North East
Derbyshire
District Council

Mental Health
Framework

Introduction

Mental health problems are common. It is estimated that nationally at least one in six workers experience common mental health problems, including anxiety and depression.

Employees might not feel comfortable talking about it, because mental health can still be seen as a taboo subject. Many people feel apprehensive or confused about confronting mental health concerns at work, but there are many small and simple steps that employees can take to look after themselves, and thus make their workplace mentally healthier. There are also steps that the Council can take to make the workplace mentally healthier. This framework sets out what everyone can do to help.

What do we mean by mental health?

There are many reasons why someone's mental health could be poor at any time including:

- Home and personal factors

- Career and work factors

- Emotional factors; finance

- Physical health and social factors

It could be long term or short term. Struggling to cope with everyday life does not look or feel the same for everyone. We cannot generalise about how it'll either make an individual feel or act.

There are many signs that someone might be having mental health issues:

- Not wanting to do things they usually enjoy

- Feeling exhausted all the time

- Finding it hard to think clearly might be signs, but there are many more

If you know someone has been unwell, do not be afraid to ask how they are. They might want to talk about it, or they might not. But just letting them know they do not have to avoid the issue is important.

> *Mental health is a critical part of our wellbeing. Mental health is:*
>
> *"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 better able to make a contribution to her or his community"*

Why do we have this framework to mental health in the workplace?

There are countless statistics relating to the cost to employers from lost work days, cost to the NHS and cost to the economy as a whole. However, most important to North East Derbyshire Council is the human cost to our employees, with poor mental health having an impact on the lives of many individuals and those around them. This manifests itself in a variety of ways both at work and at home, and impacts a person's ability to manage other elements of their personal life.

By managing the physical, operational and cultural environment to support the mental health and wellbeing of employees first, the benefits to the Council's delivery of good customer service will follow.

This framework outlines North East Derbyshire Council's commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of its employees. It supports efforts to improve employee mental health and wellbeing both at work and in home life.

The Council recognises the need to create a work environment where the mental health of our employees is managed in a supportive way. We know that people's mental health does not stay the same and can be affected by different things throughout their life. This framework will apply to all North East Derbyshire Council employees.

How does the Council prioritise mental health in the workplace?

The Council will put in place a plan with processes that will lead us to make the Mental Health at Work Commitment, to change the way we all think and act about mental health in the workplace.

The Council will promote wellbeing for all employees, embedding mental health awareness in both induction and training opportunities.

The Council will tackle the causes of work related mental health problems and support all employees who are experiencing mental health problems.

This framework contains links to other organisations that might be helpful for both employees and managers. Some mental health problems will require more specialist input than the Council can offer directly. By listening and identifying these other organisations, the Council will try to help employees decide what options might be open to them.

Council's approach to supporting positive mental health

The Council has a 'duty of care' to take reasonable steps to support employees' health, safety and wellbeing. This includes:

- Making sure the working environment is safe
- Protecting staff from discrimination
- Carrying out risk assessments

A mental health issue can be considered a disability under the law if all of the following apply:

- It has a 'substantial adverse effect' on the life of an employee (for example, they regularly cannot focus on a task, or it takes them longer to do)
- It lasts at least 12 months, or is expected to

- It affects their ability to do their normal day-to-day activities (for example, interacting with people, following instructions or keeping to set working times)

A mental health issue can be considered a disability even if there are not symptoms all the time, or the symptoms are better at some times than at others.

The Council is committed to taking all reasonable steps possible to support an employee from implementing minor changes such as enabling more frequent breaks through to considering long term reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

What are the core principals of the Council's approach to mental health?

- Educating the workforce about mental health
- Creating a work environment to facilitate positive mental health
- Signposting to reliable advice and guidance

the workplace. However, it is expected that Employers will show commitment to promoting and supporting positive mental health and encouraging employees to talk to their manager and colleagues about their mental health. All Managers should know where further support is available for them and their team.

Employees are expected to be proactive in caring for their own health and wellbeing and that of the wider workforce. This includes participating in training activities regarding mental health, being respectful and kind to others and engaging in discussions with their manager. It is important employees recognise spotting the signs that they or someone they know may be experiencing mental ill health and where further advice can be obtained.

Responsibilities

Positive mental health is the responsibility of the Council, managers and employees. Employers and managers are not expected to be experts in mental health or responsible for solving every employee's concerns, particularly in relation to issues that maybe affecting an employee outside of

What support is available at the Council?

The Council has in place a range of policies and initiatives to support employees and managers in supporting their teams including:

- Employee Assistance Programme
- Supporting employees at work training
- Managing sickness absence policy
- Occupational Health service

- Employee support plans incorporating best practice from organisations such as Mind and Acas
- Counselling
- Workplace stress risk sssessments
- Health & Wellbeing framework reviewed annually
- Corporate culture encouraging team meetings, one to ones between the manager and their employees
- Mental Health First Aiders
- Flexible Working Policies
- Social and celebration events such as walking groups, awards, yoga, nutrition workshops
- Cycle to Work scheme
- Kaarps Benefits offers
- Managers toolkits on the S Drive
- Information boards
- Health & Wellbeing bulletin every two months

What resources are available to help staff become more aware of mental health issues?

Within the Council we have Mental Health First Aiders that employees may wish to speak to about issues they are experiencing themselves or in others. A list of those current Champions can be found on the S Drive or the Extranet.

The Council also has a Mental Health Working Group consisting of officers from across the council and a nominated Councillor. The Group will review progress being made to achieve against this Framework and action plan together with receiving workforce feedback on the Council's approach to mental health and wellbeing.

A list of external organisations that can help with mental health issues and understanding is at the end of this Framework and on the S Drive in the Employee Health and Wellbeing Folder or on the Work Well Notice Boards. Employees may find the list helpful if they are having problems themselves or feel it appropriate as a signpost for colleagues.

Helpful Resources

https://www.mind.org.uk/need-urgent-help/using-this-tool

https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/4663/resource1_mentally_healthy_workplacesfinal_pdf.pdf

https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-worried-about-someone-else/how-support-someone-youre-worried-about/

https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-having-difficult-time/signs-you-may-be-struggling-cope/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIi676nefZ6wIVEoFQBh3nOAJMEAAYASAAEgJml_D_BwE

https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/mental-health-problems-introduction/for-friends-family/

https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources/create-download-materials#/~/embed/resources/collection/15