

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY

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.

Aim of the policy

To create a workplace environment that promotes and supports the mental wellbeing of all employees.

Objectives

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

- Reduce discrimination and stigma by increasing awareness and understanding.
- Give employees information on and increase their awareness of mental wellbeing.
- Give non-judgemental and proactive support to individual staff that experience mental health problems.

- Include information about your 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.
- Set employees realistic targets that do not require them to work unreasonable hours.
- 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. This will help engage employees in their work.
- 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.

To provide support for employees experiencing mental health difficulties.

- Ensure individuals suffering from mental health problems are treated fairly and consistently.
- Ensure employees are aware of the support that can be offered through occupational health or alternatively their own GP, or a counsellor of their choice.
- In cases of long-term sickness absence, put in place, where possible, a graduated return to work.
- 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.

- 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.

- Do not make assumptions that a person with a mental health problem will be more vulnerable to workplace stress or take more time off than any other employee or job applicant.
- 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.

- Identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety.
- Provide training in good management practices.
- Provide confidential counselling and adequate resources.
- Align with other relevant policies and procedures such as Equality and Diversity, Drugs & Alcohol, Communications and Company handbook.

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.

A specific focus group will be established to take forward the actions from this policy. 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.

A mental wellbeing action plan will be maintained by the workplace health champion. The policy, status updates and evaluation reports will be circulated to management and be available on request through the workplace health champion.

The SHEQ department 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 to ensure that it remains relevant.

Further information:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/PH22>

<http://www.mind.org.uk/for-business/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>

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