

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is for Inspire Education Group (IEG) to establish, promote and maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all staff through workplace practices, and encourage staff to take responsibility for their own mental health and wellbeing.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of mental health is 'Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community'.

IEG believes that the mental health and well-being of our staff is key to organisational success and sustainability.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of IEG, including agency and casual staff.

The Policy Statement

As outlined in the Strategic Plan, we support and invest in our people and their well-being, creating an exceptional working environment where colleagues feel valued and empowered. As such, this policy is based on the following principles:

IEG will:

- Signpost targeted mental health support is as appropriate, including the Employee Assistance Programme
- Utilise the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) guidance and best practice on stress management
- Undertake risk assessments to inform actions to be taken to reduce triggers for poor mental health and wellbeing in the workplace
- Utilise Occupational Health to support the improvement of mental health and wellbeing in the workplace
- Recognise and reduce stigma around mental health needs by increasing awareness and understanding
- Ensure there is a consistent and positive approach to staff wellbeing
- Maintain effective links with local and voluntary sector mental health groups
- Provide systems that encourage predictable working hours, reasonable workloads and flexible working practices where appropriate
- Manage conflict effectively and ensure the workplace is free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and racism
- Provide appropriate training for staff on mental health

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- Provide opportunities for employees to look after their mental wellbeing through promotion of the Five Ways to Wellbeing
- Establish good two-way communication to ensure staff involvement, particularly during periods of organisational change
- Ensure that job design is appropriate to the individual, with relevant training, supervision and support provided as required
- Ensure a physical environment that is supportive of mental health and wellbeing, including a sound, ergonomically designed workstation or working situation with appropriate lighting, noise levels, heating, ventilation and adequate facilities for rest breaks
- Promote and support opportunities to enhance professional development, identified through the performance review process

Responsibility

The Group Director of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring that this policy remains compliant with statutory requirements and best practice guidelines for the Further Education Sector, and professional bodies, in conjunction with the Mental Health & Wellbeing Committee.

HR will monitor sickness absence and reasons and will report the findings, patterns and trends to the Finance & Resources and Health & Safety Committees and will take appropriate action with internal and external stakeholders. The Mental Health & Wellbeing Committee will monitor the progress of actions via the Wellbeing Implementation Plan.

The Extended Leadership Group will be responsible for ensuring that IEG managers are aware of their obligations under these procedures.

Line managers within the organisation are responsible for maintaining a good level of communication with their staff to help contribute to the health and well-being of staff.

Staff are expected to take care of their own mental health and wellbeing and are encouraged to develop a balanced and responsible approach to their professional and personal lives, and to inform their line manager, as soon as possible after diagnosis, if they are suffering from a medical condition or disability that affects or is likely to affect their ability to carry out their role.

Employees are expected to utilise the support services available and engage with any advice given.

Related Documentation

- HS001 - Health & Safety Policy
- HR010 - Flexible Working Policy
- HSE Stress Management Standards and online indicator tool
- HR013 - Staff Harassment & Bullying Policy
- HR006 - Sickness Absence Management Policy
- EDI001 - Equality & Diversity Policy
- HR012 - Professional Development Policy
- HR011 - Leave of Absence Policy
- HR010 - Flexible & Hybrid Working Policy
- IEG Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- AOC Mental Health & Wellbeing Charter
- DfE Staff Wellbeing Charter

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Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Inspire Education Group has an employee benefit designed to help all employees and agency staff deal with personal and professional problems, which could be affecting their home or work life, health and general wellbeing. Confidential support is available and, dependent on the nature of the issues, counselling or information services can be provided by qualified professionals.

Summary of Services

- 24/7 support help-line, available 365 days per year
- Specialist information:
- Legal information
- Medical information
- Consumer or civil disputes
- Tax information
- Debt and Financial Information
- Structured counselling – up to 6 sessions face to face, telephone or online
- Coverage for dependants and retirees (up to 3 months) within HMRC guidelines
- Critical incident advice (telephone)
- Health & wellbeing portal and resources, including webinars, 4-week self-help programmes, mini health checks and newsletters
- Family advice
- My Healthy Advantage app
- Managerial support and consultancy

The starting point is to contact Health Assured on their 24/7/365 phone service:

0800 030 5182 (no answer machines or separate triage team, and all calls are answered in the UK)

Or access the website:

www.healthassuredeap.co.uk

Username: Wellbeing

Password: PeteStamCare

Or Live Agent instant chat via the portal or through My Healthy Advantage app.

There is the option to self-refer, or alternatively, the line manager or HR can refer.

