**Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

**Purpose**
At [Company Name], we are committed to promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all employees. We recognise that mental health is as important as physical health, and we aim to create an environment where employees feel valued, supported, and empowered to seek help when needed. This policy outlines our approach to fostering a culture of mental health awareness, providing accessible support, and ensuring proactive measures are taken to address mental health concerns in the workplace.

**Scope**
This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and volunteers working at [Company Name]. It includes provisions for mental health support, processes for addressing concerns, return-to-work plans after mental health absences, and responsibilities at all levels of the organisation.

### **1. Promoting Mental Health Awareness and Culture**

We aim to cultivate an inclusive and supportive work environment where mental health is discussed openly, and employees feel confident in accessing support.

* **Awareness Campaigns**: Regular mental health awareness campaigns will be conducted, including access to educational resources, seminars, and workshops on topics such as stress management, resilience, and mindfulness.
* **Ongoing Training**: Mental health awareness training will be provided for all employees and managers. This will include recognising early signs of mental health issues, handling sensitive conversations, and knowing where to direct employees for support.
* **Open Dialogue**: Employees are encouraged to communicate openly about their mental health without fear of stigma or discrimination. Managers will maintain regular check-ins with their teams, fostering a culture of openness and trust.

### **2. Mental Health Support Systems**

At [Company Name], we provide the necessary support to employees experiencing mental health challenges.

* **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**: We offer confidential counselling services, mental health support, and professional referrals through our EAP. This is available to all employees 24/7, covering both personal and work-related concerns.
* **Mental Health First Aiders**: A network of trained Mental Health First Aiders is available to offer immediate, confidential support to any employee in need.
* **Access to Occupational Health**: Employees may be referred to Occupational Health for specialist advice and support, including guidance on workplace adjustments to support mental health.
* **Wellbeing Resources**: We provide employees with access to mental health apps, relaxation techniques, and other resources as part of our ongoing commitment to mental health and wellbeing.

### **3. Encouraging a Healthy Work-Life Balance**

We recognise the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance and actively support initiatives that reduce work-related stress.

* **Flexible Working Arrangements**: Employees may request flexible working hours, remote work, or hybrid working options. We are committed to considering all reasonable requests that help employees balance personal and work commitments.
* **Managing Workloads**: Managers will work closely with employees to ensure workloads are manageable, realistic, and prioritised effectively. Clear communication around expectations and deadlines will be maintained to prevent undue stress.
* **Annual Leave Encouragement**: Employees are encouraged to take their full annual leave entitlement each year to ensure adequate rest and recovery.

### **4. Early Identification and Support for Mental Health Concerns**

Managers and employees alike are encouraged to recognise the signs of mental health challenges and take early action.

* **Signs of Concern**: Indicators such as changes in behaviour, performance, mood, or attendance may suggest an employee is struggling with mental health. Managers are responsible for approaching these situations with care and offering appropriate support.
* **Non-Judgmental Conversations**: Managers are trained to engage in compassionate, non-judgmental conversations with employees to explore any issues they may be facing and to identify suitable interventions.
* **Referral to Support Services**: Where appropriate, employees will be referred to internal or external support services, such as the EAP or Occupational Health.

### **5. Mental Health Check-Ins During Absences**

We recognise that mental health challenges may require employees to take time off work, and we are committed to supporting their recovery throughout their absence.

* **Regular Check-Ins**: For employees who are off work due to mental health reasons, regular check-ins will be scheduled with their consent. These check-ins, conducted by HR or line managers, will focus on the employee’s wellbeing and any additional support they may need.
* **Frequency**: The frequency of these check-ins will depend on the employee's preferences and needs, ensuring that they do not feel pressured.
* **Supportive Conversations**: Check-ins will prioritise the employee’s recovery and will not focus on work-related matters unless the employee is comfortable discussing them.
* **Support During Long-Term Absences**: In cases of long-term absence due to mental health, we will ensure the employee remains connected to the workplace, including updates on significant company events and any changes that may impact them upon return.

### **6. Return to Work After Mental Health Absences**

We are committed to ensuring that employees returning from mental health-related absences are supported and reintegrated into the workplace smoothly and sensitively.

* **Tailored Return to Work Plans**: Upon an employee’s return, a personalised plan will be developed in collaboration with the employee, their line manager, HR, and Occupational Health (if required). This plan may include a phased return, flexible working hours, reduced workload, or other reasonable adjustments.
* **Ongoing Support**: Following their return, employees will receive regular check-ins to ensure they continue to feel supported. Adjustments to the return-to-work plan will be made as necessary, based on feedback from the employees and managers.
* **Access to Counselling**: Employees will continue to have access to the EAP and mental health support services, ensuring that ongoing challenges can be addressed promptly.

### **7. Managing Stress and Preventing Burnout**

We recognise that workplace stress is a significant contributor to mental health issues, and we are dedicated to minimising stressors within the workplace.

* **Stress Risk Assessments**: Managers will regularly conduct stress risk assessments to identify potential workplace stressors and implement preventative measures.
* **Workload Management**: Managers are responsible for ensuring that team members have reasonable workloads and that they receive the resources and support needed to meet their objectives without undue pressure.
* **Employee Feedback**: Employees are encouraged to provide feedback on their workloads and stress levels, either directly to their manager or through anonymous channels, such as employee surveys.

### **8. Employee Responsibilities**

Employees play a key role in maintaining their own mental health and contributing to a healthy work environment:

* **Self-Care**: Employees are encouraged to take proactive steps to maintain their mental wellbeing, including using resources available through the EAP, taking regular breaks, and seeking support when needed.
* **Early Communication**: Employees should inform their line manager or HR as early as possible if they feel their mental health is being affected by work or other factors.
* **Supporting Colleagues**: Employees are encouraged to support colleagues who may be struggling with their mental health by offering kindness, understanding, and directing them to appropriate resources.

### **9. Manager Responsibilities**

Managers have a duty to support the mental health of their teams:

* **Regular Wellbeing Check-Ins**: Managers will regularly check in with team members regarding their wellbeing and create a space where employees feel comfortable raising concerns.
* **Intervention and Referral**: When signs of mental health issues are identified, managers will offer appropriate interventions and refer employees to relevant support services.
* **Fostering a Positive Work Culture**: Managers will model and encourage a positive work culture that promotes balance, reduces stress, and supports mental health.

### **10. Confidentiality**

All discussions related to an employee’s mental health will be handled with strict confidentiality. Information will only be shared with relevant parties when necessary to provide support, make reasonable adjustments, or in compliance with legal obligations.

### **11. Review and Continuous Improvement**

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, to ensure it remains effective and reflective of best practices. We will seek feedback from employees, HR, and managers to identify any areas for improvement.