 based in priority business engagement areas of deprivation in Leeds and 37 operating in sectors with high-risk or low-security/low-wage workforces.

Employers in Leeds who renewed their signature include Advonet (Health and Social Care), AW Hainsworth (Manufacturing), Leeds Marriott Hotel (Hospitality), Building Interiors Limited (Construction), and Leeds Beckett University (Education). Given the financial pressures many businesses and organisations are facing — from the ongoing cost of living crisis to broader economic uncertainty — these renewals reflect a strong and deliberate commitment to supporting mental health in the workplace, even when budgets and resources may be stretched.

Our Wellbeing Commitment

We want to create a workplace where...

- ... our people choose to join and choose to stay!**
- ... every colleague not only feels supported but is inspired to lend their support to one another!**
- ... every colleague feels valued and appreciated for giving their best!**

our **JCT600**



Being a Mindful Employer signatory signals our commitment to wellbeing and mental health and enables us to be connected to a network of other employers who are engaged with the same challenges and opportunities. Being part of the Leeds Mindful Employer network means we can work with, learn from, and support other employers in Leeds. We are an organisation grounded in Leeds and are active members of the city's Anchor network. This connects us to the city-wide ambitions to improve health outcomes and offer opportunities to people living and working in Leeds.



**Sarah Swales, Deputy Director for Human Resources,
Leeds Beckett University**

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Events

2024 – 2025

Strengthening the Safety Net: The Vital Role of Employers in Suicide Prevention and Postvention

Hippo Digital, 10th September 2024

This event welcomed 50 attendees from 31 businesses and organisations, with 42% representing employers from our priority engagement areas. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 85% rating the event 5 out of 5 for usefulness, and the remaining 15% giving it a 4.

The event featured a range of interactive and reflective activities: Leeds Mind Suicide Bereavement Service hosted a stall and Leeds Mind also delivered an art activity exploring workplace psychological safety nets; Joy Junction facilitated a LEGO networking space; and Public Health and Touchstone ran a station encouraging attendees to make a Suicide Prevention Pledge as part of the West Yorkshire campaign. A new employer resource was launched, developed in partnership by Leeds Mind, the Leeds Mindful Employer Network, and network member Punch Creative. Additionally, written case studies from the Oakland Group, Touchstone and TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) sharing approaches to suicide prevention in the workplace were given to attendees to take away.

Speakers included representatives from Leeds City Council Public Health, Leeds Mind, The Jordan Legacy CIC, and Abraham Moon & Sons. In total, 12 attendees made a Suicide Prevention Pledge during the event.



Attendee Reflections

“Great speakers sharing insightful info. Felt very safe in the room and overall, the event was very well organised.”

“It was so valuable to hear how workplaces are implementing so much positive actions to look after their employees.”

“Brand new topic. Never been to an event discussing this area.”

“Great presentations and agenda. Well thought out event.”

“I will share the information with people at work and be more open to conversations about suicide as don't wish our company to become part of the club.”

“I’ve become a WY Suicide Prevention Champion & today I was at an all managers meeting with our parent company where I shared what we had done yesterday. The HR Director now wants to talk to me about what more they can do, I’ve been contacted by the L&D manager as well re the Zero Suicide Alliance training, and two operations managers who I’ve never met want to speak with me in more detail about suicide awareness & wellbeing in general. So, the start of a ripple effect within less than 24 hours!”

“I have signed the pledge to be a champion, and we will start conversations and reduce the stigma.”



Helping the Helpers: Supporting Staff who care for, support or advise others

Northpoint, 25th November 2024

The event was attended by 31 individuals from 22 businesses and organisations, with 64% representing employers from our priority engagement areas. Attendee feedback was very positive, with 75% rating the event 5 out of 5 for usefulness, and the remaining 25% rating it 4.

Stallholders included Leeds Mind, Northpoint, MindWell, the Recovery College, Leeds Health and Care Academy, and the Public Health Resource Centre.

Joy Junction led an interactive activity encouraging businesses to reflect on and identify a staff wellbeing goal.

The event was opened by the CEO of Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, followed by a programme of talks and workshops covering lived experience, employer case studies, wellbeing conversations, burnout, and wellness action plans.

