



Service Instruction 0782
Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing

“An Excellent Authority”

Document Control

Description and Purpose

This document is intended to give guidance to all Service staff on Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing and the support they can expect

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19/12/2012	19/12/2013	Paul Blanchard-Flett	Paul Blanchard-Flett	Sue Coker
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Amendment History

Version	Date	Reasons for Change	Amended by

Risk Assessment (if applicable)

Date Completed	Review Date	Assessed by	Document location	Verified by(H&S)

Equalities Impact Assessment

Initial	Full	Date	Reviewed by	Document location
x		06/08/12	P Blanchard-Flett	

Civil Contingencies Impact Assessment (if applicable)

Date	Assessed by	Document location

Related Documents

Doc. Type	Ref. No.	Title	Document location
SI		Capability	

Contact

Department	Email	Telephone ext.
Occupational Health Team	occupationalhealthservices@merseyfire.gov.uk	0151 296 4917

Target audience

All MFS	Ops Crews	Fire safety	Community FS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Principal officers	Senior officers	Non uniformed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Relevant legislation (if any)

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's Positive Health and Wellbeing Policy has been developed to promote and encourage positive health and wellbeing at work.

This Service Instruction has been produced in accordance with our Mission and Values and recognises that it is the policy of the organisation to:

Promote health and wellbeing through its management policies, support services, information networks and health promotions, including alcohol awareness, healthy eating, physical activity, self management, and by liaising with external agencies such as local health providers.

Prevent, so far as is practicable, those circumstances detrimental to mental health and wellbeing

The Service recognises that mental health is as important as physical health. This Service Instruction applies to all staff employed by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service and aims to ensure that all staff feel supported in their work.

The Service aim to:

- promote good practice in both physical and mental health & wellbeing activities and share successes across the organisation
- provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices appropriate to this policy
- ensure all necessary resources are provided to enable managers to implement the organisation's agreed health & wellbeing strategy
- Identify those circumstances that may contribute to work-related stress and conduct stress risk assessments to eliminate or control the risks from such stress. These circumstances and risk assessments will be kept under regular review
- consult with relevant trade union safety representatives and other stakeholders, where appropriate, on all proposed action relating to staff wellbeing and the prevention of workplace stress
- provide confidential counselling for staff whose wellbeing is affected by either work or external factors

Responsibility of the Health, Safety and Welfare Committee

The Committee has a responsibility to:

- promote an emphasis towards good physical and mental health and wellbeing
- provide support, resources and advisory services
- produce and disseminate guidance notes to the policy
- offer practical support and guidance
- provide training to staff

- monitor the effectiveness of the policy through annual reporting

Responsibility of the Strategic Management Group

Strategic Managers will:-

- establish effective monitoring processes so as to be able evaluate the impact of the policy
- make recommendations following consultation with staff on developments and improvements to the policy
- ensure the promotion of the policy throughout the organisation
- provide support and guidance for individuals
- Allocate resources necessary to allow managers to deliver the agreed strategy on reactive response, promotion of health and wellbeing activities and health referrals for expert opinion.

In addition to the general duties of all managers, Strategic Managers influence the culture in their part of the organisation. Their specific responsibilities include:

- Setting an example by adopting and adhering to the agreed health & wellbeing strategy
- Actively promoting the principles and behaviours contributing to positive staff wellbeing
- Awareness of employees' personal circumstances and offering additional support where appropriate to members of staff experiencing risks to their wellbeing derived from outside work, e.g. bereavement or separation
- Ensuring effective communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes
- Ensuring that bullying, harassment and discrimination are not tolerated
- Referring employees (with their consent) to the Occupational Health Team or counselling services
- Working with managers to initiate staff wellbeing focus groups where appropriate
- Conducting any investigation necessary to protect staff wellbeing – with input from the most appropriate line manager in the circumstances.

Responsibility of Line Managers

All line managers and those with supervisory responsibility for other employees are required to:

- Facilitate risk assessments relating to staff wellbeing, and implement agreed findings
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties
- Ensure staff are provided where practicable with meaningful developmental opportunities
- Monitor workloads to ensure staff are not overloaded

- Monitor working hours to ensure staff are not overworking, and monitor holidays to ensure staff are taking their full entitlement
- Attend relevant training as required, including management training and health and safety training
- Ensure any potential staff wellbeing issues are communicated to a member of the Occupational Health team as soon as possible in order to secure appropriate advice and support
- Ensure effective measures are in place for monitoring all sickness absences for stress-related absence
- Ensure absence patterns are monitored, and anomalies are reported to Senior Management.
- Ensure regular contact is maintained for welfare purposes with staff absent from work due to ill health

Responsibility of Staff

All staff are expected to:

- treat each member of staff with dignity and respect
- take advantage of training and information sources
- recognise the limits to what they can do and seek advice at the earliest opportunity
- share ideas for promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace
- Raise issues of concern with their line manager, the Occupational Health team, their Health & Safety Representative or member of the Strategic Management Group.
- Accept opportunities for Occupational Health review or counselling when recommended.

Responsibility of the Occupational Health Team

Occupational Health Early Intervention

For Service staff who become unfit for work through either illness or injury the Occupational Health Team can offer early intervention to enable employees to access treatment and assistance to aid their recovery.

