City Mental Health Alliance UK

Thriving at Work Guide UK

Foreword

City Mental Health Alliance

It has been three years since we started work on creating the 'CMHA: Thriving at Work Guide'. This was a collaborative project with our members, who worked with us to create a practical guide for businesses in response to the recommendations in the 2017 Stevenson/Farmer 'Thriving at Work Review of Mental Health and Employers'. We know CMHA members have valued and embraced the framework in the CMHA Guide and, through our annual Thriving at Work Assessment, it has been great to see the progress that has been made.

Much has changed over these past three years and we have seen that in how workplace mental health and wellbeing programmes have evolved, demonstrating new and innovative practice and we feel now is the right time to update the Guide. We continue to support the recommendations in the Stevenson/Farmer report and these still form the cornerstone of this framework.

In this new Guide, we go further by introducing new Standards; a stronger focus on inclusion and diversity and the intersectionality with mental health; and, a more ambitious set of actions for employers to adopt and lead the way in creating mentally healthy workplaces.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our members, Board, Executive Team and Advisory Group for your on-going support and contribution to our Thriving at Work programme.

– Alison Unsted, Director of Strategy & Operations

"The CMHA Thriving at Work framework underpins and informs our global mental health & wellbeing strategy at Oliver Wyman. It is incredibly useful tool to help us to assess our wellbeing at work strategy globally. The annual CMHA Assessment allows us to review our progress, identify where we can make improvements to our thinking, as well as receiving advice from the CMHA team to continue to evolve our wellbeing at work journey."

– Gemma Porter, Global Wellness Manager, Oliver Wyman

How to Use This Guide

The UK Thriving at Work Guide is intended as a reference for businesses looking to develop their approaches to workplace mental health and wellbeing. The Standards and associated recommended actions and practices are based on evidence from research and what has worked well across the CMHA member community.

Pillars and standards

City Mental Health Alliance UK

PILLAR 1

Create a Culture of Wellbeing and Psychological Safety

Standard 1
Communication & Engagement

Standard 2
Senior Leadership

Standard 3
Transparency & Accountability

Standard 4
Ecosystem

PILLAR 2

Developing a Mentally Healthy Working Environment

Standard 5
Managing People

Standard 6
Employee Lifecycle

Standard 7
Working Environment

PILLAR 3

Provide and Signpost to Accessible Resources, Tools and Support

Standard 8
Opening the Dialogue

Standard 9
Providing Support

Standard 10
Monitoring & Disclosure

Key to Levels

These have been arranged into four levels to illustrate interventions taken at different stages of progress:

Committed – pledged to deliver this Standard and identified resources and a plan to do so.

Achieving – delivering on Standard and are measuring outcomes to inform progress.

Excelling – leading and innovating with new ideas and ways of thinking on meeting the Standard.

Health Creating – going beyond the Standards to build a workplace that is creating health where people flourish.

There are 10 Standards for workplace mental health, which we have divided under three strategic Pillars. These Pillars represent the three strategic guiding principles that organisations should be working towards to create mentally healthy workplaces, and align with the CMHA Global Thriving at Work Framework.

The 10 Standards in this Guide each cover a key focus area that organisations need to address. Each Standard is underpinned by recommended actions and practices that have been drawn from across the business world. In recognition that organisations are at different stages of their mental health journey, we have broken down the recommended actions into four levels – committed, achieving, excelling and health creating.

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PILLAR 1 - CREATE A CULTURE OF WELLBEING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

STANDARD 1

Communication & Engagement

Produce, implement, and communicate a mental health plan that promotes good mental health. Develop mental health awareness by providing accessible information and resources and engage employees and colleagues in campaigns, events, and activities that challenge stigma and promote inclusion.

1 STANDARD 1

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Communication & Engagement

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Committed	Develop a mental health plan to promote mental health and wellbeing with signposting to access confidential support for those who need it. Provide information and resources on mental health, wellbeing and confidential support provided to all organisation. Ensure communications are varied and accessible (e.g. intranet/website, forums, networks, emails, and posters) and are tailored to meet the needs of different and diverse audiences.
Achieving	Widely communicate the organisation's plan and commitment to mental health and wellbeing to different audiences, (i.e. Board, HR, employee networks & resource groups, all employees). Promote events, conferences and activities that raise awareness of mental health. Regularly use campaigns (e.g. Green Ribbon, Mental Health Awareness Week, World Mental Health Day) to raise mental health issues at work. Recruit mental health/wellbeing champions or ambassadors, across all levels of seniority, to act as role models to communicate and advocate organisation's approach, including signposting to promote support available. Recognise mental health in communications relating to key life-time events (new parents, carers, late career, retirement) with signposting to tailored mental health information and resources.