Ten attendees completed Pledge Cards outlining actions they would take to support staff wellbeing. Speakers included representatives from LYPFT, Northpoint, Leeds Mind, Joy Junction, Leeds Recovery College, and Dynamic Social Support.



Attendee Reflections

“Informative and inspiring.”

“Informative, enjoyable and really useful.”

“Good takeaways.”

“Informative and relatable.”

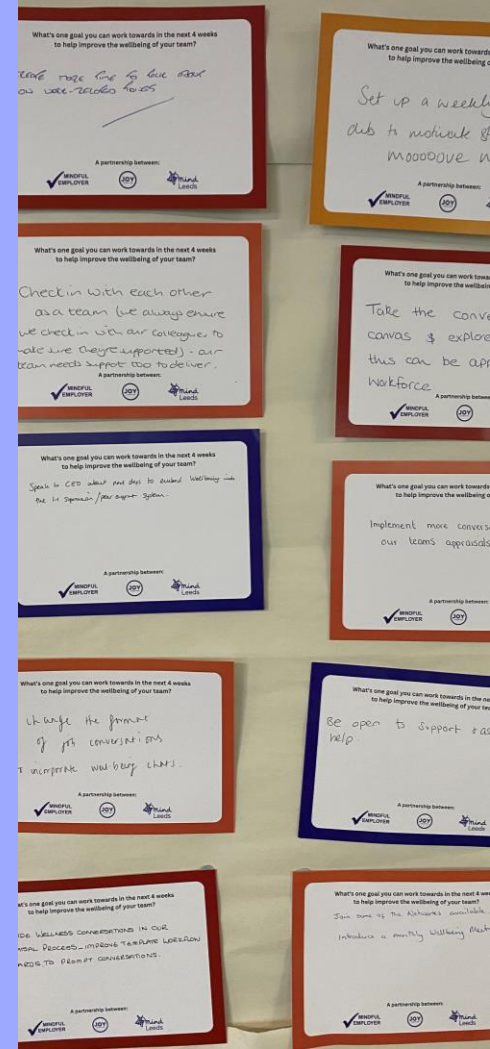
“We are going to look at numerous things around team wellbeing moving forward from the session.”

“Have already shared some of the learnings with colleagues and will be looking to change some of our staff feedback processes to encompass the 5 ways to wellbeing.”

“I have signed the pledge to be a champion, and we will start conversations and reduce the stigma.”

“More aware of the support available and will help us to create our own wellness action plan to support colleagues.”

“Building up knowledge and context is key to supporting staff in various ways and trying new ways is important.”



Workplace Wellbeing After Bereavement

Online, 4th December 2024

Rounding off our activity in 2024, this webinar hosted by Steering Group member Full Circle Funerals welcomed 34 attendees from 22 organisations, with 45% representing employers from our business engagement priority areas.

Attendee Reflections

“It’s been very thought provoking and you held the space so sensitively. Thank you.”

“Thank you for mentioning anniversaries too Ruth. It has got me thinking about how as employers we can show we care by acknowledging anniversaries of bereavements by sending a card or some flowers etc.”

“Thank you for this webinar today, very helpful in supporting us to shape our policy and put support in place for our colleagues.”

“I really found this webinar helpful.”

“Thank you for this presentation and conversation. All of it has been very useful for my work and personal life.”

Workplace Wellbeing After Bereavement

A special online event brought to you by the Leeds Mindful Employer Network and Full Circle Funerals for National Grief Awareness Week 2024 (2nd - 8th December)

Full Circle Funerals invite Leeds Mindful Employer Network Members to a special, interactive online workshop considering grief, its psychological and physical impact and how we can support wellbeing after bereavement.

The workshop will cover,

- Psychological manifestations of grief
- How bereavement affects our physical body
- Vicarious trauma vs professional bereavement
- The pillars of wellbeing
- Staying connected after bereavement
- Continuing bonds
- Supporting ourselves and others
- Supporting children after bereavement
- Supporting people from different cultures

The event is FREE and open to all local employers and business owners
Register via Eventbrite - <https://bit.ly/3Y7Cdmc>



Wednesday 4th December

11am - 12.15pm

online via Zoom

Why Supporting Working Carers Matters

Online, 23rd January 2025

Our final event this financial year was a webinar hosted by network member organisation, Carers Leeds. This was attended by 29 participants from 17 organisations, with 41% representing employers from our business engagement priority areas.

