



WELLBEING POLICY

A) INTRODUCTION

We understand the positive impact that healthy and engaged employees make to the success of our business and that mental health will play a significant role in an employees' state of mind.

We appreciate that individuals can experience periods - sometimes prolonged periods - of poor mental health in the same way as with physical health. We commit to providing support for employees going through mental health problems because we recognise such employees can provide a substantial contribution to the success of this Council..

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'mental health problem' includes mental health conditions that have been diagnosed by a medical professional as well as signs of stress and anxiety.

B) LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

We understand that, as a Community Council, we must comply with health and safety legislation. We undertake to create a safe workplace in which we will actively take measures to limit risks to mental health and wellbeing.

We also acknowledge our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in respect of making reasonable adjustments for employees suffering from a disability.

1) Clerk Responsibilities

Where necessary, the Clerk will invite the employee to regular private meetings and ask them to talk openly about their mental health problems. The Clerk will not make presumptions about how the mental health problem is impacting on the employee personally and professionally. Initial action will include checking how the employee is getting on at work, in the same manner as if the employee was suffering from a known physical health problem.

In a more general sense, the Clerk will strive to create an environment in which employees feel capable of approaching the Clerk to discuss their mental health.

2) Employee Responsibilities

Any support required by the employee is likely to be known by the employee themselves. We actively encourage employees to be open and honest about their mental health and to inform the Clerk of any issues at an early opportunity to allow these to be addressed. There is also an expectation on all employees to conduct themselves in a helpful and open-minded manner towards colleagues who have mental health problems.

Behaviour which is deemed by us as being harassing or bullying in nature which is either a contributory factor to an employee's poor mental health, or is in reaction to the employee's current situation, is unacceptable and will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

c) WELLBEING PLAN

1) Employee action plan

If the Council/Clerk identifies a mental health issue, the Council/Clerk will work alongside the employee to create a personal action plan that provides for proactive management of their mental health. This will support ongoing open communication between the Clerk and the employee and will result in mutually agreed steps being set in place that can be monitored on an ongoing basis.

The Clerk will ask the employee to draft the plan to ensure it meets their requirements, with medical support as necessary, and then it will be set in place with the Clerk. Any information in the plan, and the plan itself, will be kept confidential and reviewed on an ongoing basis by both the employee and the Clerk.

2) Workplace adjustments

We will endeavour to consider all reasonable workplace adjustments for any employee who is suffering from a mental health problem to ensure their situation does not create a barrier to actively contributing to the workplace. Once the adjustments are agreed, they will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are having the required effect.

3) Occupational health referral

With the employee's consent, a referral will be made to an external occupational health expert who will undertake an assessment on the employee's current condition in order to ascertain how we may provide appropriate support to the employee.

4) Managing absence and return to work

Where the employee is absent by reason of their mental health concerns, the Clerk will communicate with the employee at regular intervals during their absence as agreed with the employee. Our sickness absence policy will apply to the employee's absence as normal, subject to any reasonable adjustments in place for the employee.

Upon the employee's return from absence, a return to work meeting will take place and any return to work plan agreed between the Clerk and the employee to ensure necessary steps can be taken to support the employee to remain in work.

D) CONFIDENTIALITY

Information concerning an employee's mental health is defined as sensitive personal information. This information will only be disclosed to others where necessary.

E) TRAINING

In order to be able to provide valuable support to an employee suffering from poor mental health, the Clerk and other relevant members of staff will attend training in how to support positive mental health and how to deal with poor mental health in employees, including how to identify the signs of poor mental health in employees and how to take appropriate measures to proactively deal with it. Training will also include the taking of swift and appropriate action to discover whether the cause of the concern is work-related.

F) EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

We would like to remind employees that, if you have any worries or concerns about any aspect of your situation, you have access to a confidential 24-hour telephone counselling service on 0800 047 4097.