

MBC signatories call 13 January 2020

Attendees – Richard Martin (RM) and Lisa Swinney at byrne-dean were joined by 40 participants on the call. In view of the number of those participating we haven't listed all attendees by name except where a full update was given or question raised.

1. Update from RM on new signatories

Byrne-dean are in active discussion about the Charter with an increasing number of organisations that have shown interest. We will continue to welcome organisations on board, and to include them in calls and other activity, as and when they commit on the basis that they will formally sign in May. We're delighted to confirm that Womble Hill Dickinson, Shoosmiths, JMC Legal Recruitment and Mathesons are all committed to the Charter.

Confidentially between this group, Allen & Overy have also confirmed that they will sign.

Confidentially again, until such time as they announce their commitment, Goldman Sachs will sign. They will hold an event in their offices on 22 January to mark that and will subsequently join the group signing in May.

There are, in addition, ongoing discussions happening with accountancy firms and organisations from other industries. Thank you all for your ambassadorial efforts in promoting the Charter and encouraging people to join briefing calls.

2. Updates from signatories

Capsticks - Katherine Hallam

Capsticks signed in May 2019. Their MBC activity started with an internal comms programme. They used their division department away days as a platform for talking about the Charter. Their Senior Partner and Managing Partner attended each away day and delivered 45 minute sessions to explain its content and what Capsticks were trying to achieve by becoming a signatory. Through these sessions they acquired a huge volume of knowledge driven information; hints and tips about good working practices and agile working which will be shared across the firm.

Capsticks have been promoting the MBC through their MHFA forum and are using tools such as statements on email signatures to maintain its profile. Their current focus, having just gone through their annual employee survey, is on good management practices. Training plans have been created to embed the MBC principles so they go beyond the activity around mental health and agile working and come to reflect what good management looks like. Challenges faced include keeping the MBC fresh and alive, leveraging so that it's seen as more than a box ticking exercise that was done once. They are using every opportunity they have to reinforce their involvement and remind people about what the Charter means.

be brave.

Openness and respect



Smart meetings and emailing



Respecting rest periods



Mindful delegation



CMS – Rachel Czernobay

CMS also signed in May 2019, having identified that the MBC fitted well with their existing mental health initiatives. CMS have taken a top down approach, starting with the full support of their Managing Partner. A programme of sessions was developed for leadership around mental health which included material on the MBC. Sessions have been rolled out to partners within their practice groups (invitations to which came from practice group leaders (PGLs) to underscore the firm's commitment) in London and throughout UK offices. Internationally, the MBC has been promoted in the CEE region via their annual partner conference and in the Middle East via sessions in Oman. Planned activity in Hong Kong has sadly had to be cancelled due to the unrest but there. CMS appointed a board level champion for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Michael Cavers, who has had a prominent profile in the MBC roll out.

The sessions were called 'sustainable high performance' and combined general mental health awareness (pointing out the responsibilities of business leaders for improving mental health within the firm) with specific data compiled from use of their onsite CBT service. This format created an effective platform for introducing the MBC, explaining why the principles were important and then why CMS needed to take steps.

As an example of practical tools, following on from the sessions some practice groups put together an email guidelines document as a guide to managing email flow. This was shared at later sessions and has been adopted and adapted by further practice groups.

Now that the Charter has been rolled out to practice groups the next step is to tackle business services, with sessions planned for business services heads. They will be collaborating with PGLs to create individual action plans.

In relation to clients, CMS are holding a client event to which PGLs are asked to invite clients to introduce them to the Charter, both in relation to their bilateral relationship and as a potential initiative for the clients to adopt themselves.

The Edinburgh Warwick scale is being considered as a mechanism for measuring improvements in wellbeing attributable to the introduction of the MBC. There is a shorter version of the scale with 7 questions, the answers to which produce a score that might be used to benchmark wellbeing.

RM explained that 'measuring impact' is one of the standing agenda items for the working group, the intention being to formulate a consistent way of measuring impact across signatory organisations. The Edinburgh Warwick scale is one of a number of different tools being considered. In respect of the legal profession RM is also having conversations with the Law Society (both the Junior Lawyers Division and more broadly) to ensure that where we can, consistent measures are being used across different initiatives.

