

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We recognise that the success of the Trust, our students and staff is reliant on everyone within our workforce, and in turn the effectiveness of our workforce is reliant on, amongst other elements, health and wellbeing at work. We recognise that when employees feel supported and valued that they feel able to achieve more and as such this Charter, which forms part of our HR strategy, sets out our approach and commitment to mental wellbeing.

2. Why is this Charter important?

- 2.1 Mental ill-health affects around 1 in 6 workers. Around 15% of people at work have an existing mental health condition and poor mental health is the leading cause of sickness absence in the UK.
- 2.2 In 2019 Mental Health was the most common reason for absence within the Trust. We recognise it can be difficult for employees to disclose that the reason for their mental ill-health is either work causal or work aggravated and therefore we combine work-related and non- work related absence to determine the proportion of absence related to mental ill-health. We recognise that in reality, this figure is likely to be higher as some employees will not wish to declare that their absence is linked to mental ill-health at all and will certificate for minor illnesses instead.

3. Our response

- 3.1 The Trust recognises that it has a key role to play in promoting and supporting the wellbeing of our employees. As such, we aim to provide clear leadership and management in relation to mental wellbeing leading to sustainable improvements in the mental health of all employees.
- 3.2 We also recognise that whilst we have calculated the effect of absenteeism due to mental ill- health, that this is a crude measure. The costs of presenteeism, by which we mean the loss of productivity when employees are at work but significantly less productive due to poor mental health, have not been taken into account as they are incalculable. To address presenteeism Trust leaders will take steps to promote a culture which values a healthy work / life balance. In developing our response, the Trust has chosen to use the Mental Health Core Standards as a framework for schools to proactively develop approaches to mental wellbeing.
- 3.3 To enable schools to discharge their responsibilities the Trust will provide training for Designated Senior Leads for mental health and will have at least one Mental Health First Aider accessible to each school / academy.

4. Aims

- 4.1 In delivering this charter our aim is to create a sense of employee wellbeing and belonging and build a culture based on shared values and trust where good wellbeing practices are integrated into day to day practices.

5. The Mental Health Core Standards

Core Standard One

Produce, implement, and communicate a mental health at work plan that encourages and promotes good mental health of all staff and an open organisational culture.

Core Standard Two

Develop mental health awareness among employees by making information, tools and support accessible.

Core Standard Three

Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling during the recruitment process and at regular intervals throughout employment, with appropriate workplace adjustments offered to employees who require them.

Core Standard Four

Provide your employees with conducive working conditions and ensure they have a healthy work / life balance and opportunities for development.



Core Standard Five

Promote effective people management to ensure all employees have a regular conversation about their health and wellbeing with their line manager, supervisor or an organisational leader and train and support line managers in effective management practices.

Core Standard Six

Routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing by understanding available data, talking to employees, and understanding risk factors.

6. Delivering the standards

We will take the following proactive steps in order to meet the Mental Health Core Standards:

The Trust will:

- Clarify our expectations of people at all levels (Appendix 1).
- Aim to create and maintain a healthy and safe environment for people at work.
- Promote key dates and activities within the mental health calendar to raise awareness.
- Recruit and train Mental Health First Aiders for all sites.
- Undertake staff surveys which include temperature tests on wellbeing.
- Undertake surveys on Work Related Stress at regular intervals
- Ensure wellbeing is on the agenda of Health and Safety Committees to enable issues to be raised and responded to at local level.
- Promote our expectations of a healthy work / life balance. For example, employees should work sensible hours, take a lunch break and not work during rest periods. Managers should lead by example.
- Provide support and training to managers to identify stress and how to approach supportive conversations with team members.
- Facilitate time for line managers to have conversations with team members
- Ensure that agreed contact is maintained during periods of absence.
- Take steps, so far as possible, to improve the work environment.
- Signpost employees to support and other mental wellbeing services (appendix 2).
- Promote our approach to positive mental health in our employee handbook which forms part of the induction process.
- Monitor workload, providing DfE resources, guidance, tools and materials to school leaders for their use to enable them to review workloads.
- Ensure that job profiles are correct and that responsibilities and the person specification are clear and reasonable. We recognise that a mismatch between a new employee and the job can result in intense stress and so we will take steps during the recruitment process to maximise an effective match between the person and the job role.
- Ensure that our shortlisting is based on the person specification and undertake competence based interviews to maximise the right person being recruited for each role.
- Promote the Trust's commitment to equality of opportunity in the recruitment process and throughout the employee lifecycle.
- Take steps to inspire confidence that a disclosure of mental health will not lead to discrimination, encouraging disclosures and demonstrating that the Trust is committed to promoting and protecting the physical and mental health of all employees.
- Make reasonable adjustments to enable employees to obtain work and remain in work.
- Uphold our commitments as a Disability Confident Employer.
- Respond promptly to an employee who discloses a mental health problem.



- Take professional Occupational Health advice on reasonable adjustments and phased return to work arrangements to enable employees to make and sustain a successful return to work following a period of absence.
- Consider adjustments or flexible working to support employees to manage their mental wellbeing.
- Ensure that communication is clear and open and delivered in a way which is manageable and responsive.
- Provide time off for special leave as set out in the Trust's policy.
- Monitor and report on absence and the reasons for absence, taking follow up action as required.
- Use exit interview data to identify areas of concern and take follow up action as required.

7. General Data Protection Regulation

- 7.1 All data within this policy will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the General Data Protection Regulation.

