

Mental Wellbeing Policy.

Mental ill health and stress are associated with many of the leading causes of disease and disability in our society. Promoting and protecting the mental wellbeing of the staff at Chandlers Chatters Playgroup/Preschool is important to us and for individual's physical health, social wellbeing and productivity. Many factors in the workplace influence the mental wellbeing of individual employees. Understanding and addressing the factors which affect people's mental wellbeing at Chandlers Chatters will have a wide range of benefits, both for our staff and our organisation. Mental wellbeing is relevant to all employees and everyone can contribute to improved mental wellbeing at work. Addressing workplace mental wellbeing can help strengthen the positive, protective factors of employment, reduce risk factors for mental ill health and improve general health. It can also help promote the employment of people who have experienced mental health problems and support them once they are at work. Chandlers Chatters mental wellbeing policy covers the following aspects of mental health and wellbeing:

Promotion of mental wellbeing

Promoting the mental wellbeing of all staff through:

- Providing information and raising awareness about mental wellbeing
- Providing opportunities for employees to look after their mental wellbeing
- Promoting policies and practices that promote wellbeing.

Management skills

Developing skills for managers and supervisors to:

- Promote the mental wellbeing of employees
- Deal with issues around mental health and stress effectively

Support Providing

Support to employees through:

- Providing a work environment that promotes and supports mental wellbeing for all employees
- Offering assistance, advice and support to people who experience a mental health problem while at Chandlers Chatters
- Support for staff returning to work after a period of absence due to mental health problems.
- Support staff returning to work after a long period of absence due to COVID-19

Employment

Helping people get back to work after a period of absence due to mental illness through:

- Recruitment practices
- Making reasonable adjustments
- Retaining staff who develop a mental health problem

Scope

Mental health problems and stress can affect anyone, regardless of their position at Chandlers Chatters specially during the COVID-19 pandemic. This policy applies equally to all employees. The implementation of this policy will also be supported by other health and safety policies e.g., sickness absence, alcohol, drug and substance abuse, COVID-19 risk assessment and policy, bullying and harassment.

Aim of the policy

To create a workplace environment that promotes the mental wellbeing of all employees at Chandlers Chatters

Objectives

To tackle workplace factors that may negatively affect mental wellbeing, and to develop management skills to promote mental wellbeing and manage mental health problems effectively. At Chandlers Chatters we aim to create and promote a workplace environment that supports and promotes the mental wellbeing of all employees. We acknowledge that certain working conditions and practices can negatively affect employees' mental wellbeing, including aspects of work organisation and management, and environmental and social conditions that have the potential for psychological as well as physical harm.

Policy actions

- Give employees information on and increase their awareness of mental wellbeing
- Provide opportunities for employees to look after their mental wellbeing, for example through physical activity, stress-buster activities and social events
- Offer employees flexible working arrangements that promote their mental wellbeing where necessary
- Give all staff the opportunity to influence how they do their jobs, scope for varying their working conditions as far as possible, and opportunities to develop and fully utilise their skills
- Ensure all staff have clearly defined job descriptions, objectives and responsibilities and provide them with good management support, appropriate training and adequate resources to do their job
- Manage conflict effectively and ensure the workplace is free from bullying and harassment, discrimination and racism
- Establish good two-way communication to ensure staff involvement, particularly during periods of organisational change and COVID-19

Chandlers Chatters will develop a culture based on trust, support and mutual respect within our setting.

We aim to create and promote a culture where employees are able to talk openly about their job and mental health problems and to report difficulties without fear of discrimination or reprisal.

Policy Actions

- Give non-judgemental and proactive support to individual staff who experience mental health problems
- Deal sympathetically with staff suffering from mental health problems due to circumstances outside the workplace, and who consequently find it difficult to do their jobs properly
- Give new employees a comprehensive induction programme providing an understanding of the organisation, the established policies and procedures, and the role they are expected to carry out

To provide support and assistance for employees experiencing mental health difficulties.