On receipt of referral when an employee has booked sick due to mental ill health (this is employees booking unfit for work due to stress, anxiety, depression or similar ill health issues), the Occupational Health team will take the following steps:

- Ascertain more information from the Line Manager and when appropriate make contact with the employee
- Offer relevant support services and advice
- Refer on to the Occupational Health medical team

- On advice from the Occupational Health medical team, a rehabilitative return to work/ other duties or the Psychological Support Pathway of Care may be considered

Occupational Health Services, supported by the Health and Safety Department, are responsible for the monitoring and support for employees' mental health and wellbeing.

This is done by:

- Health & Wellbeing promotion and training
- The training for managers and supervisors on Stress Risk Assessments and how to identify the early warning signs and symptoms of stress
- The introduction of an individual stress risk assessment
- The provision of Counselling Services and Employee Assistance Programme

Employees experiencing difficulties due to stress, anxiety, depression, or a similar problem may be referred to the Service Counsellor via the Occupational Health Team. Those experiencing difficulty following bereavement may also be referred to a Bereavement Counsellor.

Employees and their families living at the same address can access counselling and advice services by contacting the Service employee assistance programme at any time, all year round.

Pathway of Care

Psychological Support Pathway of Care (PSPC)

In cases considered appropriate by the Occupational Health Medical team the Service will consider placing an individual who is experiencing poor mental health on a PSPC.

An employee at any time based on their circumstances may request a referral into Occupational Health in order to be placed on a PSPC.

This Pathway of Care will seek to ensure that they access mental health services available through the NHS and the Service. The employee's role in the workplace will be modified to ensure their wellbeing.

The employee will have an individual stress risk assessment and will attend Occupational Health medical reviews at regular, initially weekly, intervals. They will be directed to seek support, and probably medication, from their General Practitioner. They shall also be directed to access the wellbeing support services such as the Employee Assistance Programme. The pastoral care services of the Service Chaplain will be offered to the employee.

There will be regular reviews with the employee to ensure they are receiving appropriate support and formal reviews will be set on an individual case basis. A return to the employee's

full duties will be determined by management based on medical advice from the Service Occupational Health medical team.

The Occupational Health team shall continue to undertake clinical checks on an employee following their time on the Pathway to ensure their continued wellbeing in the workplace.

The Service may utilise the Pathway of Care to support an employee in cases where it is considered more appropriate than utilising the capability or conduct procedures. Alternatively the employee may be placed on a Pathway of Care following a sanction to support them in their rehabilitation.

The Pathway of Care will be used on occasions to formalise the support available to an individual accessing this support. This does not preclude the possibility of formal.

The Chaplain and Chaplaincy Team

The Service Chaplain is available for staff who may be seeking assistance. It should be stressed that the Chaplain and the Chaplaincy team are there for all personnel irrespective of whether they have religious beliefs or not. The Service Chaplain is available any time to chat and listen to groups i.e. watches or crews, or individuals.

Confidentiality

While all dealings with staff are subject to the organisation's policy on confidentiality this policy is often of great importance with regard to those experiencing mental health difficulties. Confidentiality would only be breached by necessity, for example where the individual is deemed to be a risk either to him/herself, to other people or to the Authority. In cases of doubt the safety of the individual and the safety of our community take precedence over confidentiality.

Wellbeing Indicators

Experience demonstrates that organisations which adopt a positive approach to improving health and wellbeing across the organisation, may achieve substantially reduced costs associated with:

- A healthy workforce
- Low rates of accidents and injuries to Service employees
- An engaged, high performing workforce
- Low levels of absence, discipline, absenteeism and staff turnover

Appendix A

Employee Wellbeing Occupational Health Contacts:

Occupational Health Services Team Office Number	0151 296 4917
Paul Blanchard-Flett - OH Manager	0151 296 4339/ 07977 218 474
Kelly Patterson– Senior OH Officer	0151 296 4340
Nicola Hanlon – Occupational Health Officer	0151 296 4344
Wendy Stanley – Occupational Health Administration	0151 296 4338

(The Medical Team should be contacted only via the Occupational Health Services Team).

Reverend Bill Sanders - Service Chaplain	07970 669160
PPC - Freephone number (available 24/7 365) Employee Assistance Programme	0800 282 193
For calls from outside the UK	+44 (0) 1865 397 074
For deaf /hard of hearing employees please use	(Minicom) 0800 085 4739

Further Information and resources

Wellbeing Charter	www.wellbeingcharter.org.uk
NICE Public Health Guidelines on workplace Mental health	www.nice.org.uk
Mindful Employer Charter	www.mindfulemployer.net
Time2Change anti-stigma campaign	www.time-to-change.org.uk
MIND employer resources	www.mind.org.uk
Mental Health Foundation	www.mentalhealth.org.uk
Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health	www.scmh.org.uk

'Health, work and wellbeing' (Department for Work and Pensions 2005; 2008). 'Dame Carol Black's review of the health of Britain's working age population

'Working for a healthier tomorrow' (Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health 2008).

'Mental health and employment strategy' (Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health 2009).

Healthy Lives, Healthy People PH White Paper 2010 www.dh.gov.uk

This Policy shall be reviewed every 12 months to assess the requirement for updates.

Appendix B

Definition and Terminology

The term “mental health” 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.

The organisation’s duty of care towards its staff is determined externally by legislation such as

Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)

Human Rights Act (1988)

Data Protection Act (1988)

Equality Act (2010)

The Equality Act defines 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.

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