

Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy

Reference: GN32

Effective date: 1 January 2015

Page no: 1 of 4

Approved: 7 June 2022

Last revision date: 9 May 22

Next revision date: June 2024



Introduction

Windmill Hill City Farm recognises that mental health is as important as physical health, acknowledges that, on average, one in four people will experience a mental health difficulty in the course of a year; and that such problems can cause real and lasting damage, both to the individual and to the community. The City Farm also recognises that the majority of people who experience mental health difficulties can overcome them or learn to live with them especially if they are supported early on.

This policy applies to staff and aims to ensure that they feel supported in their work. Accompanying this policy are sets of guidance notes offering practical advice to all staff.

Policy

It is the policy of Windmill Hill City Farm to:

- a. promote mental health and wellbeing through its management policies, support services, information networks and regular health promotion campaigns (including alcohol awareness, diet, exercise, self-management), and by liaising appropriately with external agencies;
- b. prevent, so far as is practicable, those circumstances detrimental to mental health and wellbeing;
- c. provide an environment in which staff who have mental health difficulties receive suitable support and adjustments to their work circumstances to allow them to achieve their fullest potential.

The purpose of the policy

The policy

- a. supports the effectiveness of its staff in the services which it provides;
- b. seeks to enhance the ability of employees to benefit from those provisions;
- c. seeks to prevent the unwanted development that the response to one individual's mental health difficulty significantly affects other people's mental health. For example, a member of staff who has to deal with a colleague who has mental health difficulties may find that personally distressing and disruptive to other commitments. The Farm's policy is to help individuals to respond successfully to those difficulties.

Definitions and terminologies

The term "mental health difficulties" is one which encompasses a wide range of experiences which affect an individual's ability to balance his/her life. The difficulties can range from stress and anxiety through to serious mental health conditions diagnosed and treated by the health services.

Although a difficult definition to give in precise terms, it is important to avoid the use of negative terms with stigma attached which may deter staff from accessing the support required. The inappropriate use of medical terms which might mislead and label unnecessarily must be avoided.

Staff will be encouraged to respond to individual needs rather than labels.

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Interactions with other policies

This policy interacts with and refines other policies. The organisation's duty of care towards its staff is determined externally by legislation such as the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Human Rights Act (1998), Data Protection Act (1998), Disability Discrimination Act (1995).

The organisation exercises that duty of care through this policy and through the following related policies, procedures and notes for guidance:

- ◆ Health and Safety Policy – GN09
- ◆ Equality & Diversity Policy – GN06
- ◆ Respect and dignity Policy – GN29
- ◆ Complaints and Grievance Procedures – GN03 & GN08
- ◆ Sickness Absence Policy – GN19
- ◆ Managing Stress and wellbeing in the workplace Policy and procedure – GN33

While mental health and well-being issues may be relevant to the application of the above policies, the relationship between this policy and the following other policies, procedures and notes for guidance is especially important:

- ◆ Staff confidentiality
- ◆ Disability statement
- ◆ Disciplinary procedures

Staff confidentiality

While all dealings with staff are subject to confidentiality, it must be emphasised that this is often of paramount importance with regard to those experiencing mental health difficulties. However, it must also be emphasised that confidentiality may be necessarily breached in certain circumstances where the individual is deemed to be a risk either to him/herself or to other people. If there is a conflict between these two statements then it should be stressed that the safety of the individual and/or the safety of other members of our community takes precedence over confidentiality.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act defines a disability as “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities” and defines “long-term” as “12 months or more”. Certain mental health difficulties may fall under this definition and will therefore qualify as disabilities

When a member of staff discloses a long-term mental health difficulty (and, therefore, a disability) to a member of staff, this disclosure will be passed on to the Office Manager in order to facilitate support. The organisation must make reasonable adjustments in order not to disadvantage the individual. However, most cases are likely to be of shorter duration, in which case the situation will be dealt with under the Sickness Absence policy and procedures – GN19

Disciplinary Procedures

The behaviour of some individuals experiencing a mental health difficulty may be very disruptive and may contravene disciplinary codes and/or be detrimental to the wellbeing of other members of the organisation. Formal action may be suspended where an individual has declared to the Farm a mental health difficulty in order to bring to the individual's attention the effects of the behaviour, and to seek to identify suitable support to moderate that behaviour.

