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Mental Health in the Workplace Policy



1. INTRODUCTION

Increasing attention has been paid in recent years to the importance of promoting and maintaining mental health in the workplace. Additions to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in December 2005, clearly identifies the need to recognise all mental illnesses whether or not there has been a clinical diagnosis.

The economic costs of failing to address mental health issues in the workplace are also considerable. It is accepted that 1 in 4 people in this country will have poor mental health in any given year, that they will need additional help and support. 1 in 6 employees will have some kind of mental health problem in any one year, most of which will be depressive and anxiety disorders. Work-related stress is the second biggest occupational health problem in the UK, after back problems.

As an employer, BL Training has a responsibility to fulfil its legal obligations under statute (including Health and Safety legislation, and the Disability Discrimination Act). As part of this duty BL Training will endeavour to develop best practice in providing a suitable employment and training environment and opportunities for people with mental health problems, and in creating and sustaining a safe working environment that minimises risks to the mental health of all staff.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY

It is the responsibility of BL Training, as an employer, to identify and reduce risks to mental health arising within the workplace, and to ensure that staff members who are experiencing or recovering from mental health problems are supported and enabled to continue in employment wherever possible. Therefore, this policy aims to:

- Promote mental health and well-being for all staff employed
- Raise awareness of factors within the workplace that may adversely affect mental health
- Will support staff experiencing or recovering from mental health problems
- Provide a framework that supports the employment and training of people with a history of mental health problems

3. POLICY STATEMENT

BL Training recognises its responsibility to promote and safeguard the mental health of its employees. It also recognises that it can play a leading role in promoting fair access to employment for people with a history of mental health problems.

To that end, BL Training will:

- Aim to create and promote an organisational culture that is based on trust, support, and mutual respect, such that employees are able to freely report

difficulties with their job or mental health without fear of discrimination or reprisal.

- Take a positive approach to reducing stress and promoting good mental health, by enabling and expecting managers to act appropriately and supporting the spirit of this policy, to be vigilant in identifying any risks they may perceive that could affect the mental health and well-being in the workplace and its training environment.
- Ensure that staff members who are experiencing or recovering from mental health problems receive empathetic and constructive support.
- Positively support and encourage the appropriate employment and training of people who have had first hand experience of mental health problems.

These policy objectives will be achieved by taking action on three key areas, supported by training and development of staff, and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the policy.

4. POLICY THEMES

Creating a Safe Environment

It is well recognised that some working conditions and practices can adversely affect employees' mental health. BL Training will identify those aspects of work organisation and management, as well as environmental, social, and organisational conditions that could give rise to psychological as well as physical harm, and take action to ensure that risks to staff are minimised.

BL Training will ensure compliance with Health, Safety, and Welfare regulations and will ensure that:

- We promote a culture of respect and dignity for everyone, ensuring staff are trained to recognise and be sensitive to mental distress or disability in others
- We can demonstrate that they take positive steps to ensure that people with mental health problems are not disadvantaged, in relation to the availability of their services
- We can demonstrate that no one is refused employment on the grounds of mental illness or disability
- The induction process provides new employees with an understanding of the organisation, the policies and procedures that are in place, and their role in ensuring that these are adhered to
- We clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and are provided with good management support, appropriate opportunities for training/personal development, and adequate resources to do their job
- Job roles are designed in such a way as to ensure that employees are set achievable targets that do not require them to work unreasonable hours, or carry out tasks or roles that they have not been trained to carry out

- Support employees if they have a problem and make reasonable adjustments to the work environment for people with mental health problems to enable them to carry on working
- Employees are able to influence how they do their jobs, with scope for varying conditions, and opportunities to make full use of their skills
- Make sure their employees understand mental health issues and encourage them to develop positive self care strategies, and make them aware of the steps that can be taken to preserve and maintain their own and others mental well-being.
- Employees are provided with regular opportunities to discuss their work with their line managers, and that BL Training appraisal and performance review system is used appropriately
- There is effective communication in both directions enabling all employees to be involved in decision making and planning, especially during periods of organisational change
- They will not discriminate against an employee because they have a mental health problem
- Bullying and harassment are not tolerated, and that any instances of either are handled within the terms of the existing BL Training Harassment & Bullying Policy.
- There are effective ways of dealing with interpersonal conflict, supported by and supporting BL Training existing Grievance Procedure, together with a commitment to investigate complaints appropriately.

BL Training will aim to raise awareness of mental health issues for all employees by:

- Ensuring specific reference to promoting and maintaining mental health in induction programmes, and other in-house training opportunities as appropriate (e.g. recruitment and selection training, performance review and appraisal training)

Supporting Staff Affected by Mental Health Problems

BL Training will ensure that individuals experiencing mental health problems are treated fairly and consistently, by ensuring that:

- Confidentiality is protected at all times, and that disclosure of an individual's circumstances will occur only on a 'need to know' basis and with the full knowledge and consent of that individual
- If working conditions or other factors within the workplace are contributing to the mental health problems, these are promptly and fully investigated and remedied where possible
- All sickness absence is managed within the terms of the BL Training Staff Absence Management Policy, including identification of suitable alternative employment or workplace adjustments (which maybe temporary or permanent) in consultation with the employee

Employing People with Mental Health Problems

Existing policy and practice relevant to each of these areas will be kept under review to ensure that people with mental health problems are not disadvantaged, whether during the recruitment and selection process or afterwards.

By incorporating specific examples related to mental health within existing recruitment and selection training we will seek to raise managers' awareness of the positive contribution that people who have experienced mental health problems can make to the work of the organisation.

6. ACCOUNTABILITIES

This policy is an integral part of BL Training Health and Safety Policy framework. Therefore:

- The Directors of BL Training are ultimately responsible for its Implementation and for ensuring that appropriate training and awareness raising courses are available for all staff, and for the provision of specialist advice and support to managers and employees in operating this policy
- All managers are responsible for monitoring the workplace, identifying hazards and risks to employee mental health, and taking steps to eliminate or reduce these as far as is reasonably practicable
- All managers have a responsibility to provide appropriate advice, support, and assistance to employees who have mental health problems.
- All Directors and Senior Managers have a responsibility to ensure that staff members who are involved in the line management or supervision of other staff are competent to fulfil that role in a way that is consistent with protecting mental health and well-being amongst the workforce
- Risk assessment within the workplace needs to explicitly cover risks to mental health and well-being
- All employees are responsible for reporting any risks to health, including mental health that they identify to their Line Manager.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy will be brought to the attention of all staff during induction, and will be readily available in the BL Quality Manual.

Mental health awareness will be incorporated into relevant training programmes. Where appropriate, specialist workshops focusing on mental health will be offered, but the general aim is to ensure that coverage of mental health issues is integrated within generic programmes as far as possible.

This policy is reviewed annually by Admin.