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HSP XXX - Corporate Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy (Incorporating the Stress at Work Policy)

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AUTHOR	Justin Tyas
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POLICY

1. Introduction

Mental ill-health issues are common, especially depression, anxiety and those associated with misuse of alcohol and other drugs. Research indicates that one in four persons experiences some form of mental health challenges issue during a year. Throughout the course of any person's life it is highly likely that they will either develop mental ill-health or have close contact with someone who does.

Many people are often not well informed about mental health issues including about what effective treatment and support may be available. In addition, there are numerous myths and misunderstandings about mental ill-health which can reinforce the stigma associated with it.

Stigma involves negative attitude (prejudice) and discrimination refers to negative behaviour. Stigma can have several adverse effects. It may lead to people hide their difficulties from others. People often feel ashamed to discuss mental ill-health and may be reluctant to seek treatment and support. The longer people delay getting help and support, the more difficult recovery may be.

Mental ill-health and stress (excessive pressure) can be associated; the symptoms and signs of some of the more common mental ill-health conditions and stress can be similar. Stress may result in mental ill-health conditions when it is experienced over a longer time. However, mental ill-health and stress can exist independently. In practice, it can be difficult to distinguish when 'stress' turns into a '*mental ill-health problem*' and when existing mental ill-health problems become aggravated by stress at work and/or from elsewhere.

A more holistic approach to mental health is to consider it as being a continuum that can change over time and will be different from person to person. It is possible for a person with a diagnosis of mental ill-health to be coping at a point in time and experiencing positive mental health. It is equally possible for a person with no diagnosed mental illness or disorder to be experiencing mental health challenges. There are no absolutes.

2. Policy statement

The City of London Corporation (City Corporation) has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all its employees. It aims to establish a positive health and wellbeing culture that includes awareness and understanding, effective processes, and positive behaviour by staff at all levels. The City Corporation recognises that mental and physical health and wellbeing are equally important and acknowledges the potential impact that work can have on both. Well-designed work and management process / behaviours and attitudes can have a very positive impact.

Everything we do must support delivery of the Corporate Plan and our top-level outcomes include *people enjoy good health and wellbeing*. The City Corporation signed the public '*Time to Change*' pledge and committed to act to reduce mental health discrimination.

3. Purpose of the policy

This policy provides a framework within which the City Corporation will encourage and facilitate working practices and services that support employee health and wellbeing; minimise wherever possible the detrimental impact of organisational stressors on all staff and their work; and ensure that staff are appropriately supported in their workplace.

The City Corporation will

- promote health and wellbeing through its management policies and support services;
- prevent, so far as is practicable, those circumstances detrimental to health and wellbeing;
- provide a culture where all health and wellbeing issues can be discussed openly in a supportive way;
- provide a working environment free from bias and stigma, and where staff who have health difficulties receive appropriate support and consideration of reasonable adjustments to allow them to achieve their full potential;
- monitor and review indicators of organisational health and wellbeing, and to take steps to respond where issues are identified;
- seek to ensure that those who support or manage staff who are experiencing health and wellbeing issues are themselves supported as they respond to the needs of colleagues;
- improve understanding and awareness of health and wellbeing issues and the support available both within and outside of the City Corporation;
- consult with recognised trade union safety representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of mental ill-health.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all staff employed by the City Corporation. While recognising that the City Corporation has a legal obligation to manage work-related factors that could harm employees' health and wellbeing, including work-related stress, wellbeing is affected by situations at work and outside of it. As a good employer, this policy makes no explicit distinction between work-related and personal factors in supporting employee health and wellbeing. However, it is acknowledged that the City Corporation has a greater responsibility to those factors at work that may be causing or contribution to mental ill-health.

5. Definitions, terminologies and legal responsibilities

5.1 Wellbeing and mental health

Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to contribute to his or her own community. In order to avoid stigmatised terms which may deter staff from accessing the guidance and support required at work, in this policy the terms **health and wellbeing** are used as alternatives to **physical and mental health**.

5.2 The law

The City Corporation has a statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974) to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all its employees. The Act also places a general duty on the employee to co-operate with his/her employer to enable that duty to be complied with. The City Corporation will support and promote policies and practices which uphold this statutory duty and any statutory requirements made under the Act including the duty to undertake risk assessments.

5.3 Stress

Stress is a physical and psychological reaction when pressures and demands are beyond an individual's ability to cope at that time. In the workplace, it is important to distinguish between excessive pressure and demands from those that are reasonable and provide stimulating and challenging work. Much will depend on an individual's ability to cope with the pressures and demands placed upon them at that particular time, and different individuals will have differing abilities to cope.

5.4 Equality

Under the Equality Act 2010 employers have a duty not to discriminate against employees on account of their disability as defined under the Act. This involves considering reasonable adjustments to the workplace or to the way the work is done, if the existing working arrangements or physical features place the disabled person concerned at a substantial disadvantage.

6. Interactions with other policies and guidance

This Policy supports and is aligned with other City Corporation policies and guidance which offer further information to staff in relation to health and wellbeing, including but not limited to:

- Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Drugs and Alcohol Misuse Policy
- Supporting Employees with Caring Responsibilities
- Transgender Equality
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Stress Risk Assessment Guidance
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Union Recognition
- Internal Responsible Business strategy

This Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy should be read in conjunction with another key City Corporation documents including the above.

