## 

**SMALL BUSINESS GUIDES:**

**Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

Our Company recognises the benefits to business performance that healthy, safe, motivated and focused employees bring and is committed to supporting employees who are experiencing mental health problems to cope and recover. These problems are frequently complex and may come from mental health distress, mental health disorder or mental health illness and can include early signs of anxiety and stress as well as medically diagnosed conditions such as depression, schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

This Policy has been developed to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of employees and to comply with relevant legislation. The Company aims to ensure mental health is treated in the same way as physical health and aims to promote a culture that is supportive, flexible and non-judgmental to colleagues facing problems with mental health.

The Company is committed to providing a working environment and management practices which promote employee wellbeing and good mental and physical health. The Company also acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing the causes of workplace stress where possible.

### **Responsibilities**

The Directors have overall responsibility for the implementation, maintenance and review of this Policy.

Managers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this Policy and for dealing with issues which arise and are related to possible mental health issues. They are responsible for ensuring all their employees are aware of this Policy.

The Company encourages employees to be as open as possible about mental health matters and raise any problems with managers at an early stage. If applicable and with the agreement of an employee, managers may also involve occupational health advisers to support individuals.

Employees must also ensure that their behaviour and/or actions do not amount to discrimination in any way i.e. they do not harass, abuse or intimidate others, nor support those who might seek to do so. Serious breaches of this Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

### **Assistance**

The Company recognises that many of the factors affecting mental health are outside its control, but it will monitor workloads (including hours worked and overtime), employee involvement, employee communication, communication access out-of-hours, employee engagement, the physical environment and encourage employees to take their full holiday entitlement, as well as provide appropriate training and education regarding mental and physical health and wellbeing.

As many people are able to manage their mental health and perform their role to a high standard, the Company will not make assumptions about what effect a mental health condition might have on an individual’s performance. However, where a problem has been brought to the Company’s attention, managers will be encouraged to establish an open dialogue with individuals to gain trust and understanding, as well as seek occupational health support where appropriate. An outcome may be the development of a tailored confidential action plan to help proactively manage an individual’s mental health at work, including actions and behaviours that support their mental wellbeing and/or workplace adjustments such as flexible working and the temporary or permanent change to working hours, patterns or locations.

If an employee’s ill health means that they have to take time off work to recover, their manager will be proactive and maintain appropriate contact. Their manager will also take an active role in supporting their return to work, which may include a structured phased return.

### **Confidentiality**

Information regarding mental health will be classed as special category personal information and, as such, will be shared with as few people as possible. If the Company is required to disclose information about an individual to other relevant third parties, the individual will always be asked to give consent before any information is passed on. Information will be kept secure at all times and individuals will be kept fully informed regarding its processing and retention.

### **Training and Education**

The Company will, where appropriate, provide educational and training initiatives to raise awareness of both mental and physical health and associated wellbeing issues.

If you would like help with implementing this Policy or want to discuss how to introduce other initiatives to support the Policy, call me on: 01952 246612 or email: [kay@kayhealdhr.co.uk](mailto:kay@kayhealdhr.co.uk)

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