

Mindful Business Charter



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What is the Mindful Business Charter?

The MBC began as a collaboration between leading banks and law firms committed to driving change in how we work, specifically in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

When we're stressed our brains don't work very well...

That is harmful for us as individuals and harmful to our organisations as it has a negative impact on the quality of our work. Some stress comes from our own heads but some comes from the way we interact with each other, within and between our organisations.



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What is the Mindful Business Charter?

Click on the link below to view a short video explaining the Mindful Business Charter

[VIMEO LINK TO VIDEO](#)

A starting point

The Mindful Business Charter recognises that we cannot remove all sources of stress, nor will change happen overnight – but as a business community we have a responsibility to try do things differently.

The Charter is a practical framework designed to encourage individuals in business settings to talk openly and honestly with each other about the ways they impact each other, by providing a common language built on the following four pillars:

Openness and respect



Respecting rest periods



Smart meetings and emailing



Mindful delegation



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Openness and respect

Building trust and effective communication

- Discussing upfront with my colleagues, clients and contacts their preferred method of communication and clarifying any relevant implications of an individual's working patterns.
- Treating internal colleagues and external contacts with the appropriate level of respect and courtesy.
- Asking for and providing feedback to others on a regular basis.

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Smart meetings and emails

Adhering to smart meeting and email guidance

- Allowing people to join meetings by the method they deem suitable, providing dial in details as default on meeting invites unless it is imperative that everyone attends in person.
- Being respectful of others' time by planning meetings properly (considering who needs to attend / giving appropriate notice / setting clear agendas and objectives) and avoiding last minute cancellations.
- Avoiding over-use of email and not copying people into emails that they don't need to receive.
- Making use of subject lines in emails and ensuring these are reflective of the email's content.

Respecting rest periods

Consideration given to the need to switch off

- Where support is required outside of someone's core working hours, giving them options for when that could be (early morning or evening / weekend).
- When sending emails outside of business hours, being clear in the title whether it needs to be read / actioned promptly or considering sending pre-timed emails (so emails are not received late at night and at weekends).
- Including working hours / availability as part of my email signature, so people are aware of each others' working patterns.
- Respecting people's right to take annual leave without the expectation of them checking emails / being on call, and role modelling the same behaviour myself where possible.

Mindful delegation

Implementing a best practice approach to collaboration, instruction and delegation

- Respecting the need to provide sufficient context and information for a piece of work, ideally including the purpose and ultimate recipient.
- When instructing on a task, negotiating rather than imposing a deadline, being transparent where possible on the wider timetable, and promptly communicating timing changes which impact others.
- When being instructed on a task, being confident to flag when a deadline is unrealistic and / or unachievable.

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What we ask of MBC members

There is no one size fits all approach for adopting the Mindful Business Charter. It acts as a permissive framework rather than a prescriptive rule book - and it has been implemented in many different ways.

We ask that our members make the following broad commitments:

- **Make change** – we are asking for a commitment that organisations will take steps to promote and embed the Charter's principles.
- **Share** – reporting back and sharing learning is a key part of the MBC community experience.
- **Spread the word** - encourage other organisations to come on board.

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What you get in return

Signing the Charter represents a clear and strong commitment to the health and safety of your people.

As well as contributing to the greater good, our members benefit from:

- **Membership of a growing network of like-minded organisations** who are committed to challenging and changing the ways in which we work, to create healthier and more effective ways of working.
- **Shared learning.** Sharing of collective wisdom and thought leadership on regular group calls.
- **Help to create stronger and more collaborative relationships,** both between clients and suppliers and internally within our teams.
- **Positive profile** for stakeholders and potential clients and recruits.

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Mindful Business Charter Signatories