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Topics that EAP Supports

Health & Lifestyle

- Physical health
- Medical information
- Mental health
- Sickness absence
- Critical incidents
- Eldercare
- Rehabilitation
- Addiction
- Cancer survivorship
- Terminal illness

Legal Information

- Probate and wills
- Legal queries
- Caring for a dependent
- Debt and financial
- Buying and new home
- Separation and divorce

Work Life

- 'Leavism' and 'Presenteeism'
- Managing change
- Return to work
- Bullying and harassment
- Redeployment
- Redundancy
- Retirement
- Stress

Home Life

- Identity and LGBT
- Domestic abuse
- Discrimination
- Childcare
- Eldercare
- Dependent care
- Bereavement and loss
- Relationships and marital

This list is not exhaustive.

For Inspire Education Group staff, the Aviva confidential counselling service helpline (0117 934 0105) is also available.

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Guidance for Managers on Proactive Mental Wellbeing and Resilience

Managers should be flexible where appropriate, especially where reasonable adjustments are required for staff with mental health problems or where phased returns to work are necessary following stress related absence.

Reasonable adjustments would depend on the circumstances and service needs, but may include:

- A temporary change to the starting and finishing times
- Temporary adjustment in working duties
- Additional support and coaching
- More flexible working arrangements
- More regular supervision
- Be aware of employees' learning and development needs (especially at times of change)

If having undertaken the above, problems continue, managers should:

- Maintain good communication at all times (face to face wherever possible)
- Use positive feedback (negative should remain constructive)
- Monitor and review workload and working time
- Manage poor performance and attendance effectively in order to prevent unnecessary pressures
- Be clear about the role, expectations and responsibilities
- Refer to Occupational Health as soon as possible
- Be consistent in their approach and use the HSE indicator tool to assist with assessment

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/>

Managers should seek guidance from HR if required, who will signpost to internal and external support and to the relevant policies to support improvement, potentially to include a Health & Safety Risk Assessment based on the HSE Stress Management Standards.

HSE Stress Management Standards

The HSE management standards can be used as a framework for understanding and establishing the root cause of stress at work.

Demands

Includes issues like workload, work patterns, and the work environment.

The Standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

What should be happening/States to be achieved:

- The organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work
- People's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands
- Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees, and employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed

Control

How much say the person has in the way they do their work:

The Standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

What should be happening/States to be achieved:

- Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work
- Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work
- Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work
- The organisation encourages employees to develop their skills
- Employees have a say over when breaks can be taken
- Employees are consulted over their work patterns

Support

Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

The Standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors, and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

What should be happening/States to be achieved:

- The organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support employees

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- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues
- Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it
- Employees know how to access the required resources to do their job
- Employees receive regular and constructive feedback

Relationships

Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

The Standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns
What should be happening/States to be achieved?
- The organisation promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness
- Employees share information relevant to their work
- The organisation has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour

Role

Whether people understand their role within the organisation, and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.

The Standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.
What should be happening/States to be achieved?
- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible
- The organisation provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities
- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon employees are clear
- Systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities

Change

How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

The Standard is that:

- Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.
What should be happening/States to be achieved?
- The organisation provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes
- The organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals
- Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs
- Employees are aware of timetables for changes
- Employees have access to relevant support during changes

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Commitment to Supporting Employees Suffering with Menopause

IEG recognises it is good practice to have a commitment to supporting our staff experiencing menopause related symptoms. We provide training and resources to help raise awareness and understanding of menopausal symptoms and encourage employees to discuss their own symptoms.

Discrimination

IEG also ensures that employees experiencing the menopause are not indirectly discriminated against. For example, a requirement to wear a uniform made of uncomfortable, synthetic fabric could indirectly discriminate against an employee experiencing regular menopausal hot flushes on grounds of disability, sex and age.

Reasonable Adjustments

The menopause can, depending on the severity of the symptoms, amount to a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. IEG will ensure that we do not treat employees less favourably than others as a result of a disability and recognise we must also make reasonable adjustments as required to ensure that disabled employees are not disadvantaged as a result of their disability.

Temperature Control

IEG strives to achieve a comfortable working temperature for employees. We will allow flexibility within its dress code where reasonable. There are air conditioning systems in operation in the building where possible, chilled water is provided on each floor, and desk fans will be provided upon request.

Flexible Working

IEG recognises that difficulty sleeping is a common symptom of the menopause. To reflect this, as well as the impact of other common symptoms, we aim to facilitate flexible working wherever possible. Requests for flexible working could include asking for:

- A change to the pattern of hours worked
- Permission to perform work from home (see Flexible and Hybrid Working Policy)
- A reduction in working hours or more frequent breaks

Employees should discuss such requests with their line manager and HR. Depending on the circumstances, requests may be approved on a permanent or temporary basis.

Health and Safety

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IEG has a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all our employees. IEG will consider whether or not a risk assessment is necessary to identify how working conditions could affect those experiencing the menopause in the workplace.