STANDARD 1 continued:

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Excelling	Align mental health plan with organisation/people strategy and allocate dedicate resource for implementation. Consult with inclusion team and/or networks to ensure mental health plan and related activities incorporates different perspectives and raises awareness of the intersectionality of mental health across diverse groups. Offer general mental health awareness training to improve understanding and challenge stigma. Develop case studies and encourage sharing of stories of mental ill health and recovery (e.g. This is Me) from leaders and others in different levels/roles across the organisation.
Health Creating	Send strong leadership message through CEO, endorsing mental health plan and the organisation's commitment to mental health and wellbeing. Cascade information relating to mental health awareness and available support through local leadership by encouraging teams to attend mental health events, activities and/or training.

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PILLAR 1 - CREATE A CULTURE OF WELLBEING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

STANDARD 2

Senior Leadership

Make mental health and wellbeing a Boardroom agenda. Demonstrate visible action from senior leadership by nominating a mental health and wellbeing lead at Board or senior leadership level to drive change and influence healthy business culture.

2 STANDARD 2

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Senior Leadership

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Committed	Nominate Board/Senior level sponsor for the organisation's mental health and wellbeing agenda.
Achieving	Educate senior leaders to raise awareness and challenge stigma related to mental health and to understand the rationale for the organisation's commitment to mental health and wellbeing. Encourage senior leaders to endorse and communicate organisation's mental health plan. Recruit senior leaders as allies, being visibly involved in mental health and wellbeing activities and events, both internally and externally.

STANDARD 2 continued:

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Excelling	Make senior leaders aware of and held accountable for the implementation of the organisation's mental health plan. Ensure the mental health plan and implementation is regularly discussed at senior leadership/Board level meetings with available data and metrics reviewed. Educate senior leaders to recognise the intersectionality of mental health across different groups and be active and visible in promoting the wider inclusion agenda. Contribute to the CMHA leadership community by encouraging senior leaders to participate in CMHA meetings and events, sharing best practice and thought leadership.
Health Creating	Build resilience by investing in purpose and culture – align leadership values to human prosperity rather than profit. Consider use of mentoring and coaching to further educate senior leaders on mental health and wellbeing. Include mental health and wellbeing on meeting agendas when meeting both internal and external business leaders.

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PILLAR 1 - CREATE A CULTURE OF WELLBEING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

STANDARD 3

Transparency & Accountability

Increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting to show the organisation's commitment and approach to workplace mental health and wellbeing.

3 STANDARD 3

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Transparency & Accountability

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Committed	Make a public statement about commitment to workplace mental health and wellbeing through membership of CMHA or through pledges such as the Mental Health at Work Commitments. Include the organisation's commitment to mental health and wellbeing in company's annual report, including what action is/has being taken and any available data or information to demonstrate impact.
Achieving	Utilise digital media (e.g. website, social media) and other media channels to demonstrate commitment to mental health and wellbeing. Use CMHA TAW Assessment feedback and/or other relevant indices and comparators to evaluate and report against own performance.

STANDARD 3 continued:

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Excelling	Show evidence of impact through sharing case studies on organisational approach. Share best practice by participating in external conferences and events.
Health Creating	Provide thought leadership and influence wider change by leading campaigns to raise awareness, challenge mental health stigma, and create better business cultures for workplace wellbeing. Include workplace mental health and wellbeing in ESG credentials.

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PILLAR 1 - CREATE A CULTURE OF WELLBEING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

STANDARD 4

Ecosystem

Engage with external stakeholders (competitors/peers, partners, suppliers, and clients) to influence mentally healthy business practices across the organisation's wider eco-system. Collaborate in programmes and/or activities that support positive mental health in the wider community.

4 STANDARD 4

Ecosystem

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Committed	Share organisation's commitment to mental health and wellbeing with external stakeholders such as clients and suppliers.
Achieving	Collaborate and/or engage with stakeholders in sector and eco system on activities that promote workplace mental health and wellbeing e.g. Mindful Business Charter. Include an assessment of supplier workplace mental health and wellbeing approach in the procurement process.

