

A Health and Wellbeing Policy

MTC Northwest's Health and Wellbeing at Work Policy has been developed to promote and encourage health and wellbeing at work.

The Policy is endorsed and fully supported by the Board of Directors

In accordance with our Vision and Values, it is acknowledged that staff wellbeing is of paramount importance. Wellbeing is an important factor in the job satisfaction of our staff and is therefore a management issue for MTC Northwest. This policy is designed to bring existing staff wellbeing issues to the fore, whilst seeking to create an organisational culture where negative wellbeing issues are identified, minimised and managed before they affect the wellbeing of staff. We have a clear aim to promote the positive aspects and ideas associated with health and wellbeing at work.

The issue of staff health and wellbeing at work is recognised as part of a broader approach to health promotion that involves all stakeholders associated with our organisation.

MTC Northwest has a unique set of features including its organisational culture, structures, system of operation, management practices and workplace environment, which together with staff personal lifestyle factors play a key role in the health and wellbeing of individuals and that of MTC Northwest.

We aim to:

- promote good practice in both physical and mental health & wellbeing activities and share successes across MTC Northwest
- 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 MTC Northwest's agreed health & wellbeing strategy
- identify those circumstances that may contribute to inappropriate levels of work-related stress and conduct 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 MTC Northwest

We have a responsibility to

- promote an emphasis toward good physical and mental health and wellbeing
- provide central support, resources and advisory services
- produce and disseminate guidance notes to the Policy

- offer practical step by step procedures and guidance
- provide training to staff
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy through annual reporting

Responsibility of the Senior Management Team

Our Senior 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 MTC Northwest
- 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, Senior Managers influence the culture in their part of MTC Northwest. Their specific responsibilities include:

- Setting an example as role model by adopting and adhering to the agreed health & wellbeing strategy
- Actively promoting the principles and behaviours contributing to positive staff wellbeing
- Vigilance to 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 Occupational Health Service 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.

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 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 and health and safety training
- Ensure any potential staff wellbeing issues are communicated to a member of the Senior Management 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.

Responsibility of Staff

All staff are expected to:

- treat each member of staff with dignity and respect as an individual
- take advantage of training and information sources
- uphold confidentiality (wherever safety is not at risk)
- 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, their Health & Safety Representative or member of the Senior Management Team
- Accept opportunities for occupational health review or counselling when recommended.

Policy Statement

MTC Northwest recognises that mental health is as important as physical health. This policy applies to all staff employed here and includes those working in a voluntary capacity. It aims to ensure that staff feel supported in their work.

The purpose of the Policy:

- To support the effectiveness of its staff in their duties which contributes to achieving MTC Northwest's objectives
- To seek to enhance the ability of staff to benefit from health & wellbeing solutions

It is the policy of MTC Northwest to:

- promote health and wellbeing through its management policies, support services, information networks and health promotions, including alcohol awareness, diet, exercise, self management, and by liaising with external agencies
- prevent, so far as is practicable, those circumstances detrimental to mental health and wellbeing

Confidentiality

While all dealings with staff are subject to MTC Northwest's policy on 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.

Key Indicators

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

- absenteeism
- staff turnover
- risk management
- increased staff moral, job enrichment, quality of work life
- continuous improvement of achievement
- improved productivity and overall organisational performance

Studies have shown that regular, daily light or moderate exercise is beneficial for the prevention of heart disease and other life-threatening diseases. The provision of opportunities for physical activity is one way that workplaces can contribute to promoting health and preventing illness:

There are many psycho-social factors which influence personal health and wellbeing. Mental health promotion in the workplace can prevent stress as well as promoting an understanding of mental illness. Harmonious working relationships created by effective leadership and staff involvement in decision making, together with effective administration systems, are important contributors to staff health and wellbeing. Effective administrative and professional support can assist staff to undertake their designated role with organisational purpose and direction

Appendix

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.

MTC Northwest’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)

Disability Act (2001)

Disability Discrimination Act (2005)

(The Disability Discrimination 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.

If a member of staff declares a long-term mental health difficulty (and therefore a disability) to a member of staff, this information must be passed on to the relevant manager.

Other related policies

MTC Northwest exercises that duty of care through this policy and through the following related policies and notes for guidance:

Health and Safety Policy

Employment Equality Policy

Harrasment Policy

Complaints and Grievance Procedures

Sickness/ Absence Policy

Capability Procedure (health)

Stress Management Guidance

Stress Management Guidance

Occupational Health Guidance

Job Share Policy

Confidentiality Policy

Disability Statement

Disciplinary Procedures

Whistleblowing Policy