

Case Study title: Mental Health Awareness Lions Barber Collective

Scheme name: A303 Sparkford to Ilchester

Project stage: 6, ConstructionDate Case Study submitted09/02/2023

Wellbeing and People

Scheme context:

We’re upgrading a three-mile section of the A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester, to make the road safer and more reliable. The delivery of this scheme is part of a long-term aim to create a high-quality dual carriage way link between London and the South East and the South West. The project plans to be completed in Spring 2024. There may be up to approximately 200 people working on site daily.

Case study details:

The Problem

Suicides in England and Wales. 5,583 suicides were registered in 2021 in England and Wales, 6.9% higher than in 2020 (5,224 deaths), and equivalent to an age-standardised mortality rate (ASMR) of 10.7 deaths per 100,000 people. Globally someone dies by suicide every 40 seconds.

Men in the UK are three times more likely to die by suicide than women. However, in construction – a male dominated industry– men are three times more likely to die by suicide than the national average for men. Construction work has a variety of pressures from tight contracts to long hours, time away from loved ones and managing budgets, not to mention the added stresses of the pandemic and now the rising costs of supplies. Additionally, within construction lies a "macho" culture which prevents many workers from seeking support and help when they may need it, putting further stress on their own mental health and wellbeing.

Lions Barber Collective

Tom Chapman is a Torquay-based barber who has made it his mission to propel the stigma of mental ill health among men into the mainstream. In 2015 founded the Lions Barber Collective, an international group of barbers who have undergone training in how to recognise symptoms of mental ill health in clients and signpost them to relevant support services. The group helps to raise awareness of mental illness and aims to prevent suicide by creating training that enables barbers to recognise, talk and listen out for symptoms of depression.

A303 Day

The Lions Barbers were invited to the A303 for a day and everyone on site, men and women, were offered a free haircut. The aim was to raise awareness of mental health, to prevent suicide by using trained barbers to who recognise, talk and listen out for symptoms of depression.

What are the benefits?

The key aim is to improve the health and wellbeing of people working on site.

The day was received well with lots of discussion around mental health and positive feedback on the innovative approach. People also enjoyed a chat with a free haircut!

A raised awareness of mental health issues has been achieved that is noticeable on site.

Raised awareness of support available such as mental health first aiders, GT helpline, Lighthouse Charity.

How can others apply your learning?

Programme activities on the day to ensure site teams have time and are able to attend the event.

Contact Lions Barber Collective to arrange a day: <https://www.thelionsbarbercollective.com/>

Visual materials that explain your approach / outcome



Contact for more details: nicola.parsons2@gallifordtry.co.uk

Further information:

<https://www.thelionsbarbercollective.com/>