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## Solomons Europe – the mindfulness commitment

It has been reported in the FT this Christmas, that the Danish concept of Hygge has pushed up the price of comforting spices such as cinnamon and nutmeg for the festive season, as we in the UK, pursue the ideal of this cosy, Nordic style of living during the cold, dark and dreary winter months.

The Visit Denmark website tells us that:

*“...hygge means creating a nice, warm atmosphere and enjoying the good things in life with good people around you. The warm glow of candlelight is hygge. Friends and family – that’s hygge too. And let’s not forget the eating and drinking = preferably sitting round the table for hours on end discussing the big and small things in life. Perhaps the Danish idea of hygge explains why Danes are often considered the happiest people in the world?”*



It is true that these comforting ideals fall naturally into the Christmas period, curling up in front of a lovely fire surrounded by family, is an ideal portrayed in many a festive film...but the hygge ideal should be for life, not just for Christmas.

In these days of technology led lives, the Daily Mail reported this year that 1 in 10 people check their smart phone the second they wake up, and almost 50% of people check their smartphone at least 50

times a day, so perhaps we should be considering the concept and simplicity of Hygge as an essential way of life to help us stay happy and healthy.

This constant electronic communication bombardment can be hard to manage at times, and it is reported that stress, anxiety and depression are a UK wide epidemic costing employers an estimated £30bn a year.

As we become more aware of this issues affecting people suffering mental health problems in the UK, it is important for employers to offer supportive and beneficial policies and structures in the workplace, adapting cultures to ensure long term benefits for employees.

As part of our efforts to raise our own awareness of mental health issues in the workplace, Solomons Europe signed up to the Mindful Employer Charter in 2016. As a responsible employer, we try to support our people to achieve a healthy work life balance, and our commitment thus far has included:

- A confidential counselling service via our Westfield Health Scheme
- Participation in the GCC (now Virgin Pulse) 100 day step challenge, providing participants with information of health, nutrition, balance and sleep
- A free lake district lodge holiday to all our staff and their families each year
- Bi annual family events in spring and summer, including activities such as raft building, bush craft and orienteering

In 2017, will be embarking on a programme of training for senior managers, to further support our commitment and to raise awareness of mental health in the workplace.

We all need to take time to look after our own wellbeing now and then, and the more we can do to raise awareness of the need to care for our mental health the better. Being open and supportive in discussions about such issues is something we need to strive to achieve, and fingers crossed we have been taking steps in the right direction over the last year...