4

STANDARD 4
Ecosystem

STANDARD 4 continued:

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Excelling	Provide access to wellbeing resources, events and support for outsourced contractors/suppliers who work on-site e.g. catering services teams. Provide mental health awareness training to procurement team, those involved in the tender process and those in client/customer facing roles. Challenge suppliers who do not have in place any workplace mental health and wellbeing initiatives and offer education and support such as sharing resources.
Health Creating	Sponsor or support work of mental health charities or community groups e.g. Mental Health Sustainability Fund. Where applicable, work with clients to ensure access to wellbeing support for colleagues working on client premises.

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PILLAR 2 – DEVELOPING A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT

STANDARD 5

Managing People

Promote effective people management to ensure all employees and colleagues have regular conversations about their mental health and wellbeing with their line manager. Train line managers to develop the key skills to support their teams.

5 STANDARD 5

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Managing People

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Committed	Provide mental health and wellbeing guidance, resources and tools to line managers. Communicate EAP and other support services to enable line managers to signpost to help if needed.
Achieving	Offer a range of mental health training for line managers to raise awareness and develop their skills and confidence to have effective and compassionate conversations about mental health with their teams. Formalise the expectation that all line managers regularly discuss wellbeing and workplace risks with their direct reports, as well as during performance appraisal or feedback processes. Encourage line managers to role model positive wellbeing behaviours with their teams. Embed elements of mental health and wellbeing into management learning and development programmes/ training.

STANDARD 5 continued:

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Excelling	Include team wellbeing into management competency framework and/or leadership values and make explicit in management job descriptions and expectations. Review in management performance appraisal or feedback processes.
Health Creating	Provide specialist or advanced mental health training to line managers e.g. CMHA MD/Leader Training, Mental Health First Aid Training. Include wellbeing as a measure in management compensation framework.

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PILLAR 2 – DEVELOPING A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT

STANDARD 6

Employee Lifecycle

Recognise mental health and wellbeing throughout the employee lifecycle from recruitment to exit with policies, processes and systems that are inclusive of mental health.

6 STANDARD 6

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Employee Lifecycle

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Committed	Signpost to organisation's commitment to wellbeing in recruitment and career literature e.g. use of CMHA Thrive from the Start Badge. Introduce information about organisation's approach to mental health and wellbeing and signpost to relevant information, tools and support during on-boarding and at induction. Reference mental health in relevant HR/people policies and processes e.g. absence policy, workplace adjustments. Ensure language is inclusive of mental health.
Achieving	Include reference to mental health and support available in communications for significant career/transition events e.g. early careers, promotion, disciplinary/grievance, exits. Provide mental health awareness training for key personnel with involvement or responsibility for candidate or employee welfare e.g. recruitment teams, HR. Ensure a consistent process for offering mental health related adjustments throughout the recruitment process and on-going throughout the employee lifecycle.

STANDARD 6 continued:

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Excelling	Safeguard positive mental health by making this a consideration in the design of key HR/people processes, particularly those involving difficult discussions e.g. recruitment, redundancy consultations. Ensure health benefits provided (e.g. private medical insurance) are inclusive of mental health, and consideration given to the different needs of diverse groups.
Health Creating	Provide additional support for people experiencing difficult circumstances such as redundancy, e.g. offering outplacement support, extending psychological support available for a period of time post termination. Offer additional supports to support individuals at career transition points e.g. coaching.

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PILLAR 2 – DEVELOPING A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT

STANDARD 7

Working Environment

Provide good working conditions in relation to work-life balance, physical environment, relationships and psychological demands. Use the working environment to promote healthy lifestyle behaviours. Assess and take steps to mitigate against any identified risk to psychological health.

7 STANDARD 7

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Working Environment

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Committed	Provide and promote wellbeing and resilience resources e.g. mindfulness. Have an agile working policy in place, including access to formal and informal flexibility.
Achieving	Implement a programme of prevention measures including campaigns/activities to support healthy lifestyle, promote wellbeing and resilience. Consider wellbeing needs of all employees, including those in 'unseen' roles/support functions e.g. security, post room, cleaning. Take proactive steps to eradicate racism and discrimination in the workplace. Raise awareness of workplace risks (e.g. stress, long-hours, bullying), including where to self-report risks, and the support available to employees if they need it. Undertake psychological/stress risk assessments. Take action to mitigate against any identified and reported risks that are potentially harmful to mental health.

