

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Effective from: FEB 2024

Next review date: FEB 2025

Introduction

Mental ill health and stress are associated with many of the leading causes of disease and disability in our society. Promoting and protecting the mental wellbeing of the workforce is important for individuals' physical health, social wellbeing, and productivity. Mental wellbeing in the workplace is relevant to all employees and everyone can contribute to improved mental wellbeing at work.

Addressing workplace mental wellbeing can help strengthen the positive, protective factors of employment, reduce risk factors for mental ill health and improve general health. It can also help promote the employment of people who have experienced mental health problems and support them once they are at work.

Important aspects of mental health and wellbeing includes providing information and raising awareness, management skills to deal with issues around mental health and stress effectively, providing a supportive work environment, offering assistance, advice, and support to anyone experiencing a mental health problem or returning to work after a period of absence due to mental health problems.

Policy Statement:

The organisation is committed to the protection and promotion of the mental health and wellbeing of all staff.

The organisation shall continuously strive to improve the mental health environment and culture of the organisation by identifying, eliminating, or minimising all harmful processes, procedures and behaviours that may cause psychological harm or illness to its employees.

The organisation shall continuously strive, as far as is reasonably practicable, to promote mental health throughout the organisation by establishing and maintaining processes that enhance mental health and wellbeing.

Policy Aim:

To provide a working environment that promotes and supports the mental health and wellbeing of all employees.

Scope:

This policy will comply with Health and Safety legislation and best practice guidelines.

This policy will be developed in accordance with existing organisational policies and procedures.

This policy will be owned at all levels of the company, developed, and implemented across all departments, evaluated, and reviewed as appropriate.

Policy Objectives

To develop a supportive culture, address factors that may negatively affect mental wellbeing, and to develop management skills.

Policy actions:

Reduce discrimination and stigma by increasing awareness and understanding

Complete an employee survey to identify mental health needs

Give employees information on and increase their awareness of mental wellbeing.

Include information about the mental health policy in the staff induction programme.

Provide opportunities for employees to look after their mental wellbeing, for example through physical activity, stress reducing activities and social events.

Promote the Five Ways to Wellbeing concept :

- **Step 1 – Connect**

Connecting with others can help us feel close to people, and valued for who we are. Being social means different things for different people – you might prefer being in quieter situations with one other person, or you might like being in big groups. You might like to connect with people online, or you might enjoy phone calls or sending letters.

Here are some ways you could make a connection today:

- If you feel comfortable, you could try speaking to someone new
- Ask how someone's weekend was, and really listen when they tell you
- Put 5 minutes aside to find out how a colleague is doing
- Give a colleague a lift to work or share the journey home with them

- **Step 2 – Get Active**

Many people find that physical activity helps them maintain positive mental health.

This doesn't have to mean running marathons or training every day at the gym. There are lots of different things you can do to be a bit more active.

Studies have shown that getting active can help you sleep better, have happier moods, and reduce feelings of stress, anxiety and racing thoughts.

Here are a few ideas for how you can get active today:

- Take the stairs rather than the lift
- Go for a walk at lunchtime



- Walk into work – maybe you could go with a colleague
- Get off the bus a stop earlier than usual and walk the final part of your journey to work
- Organise a work sporting activity
- Have a kick-about in a local park
- Do some stretches before you leave for work in the morning
- If you're in the office, walk over to someone's desk instead of calling or emailing

- **Step 3 – Take Notice**

Reminding yourself to take notice can help you to be aware of how you're feeling. It can help you understand what triggers your feelings of stress or anxiety.

Some studies have shown that savouring 'the moment' can also help you to feel more positive about life.

Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you. Here are a few ideas:

- Get a plant for your workspace
- Have a 'clear the clutter' day
- Take a different route on your journey to or from work
- Visit a new place for lunch

- **Step 4 – Learn**

We're always learning new things – often without realising it. Feeling like you're learning and developing can boost your self-esteem.

And sometimes, setting goals can help you to feel more productive and more in control of your life.

What can you learn today? Here are a few ideas:

- Find out something about your colleagues
- Sign up for a class
- Read the news or a book
- Set up a book club
- Do a crossword or Sudoku
- Research something you've always wondered about
- Learn a new word

- **Step 5 – Give**

There's been lots of research about the effects of taking part in social and community life. Some studies have shown that people who help others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Is there anything you can do today, to be kind or helpful to someone else? You could try:



- Making a cup of tea for a colleague
- Offering to help a colleague with something they're stuck on
- Introducing yourself to a new-starter, to help them feel more at ease
- Seeing if there are any volunteering initiatives open at work

Provide systems that encourage predictable working hours, reasonable workloads, and flexible working practices where appropriate.

Ensure all staff have clearly defined job descriptions, objectives and responsibilities and provide them with good management support, appropriate training, and adequate resources to do their job.

Manage conflict effectively and ensure the workplace is free from bullying and harassment, discrimination, and racism.

Establish good two-way communication to ensure staff involvement, particularly during periods of organisational change.

Ensure that employees have a clearly defined role within the organisation and a sense of control over the way their work is organised.

Ensure that job design is appropriate to the individual, with relevant training, supervision and support provided as required.

Ensure a physical environment that is supportive of mental health and wellbeing including a sound, ergonomically designed workstation or working situation with appropriate lighting, noise levels, heating, ventilation, and adequate facilities for rest breaks.

Promote and support opportunities to enhance professional development, identified through the appraisal. Provide training for designated staff in the early identification, causes and appropriate management of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, stress and change management.

To provide support for employees experiencing mental health difficulties.

Policy actions:

Ensure individuals suffering from mental health problems are treated fairly and consistently.

Manage return to work for those who have experienced mental health problems and in cases of long-term sickness absence, put in place, where possible, a phased return to work.

Give non-judgemental and pro- active support to individual staff that experience mental health problems such as counselling, CBT etc

Ensure employees are aware of the support that can be offered through occupational health department, Employee Assistance Programme (if applicable) or alternatively their own GP, or a counsellor.

Make every effort to identify suitable alternative employment, in consultation with the employee, where a return to the same job is not possible due to identified risks or other factors.



Treat all matters relating to individual employees and their mental health problems in the strictest confidence and share on a 'need to know' basis only with consent from the individual concerned.

To encourage the employment of people who have experienced mental health problems.

Policy actions:

Show a positive and enabling attitude to employees and job applicants with mental health issues. This includes having positive statements in recruitment literature.

Ensure that all staff involved in recruitment and selection are briefed on mental health issues and the Disability Discrimination Act and are trained in appropriate interview skills.

Ensure all line managers have information and training about managing mental health in the workplace.

To recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue.

Policy actions:

Adopt the principles of the HSE Stress Management Standards for employees or groups of employees that it is felt may be affected by stress

Provide training in good management practices

Provide confidential counselling and adequate resources.

Align with other relevant policies such as physical activity, alcohol, and absence management

Communication

All employees will be made aware of the mental wellbeing policy and the facilities available. This will be part of a health at work policy, which will be included in the employee handbook and employee information or induction packs.

Regular updates will be provided to all employees via their line management.


Review and monitoring

Employees participating in any of the mental wellbeing activities will be regularly asked for feedback.

The policy, status updates and evaluation reports will be circulated to management and be available on request through the workplace health champion.

The human resources department (or an individual as appropriate) will be responsible for reviewing the mental wellbeing policy and for monitoring how effectively the policy meets its aims and objectives.

The policy will be reviewed annually from implementation.

<p>Date of Issue: February 2024</p>	<p>Signed:</p> 
<p>Date of Next Review: February 2025</p>	<p>Print Name: Philip Barker</p>

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