Attendee Reflections

“An interesting and informative session.”

“Good personal reflections from both working carers and employers.”

“A brilliant session!”

“The material was really well organised, relevant and very well delivered.”

“New information I didn’t know about.”

“Informative and essential points to pass onto people I help into work.”



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Bi-annual Conference

Leeds Mindful Employer Network Conference 2024

#LMEC24

“Creating Mentally Healthy Workplaces for All”

Summary

Every 2 years the Mindful Employer contract delivers a conference in Leeds, designed in collaboration with the Steering Group and Leeds Mind. The planning of the conference starts at least a year prior to the event and is coproduced by employers, for employers, via the Steering Group and the working group that was formed specifically to plan and deliver the event.

The event planning and delivery was predominantly coordinated by the Mindful Employer Project Coordinator with the support of a number of other colleagues at Leeds Mind and the event host, Leeds Beckett University.

The conference was held at Leeds Beckett University within their new £45 million Carnegie School of Sport building, which features state-of-the-art learning, activity and laboratory spaces. With 5 sizeable lecture theatres, a large and spacious atrium, ample outdoor space and room for wellbeing activities and stalls, Carnegie School of Sports was a venue which gave us the potential to plan and deliver a conference unlike anything the Leeds Mindful Employer Network has done previously.

Leeds Beckett provided not only all the rooms free of charge, but the majority of the catering during the event. Colleagues from the university's Events and Wellbeing teams also heavily supported on the day and in the months and weeks leading up to the event within the planning group. The 5 lecture theatres head a capacity of well over 400 and 200 places were made available so there was plenty of space for comfortable networking within sessions and in the atrium area.



Over 100 Leeds Businesses Gather to Promote Mentally Healthy Workplaces

The 2024 conference took place on Tuesday 21st May 2024, with more than 100 Leeds businesses and organisations in attendance.

200 delegates turned out to discuss “Creating Mentally Healthy Cultures for All”, from organisations big and small across many and varied industries.

The 40+ speakers and exhibitors included: Mind, Leeds Mind, Touchstone Support, Thrive Law, Leeds Autism Services, The Jordan Legacy, Forward Leeds and Leeds City Council. You can [find the full list on the conference webpage](#).

The event was made possible by employer sponsors: [Barca](#), [Hippo Digital](#), [madeby.studio](#) and [Touchstone](#). Deloitte also provided videography support.

Delegates were able to choose bespoke timetables from 25 sessions on offer. Sessions included: creating an anti-stigma culture and challenging discrimination; suicide prevention at work; being a racial trauma-informed employer; neurodiversity and mental health in the workplace; being a recovery-friendly employer; mentally healthy workplaces for parents and carers; and feedback to promote psychological safety.

As well as the illuminating seminars and workshops, delegates enjoyed wellbeing activities including yoga, massages, breathwork, Indian dance and a lunchtime walk.

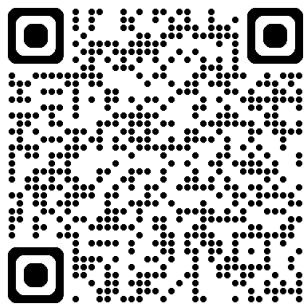
On the next slide we have shared a video from the day, produced for us by network member and Mindful Employer, Deloitte Leeds.



Watch the recap

As a proud Mindful Employer Charter Signatory, Deloitte Leeds kindly created a 5-minute film that captures the spirit and impact of our 2024 conference.

Featuring reflections from delegates, volunteers, exhibitors and facilitators, it offers an authentic glimpse into the experience and energy of the day. We invite you to take a moment to watch and hear directly from those involved via the QR code or link below.



<https://bit.ly/leedsmindfulempconf24>





It was fantastic to get so many employers interested in workplace wellbeing all in one place. It was great to welcome both existing network members and some new faces.



