

Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board

Policy No: 49

Health and Wellbeing

Review Dates:

Reviewed	25 th April 2023
Board Approved	13 th June 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

The Board has a duty of care requirement to look after the health and safety of employees, including their wellbeing. There are many factors that influence the health and wellbeing of staff. Understanding and overcoming these issues can result in a range of benefits for both individuals and the wider Board. This policy sets out the Board's commitment and arrangements for securing the health and wellbeing of staff.

2. POLICY AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- Provide a working environment that promotes and supports the physical health, mental health, and wellbeing of all employees.
- Raise awareness and provide guidance on issues relating to health and wellbeing.
- Encourage the adoption of a proactive approach to prevent and minimise the risks associated with poor health and wellbeing within the workforce.

3. DEFINITIONS

Health: '...a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (World Health Organisation).

Wellbeing: '...a state of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one's goals, and where one enjoys a satisfactory quality of life' (Economic and Social Research Council).

4. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010

5. EXPECTATIONS

- Line managers should be open, welcoming, and friendly. They should invite the employee to regular private meetings and ask them to talk openly about any health problems (physical and mental). The line manager should not make presumptions about how the health problem is impacting on the employee personally and professionally.

- Any support required by the employee is likely to be known by the employee themselves. The Board actively encourages employees to be open and honest about their health and wellbeing and to inform their line manager of any issues at an early opportunity, to allow these to be addressed. There is also an expectation on all the Boards' employees to conduct themselves in a helpful and open-minded manner towards colleagues who are experiencing health problems.

6. INDICATORS (MENTAL HEALTH)

To prevent mental health problems escalating, early intervention is important. In many cases, obvious indicators that an employee is suffering from a mental health problem may not be present.

However, early signs may include:

- behavioural, mood or temperament changes, especially when communicating with others
- decrease in productivity and focus
- inability to make decisions and difficulty in problem solving
- showing signs of tiredness or being withdrawn and unable to take part in hobbies in which they usually participate
- reducing intake of food or increasing intake of alcohol, cigarettes etc.

The Board has invested in the provision of Mental Health First Aid courses, for nominated Mental Health First Aiders, designed to be able to better identify potential mental health problems and direct individuals to support.

7. SUPPORT

(a) Mental Health

Mind (a mental health charity) recommends that, where a mental health issue is identified, they should work alongside the employee to create a personal wellness action plan that provides for proactive management of their mental health. This will support ongoing open communication between line managers and employees and will result in mutually agreed steps being established that can be monitored on an ongoing basis.

A wellness action plan should cover:

- actions and measures that can support the employee's mental health
- symptoms and triggers for poor mental health
- the impact mental health problems have, or could have, on the employee's performances
- any workplace support required from their line manager or colleagues
- any positive actions the employee can take when suffering from poor mental health
- a review process to ensure the workplace support is having the required effect.

To ensure the plan meets the employee's requirements, it should be drafted by the employee themselves, with medical support as necessary, and then set in place with their line manager. Any information in the plan, and the plan itself, should be kept confidential and reviewed on an ongoing basis by both the employee and their line manager.

(b) Physical Exercise and Healthy Eating

The Board encourages employees to undertake regular physical activity:

- It's medically proven that people who do regular physical activity have lower risk of coronary heart disease and stroke, type 2 diabetes, bowel cancer, breast cancer in women, early death, osteoarthritis, hip fracture, falls (among older adults), depression and dementia.
- To stay healthy, the UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines, on GOV.UK, state that adults should try to be active every day and aim to do at least 150 minutes of physical activity over a week, through a variety of activities.

The Board encourages employees to eat healthily:

- A well-balanced diet provides all the energy needed to keep active throughout the day.
- It can contribute to mental health, for example, increasing levels of concentration and the ability to cope with everyday stresses.
- The Board's office is equipped with food storage and preparation area for lunchtime meals. There is also easy access to cold water.

(c) Workplace Adjustments

The Board has a duty to make reasonable adjustments where an employee has a disability (Equality Act 2010), as a means of enabling the employee to continue to carry out their role and to support any identified disadvantage being removed.

Whilst adjustments are unique to the individual's situation, some examples include:

- Acquiring or modifying equipment – e.g., adapted keyboards or telephone
- Providing training – to use specialist equipment
- Changing location to a more accessible office
- Altering hours of work i.e., to assist with travelling
- Reduced hours
- Providing reasonable adjustment to role responsibilities
- Reasonable adjustments to premises

The employee will be consulted fully on these. Once the adjustments are agreed, they will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are having the required effect. The duty to make the adjustments is 'reasonable' so if the suggested adjustment is not viable it will not be made.

8. SOURCES OF EXTENRAL SUPPORT

- NHS Mental Health Services - <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/>
- Mind - <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/seeking-help-for-a-mental-health-problem/where-to-start/>
- Campaign against living miserably (Calm) - <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>
- Samaritans - <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>
- NHS Exercise Guidelines - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-guidelines/>
- NHS Eat Well - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>