

# Health and Wellbeing Policy

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## **Policy and Scope**

This policy sets out the measures that we will take to support you in maintaining your health and wellbeing at work. We are committed to creating an environment that promotes good mental health and where staff can thrive and feel supported.

Our aim is to effectively manage the physical and psychological aspects of your work and to embed wellbeing initiatives into everything we do. We recognise that an employee's performance or behaviour can be affected if they are experiencing mental ill health, and that appropriate support and adjustments should be explored before considering any formal measures such as disciplinary action.

This policy applies to all staff, including employees, temporary and agency workers, other contractors, interns, volunteers, and apprentices. This policy does not form part of any contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

## **Principles and Responsibilities**

We are responsible for ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of all our employees. We also have a duty to take reasonable care of anyone who could be affected by our work and seek to eliminate or control any risks identified. This may take the form of a formal risk assessment, which will be subject to review and will seek to:

- Manage and control the risks from work-related stress in accordance with appropriate government guidelines as in place from time to time.
- Provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement this policy, and procedure.
- Implement this policy in line with the principles of any other applicable policy giving particular regard to any employee's disability and our duty

## **Managers Responsibility**

If we know that an employee has a mental health condition or is showing signs of suffering from stress we should be, where appropriate:

- Observant to see that if an employee is having difficulties, we will try to talk to them at an early stage and ask questions in an open, exploratory, and non-judgemental way. o If they feel that they do not want to speak to us, then we will suggest that they speak to someone else, such as their GP, our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) with WeCare, and/or encourage them to participate in wellbeing initiatives.
- Monitoring workloads to ensure that they are manageable.
- Monitoring working hours to ensure that individuals work appropriate hours and take regular breaks.

- Monitoring holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Providing training, instructions, and information to employees that enable them to carry out their work without risk to their health.
- Becoming familiar with our policies and procedures that are likely to affect wellbeing, including those concerning equality, diversity and inclusion, bullying and harassment, and flexible working.
- Becoming familiar with support available through, for example, helplines, online material, occupational health services, and counselling.
- Liaising with the relevant professionals, including HR, and other medical professionals, to ensure the successful rehabilitation of any individual who is on sick leave; • consider making reasonable adjustments at work if the employee has a disability.
- Following a period of sickness absence and as part of return-to-work support, we will:
  - Discuss with the employee their return to work and reintegration into the workplace, and whether any change should be made to their duties, taking into account the available medical advice (as appropriate) and the needs of the business.
  - If an employee gets upset, talk to them, reassure them and tell them that we will give them all the help and support available. Explain that things will go at a pace that suits them. If we are meeting with them, ask if they would like someone else with them.
- Seek guidance from the employee's GP or other medical practitioner or a medical practitioner that we nominate to establish how we can help them.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of any individuals that we are supporting.

## **Employees**

We encourage all employees to be supportive of our commitment to maintaining a positive health and wellbeing culture by:

- Taking reasonable care of your own health and safety and the health and safety of the people with whom you come into contact.
- Working appropriate hours, taking regular breaks, and building healthy working habits into your day.
- Alerting managers to health, safety, and wellbeing problems affecting your work.
- Taking advantage of counselling and training opportunities.
- Seeking guidance from your line manager if you are in any doubt concerning any health and wellbeing safety issue.

## **Identifying Stress**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'.

This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress, which is likely to be detrimental to physical or mental health if it is prolonged. Stress is not in itself an illness, but it can make you ill.

If you believe you are suffering from the negative effects of stress, rather than worrying about it alone, you are encouraged to speak about it with your line manager in the first instance.

If necessary, we will carry out a stress risk assessment, which will include a review of your duties. The risk assessment will identify pressures at work that could cause high and long-lasting levels of stress, identify who could be affected by these pressures, and take appropriate steps to deal with them, such as reducing workload or transferring to other duties where appropriate. The results of the risk assessment will be communicated to those involved.

## **Mental Wellbeing**

Anyone can suffer a period of mental ill health. It can emerge suddenly, as a result of a specific event, or gradually, where it worsens over time. It can range from low mood, anxiety and depression to conditions such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia.

Some conditions can be persistent and may be classified as a disability, while others can last for a shorter period of time. Both can give the individual 'good days' and 'bad days'. While someone may be diagnosed with a mental health condition, with the right support, they can still enjoy positive mental health and working relationships.

We consider it important to better understand mental health because individuals experience and manage the symptoms differently from others. While some individuals are able to continue working with little or no disturbance to productivity, social interactions, and concentration, and find it easier to adapt, others may feel unable to manage these symptoms the same way.

You may feel that you cannot talk to your manager about your mental health and may still attend work when you are unwell, which can have an impact on yours and the team in which they work. Staff supported by their employer are more likely to feel more comfortable to stay in work or more easily return to work after a period of absence.

## **Mental Health First Aiders**

We have workplace mental health first aiders who provide initial support to employees at work experiencing a mental health crisis. Their role is to provide immediate support until professional help is received or until the crisis is resolved.

The aim of a mental health first aider is to:

- Preserve life where a person could be a danger to themselves or others.
- Alleviate suffering by providing immediate comfort and support.
- Prevent the condition from developing into a more serious problem.
- Promote the recovery of good mental health by signposting and obtaining professional support.

The role and responsibilities of the mental health first aider include:

- Being a point of contact for anyone experiencing a mental health problem.
- Identifying the signs and symptoms of mental ill health.
- Starting supportive conversations and knowing what language and questions to use.
- Listening non-judgementally and providing reassurance.
- Assessing the risk of self-harm and if the person is a danger to themselves or others.
- Signposting and encouraging professional support.
- Reducing mental health stigma at work and challenging stigma, discrimination, and bullying.
- Promoting a positive culture in the workplace.
- Calling for the appropriate emergency services if necessary.
- Maintaining confidentiality, record-keeping, and following up.

## **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**

As part of the wellbeing services that we offer, help and support is also available through WeCare. If you are an employee, you can use our EAP to speak to an independent adviser on a confidential basis about any issue that is troubling you. To access the services, download the WeCare programme app from the App Store or Google Play, or head to: [www.wecare-cl.com](http://www.wecare-cl.com). Speak to your line manager if you still need help accessing the WeCare service.

## **Requesting Support**

If you believe that your work, or some aspect of it, is putting your wellbeing at risk, you are encouraged to speak to your line manager in the first instance. If for any reason you are unable to approach your line manager, you can speak to the HR department.

We urge you to be as open as possible about any particular issues that you are experiencing or adjustments that you need to ensure that you are provided with the right level of support.

Any health-related information disclosed by you during discussions with your line manager will be treated sensitively and with confidence.

## **Data Protection**

We will process any personal data collected in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. Data collected from the point at which we become aware of the issue is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of providing the necessary support.