



Health & Wellbeing Policy

Introduction

This policy has been developed to support employee wellbeing and covers the organisation's commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health, health promotion initiatives, communication and training on the range of support available for the maintenance of mental health, and organisational commitment to handling individual issues.

Responsibilities

Organisational commitment

The organisation has legal obligations under health and safety legislation to manage risks to the health and safety of employees. In addition to reducing safety risks, this means operating the business in a way that minimises harm to employees' mental health, for example by ensuring that the demands of jobs are not unacceptable and having policies and procedures in place to support individuals experiencing mental ill health at work.

The organisation will put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing, together with appropriate training and individual support. It will also seek to foster a mentally healthy culture by incorporating these principles into line manager training and running regular initiatives to raise awareness of mental health issues at work.

Line managers

Line managers will put in place measures to minimise the risks to employee wellbeing, particularly from negative pressure at work. Managers must familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety Executive's stress management standards, and use these to mitigate psychological risks in their teams. For example, managers should ensure that employees understand their role within the team and receive the necessary information and support from managers and team members to do their job. Managers must also familiarise themselves with the organisation's policies on diversity and tackling inappropriate behaviour in order to support staff, for example on bullying and harassment issues.

In particular, line managers must ensure that they take steps to reduce the risks to employee health and wellbeing by:

- ensuring that the right people are recruited to the right jobs and that a good match is obtained between individuals recruited and job descriptions/specifications;
- keeping employees in the team up to date with developments at work and how these might affect their job and workload;
- ensuring that employees know who to approach with problems concerning their role and how to pursue issues with senior management;
- making sure jobs are designed fairly and that work is allocated appropriately between teams; and

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- ensuring that work stations are regularly assessed to ensure that they are appropriate and fit for purpose.
- Providing efficient mentoring and coaching support.

Human resources

The HR department will help in the development of organisation-wide policies and procedures to protect the wellbeing of employees, assist line managers in supporting individuals, and liaise as appropriate with occupational health and other medical professionals, with the object of helping employees to maintain good psychological health.

Occupational health

Extend support in terms of Occupational health professionals will be provided where required designed to help employees stay in work, or to return to work, after experiencing mental health problems. This will include preparing medical assessments of individuals' fitness for work following referrals from line managers and the HR department, liaising with GPs and working with individuals to help them to retain employment.

It is hoped Occupational health professionals will play a critical part in developing rehabilitation plans for employees returning to work after absences related to mental ill health, and work with GPs and line managers on designing jobs and working environments to ensure that rehabilitation is successful. Occupational health professionals will also design and implement health promotion and lifestyle behaviour management programmes, including initiatives on managing pressure and ongoing health conditions at work.

Employees

Employees must take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (for example in relation to diet, alcohol consumption and smoking) and informing the organisation if they believe work or the work environment poses a risk to their health. Any health-related information disclosed by an employee during discussions with managers, the HR department or the occupational health service is treated in confidence.

Health promotion initiatives

The organisation will promote a range of health promotion initiatives designed to raise awareness of health and lifestyle issues affecting mental health and wellbeing. HR department will have primary responsibility for leading these programmes, but line managers and employees will be expected to participate. Examples of programmes available to employees include:

- stress management;
- disability awareness;
- bullying and harassment;
- handling violence and traumatic incidents at work;
- lifestyle behaviours, with voluntary screening (for example in relation to alcohol, drugs and smoking); and
- physical activity and fitness.

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Employees will also be encouraged to establish clubs and groups designed to foster wellbeing, for example lunchtime walking or dancing clubs.

Training and communications

Line managers and employees will regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to adapt to ever-changing job demands. An examination of training needs will be particularly important prior to, and during, periods of organisational change.

Managers and employees are encouraged to participate in communication and feedback exercises, including stress audits and staff surveys. All employees are expected to be aware of the importance of effective communication. The organisation will ensure that structures exist to give employees regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.

The organisation will consider special communication media during periods of organisational change.

Occupational health support

Line managers and employees can contact the Office/HR Manager for Workplace wellbeing services that can be provided, these include:

- workstation assessments;
- pre-employment screening;
- fitness-for-work assessments;
- eye tests for users of visual display screen equipment;
- in-work screening for health risks, including for coronary heart disease;
- vaccination service;
- post-incident support;
- designing and advising on health promotion initiatives; and
- health and safety training.

If employees believe that their work, or some aspect of it, is putting their wellbeing at risk they should, in the first instance, speak to their line manager or the HR department. The discussion should cover workload and other aspects of job demands, and raise issues such as identified training needs.

A referral to the occupational health team will be made if this is considered appropriate after an employee's initial discussion with his/her manager or the HR department. Discussions between employees and the occupational health professionals are confidential, although the occupational health team is likely to provide a report on the employee's fitness to work, and any recommended adaptations to the working environment, to the HR department.

Other measures available to support employees in maintaining health and wellbeing include:

- fresh fruit and water;
- procedures for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviour (for example bullying and harassment);
- subsidised gym/sports facilities; eg. DW Fitness, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council RE:FRESH leisure/activities.

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- special leave arrangements;
- opportunities for flexible working;
- support for workers with disabilities; and
- the organisation's grievance policy.

Relationship with other policies

This employee wellbeing policy should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures covering attendance and health, including policies on work-life balance, special leave, flexible working, the management of short and long-term absence, sick pay, bullying and harassment, violence at work, equal opportunities and staff training and development.

Stress Policy

We are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. Workplace stress is a health and safety issue and we acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing the causes.

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as “the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be positive if managed correctly, and stress, which can be detrimental to health.

Symptoms of stress include: problems sleeping; dietary problems; mood swings; lethargy; fatigue; inability to concentrate; anger; anxiety; breathlessness; chest pains; palpitations; dizziness; sweating and racing heart. If you suffer from any of these symptoms, you should consult your GP.

Where appropriate, a risk assessment of stress in the workplace will be carried out by the Company in accordance with Health and Safety legislation.

The Company will provide training to managers in relation to good management practices and provide adequate resources to enable them to implement the stress policy and procedure.

The Company will not unnecessarily limit your freedom to carry out your job in your own way and will involve you in setting targets and objectives.

It is important that you maintain a good work-life balance and the Company will help you in achieving where possible.

Where appropriate, the Company will provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by work or other external factors.

If you note symptoms of stress in a colleague you should notify your supervisor or manager, who will take steps to deal with the issue in the strictest of confidence.

If you consider that you may be suffering from stress, you should raise your concerns through the Company's grievance procedure.