**Leigh Staunton, Mindful Employer
Project Coordinator, Leeds Mind**



Genuinely the best
conference I went to
last year!

**Bethan Powell, Workforce Wellbeing
Coordinator at Luminate Education
Group**



Delegate Feedback

We had 64 responses to the conference feedback form.

All numerical questions were scored out of 5. As can be seen from the chart, every question scores on average above 4.5 which means nearly every response was above average in terms of people giving a positive response.

The top themes from what delegates found was most helpful on the day were,

- ✓ Quality/knowledge/diversity of Guests Speakers
- ✓ Opportunity to network / learn from others
- ✓ Variety of content
- ✓ Practical support options / learning
- ✓ Learning so much



Delegate reflections

“It was a great day with an incredible programme of thought-provoking, relevant and thoughtfully curated sessions. The organisation and communication in advance was excellent. It is fantastic that this was a free offer to all local employers - I found it far more useful, with higher quality content than similar 'paid-for' conferences I have attended. Speakers spoke with passion, integrity and generosity - the culture of sharing and peer support that is so central to the Mindful Employer network shone through and made this a really special event to be a part of.”

“Excellently organised and run... Really exceeded my expectations. One of the best organised events I've been to”

“Just thank you for putting on this event. It was really useful and practical, particularly for a small business owner without the benefit of a HR team. It's excellent to be able to talk and listen about best practice in this way. Thank you!”

“The event was fantastic and I loved every minute. It was brilliant to have such a wealth of wellbeing at our fingertips and access to so many great speakers. The delegate wellbeing sessions and stalls were an added bonus too and the lunch was lovely! I felt pampered from start to finish and would love to attend your next conference.”

“Phenomenal speakers on the panels and brilliant workshops!! It was a perfect opportunity to network and engage with many professionals. I will definitely be implementing and sharing tips and tricks from these sessions with my teams and wider organisation.”



Lasting impact

To measure the long-term impact of the 2024 conference, we reached out to delegates 4 months on to ask them about long-term value of takeaways.

100% of respondents said learnings continue to be useful / very useful. Delegates remarked,

“Still think about one of the sessions really frequently, and it has definitely added value in terms of diversifying my thought on how race and neurodiversity must be sufficiently embedded into a trauma-informed culture”

“Concentrating more on glimmers than triggers.”

“We’ve launched a Caregivers group open to all carers, exploring mentoring for carers, increased some benefits.”

“I learnt a lot and have been able to introduce new things to benefit staff and residents in the organisation as a result.”

“Attending has brought about an improvement in the wellbeing of staff. The two surveys we have done so far indicate a 49% improvement.”

“I've been exposed to lots of prevalent campaigners and speakers who inspire me to look at HR and wellbeing in new ways.”



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Case Studies, Communications and Resources

2024 – 2025

Celebrating best practice

We have produced 14 case studies with local employers this year to showcase varied effective approaches to creating mentally healthy and inclusive workplaces. Case studies from local employers including Hollybush Primary School, Turning Lives Around, Dynamic Social Support, Leeds Marriott Hotel and JCT600 Ltd.

Through their case studies, employers from variety of sectors and industries shared approaches to creating a Mental Health Strategy, Suicide Prevention Plans, supporting Mental Health First Aiders, embedding reflective practice and effectively supporting a high-risk workforce. Other employers such as JCT600, Dynamic Social Support and Axiologik shared stories of their journeys towards becoming a Mindful Employer.

Case studies shared at events or via our blogs or 10 Steps Toolkit provide network members with valuable learning as they demonstrate how ideas or strategies actually play out in real workplaces — not just in theory.

Employers sharing case studies this year have demonstrate what's working, what challenges were overcome, and what outcomes were achieved — helping to build the case for investment or change. We are so grateful for their shared lived experience which encourages others to take action and make positive changes.



