Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Introduction

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 Objective 1

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.

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.

Policy Objective 2

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.

Policy Objective 3

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.

Policy objective 4

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.

Consult with trade union safety representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace 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.

The works forum /Health and Safety Committee will 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.

The mental wellbeing activities will be included in an annual 'health at work audit'.
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.