Attention is drawn to:

This policy and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Policy and Guidance While all dealings with staff are subject to the City Corporation's GDPR Policy, confidentiality is often of paramount importance to those experiencing wellbeing difficulties. However, that confidentiality may be necessarily breached where the individual is deemed to be a risk either to him/herself or to other people. The safety of the individual and/or the safety of other members of our community must take precedence over confidentiality.

This policy and the Equality and Inclusion Policies and Guidance

The City Corporation also aims to provide an inclusive, respectful and discrimination-free work environment for our staff. We will use best practice in employment in accordance with legislation to ensure that employees feel respected and able to give their best. As far as possible, we would like our workforce to be broadly representative of all sections of society.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 Responsibility of the City Corporation

The City Corporation is responsible for:

- promoting a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect;
- providing support and advisory services through the Staff Counselling, Occupational Health Service, and the Employee Assistance Programme;
- providing information on resources and services external to the City Corporation;
- ensuring that there is advice and guidance on procedures to support staff experiencing health and wellbeing issues, and their colleagues/line managers;
- ensuring that framework is in place for mental health training and development;
- encouraging a non-stigmatising work environment for all staff within the City Corporation;
- ensuring sensitivity in disclosure and maintaining confidentiality unless it is clearly unsafe to do so.

7.2 Responsibility of Chief Officers, Assistants Directors, Head Teachers, Bursars and other Senior Officers.

The Chief Officers and other senior Officers are responsible for ensuring that health and safety issues reported to them, as senior line managers, are addressed at the appropriate level and in a timely manner. In the day-to-day management of health and safety matters within the various, departments, divisions or institutions, the responsibility lies with the senior operational manager (e.g. in a school, it is Bursar, in a division it is the Assistant Director). Tasks can be delegated; responsibility cannot.

7.3 The responsibility of managers

Managers are responsible for:

- risk assessing work-related stressors within their area of responsibility
- providing staff with wellbeing awareness information;
- defining clear roles for employees and ensuring that the employees are competent to undertake their roles;
- treating team members with consideration and dignity, and supporting steps taken to promote a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect;
- ensuring that any member of their staff who is affected by health and wellbeing issues is appropriately and sensitively supported;
- ensure that they are aware of guidance, policy and available support and advisory services in relation to health and wellbeing;

- undergo the City Corporation's mandatory mental health awareness training;
- ensure that they, and appropriate members of their staff, attend training on health and wellbeing;
- encouraging staff to participate in events and initiatives undertaken by the City Corporation to promote wellbeing;
- supporting and encouraging flexible working practices wherever practical to do so;
- take appropriate action where the performance and/or behaviour of a staff member may be causing distress to their colleagues

7.4 Responsibilities of all staff

All employees have a responsibility to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions. This includes:

- taking responsibility for their own health and wellbeing;
- informing their manager of health and wellbeing difficulties that affects them at work so that appropriate support can be put in place;
- raising concerns with their manager about work-place pressures and asking for help;
- participating in appraisals and responding to training and development opportunities;
- treating all team members with consideration and dignity and supporting steps taken to promote a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect;
- contributing towards a non-stigmatising culture;
- upholding confidentiality (wherever safety is not compromised);
- supporting peers within appropriate limits and boundaries.

7.5 Responsibility of Human Resources

Human Resources is responsible for:

- ensuring the provision of appropriate networks to support staff;
- supporting the management of sickness absence and monitoring employee turnover;
- providing advice and guidance to managers and employees and signposting support for health and wellbeing issues;
- advising on the Occupational Health referrals process and assisting managers with considering and implementing adjustments;
- facilitating appropriate arrangements to support individuals experiencing health and wellbeing issues; and their managers;
- supporting managers experiencing problems with employee performance and attendance;
- collating management information on sickness absence for the Sickness Advisory Group (SAG); and facilitating action where issues are identified;
- providing mental health awareness and prevention courses via the Corporate training programme.

7.6 Responsibility of the Health Safety and Wellbeing Team

The Health Safety and Wellbeing Manager is responsible for:

- providing guidance on risk assessments;
- conducting audits on the management mental health / stress through the audit programme;
- ensuring the H&S and Wellbeing Consultative Committee provides opportunities for discussion of health and wellbeing issues;
- Implementing and embedding mental health awareness training for all managers;
- Developing a Wellbeing Workplace Action Plan in consultation with other stakeholders through the CityWell programme;

- Developing a network of Mental Health First Aiders and Wellbeing Ambassadors.

7.8 Responsibility of Occupational Health

The Occupational Health Service is responsible for:

- Providing advice at recruitment regarding fitness to work and reasonable adjustments;
- Advice in relation to return to work following ill health or injury;
- Advice on maximising attendance including lifestyle advice;
- Facilitating referral to in house rehabilitation and external support networks;
- Offering timely appointments for work related health issues on management referral and providing reports on functionality and reasonable adjustments;
- Conducting statutory health surveillance and advising on statutory requirements in relation to risk assessment and the prevention of work related ill-health.

8. Monitoring & Review

The Health Safety and Wellbeing Team has lead responsibility for reviewing this policy and reporting to the Corporate Health Safety and Wellbeing and other committees as required.

This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis at no more a than three yearly intervals.

Revisions

Version	Page/ Para No	Description of change	Date Approved