

Introduction

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that work place stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing work place stress and associated illnesses.

This policy has been developed to manage its obligations to maintain the health and well being of all staff. It covers the council's commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological and physical health, health promotion initiatives, communicating and training on health issues, the range of support available for the maintenance of health, and organisational commitment to handling individual issues.

This policy will apply to all HBBC employees. Managers are responsible for implementation and the Council is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

Cause of stress (stressors) will be identified and managed. A suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk of these stressors will be undertaken. We will take all reasonable steps to reduce health and safety risks from stress in the workplace to as low a level as reasonably practicable through safe systems of work, suitable equipment and information and training. Employees will make proper use of any equipment and systems of work provided for their safety.

It is acknowledged that not all stressors are work related. As an organisation we will sensitively support staff when dealing with personal circumstances.

Any reports of stress at work will be investigated and individuals will be provided with appropriate support.

Objective

The aim of this policy is to describe the organisation's commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of employees in its broadest, holistic sense, setting out how the organisation fulfils its legal obligations, the responsibilities of different functions and specialists and the range of services available to help employees maintain health and wellbeing. The organisation recognises that wellbeing and performance are linked. Improving employees' ability to handle pressure and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improved individual and organisational performance.

Our commitment

The council has legal obligations under health and safety legislation to manage risks to the health and safety of employees. In addition to reducing safety risks, this means operating the council in a way that minimises harm to employees' mental health, for example by ensuring that the demands of jobs are not unacceptable and having policies and procedures in place to support individuals experiencing mental ill health at work.

The council will put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing, together with appropriate training and individual support. It will also seek to foster a healthy culture by incorporating these principles into line manager training and running regular initiatives to raise awareness of mental health issues at work.

Consultation of policy

The Council will ensure that adequate consultation takes place with all staff, including managers, supervisors, team leaders, human resources, trade unions, statutory safety committee on the content, implementation, monitoring and review of this policy.

Roles and responsibilities

The council will:

- The council has a legal duty of care to employees to ensure health at work, as set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The council will ensure that its policies and practices reflect this duty and review the operation of these documents at regular intervals.

Senior Leadership Team will:

- commit time and resources to making the wellbeing policy work, over the medium and long term, including enabling line managers to make wellbeing a priority
- exhibit the behaviours that the policy seeks to encourage and seek to engage all levels of the council in employee wellbeing
- embed initiatives, systems and policies throughout the organisation, to ensure that the organisation works towards a culture change

Line managers will:

- commit to ensuring the health and wellbeing of their employees
- encourage employees to participate in wellbeing initiatives; and
- maintain employee confidentiality
- monitor employees' roles to ensure that they are manageable;
- monitor employees' working hours and holiday to ensure that they work appropriate hours and take regular breaks;
- consult employees on changes that may have an effect on their health and wellbeing;
- be responsible for day-to-day absence management, including maintaining contact with absent employees and taking an active part in the case

management of employees absent with mental ill health, for example designing rehabilitation plans and suitable adjustments in conjunction with HR and the Attendance Management Framework;

- support employees sympathetically who have raised a mental health/ stress issue and to see if further support is needed by carrying out follow up meetings/ 1-2-1's
- liaise with the relevant professionals, including HR, occupational health and other medical professionals to ensure the successful rehabilitation of any employee who is on sick leave;
- become familiar with the wellbeing policy and the additional resources supporting the policy including the stress, anxiety, depression guidance and other policies that are likely to affect wellbeing, for example those relating to bullying and harassment, flexible working and access to occupational health services via HR;
- recognise how their management style can affect employee wellbeing;
- become familiar with employee-support services, for example helplines, online material, occupational health services and counselling;
- commission stress risk assessments, where appropriate, and ensure that the measures that the assessments identify are implemented;

Occupational health will:

- act in a professional manner and in compliance with the professional guidance produced by their licensing body, including keeping information confidential;
- obtain employees' informed consent where necessary;
- support the council in the case management of employees on long-term sick leave, including managing referrals, treatment and rehabilitation, in conjunction with line managers and employees;
- advise line managers on suitable adjustments and fitness for work;
- help to design health-promotion and other wellbeing activities;
- conduct risk assessments and health surveillance; and

Human Resources will:

- provide support and guidance to employees and line managers on wellbeing matters;
- monitor, evaluate and review the wellbeing policy
- source training to line managers on managing stress, building resilience among teams and how to have difficult conversations with employees about mental-health matters; and

- support employees who experience health problems and alert them to in-house and external support services.