Mindful Employer of the Quarter Award

We launched the Mindful Employer of the Quarter initiative in 2023 to help network members connect, celebrate positive mental health practice, and raise awareness of the Charter through social media and local press. Members can nominate any local business, including their own, for actions such as implementing a positive change, learning something important, receiving great feedback, or overcoming a challenge. It's been encouraging to read the nominations and each of the four winners this quarter received a certificate, were featured on social media and in our newsletter, and highlighted in both a special blog and a case study. This initiative has encouraged employers to post on social media to celebrate, with Right at Home North Leeds' win making local news in Quarter 1 this year, achieving excellent publicity for our local network and the national Mindful Employer initiative.

This year's winners

Quarter 1 – [Turning Lives Around \(pictured\)](#) Quarter 2 – [Leeds Marriott Hotel](#)

Quarter 3 – [Leeds Autism Services](#) Quarter 4 – [Abraham Moon & Sons](#)

Like last year, we are proud to highlight that each winner comes under at least one of our priority business engagement areas, a further demonstration of the progress we are making to engage and support employers in these areas.

Check out our spotlight on Q3 winner Leeds Autism Services on the next slide.



Leeds Autism Services

“I’m Brooke Asquith, HR Manager at Leeds Autism Services. For a relatively small organisation with extremely limited funds, I believe we go over and above to look after our employees. We are so proud of the work we do and truly do value our staff who give such amazing support to our service users every day. Employee wellbeing is a top priority for us as our employees do an often difficult job and can face challenging situations. We recognise that we need to look after our staff to empower them to support our service users in the best possible way. We are always exploring new ways to promote wellbeing, such as with the introduction of our new menopause hub.

We also recognise the absolute importance of there being a culture of informally checking in with each other. A simple ‘how’s your day been?’ or ‘fancy a catch-up?’ can demonstrate that we care and give someone an opportunity to offload. Our management team, all the way up to the CEO are extremely approachable, always having open and honest lines of communication. Our CEO has time for everyone and will always do what he can to help, despite being ridiculously busy! His approach has had such a positive influence on the management and HR teams. It’s an open-door policy but levelled up!

We have Suicide Prevention champions in place and are not afraid of having difficult conversations if that means we can get the right help for someone going through a difficult time.

We absolutely love a Wellness Action Plan here! The plans are owned by the employee and gives them the opportunity to share how they might behave if they’re feeling down or stressed. This empowers managers to take a more proactive approach and means they can put supportive measures in place for our staff as and when they need them.

Over the next 6 months we’ll continue building on all of the good work we’ve done so far! We really want to focus on gathering feedback from our staff team and implementing the things that will help to promote their wellbeing and support them to do a great job in a sector which is facing a lot of challenges in the new year.”



Employer Resources

We've produced four new employer resources this year, all aligned with our workplan and designed to engage employers in our priority sectors.

- In collaboration with Leeds Mind and Punch Creative, we created a [leaflet on supporting employees affected by suicide](#)—available in both print and digital formats, and launched at our WSPD event.
- Partnering with Leeds Arts Health and Wellbeing Network, we developed a [Creative Wellbeing in the Workplace directory](#), <https://mailchi.mp/b28dfa60ae69/creativewellbeingprovidedirectory> showcasing local providers of creative workshops to inspire fresh approaches to staff wellbeing.
- For the first time, we've used LinkedIn Articles to reach employers directly:
 - [How employers can support colleagues and communities in light of the racist violence happening across the UK](#) responded to the August riots.
 - [Supporting your employees through welfare reform changes](#) followed the Spring Budget and offers practical guidance for employers supporting affected staff.

The themes of these resources were carefully chosen to resonate with employers in key engagement areas and encourage meaningful action on workplace mental health.

How an employer can support

Understanding and reassurance

Acknowledge their loss and offer condolences. Avoid clichés (e.g. "they are at peace now"). Do not assume that you understand how they are feeling, offer opinion or pass judgement. Reassure them that their workload is being taken care of in their absence. You may feel like you don't know what to say but in our experience small thoughtful gestures such as a card or flowers are often appreciated.

Employee-centred approach

What are their employee's support needs? Discuss this directly with them and assess what help can be provided by the organisation. Consider cultural perspectives and needs. Consider possible triggers that the employee may encounter in their role and how these might be avoided or managed e.g. awareness days like World Suicide Prevention Day.

