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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Hughes Insurance Signs Charter during Mental Health Awareness Week**

Hughes Insurance is the latest employer to sign up to Northern Ireland's Mental Health Charter, highlighting its commitment to helping employees get through difficulties at work caused by mental illness.

Chief Executive of Hughes Insurance, David Egan signed the Charter during Mental Health Awareness Week (14-20 May), further cementing the company's commitment to this important issue following their partnership with mental health charity Inspire, earlier this year.

David said: "I'm very proud to be signing this Charter on behalf of Hughes Insurance. We take our duty of care for our employees very seriously and have already committed to running a number of programmes for staff via our partnership with Inspire, all of which aim to help staff maintain good mental health. Hughes is committed to continuing to support staff on the important subject of mental health."

Peter McBride CEO at Inspire commended Hughes Insurance noting "It is great to see Hughes Insurance signing the mental health charter today. They are great supporters of Change Your Mind – our mental health anti stigma campaign, as well as being partners with Inspire as the charity. This signing evidences their commitment to promoting positive mental health in their workplace and valuing the wellbeing of each staff member"

The Charter which is a joint project between the Equality Commission, Action Mental Health, Change Your Mind, Disability Action, the Mental Health Foundation, MindWise and Inspire, sets out five commitments that employers and service providers will work to deliver.

The commitments for staff with mental illness include: an open and inclusive workplace culture; promotion of equality of opportunity and challenge discrimination in the workplace; equality of opportunity in recruitment and selection; identification and provision of sources of information and support; and adoption of Every Customer Counts recommendations.

Dr Michael Wardlow, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission, said: "It's good to see a large employer like Hughes leading the way. Mental ill health is a largely hidden disability and observing the provisions of the Charter helps people recognise it, talk about it and give and receive help. This is a voluntary, long term and practical commitment that helps employers comply with – and go beyond - the law. It can have huge importance for employees to help them when they experience difficult times."