

Mental Health Policy

1.0 Introduction

The Trust as an employer aims to promote, as far as is reasonably practicable, a proactive approach to positive mental health and to minimise those risks to mental health which can arise in the workplace. Additionally, the Trust aims to provide a supportive working environment to those experiencing or recovering from mental ill health, and recognises that mental ill health need not be a barrier to effective working.

Providing employment or maintaining people in work is a positive way of supporting individuals who have, or are recovering from, mental ill-health. The Trust will not discriminate against people with mental ill-health in terms of employment, or access to training and promotion. A positive working environment and appropriate support at work has a significant impact on reducing stress-related sickness absence and improving long-term outcomes for employees experiencing mental health problems.

A positive working environment is essentially about good management practices, characterised by respect and value for staff, meaningful consultation, staff involvement and participation in decision-making. The Trust is committed to developing a work environment and culture where employees can be open about their mental health without fear of stigma.

2.0 Policy statement

The aim of this policy is to raise awareness of mental ill health in the workplace, clarify support systems in place for all Trust employees suffering from mental ill-health, identify the stigma associated with mental ill health and provide guidance to enable managers to manage mental ill-health in the workplace.

As an equal opportunity employer, the Trust is fully committed to improving work and career opportunities for individuals with a history of mental health problems.

3.0 The Trust's Responsibilities

The Trust regards the mental health and well-being of its employees as being crucial to the organisation as a whole. The effect of poor mental health can be seen in terms of physical and psychological ill-health and may result in the following:

- Poor performance due to poor concentration and memory problems
- Low motivation
- High anxiety
- Job dissatisfaction
- Lowered ability to handle workplace stress
- Changes in behaviour
- Negative, over-critical and paranoid thinking styles
- Poor attendance

The recognition and management of this issue is an integral part of the Trust's responsibility to its employees.

4.0 Management standards

In addition to ensuring that employees are given an understanding as to how the Trust works, the policies and procedures in place and the role they are expected to play (via initial induction), all managers and Board members should ensure that the following standards are met:

- 1. Job demands:** employees are set realistic targets that do not require them to work unreasonable hours.
- 2. Job control:** where practical, staff are given influence over how they do their jobs, have scope for varying working conditions (including flexible working) and are given opportunities to develop and fully utilise their skills.
- 3. Job role:** all staff have clearly defined objectives and responsibilities and are provided with good regular management support (Staff Appraisals), appropriate training and adequate resources to do their job.
- 4. Communication:** there is effective two-way communication enabling all staff to be involved in decision making and planning, especially during periods of organisational change (e.g. during one to one meetings). Managers should ensure there are processes in place for regular 2-way feedback such as the use of regular supervisory or workload meetings, team meetings and Appraisal discussions either in person or by phone.
- 5. Job support:** employees are offered regular supervision. Line manager guidance on dealing with interpersonal conflict, including an agreed grievance procedure and proper investigation of complaints, is available in the Grievance Procedure, which is detailed in all staff contracts. There is also a requirement for management to be aware of mental health issues/types and the support mechanisms, as outlined in this document, available

5.0 Legislation, policies and guidance

This policy has been developed in line with the following legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)
- Equalities Act 2010
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust policies and guidance:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Continuing Professional Development Policy

6.0 Risk Assessment

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers are required to undertake an assessment of the risk or potential hazards that may adversely affect the health or safety of employees. Significant hazards should wherever possible be eliminated and, where they cannot, suitable control measures put in place to minimise the risk.

It should be noted that some causes of stress such as job insecurity and occasional increases in work intensity can be difficult to control, but other known triggers can be addressed. Causes of stress that are non-work related but which may influence work should also be considered.

7.0 Support systems

Early intervention (even when the employee is still at work) is the one approach which research shows will have the most positive impact on recovery

At least one staff member who is also a trained Mental Health Representative

All employees are permitted 5 'self care' days per year, pro rata against their hours

Working hours must be respected, and staff should only contact their manager or colleagues between the hours of 8am and 6pm. This includes contact via social media, WhatsApp and other digital groups (in case of an emergency out-with office hours, staff should contact the Development Manager in the first instance, then the Chair if Development Manager is not available)

In the case of volunteers – where practicable, they will be encouraged to also follow this practice and advised that unless its an emergency, staff or a member of the Board will respond next working day.

Monthly one-to-ones with Development Manager

For new starts, a schedule of regular one-to-ones with Development Manager and a Board Member - weekly for the first 4 weeks, fortnightly for the following 4 weeks, then monthly for 6 months (followed by ongoing monthly one-to-ones with Development Manager only, as stated above)

8.0 Monitoring

This effectiveness of this policy will be monitored in terms of:

- Incidences of reported work-related mental health issues
- Information via the Breathe HR platform

9.0 Review

This policy will be reviewed after a period of six months

The review will take into account any changes to legislation and best practice, and any staff input.

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