Radiant Law - Nicola Lyons

Radiant Law support in house legal teams for large organisations and banks. Having had extensive discussion before signing, they were keen to demonstrate that the Charter was a living commitment rather than a tick box exercise as soon as they signed in October 2019. A working group, that meets weekly, was set up. The group's first action was to explain what they were doing to the company, making themselves visible and accountable. Physical and virtual whiteboards were created for anyone to add ideas to. MBC activity is tracked by the company's project management board, further ensuring visibility.

be brave.

Openness and respect



Smart meetings and emailing



Respecting rest periods



Mindful delegation



To identify where to focus priorities, Radiant Law circulated a survey monkey question: “What are the main stressors for you at work?” There were interesting and unexpected answers.

It is acknowledged incremental changes will be key to addressing issues. As an example of granular changes, meeting etiquette has been refined. Standard meeting agendas and templates are provided for internal meetings to be used by all. It gives clarity and structure to meetings. People are better able to catch up on the content of meetings missed. These documents were already in place for external meetings but there was a realisation that people were being less careful of colleagues’ time, which created stress. A mindset check-in has been put in place at the start of a meeting, and a quick score out of ten pulse is taken at the end, asking ‘was that an efficient use of time?’ etc The default outlook internal meeting slot has been changed from 30 to 15 minutes. Shorter meetings do seem to be more focussed. As another example, remote workers are encouraged to use video call to avoid the stress attributable to misinterpretation of email tone.

On the skills side, generic training has been broadened out beyond lawyering skills and managers, covering topics such as active listening, delegation, positive communication and handling conflict. Having these skills embedded across the company does seem to be lowering stress levels.

There is a standing agenda item to discuss MBC principles and progress at all client governance meetings, an update on MBC progress is included in all client quarterly reports, details of commitments around values initiatives are included in new client proposals, and the Charter is communicated at the client onboarding stage.

More broadly in terms of mental health initiatives, Radiant Law have committed to MHFA training, have revisited resources signposting help available, are promoting LawCare and are launching an EAP.

In response to a question by Philip Aiken, Nicola identified that one of the unexpected examples of employees’ reported main stressors was holidays. Survey respondees stated that they find taking holiday stressful; having to ask for it, feeling like they are letting teammates down, all of the work that goes into prepping, taking the holiday and allowing themselves to switch off and then catching up on their return.

Expanding on the introduction of the MBC to clients at the onboarding stage, in response to a question from Kate Dodd, Nicola explained that the Charter is included regardless of whether the client has signed up to the MBC themselves. Radiant talk about their commitment and the ways that they work, try to bring clients on board in terms of expectations of when teams will be available etc and explain the Charter itself. Reactions have been positive. Some teams had been nervous about talking about hours and expectations but there have been no reported negative reactions. Some clients asked for reassurance that it would not affect the way they are serviced. Service levels have not been affected.

3. Update on collaboration with other bodies

Discussions continue with the Bar Council and a number of other organisations.

David McCahon (Barclays) has been particularly involved in discussions involving the Wellbeing at the Bar Steering Group and last November presented to the Inns of Court and various chambers about what the Charter is.

RM had a conversation with Mind at the end of last year, prompted by the Mental Health at Work Commitment, to discuss how different initiatives overlap and complement each other. The aim is

that, within the next quarter, a meeting will be arranged with representatives from Mind, the Lord Mayor's Appeal, the City Mental Health Alliance and others to explore what each organisation is doing and see how we can support, collaborate and complement each other's activity.

4. Update on international activity

Byrne-dean were due to speak at a conference in Hong Kong in February which unfortunately had to be pulled because of the unrest. Addleshaw Goddard have kindly written to the Law Society in Hong Kong to encourage them to put some thought to the Charter. It is hoped that an event will take place at a future date.

In Scotland Morton Fraser are hosting an event on 6 May with the Scottish government's legal team where byrne-dean will be talking about the Charter. It's hoped that an event can be organised around that date, as an opportunity to promote the Charter in Scotland and to act as a local signing event to make it easier for Scots organisations who are ready to do so to get onboard.

In Ireland, as mentioned, we are delighted to have Matheson joining us. They plan to take an active role in promoting the Charter in Ireland. Separately, discussions are ongoing with the Law Society of Ireland about the Charter and they are hosting an event in Dublin on 23 April.

5. 14 May signing event

Ashurst have kindly agreed to host the next London signing event on **Thursday 14 May** in the City. If anyone has any thoughts about speakers can they please let byrne-dean know.