Communication

Communicate directly with the employee about what they wish to share. Sensitive prepare colleagues for the employee's return to work. Clarify if there is any other support they would appreciate from colleagues, such as appointing a work buddy or Mental Health First Aider. Learn about potentially triggering language e.g. instead of saying "committed suicide" say "died by suicide".

Consider the team

The wider team's workload may be impacted by adjustments made for the person bereaved by suicide; remember to recognise and praise the additional efforts of those individuals to ensure ongoing co-operation and solidarity.

Flexibility

Flexibility in the employee's schedule or responsibilities may help someone manage better after suicide bereavement. Review, negotiate and adapt this regularly with the employee.

Signposting

Signpost to support services as well as relevant support through any Employee Assistance Programmes you provide. Encourage your employee to engage with Leeds Mind Suicide Bereavement Services. Where appropriate, liaise directly with our service for advice regarding specific concerns.

Thinking longer term

When someone is bereaved by suicide, they can experience the impact – both emotional and practical – for years after the loss. Here's what this might look like:

Longstanding complicated emotions and reactions to trauma

Consider reasonable allowances around an employee's work performance after the loss. Longer term, an employer should maintain regular communication around the employee's needs and signpost to support services if relevant, keeping in mind performance issues may be related to their bereavement. Continue to be mindful of potential triggers such as awareness days, training topics etc.

Difficulties managing anniversaries and other significant dates

Employers can make a discreet note of such dates to ensure they are well prepared to support employee needs at this time.

Increased family or caring commitments which may impact on their work/life balance.

They may also have more financial responsibilities. Employers can discuss specific needs sensitively with the employee. Consider flexible working policies and signpost to local/national debt support charities if appropriate.



Communications

Our blogs and newsletter special features explored topics designed to engage employers from priority areas. We aimed to raise awareness, tackle stigma and share tools and signposting information to help them better support high-risk or disadvantaged workforces, including those in low-wage or low-security roles.

Below is a selection of some of the topics covered.

A focus on self-care for self-care week	Focus on Getting Clean CIC charity supporting people in recovery	Promotion of the Synergi Leeds mentoring library
Celebrate Pride Month in your workplace	Reflections on Men's Health Week from Men's Health Unlocked	Spotlight on the Age Friendly Employer pledge
Celebrating International Non-Binary People's Day	Relationships Matter: Supporting employers experiencing relationship distress	Credit Union – financial wellbeing in the workplace
Supporting Racial Equity in your Workforce	Inclusion Toolkit for Workplaces	South Asian Heritage Month
Workplace Reasonable Adjustments for Autistic people and people with ADHD, and Au-DHD	Ways to support working parents for parent mental health day	Making Stress Awareness Month Meaningful

Social media

This year, we made the decision to stop posting on X and Facebook due to low engagement and a sense that these platforms weren't the right fit. Instead, we've focused our efforts on LinkedIn, taking a more strategic approach that includes regular posts, repurposing newsletter content, and showcasing the work of member employers.

This has paid off, with follower numbers rising by 292 to a total of 585 – a clear sign that concentrating on one platform is working. The response to this year's conference was particularly encouraging, with unprecedented engagement on social media through the dedicated hashtag #LMEC24, helping to boost visibility and momentum. We've also seen growing interest around our Mindful Employer of the Quarter feature and celebrations of new Charter signatories.

To professionalise and formalise our content, we've begun sharing more structured article-style posts and encouraging Steering Group members to amplify this by resharing. We now include a reminder to follow the LinkedIn page in every newsletter.

Looking ahead, we're considering using the Leeds Mind Instagram account to broaden our reach beyond LinkedIn. Social media remains a vital tool for raising awareness, celebrating good practice, and building a visible, engaged community of employers committed to mental health at work.



Abstract white lines, possibly representing a stylized tree or branching structure, are drawn on a solid blue background. The lines originate from the top right and branch out towards the center and bottom right.

Partnership work

2024 – 2025

Working together with partners

Partnership working is central to the Mindful Employer Network's approach. We're proud to be part of a city where collaboration is the norm, not the exception. By sitting on key forums and taking part in citywide conversations about mental health and wellbeing, we stay informed, influence change, and help raise awareness. We regularly present at key city events to promote the network, and we actively champion the work of our partners—because when we work together, we create stronger, more supportive workplaces across Leeds.