STANDARD 7 continued:

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Excelling	Set a clear expectation on all levels of leadership to proactively support the wellbeing of their teams and role model healthy behaviours including taking regular breaks throughout the day, using holiday entitlement and encouraging others to do the same. Create and protect boundaries for people working from home/away from the office. Ensure people are not working excessive hours, taking adequate rest breaks and encouraged to prioritise personal wellbeing. Promote positive working relationships to avoid conflicts and robust processes in place to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
Health Creating	Design work to mitigate excessive work demands with consideration given to working hours, role expectations, control and autonomy. Review team and reporting lines to ensure all teams and individuals are supported, especially those working away from the office (e.g. remote workers, those working in client premises). Maximise wellbeing through providing opportunities for social connection, learning and development, and volunteering. Create an environment where employees feel safe to share ideas and challenge ways of working. Consider and implement ways that office buildings and the built environment can improve the physical, psychological, and social health and well-being of people.

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PILLAR 3 - PROVIDE AND SIGNPOST TO ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES, TOOLS AND SUPPORT

STANDARD 8

Opening the Dialogue

Develop mental health literacy and confidence. Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available. Offer appropriate workplace adjustments to anyone who requires them.

8 STANDARD 8

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Opening the Dialogue

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Committed	Use campaigns such as ‘Green Ribbon campaign’, ‘Take 10 for Mental Health’ to raise awareness and encourage conversations about mental health.
Achieving	Share stories of lived experience of mental health and recovery through events, blogs, vlogs and other communication channels. Create network of mental health and wellbeing advocates (e.g. champions, ambassadors, mental health first aiders) to raise awareness, advocate for mental health and wellbeing initiatives, and to offer support and signpost to help if needed.

STANDARD 8 continued:

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Excelling	Provide mental health training for line managers and key personnel e.g. HR, Occupational Health, that incorporates core people/HR processes e.g. recruitment, performance management, absence management and exits. Put in place a robust return to work process and a recovery/resilience plan for those returning from mental health related absence that includes: ■ Consultation with and active involvement of line managers in return to work plan ■ Routinely held return to work discussion ■ Proactive support including workplace adjustments, guidance, and available resources Put in place robust process for managing long-term absences related to mental health including tracking return to work and retention post return.
Health Creating	Encourage leaders to show their own vulnerability and be authentic, open and honest with teams about mental health and wellbeing, empowering others to do the same. Encourage the creation of peer communities (e.g. leadership, early careers, diversity networks), and provide safe and confidential spaces for people to talk openly about any mental health concerns.

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PILLAR 3 - PROVIDE AND SIGNPOST TO ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES, TOOLS AND SUPPORT

STANDARD 9

Providing Support

Signpost to mental health support, including digital support, employer funded services such as in-house counselling, occupational health, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or NHS services and other external sources of support.

9 STANDARD 9

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Providing Support

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Committed	Provide access to preventative and early intervention support. Widely communicate and signpost to support available such as: ■ Employee Assistance Programme ■ Wellbeing Champions/Mental Health First Aiders ■ Occupational Health ■ Counselling/Psychological services (if applicable) ■ Primary care/GP ■ External resources e.g. Samaritans, other helplines, NHS services
Achieving	Consult with diverse groups (e.g. employee networks) to ensure wellbeing interventions and internal supports available (e.g. wellbeing champions) are representative and meet the needs of different groups. Communicate and signpost to information, resources and support that supports the specific needs of diverse groups (e.g. Black and Minority Ethnic, LGBT+, Women, Neurodiverse). Communicate and signpost to information, resources and support that supports the specific needs of vulnerable groups (e.g. young people, carers, victims of domestic abuse). Ensure support available is accessible (e.g. out of standard office hours) and offered via self-referral.

STANDARD 9 continued:

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Excelling	Leaders to advocate for and signpost to support services available. Communicate and signpost to information and resources that support financial wellbeing. Make support available accessible to family members.
Health Creating	Offer training in resilience and other preventative measures e.g. mindfulness. Consider other methods of promoting wellbeing such as use of wellbeing technology (e.g. mental health apps).

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PILLAR 3 - PROVIDE AND SIGNPOST TO ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES, TOOLS AND SUPPORT

STANDARD 10

Monitoring & Disclosure

Routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing by exploring available data, seeking feedback from employees and colleagues. Create an environment for safe disclosure and provide opportunities during the recruitment process and throughout the employee lifecycle. Make sure the right support is in place to facilitate a good response following any disclosure.