- **Addleshaw Goddard**
- Akin Gump
- Allen & Overy
- Allied Irish Banks
- Allwyn
- Aldermore Group
- Ashurst
- Baker McKenzie
- **Barclays**
- BCLP
- Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP
- BMO Financial Group
- Branscombe Group
- Bristows
- Brodies
- Burness Paull
- Capsticks
- Carbon Financial Partners
- Carson McDowell
- Centralis
- Charles Russell Speechlys
- City of London Corporation
- Clifford Chance
- Clyde & Co
- CMS
- Coats plc
- Cobalt Cooley
- Contract Scotland
- Coventry Building Society
- DAC Beachcroft
- Dentons
- DLA Piper
- DWF
- Eversheds Sutherland
- Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer
- Firefish
- 4 New Square Chambers
- FSCS
- Gateley
- Goldman Sachs
- Herbert Smith Freehills
- HFW
- Hill Dickenson
- Hogan Lovells
- Howden Employee Benefits & Wellbeing
- Irwin Mitchell
- JMC Legal Recruitment
- Law 365
- Linklaters
- Lloyds Banking Group
- Mastercard
- Matheson
- Michelmores
- Mills Reeve
- Morton Fraser
- Nationwide Building Society
- Network Rail
- Norton Rose Fulbright
- Osborne Clarke
- Paul Hastings
- Pantheon
- PGIM
- **Pinsent Masons**
- PLMJ
- Radiant Law
- Rapport Guest Services
- RBS
- RPC
- Sarthak Advocates & Solicitors
- Sharpe Pritchard
- Shoosmiths
- Simmons & Simmons
- Social Investment Scotland
- Squire Patton Boggs
- Stone King
- Sullivan & Cromwell
- Summit Law
- Taylor Wessing
- The SR Group
- Thomson Reuters
- TLT
- Travers Smith
- Unilever
- Uniper
- VIALEX
- Visa Europe
- Ward Hadaway
- Weightmans
- Womble Bond Dickinson
- Zebedee Capital Partners
- Zico Law

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What existing signatories say



Barclays Legal: *By sharing “non-negotiables” within the team, we’ve found that not only do we know when not to disturb each other and what can’t be cancelled, but we understand each other better.*

Addleshaw Goddard: *The MBC has very much served as a springboard to opening up internal discussions about mental health. Knowing that our clients are doing likewise, and valuing mental health in much the same way, has been imperative in engaging the team and ensuring that, whilst wellness cannot always be dealt with by a 'one size fits all' approach, we are all striving towards the same goal to create better and safer working environments for everyone.*

Pinsent Masons international office: *Law firms and clients face particularly unique challenges in Hong Kong and Asia Pacific, for instance working across multiple time zones and with other parties in different geographies, which drive home the need to ensure we embrace the principles of the Mindful Business Charter here. The Charter is not a panacea. People in our office still work very hard, but we believe there is a more efficient and effective way to work, both internally and with clients. As the name suggests, at the heart of the Charter is the call for people (including clients) to be more mindful of their impact on others and to challenge some of the unhealthy practices that we have come to see as normal.*

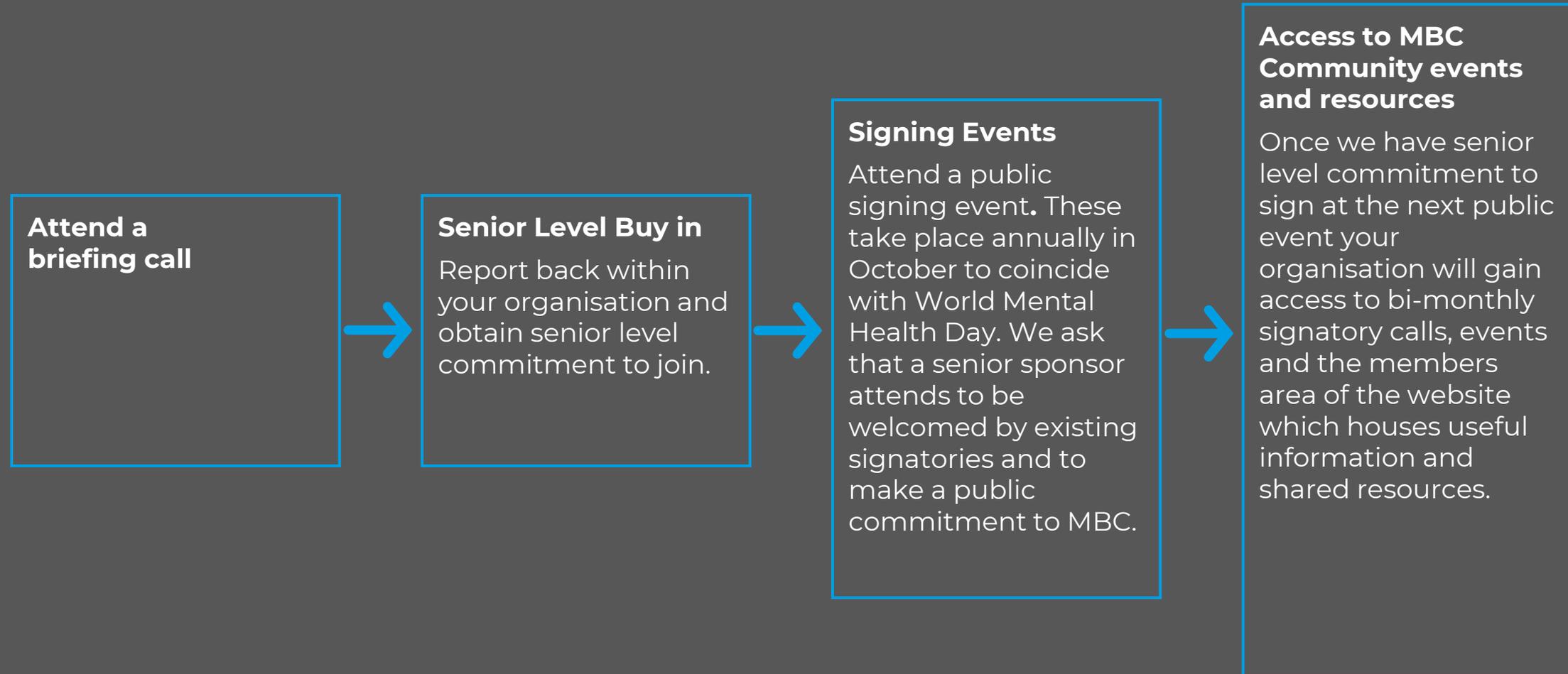
Nationwide Building Society: *We’re proud to be a signatory to the Charter. We’ve used it to develop our own protocols that reflect our role as an in-house legal and company secretarial function. We’re now better placed to work mindfully with colleagues within our business, and with those colleagues supporting us from our panel firms.*

