



## IN PERSON: MATTHEW KING

The sales director at Keylite Windows talks to **BMJ** about the company's initiative to raise awareness of mental health issues.

**K**ick It With Keylite was launched in the summer of 2021 and was a great success. So much so that the initiative has been launched again this year, aiming to raise even more awareness issues surrounding mental health.

"Our merchant partners were fantastic in supporting our Kick it With Keylite trade days last year. We had so much enjoyment watching merchants and trades kick, putt and throw a ball through our portable roof windows – which we took across the UK to any branches that wanted to get involved," King says.

The whole initiative really brought people together in such a positive way – we had a good laugh, whilst also raising much-needed funds for three children's charities. In fact, merchants helped us raise an incredible £15,000 in total last year, which we're incredibly grateful for."

This year Keylite has partnered up with Mates in Mind, a registered charity working throughout UK and Ireland to address the stigma of poor mental health within the construction sector. The charity provides clear information to employers on available support and guidance on mental health, mental illness, and mental wellbeing, and how they can address this within their organisations.

To mix it up for 2022, the company is challenging merchants, installers and trades across the industry to record themselves doing as many keepie uppies as they can, share on social, donate to the charity and nominate a 'mate in mind' to get involved using the hashtag #KeepItUp. "Our message this year is to 'keep it up' not only for the keepie uppie challenge, but also as a reminder to keep talking to each other, keep breaking the stigma, and keep being a mate – you never know who might need it," King says.

Disturbingly, suicide rates amongst construction workers are more than three times higher than the national average, averaging at a shocking two deaths per day in the UK and research shows that more than a third of construction workers live with severe levels of anxiety. Mates in Mind looks to make sense of what options and support are available to employers such as builders' merchants and construction companies wishing to promote improved mental health within their workforce. It was this that encouraged the choice of Mates in Mind as the charity for the initiative, King explains.

"At Keylite we are passionate about improving the lives of the people and the businesses we work with, and we wanted to work with a charity that would help us to make a difference within the industry. Mates in Mind will help us significantly in this movement.

"Why is promoting good mental wellbeing important to Keylite? Well, I've worked in construction all my life and love the camaraderie, fun and 'can do' attitude throughout the industry. However, I am well aware of the pressure and challenges to our mental wellbeing, and maybe we have not been as conscious of these hidden struggles faced by our colleagues around us every day.

"During the past three years, like so many, I have found things more difficult at times, and I think it's great that we have this industry forum to make people understand that it's ok to not always feel fabulous and a reminder that testing times are only temporary."



King says that Keylite also wants to 'live by the values' of this initiative, so the partnership with Mates in Mind extends across the whole organisation. "We'll be having regular meetings with the charity to ensure we can best support our teammates and colleagues when it comes to discussing and challenging mental health stigmas," he says.

Merchants can get involved by taking on the #KeepItUp challenge and by hosting Kick it With Keylite trade days. They can also help by encouraging their staff to start conversations, perhaps take a tea break together and check in on their teammates. "It's been an incredibly tough few years post-pandemic but together, we can make someone's day that little bit better," he adds.

Merchants can contact their local Keylite Area Sales Manager to set up a Kick It With Keylite pop-up event at branches across the UK, getting customers and employees involved and helping to spread awareness of the importance of mental wellbeing within the industry.

Passionate about raising as much money as possible for Mates in Mind, King says that Keylite is asking merchants to make a donation via its JustGiving page [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/kick-it-with-keylite](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/kick-it-with-keylite) and start talking about mental health in their own workplaces. **BMJ**