Health & Safety will:

- if work related conduct stress specific risk assessments for managers who have identified a employee requiring support
- provide awareness training and stress reduction techniques

Employees will:

- Inform their line manager, HR (or suitable person) if they are suffering from excessive pressures or stress at work; and
- Follow appropriate systems for work laid down for their safety
- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and the health and safety of the people with whom they come into contact, including cooperating with managers on measures designed to cut work-related stress and improve wellbeing;
- alert line managers to health and safety and wellbeing problems affecting work;
- take advantage of counselling and training opportunities, including making use of the employee assistance programme and
- get involved in developing the wellbeing programme

Health promotion initiatives

The council will develop and run a range of health promotion initiatives designed to raise awareness of health and lifestyle issues mental health and wellbeing. HR will have primary responsibility for leading these programmes, but line managers and employees will be expected to participate. These programmes will be evaluated to determine their effectiveness.

The programmes will cover:

- stress management;
- disability awareness;
- bullying and harassment;
- handling violence and traumatic incidents at work;
- lifestyle behaviours, with voluntary screening (for example in relation to alcohol, drugs and smoking); and
- physical activity and fitness.

Employees will also be encouraged to establish clubs and groups designed to foster wellbeing, for example lunchtime walking or dancing clubs.

The Wellbeing Charter

The council has developed a Wellbeing Charter which is a corporate commitment to ensure that above health initiatives are delivered. The Charter will be delivered through a detailed action plan, led by the Director (Community Services).

Training and communications

Line managers and employees will regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to adapt to ever-changing job demands. An examination of training needs will be particularly important prior to, and during, periods of organisational change.

Managers and employees are encouraged to participate in communication/feedback exercises, including stress audits and staff surveys. All employees are expected to be aware of the importance of effective communication and to use the media most appropriate to the message, for example team meetings, one-to-one meetings, electronic communications and organisation-wide methods. The council will ensure that structures exist to give employees regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.

The council will consider special communication media during periods of organisational change.

Occupational health support

HR in conjunction with line managers access a comprehensive occupational health service, who are able to provide services ranging from individual health screening to the design of return-to-work plans for those rehabilitating after a period of long-term sickness absence.

Workplace wellbeing services provided by the occupational health team include:

- pre-employment screening;
- fitness-for-work assessments;
- in-work screening for health risks, including for coronary heart disease;
- vaccination service;
- post-incident support;
- designing and advising on health promotion initiatives; and

If employees believe that their work, or some aspect of it, is putting their wellbeing at risk they should, in the first instance, speak to their line manager or HR. The discussion should cover workload and other aspects of job demands, and raise issues such as identified training needs.

A referral to the occupational health team will be made if this is considered appropriate after an employee's initial discussion with his/her manager or HR. Discussions between employees and the occupational health professionals are confidential, although the occupational health team is likely to provide a report on the

employee's fitness to work, and any recommended adaptations to the working environment, to HR.

Other measures available to support employees in maintaining health and wellbeing include:

- an employee assistance programme (see appendices for details);
- procedures for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviour (for example bullying and harassment);
- special leave arrangements;
- opportunities for flexible working;
- support for workers with disabilities; and
- the organisation's grievance policy.