Ashurst: *As a team, we identified the behaviours relating to email usage that were causing team members the most unnecessary stress, and together we agreed a short, practical list of email etiquette tips to try to alleviate that stress. This was a tangible and meaningful way we could start to implement the MBC and build the principles into our everyday behaviour.*

Lloyds Banking Group: *We focused on setting core principles to reduce the volume of communications and to ensure meetings had more structure. So we embedded email and meetings etiquette: all email subject lines had to be clear, concise and short, so recipients are much more aware of the purpose of the email from the subject line; all meetings have a purpose, with an agenda circulated in advance, and with thought given to the length of the meeting aiming for 25 mins or 45 mins where possible. So now we receive more focused emails, are better prepared for meetings, and have reduced the volume of communications overall.*

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Joining the Charter



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Membership fee bands

MBC is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which relies on membership income to provide a platform for the MBC community's activity and to ensure that it serves a wider public benefit.

The financial cost of poor mental health in the workplace has been comprehensively researched and documented. [The 2020 Deloitte mental health and employers report](#) found that on average employers obtain a return of £5 for every £1 invested on mental health initiatives, with higher ROI returns for large scale culture change, or organisation-wide initiatives that support large numbers of employees (£6 return for every £1 invested)

Employees	Fee (excl VAT)	MBC fee band
Not for profit/up to 25	£500	A
26-100	£1500	B
101-500	£2000	C
500+	£2500	D

Notes:

Membership bands relate to 'relevant employees' (for example where the in-house legal function of a larger organisation becomes a signatory, the headcount of that group would be used). Membership Fees are paid yearly from 1 September.

Myth busting Q&As

My team is hard working. They aren't slackers. Why should I be interested?

The Charter is relevant to anybody who interacts with or supervises anybody else, who delegates or is delegated to. All of us. It is not about working less, but about how we treat each other. It's about putting the humanity back into the workplace and into all of our interactions between each other. It's about ensuring that when things are busy people have some energy left. And when asked to work long hours or weekends people know it's needed, and they're prepared to contribute because they feel valued. It's absolutely not about slacking off and saying no to work. It's about trying to give back control to work hard in a way that works for our people. We want to retain talented people, and for our professions and business areas as a whole to remain attractive to generations in the future.

None of our clients have signed up to the MBC. How can this possibly work for us?

The Charter principles address the bilateral relationship between client and supplier, but of equal importance is how we treat each other within our organisations. If we concentrate on creating a kinder, fairer and more respectful workplace then good things will flow. When people feel more valued they are likely to be more productive and contribute more to the business.

Not another initiative? I can't cope with any more. Just let me do my job!

This is not just another initiative that is picked up and put back down again. This is about behaviours. It's not an extra thing to be done each day but about thinking more deeply about the way that we interact to each other and embedding systemic change.

Is the MBC anti-competitive?

This isn't about working less, or having people not available to respond to clients. It's about changing the manner in which we work. It's about having healthy, happy people who are more able to respond productively and effectively because they aren't operating in a state of near exhaustion and because they feel more appreciated and valued.

It's often difficult to push back on deadlines and challenge whether a task is urgent. How can we overcome this?

A key MBC principle is to be brave. To create an environment where it's safe to discuss deadlines with clients and differentiate the genuinely urgent from the artificial deadlines. The Charter provides a framework for open sensible conversations and two way discussions. It is surprising how receptive others can be to these discussions if we have the bravery to ask.

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Re-humanising the workplace

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