Below is a list of key networks/forums we've been part of this year and partner's we've collaborated with and promoted the work of.

MindWell	This is Me Yorkshire Committee	Synergi Leeds Network
Mental Health Anti-Stigma Core Group	Men's Health Unlocked	Leeds Arts Health Wellbeing Network (LAHWN)
Leeds City Council (Public Health, HR, Active Workplaces, Compassionate Leeds, Anchor Network)	Leeds City Council Financial Wellbeing Working Group	ATR Trauma Informed Staff Experience and Workforce Practices Workstream meeting
Leeds Health and Care Academy	Leeds Recovery College	Leeds Suicide Prevention Network
Workplace Reasonable Adjustments for Autistic people and people with ADHD, and Au-DHD	NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board / West Yorkshire Health and Care	Leeds Inclusive Employers Network
Leeds Mind	Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust	Touchstone

Feedback from partners

“Thanks so much for your presentation which attendees loved. It was so so thought-provoking. Thank you for taking the time out. it was such a good presentation and landed so well.”

“It is such a fantastic platform to get linked messages across. The network of likeminded businesses across Leeds is now growing into such a great community and by working as the network we can do some real positive stuff. I love it”

“Really appreciate your support.”

“I just wanted to say a massive thanks for yesterday as you were brilliant at facilitating the group.”

“We are going to look at numerous things around team wellbeing moving forward from the session .”

“It's been great to work with you too and I'm looking forward to seeing how the conference comes together.”



External evaluation

The background of the slide features a solid light blue color. Overlaid on this are several thick, hand-drawn style wavy lines in a muted green color. These lines originate from the right side of the frame and curve towards the left, creating a sense of movement and depth.

Evaluation by PHIRST Elevate

Every three years the Leeds Mindful Employer Network's impact is to be evaluated by an external body.

This year we were successful in a bid to have our network evaluated by PHIRST Elevate Research Team at the University of Edinburgh, which evaluates public health interventions run by local government across the UK. The process was competitive, and we are delighted our initiative has been chosen.

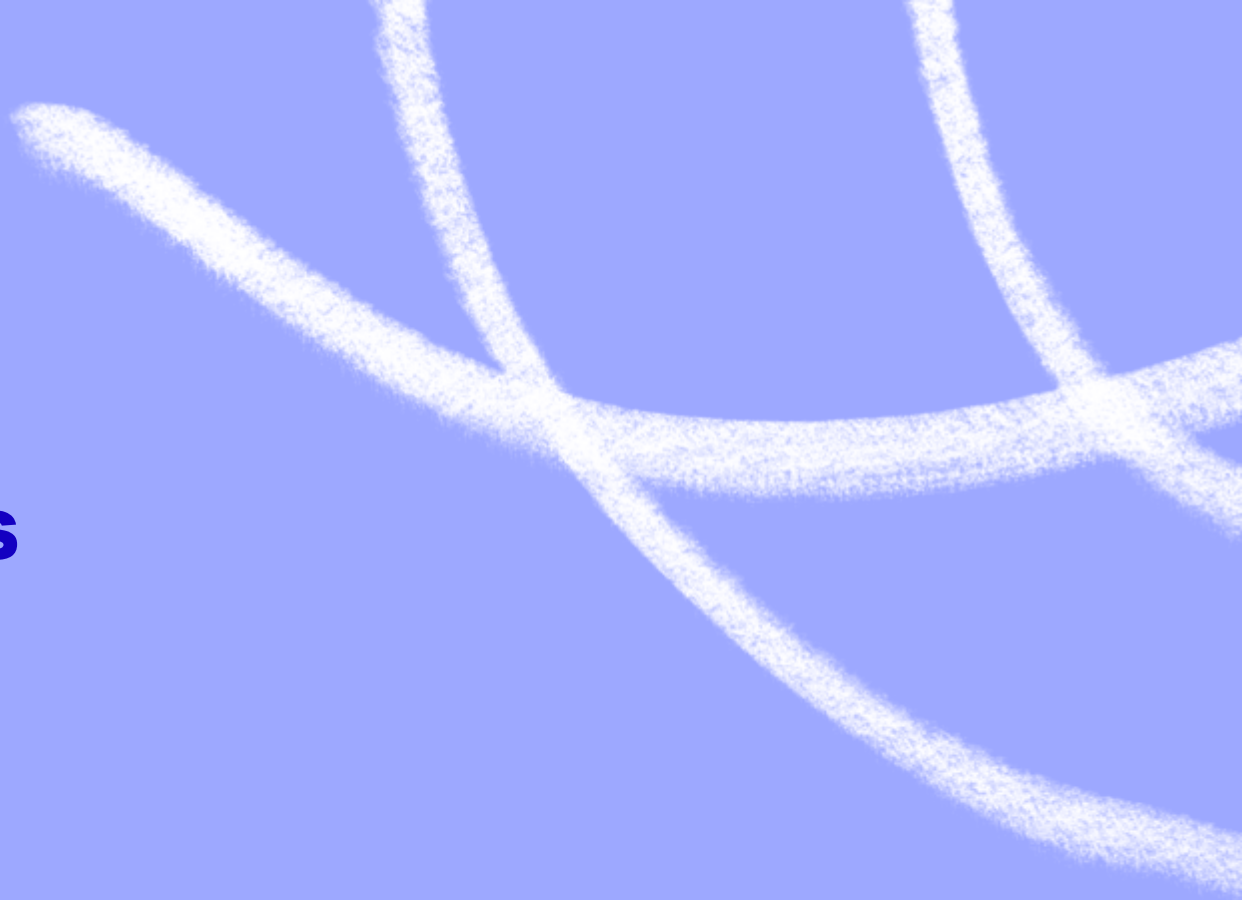
The evaluation will help our commissioners at Leeds City Council to:

- Understand how network members translate the network into action
- Assess the perceived impact of the network on employers and employees
- Make recommendations for programme enhancements, engagement, and sustainability

We look forward to the results in January 2026.



Conclusions



Reflections

This year has marked a period of real momentum and maturity for the Leeds Mindful Employer Network.

With stable staffing in place for the first full year in two years, we've been able to build meaningful, sustained relationships with employers across the city—particularly those in high-risk sectors, lower-paid roles, and areas of deprivation.

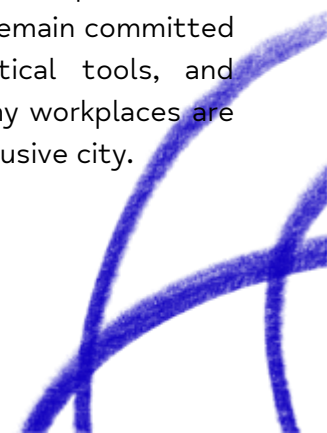
From a record-breaking bi-annual conference to targeted one-to-one support and the continued success of our Mindful Employer of the Quarter initiative, every aspect of our work has helped to normalise mental health conversations and embed positive culture change.

Our communications have evolved too: we've streamlined our social media focus to LinkedIn, resulting in unprecedented engagement—especially through the #LMEC24 conference hashtag—and formalised our voice through article content and amplified sharing from the Steering Group committee and network members.

With 22 new Charter signatories and 65 renewals, it's clear that commitment to workplace wellbeing is not only growing, but deepening.

We also welcomed a number of new Steering Group members, bringing fresh energy, lived experience, and strategic insight to the table. Their presence has helped diversify our knowledge and influence and strengthen our focus on inclusion, making the network even more responsive to the needs of underrepresented sectors and communities. The commitment and ownership shown by the group as a whole has been instrumental in shaping our direction and delivering our shared mission.

The success of our partnership working, and the external evaluation now underway with PHIRST Elevate, position us strongly for the future. As we look ahead, we remain committed to amplifying diverse voices, sharing practical tools, and celebrating progress—because mentally healthy workplaces are not a luxury, but a foundation for a thriving, inclusive city.





If you're not part of the Mindful Employer Leeds network you're missing out on so much important advice, resources and expertise that can make your company a place your employees love to work.



**Thomas Nadin, Co-Founder and
Technical Director at Few and Far**