Relationship with other policies

This employee wellbeing policy should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures covering attendance and health, including Attendance Management Framework – sickness related, Absence Management – non sickness related, Bullying and Harassment, Flexible Working, Grievance, Employees Domestic Violence Abuse, Drug and Alcohol

Further sources of advice and information

Health and Safety

Advice on everything from hazardous substances to musculoskeletal disorders and stress can be found at the Health and safety Executive:

- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
Infoline: 0845 345 0055
www.hse.gov.uk

Equality issues

The Equality and Human Rights Commission – formerly the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality, and the Disability Rights Commission – works to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, and protect human rights.

- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
Disability Helpline (England)
Tel: 08457 622 633Textphone: 08457 622 6447

Race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief and human rights
Helpline (England)
Tel: 0845 604 6610Textphone: 0845 604 6620

EHRC Wales
Tel: 0845 6048810Textphone: 0845 6048820

EHRC Scotland
Tel: 0845 6045510Textphone: 0845 6045520

www.equalityandhumanrights.com/

Mental Health

Information and advice on a wide range of mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, phobias, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia.

- Rethink

Rethink is the largest national voluntary sector provider of mental health services with 340 services and more than 130 support groups. It helps over 48,000 people every year through its services, support groups and by providing information on mental health problems.

Helpline: 0845 456 0455

www.rethink.org

- Employer's Forum on Disability

The Employers' Forum on Disability is the world's leading employers 'organisation focused on disability as it affects business. Funded and managed by over 400 members, it aims to make it easier to recruit and retain disabled employees and to serve disabled customers.

Tel: 020 7403 3020

www.employers-forum.co.uk

- Mind

Mind is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales. It campaigns to create a better life for everyone with experience of mental distress

Tel: 020 8519 2122

www.mind.org.uk

- Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health

The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health works to improve the quality of life for people with mental health problems by influencing policy and practice in mental health and related services. It focuses on criminal justice and employment.

Tel: 020 7827 8300

www.scmh.org.uk

- Shaw TrustShaw Trust is a national charity that provides training and work opportunities for people who are disadvantaged in the labour market due to disability, ill health or other social circumstances.

Tel: 0800 085 1001

www.shaw-trust.org.uk

Drugs

•Drug scope

Drug Scope is the UK's leading independent centre of expertise on drugs. It aims to inform policy development and reduce drug-related risk.

Tel: 020 7940 7500

www.drugscope.org.uk

•Re-SolvRe-Solv is a national charity dedicated to the prevention of solvent and volatile substance abuse.

Tel: 01785 810762 (helpline)

www.re-solv.org

HIV

•National AIDS Trust (NAT)NAT is a national charity and the leading independent policy and campaigning voice on HIV and AIDS.

Tel: 020 7216 6767

www.nat.org.uk

•Terence Higgins TrustTerence Higgins Trust is the leading HIV and AIDS charity in the UK, and the largest in Europe.

Tel: 0845 1221 200 (helpline)

www.tht.org.uk

Alcohol

•Alcohol ConcernAlcohol Concern is the national agency on alcohol misuse. It works to reduce the incidence and costs of alcohol-related harm and to increase the range and quality of services available to people with alcohol-related problems.

Tel: 020 7264 0510

www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Conflict management

- The Advice Services AllianceThe Advice Services Alliance (ASA) was established in 1980, and is the umbrella organisation for independent advice services in the UK. Membership of ASA is open to national networks of independent, not-for profit advice services in the UK.
www.adrnow.co.uk

- The Scottish Mediation Network

The Scottish Mediation Network 'aims to put mediation into the main stream as a widely available and clearly understood option for resolving disputes of all kinds in Scotland'.

www.scottishmediation.org.uk

- National Mediation Helpline

run by the Civil Mediation Council, the helpline aims to explain the basic principles of mediation, answer general enquiries relating to mediation and put you in contact with one of their accredited mediation providers.

Tel: 0845 6030809

www.civilmediationcouncil.co.uk

Other useful helplines

- Samaritans

Samaritans provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide.

Helpline: 08457 909090

www.samaritans.org