

## Policy Brief and Purpose

Mental ill health and stress are associated with many of the leading causes of disease and disability in our society. Promoting and protecting the mental wellbeing of the workforce is important for individuals' health, wellbeing and productivity and is relevant to everyone.

Mental health is just as important as physical health. Mental illness may be detrimental to a person, as it impacts on happiness, productivity and collaboration. Mental health issues may affect companies, in the form of:

- Turnover
- Absenteeism
- Poor employee performance
- Employee substance abuse
- Work-related accidents
- Workplace violence or harassment

With this policy, we aim to support our employees and create a healthy and happy workplace.

Important aspects of mental health and wellbeing include providing information and raising awareness, management skills to deal with issues around mental health and stress effectively, providing a supportive work environment and offering assistance, advice and support to those experiencing mental health problems. We are committed to the protection and promotion of the mental health and wellbeing of all employees.

## Scope

- This policy applies to all our employees.
- This policy will comply with Health and Safety legislation and appropriate guidelines.
- This policy will be developed in accordance with existing organisational policies and procedures.
- This policy will be evaluated and reviewed as appropriate by HR.

## What are mental health issues?

Mental health issues in the workplace are any conditions that affect employees' state of mind. These conditions may include mild depression, stress and severe anxiety which may result in burnout and nervous breakdowns. Substance abuse may also perpetuate mental health issues.

Mental health problems manifest in different ways. Some employees may suffer with no physical side effects, while others may experience physical symptoms (e.g., increased blood pressure, lethargy, changes in eating habits.)

## Factors that cause mental health issues

Employees may experience mental health issues for various reasons that an employer cannot control (e.g., hereditary, family conflicts, general health.) But there are also work-related reasons for mental health problems, including:

- Job insecurity.
- Excessive pressure.
- Work-life imbalance.
- Lack of appreciation.
- Hostile workplace conditions.
- Unsatisfactory job or workload.
- Unpleasant relationships with colleagues or managers.

This policy has the full support of the management team, company directors and Unite Trade Union representatives who aim to recognise and address cases of workplace pressures that contribute to mental health issues.

## Policy Objectives

### **1. To develop a supportive culture, address factors that may negatively affect mental wellbeing, and to develop management skills.**

- Give employees information on and increase their awareness of mental wellbeing.
- Include information about the mental health support options in the employee's induction programme
- Provide opportunities for employees to look after their mental wellbeing, for example through occupational health and Westfield Health Services
- Help support management in having welfare conversations and resolving employee issues that impact on wellbeing.
- Manage conflict effectively and ensure the workplace is free from bullying and harassment, discrimination and racism and ensure people are aware of the grievance policy and informal resolution options.
- Establish good two-way communication to ensure employees involvement, particularly during periods of organisational change.
- Consider job roles and their appropriateness to the individual, with relevant training, supervision and support provided as required.

### **2. To provide support for employees experiencing mental health difficulties.**

- 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 proactive support to individual employees that experience mental health problems wherever possible.
- Ensure employees and managers are aware of the support that can be offered through occupational health department, Westfield Health counselling and our trained Mental Health First Aiders or alternatively their own GP, or a counsellor.
- To undertake risk assessments supported by health and safety where the need is identified or where identified as a recommendation from occupational health.
- 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.

### **3. To encourage the employment of people who have experienced mental health problems.**

- Show a positive and enabling attitude to employees and job applicants with mental health issues.
- Ensure that HR involved in recruitment and selection are briefed on mental health issues and related legislation and are trained in appropriate interview skills and support supervision involved in interviewing accordingly.

### **4. To recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue.**

- Consult with trade union safety representatives on proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress.
- Provide training in good management practices.
- Provide confidential counselling and adequate resources through Westfield Health and the opportunity to raise issue confidentially with a trained Mental Health First Aider
- Align with other relevant policies such as the Alcohol and Drugs Policy and Absenteeism management processes.

## **Communication**

- All employees will be made aware at induction of the mental health support available.
- Literature will be made available in communal areas across site to signpost employees suffering from mental health problems to appropriate support networks, including the availability of our trained Mental Health First Aiders.
- Updates will be provided to employees via email or a Works Notice

## Review and monitoring

The HR department will be responsible for reviewing the mental wellbeing policy and for monitoring how effectively the policy meets its aims and objectives. HR should continuously research mental health topics and evaluate the results of our policy with managers' help.

To develop, revise and establish this policy, we need everyone's help. We can all work to define mental health issues, their causes and seek or offer help when needed.

## Status of this policy

This policy does not give contractual rights to individual employees. The company reserves the right to alter any of its terms at any time although we will notify you in writing of any changes.

Signed on behalf of Wm. Lee Ltd



DATE: 29 JAN 2024

Signed on behalf of Unite the Union



DATE: 22-1-24