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Responsibility of WHCF

- ◆ promote the emphasis towards good mental health and wellbeing and consideration of this goal within all relevant aspects of its operation.
- ◆ provide central support and advisory services.
- ◆ provide training and guidance to staff.
- ◆ encourage a non-stigmatising community to enhance the effectiveness of its actions.
- ◆ monitor the effectiveness of this policy through its annual policy revision schemes.

Responsibility of staff

All staff are expected to:

- ◆ maintain a non-stigmatising environment.
- ◆ treat each member of staff with a mental health difficulty as an individual, not a problem or a condition.
- ◆ take advantage of training and information sources.
- ◆ uphold confidentiality (wherever safety is not at risk).
- ◆ recognise the limits to what they can do.

The organisation recognises that where individuals help a colleague experiencing mental health difficulties, each person has boundaries or limits to his/her knowledge, responsibilities and competence, and that these boundaries must be respected. The organisation will provide for its employees suitable advice and training on:

- ◆ identifying mental health difficulties and making initial responses to individuals;
- ◆ recognising the need to refer an individual to support services;
- ◆ accessing the organisation's support network;

Support network information:

VitaMinds: [Bristol Mental Health Services - North Somerset & South Gloucestershire \(vitahealthgroup.co.uk\)](http://www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk) works in partnership with the NHS to offer a range of short-term psychological therapies known as IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) to adults 16-years and over, who live and are registered with a GP in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. NHS service that provides group and individual support for people who are experiencing low mood and anxiety.

Richmond Fellowship – <http://www.richmondfellowship.org.uk/> based at the Farm. Supporting people with mental health issues in the work place.

Bristol Mind – <http://www.bristolmind.org.uk/>. Bristol Mind is a mental health resource for people in Bristol and surrounding areas which promotes wellbeing and recovery. Provides a wide range of advocacy services. Delivers cutting edge training courses. Offers a confidential helpline most evenings including the weekend and encourages recovery through volunteering.

Second Step: <http://www.second-step.co.uk/>. Based in Bristol and also have bases in Bath and Weston. We provide housing and support services to hundreds of people across Bristol and beyond. Our focus is on helping people find strategies to cope with their problems, to gain independence and achieve their ambitions. We work with people at their pace, helping them remain in control of their recovery journey.

Returning to work after absence: [Returning to work after absence: Absence from work - Acas](#)

Wellbeing and Healthy Eating

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Healthy eating

Healthy eating is essential for good health and contributes to positive wellbeing. Many of the leading causes of disease and disability in our society – such as obesity, coronary heart disease, diabetes, and certain forms of cancer, mental ill health and osteoporosis – are associated with poor nutritional choices.

A healthy, balanced diet contains a variety of different types of food, including: lots of fruit, vegetables; plenty of starchy foods such as wholemeal bread and wholegrain cereals; some protein-rich foods such as meat, fish, eggs and lentils; and some dairy foods. We should also be drinking about 6 to 8 glasses (1.2 litres) of water, or other fluids, every day to stop us getting dehydrated.

The workplace is an important setting in which people can increase their intake of healthy foods to benefit their health and protect against illness. A healthy, balanced diet also helps people to recover more quickly from the illnesses they may get.

The food we eat, and what we drink, not only have a physical impact on our body, but can also contribute to our mental health, resulting in improved levels of concentration, mental alertness and ability to cope with everyday stresses and strains.

We will work hard to promote healthy eating and provide healthy eating food options. We will provide fresh drinking water and suitable food preparation areas.

Wellbeing and Physical Activity

Physical activity is essential for good health and contributes to positive well-being. Many of the leading causes of disease and disability in our society – such as coronary heart disease, strokes, obesity, type 2 diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), colorectal cancer, stress, anxiety, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis and low back pain – are associated with *physical inactivity*.

For general health benefit, adults should achieve a total of at least 150 minutes a week of at least moderate intensity physical activity. Every bouts of activity of 10 minutes or more counts and we should try to be active on every day of the week building up to our 150 minutes. Any activity during leisure, working or travel counts. Physical activity includes activities such as walking, housework, cycling, gardening, dancing and housework, as well as participation in sport and formal exercise.

The workplace is an important setting in which people can increase their levels of activity to benefit their health and protect against illness. Physical activity helps people to manage stress, back pain, weight and medical conditions. Physically active employees also report less illness and recover more quickly from the illnesses they do get.

Employees engaged in physical activity initiatives have reported greater enjoyment of their work, improved concentration and mental alertness and improved cooperation and rapport with colleagues.