

## Mental Health Charter

### 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.

Review cycle:	Annually
Next review due:	February 2022
Policy owner	Head of HR
Equality Analysis completed:	January 2020

## Responsibilities and expectations

### Senior Leaders across the Trust

Senior Leaders are accountable for creating a culture which enables employees to feel comfortable at work and able to ask for help when they need it. Where help is needed, they are responsible for ensuring action is taken, progress is monitored, and support is updated as required. We recognise the value of early intervention and Senior Leaders may engage support from the Central HR team at the earliest opportunity.

Senior Leaders are responsible for promoting mental health and leading by example, by which we mean:

- Behaving in a way which promotes a healthy work-life balance, for example taking and encouraging staff to take lunch-breaks and working healthy hours.
- Ensuring that presenteeism is tackled and does not become the norm.
- Talking openly about mental ill-health recognising that bringing this into common language lessens the sense of it being a taboo subject.
- Listening to and responding to employees, including putting steps in place to meaningfully consult about proposed changes to work or working arrangements.

### Line Managers

We recognise that good line management lies at the heart of effective wellbeing. On a day to day basis managers are responsible for their team's mental health, which means noting mental wellness continually through a range of methods including team meetings, formal and informal conversations and formal reviews, seeking support and taking action when required.

We recognise that starting a new job can be unsettling and is a pressure point which causes anxiety for most people. Furthermore, when employees are not provided with information, support and guidance to understand expectations placed upon them, this can trigger mental ill-health. To avoid this situation arising all managers are responsible for ensuring that new employees, or those change roles, receive an effective induction into their role.

### The Central Human Resources Team

The Trust's HR team are responsible for providing advice and support to managers and employees and leading on the development of wellbeing across the Trust. Responsibilities also extend to monitoring absence, taking appropriate action and liaising with Occupational Health to obtain guidance, advice and support.

### Mental Health First Aiders

Mental Health First Aiders act as a point of contact for anyone who is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. Mental Health First Aiders are responsible for listening and signposting.

### All employees

Everyone has a responsibility to be a role model for a healthy work-life balance, irrespective of seniority, and as such should behave as an exemplar to others. Where employees are experiencing difficulties, they should ask for help, raise concerns and access support

## Appendix 2

**Support and other services****Mind**

Mind provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem and they campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding. Mind offer a range of services and advice including:

The Mind Infoline provides information on types of mental health problems, where to get help, medication and alternative treatments and advocacy. Lines are open 9am- 6pm Monday to Friday 0300 123 3393. [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk).

The Mind Legal Line provides legal information and general advice on the law related to mental health, mental capacity, community care, human rights and equality related mental health issues. Lines are open 9am -6pm Monday to Friday 0300 466 6463. [Legal@mind.org.uk](mailto:Legal@mind.org.uk)

The Mind Website contains information on types of mental health problems, drugs and treatments, helping others, legal rights, tips for everyday living, guides to support and services. [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

**Samaritans**

Samaritans is a charity dedicated to reducing feelings of isolation and disconnection that can lead to suicide. Samaritans are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 116 123. [Jo@samaritans.org](mailto:Jo@samaritans.org). [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org).

**Employee Assistance Programme**

The Trust has contracted with Health Assured to provide all employees with free access to an enhanced Employee Assistance Programme. Access is free and confidential and includes telephone and on-line support services. 0800 030 5182. [www.healthassuredeap.com](http://www.healthassuredeap.com)

Username: Two

Password: Counties

Health Assured on-line services also provide webinars and information on a range of subjects including mental resilience, supporting mental health, stress management, introduction to mental health first aid and reducing the stigma of mental illness.

**Education Support Partnership**

A UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of education staff in schools, colleges and universities. Call 08000 562 561. [www.educationsupport.org.uk](http://www.educationsupport.org.uk)

**NHS 111**

NHS 111 can help if you have an urgent medical problem and you are unsure what to do. Call 111. [111.nhs.uk](http://111.nhs.uk)

**ELEfriends**

Elefriends is an online peer support community where you can be yourself providing a safe place to listen, share and be heard. [www.Elefriends.org.uk](http://www.Elefriends.org.uk)

**Occupational Health**

Referrals to an Occupational Health Advisor are available, in confidence, via the central HR team.

**Mental Health Foundation**

The Foundation is a website that includes podcasts, videos and tools to test levels of positive mental health and information about getting help. [www.mentalhealth.org](http://www.mentalhealth.org)