10

STANDARD 10

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Monitoring & Disclosure

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Committed	Collect data to inform your mental health plan: ■ Identify what mental health and wellbeing data you have available internally. ■ Hold meetings with wellbeing service providers to understand what data they have available.
Achieving	Provide opportunities for disclosure of a mental health condition: ■ Monitoring forms that include mental health ■ Disclosure opportunities at different stages of recruitment and on-boarding ■ Disclosure opportunities throughout the employee lifecycle ■ Opportunities for anonymous disclosure ■ Support available following disclosure Include wellbeing measures/questions in existing employee surveys. Undertake external benchmarking and assessment e.g. CMHA Thriving at Work Assessment. Include data related to mental health risks in Risk Register and report to Risk Committee (or equivalent management committee).

STANDARD 10 continued:

LEVEL	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/PRACTICES
Excelling	Report mental health and wellbeing data, including benchmarking at Board/senior level meetings. Implement a short-term absence management system to monitor and measure mental health related sickness absence.
Health Creating	Disaggregate mental health and wellbeing data by demographic groups to identify prevalence and understand better the experience and mental health needs of different groups. Include mental health data in management score cards. Make mental health/wellbeing assessments available.

Measurement

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Measurement of your mental health and wellbeing approach can help to assess impact and inform future priorities. What you measure will depend upon what information you currently collect. The best approach is to be clear on your goals and desired outcomes and this should help inform what data you should use. As a guide, please see the table of suggested data measurements below:

CREATE A CULTURE OF WELLBEING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY:	DEVELOP A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT	PROVIDE AND SIGNPOST TO ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES, TOOLS & SUPPORT
■ Disclosure rates ■ Mental health case studies ■ Engagement survey feedback ■ Wellbeing survey feedback ■ Feedback/performance review data ■ Grievances ■ Exits/reasons for leaving ■ Recruitment/candidate review forums (e.g. Glassdoor)	■ Absence monitoring (short & long term) ■ Retention data for those with diagnosed mental health conditions ■ Policy & process audit ■ Stress & psychological risk assessments ■ Work utilisation/hours worked ■ Benchmarking (external)	■ Utilisation of wellbeing interventions ■ Participation in activities & events ■ Website/intranet/app usage ■ Service provider data (e.g. Medical insurance claims, EAP, utilisation of apps)

References & Resources

City Mental Health Alliance UK

- CMHA UK Coronavirus resources
- CMHA Hong Kong Thriving at Work Guide
- CMHA Thriving at Work Global Framework
- CMHA Early Careers Health Programme
- CMHA UK How To Guides
- CMHA UK Thriving at Work Assessment
- CMHA UK events
- CMHA UK member case studies
- CMHA UK Training
- Banking Standards Board - 8 factors that affect employee wellbeing in the workplace
- BITC Wellbeing Workwell Model
- Deloitte 2017 – At a Tipping Point? Workplace Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Deloitte 2020 – Mental Health & Employers – Refreshing the Case
- HSE Management Standards
- MHFA Take 10 Together
- Stevenson Farmer Review of Mental Health and Employers
- The Lord Mayor's Appeal: This is Me Campaign
- The Mental Health Work Commitment
- Time to Change Employer Pledge

CMHA Thriving at Work Assessment

City Mental Health Alliance UK

Measure your progress on building a mentally healthy workplace

Our Thriving at Work Assessment is an evaluation and benchmarking tool for organisations to measure their progress in developing mentally healthy workplaces. It is based on the evidence-based Standards in this Guide and will identify your strengths and prioritise areas for development.

- The tool measures the following areas:
- Communication and engagement
- Skills development
- Working environment
- People management and employee lifecycle
- Leadership and accountability
- Business ecosystem
- Monitoring and disclosure
- Interventions and support

Cost

Members: included in membership

Non-members: contact us for pricing and further information

Benefits of the Assessment

- Benchmark your organisation's approach to mental health and workplace wellbeing against other leading organisations
- Provide a gap analysis against the CMHA Thriving at Work framework that will help identify future priorities
- A confidential organisation report and face-to-face feedback and consultancy
- Measure year on year progress (for those that complete the assessment on an annual basis)
- CMHA Thriving at Work Digital Badge (for organisations achieving required standard)

Accreditation & Recognition

Upon completion of the Assessment, and subject to achieving the required standard, you will be awarded the CMHA Thriving at Work Accreditation Mark.

The level awarded will be based upon your assessment score.

City Mental Health Alliance UK

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