6. MBC evolution model

The evolution tool, a copy of which was circulated with the agenda, originated from thinking around the different stages of an organisation getting on board and helping organisations to think about what activity they might look to undertake at these stages. The model reinforces the point that there are important stages that might otherwise go unnoticed or unrecognised. Internal and external informing and discussion are critical. An organisation may feel that they are at a stage of inactivity, particularly where their overall mental health and wellbeing activity is still in development, but where discussion is taking place that is a valuable activity in itself. Having moved through the stages of embedding there is a cycle back, reflecting on what has been successful and what challenges have been faced, which then informs a new cycle.

The layout shows bands across the image showing what an organisation might be doing overall at different stages: sharing with other signatories etc The role of byrne-dean is also shown via bands, illustrating that our role as consultants to the Charter supports the first stages of interest and adoption. Where byrne-dean support individual firms at later stages of the cycle, beyond the core activity of calls and updates, that becomes a one-to-one consultancy arrangement.

The evolution model will be incorporated within the updated MBC Toolkit (as mentioned below) and will be posted as a standalone resource on the MBC website.

If anyone would like to email any thoughts on the model separately, all ideas are gratefully received.

7. MBC endorsement

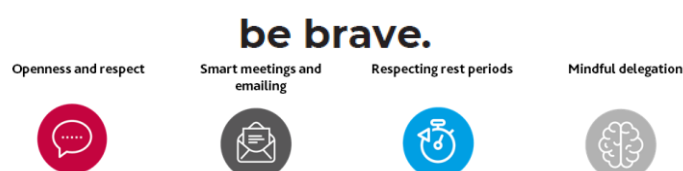
We have had conversations with various organisations, including the International Bar Association, who don't feel it is right to become a signatory but would like to add weight and support to the initiative. Within the working group there has been discussion around what the criteria might be for introducing endorsements. The resulting thinking is as follows:

- Endorsers should be nationally and/or internationally recognised and reputable;
- They should have some relevance to either mental health and wellbeing (eg Mind, Heads Together) or to the better management of business generally and/or particular business sectors (eg the CBI or the Law Society);
- They should be not for profit organisations (as opposed to businesses who we think should show their support by signing the Charter);
- They should be well known enough and/or respected sufficiently such that third parties will recognise them and their likely motivation for endorsing the Charter;
- Their interest in endorsing the Charter should appear to be for the good of the Charter and any members they represent (as opposed to any ulterior motive);
- Their endorsement should enhance the status of the Charter;
- They should give their approval to our using their name and logo on the website and other promotional material;
- They should commit to using appropriate mechanisms (to be determined by them) to promote and publicise the Charter;
- There should not be any clear evidence that they act other than in accordance with the principles of the Charter; and
- They should not seek to restrict future endorsement within the same category or otherwise restrict the scope of the Charter – we do not want sector exclusivity being sought.

If there are any strong objections to what has been proposed please let us know. The criteria will serve as guidelines to further existing conversations and byrne-dean would then envisage proactively approaching further organisations that meet our criteria. Such further organisations might include Mind, The Lord Mayor's Appeal, BiTC, the Law Society of England and Wales, the Bar Council and LawCare.

8. MBC toolkit

The toolkit was put together by Barclays, Addleshaw Goddard and Pinsent Masons when the MBC was introduced in October 2018. The toolkit is being updated so as to remove terminology specific to the legal profession, to remove outdated information and to replace the implementation model – signing up, communication, upskilling and auditing – with a version of the evolution model discussed



above. The updated version will be circulated to all and replaced on the website when approved by the firms involved in its creation.

9. AOB

Measuring impact – a reminder that this is a standing item for discussion by the working party and updates will follow.

Structure - discussion around structure and whether the MBC becomes a formal structure as opposed to the current loose affiliation of interested parties continues. We will revisit this discussion at the next working group meeting in February. If a proposal is agreed upon we will put it out to signatories more generally. If the decision is made that we need to adopt a structure, we would aim to put something in place by August 2020, with the assistance of the pro bono services of an appropriate legal team from within the signatory group. August 2020 represents the end of the period for which the original signatories have pledged funding, beyond which there will need to be clarity as to funding and other ongoing operational decisions.

Website - signatories should please keep in mind providing written updates and materials for the website.

The next signatories call is scheduled for 9 March at 1pm.

be brave.

Openness and respect



Smart meetings and emailing



Respecting rest periods



Mindful delegation