Policy actions:

- Ensure individuals suffering from mental health problems are treated fairly and consistently and are not made to feel guilty about their problems
- Encourage staff to consult their own GP, or a counsellor of their choice
- Investigate the contribution of working conditions and other organisational factors to mental ill health and remedy this where possible
- In cases of long-term sickness absence, we will put in place, where possible, a graduated return to work
- Make every effort to identify suitable alternative provisions, in full discussion with the employee, where a return to work may be difficult due to identified risks or other factors
- Treat all matters relating to individual employees and their mental health problems in the strictest confidence and share on a 'need to know' basis only with consent from the individual concerned

Chandlers Chatters will positively encourage the employment of people who have experienced mental health problems by providing fair and non- discriminatory recruitment and selection procedures.

At Chandlers Chatters we recognise that people who have or have had mental health problems may have experienced discrimination in recruitment and selection procedures. This may discourage them from seeking employment. While some people will acknowledge their experience of mental health issues openly, others may fear that stigma will jeopardise their chances of getting a job. Given appropriate support, the vast majority of people who have experienced mental health problems continue to work successfully, as do many with ongoing issues.

Policy actions:

- Show a positive and enabling attitude to employees and job applicants with mental health issues
- Ensure that all staff involved in recruitment and selection are briefed on mental health issues and the Disability Discrimination Act, and are trained in appropriate interview skills
- Make it clear, in any recruitment or occupational health check undertaken, that people who have experienced mental health issues will not be discriminated against and that disclosure of a mental health problem will enable both employee and employer to assess and provide the right level of support or adjustment
- Do not make assumptions that a person with a mental health problem will be more vulnerable to workplace stress or take more time off than any other employee or job applicant
- Ensure the Manager/Deputy have information and training about managing mental health in the workplace

To recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

Policy actions:

Identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed and updated where necessary.

- Provide training in good management practices, including those related to health and safety and stress management
- Provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors through supervisions, appraisals, individual meetings, keep in touch days
- Provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the organisation's agreed workplace mental wellbeing policy

Responsibilities

Everyone has a responsibility at Chandlers Chatters to contribute to making the workplace mental wellbeing policy effective. Managers and the appointed Health and safety officer have a responsibility to:

- Monitor the workplace, identify hazards and risks and take steps to eliminate or reduce these as far as is reasonably practicable
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes
- Assist and support employees who are known to have mental health problems or are experiencing stress outside work- for example due to bereavement, separation or COVID-19
- Ensure staff are provided with the resources and training required to carry out their job
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful development opportunities
- Organise training and awareness courses on workplace mental wellbeing in conjunction with suitable experts
- Provide advice and support to employees in relation to this policy
- Monitor and report on levels of sickness absence which relate to mental health problems including stress-related illness

The Role of Employees

Employees have a responsibility to:

- Raise issues of concern and seek help from their Health and Safety Officer, Manager, Deputy
- Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended

Management and Health and Safety Officer

Have a responsibility to:

- Provide specialist advice and awareness training on mental wellbeing
- Train and support each other in implementing stress risk assessments
- Support individuals who have been off sick with mental health and stress problems, and advise them and their management on a planned return to work
- Refer individuals to specialist agencies
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to promote mental wellbeing
- Inform the employer and the health and safety officer of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work

Safety representatives must be:

- Meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress
- Able to consult with members on the issue of stress, including conducting workplace surveys or questionnaires
- Employees must be involved in the risk assessment process and able to conduct joint inspections of the workplace at least once every three months, to ensure that environmental stressors are properly controlled. Think fit! Think well!

Review and monitoring

The Management and Health and Safety officer will be responsible for reviewing the workplace mental wellbeing policy and for monitoring how effectively the policy meets its aims and objectives. Regular review and monitoring are vital to assess the effectiveness of a workplace mental wellbeing policy. Chandlers Chatters will track progress, through Staff attitude surveys will be used to gauge morale among existing staff and exit interviews or questionnaires can help identify reasons for staff turnover.

Indicators to measure effectiveness:

- Working hours and patterns
- Accidents at work
- Staff complaints
- Staff sickness levels
- Staff turnover
- Use of occupational health or counselling services
- An employee survey, questionnaires, supervisions

The policy will be reviewed in three months from implementation due to COVID-19 and the impact it could have on staff, and then annually after that to ensure that it remains relevant.