

Merton Mencap

Staff Wellbeing

Policy & Procedure

Last reviewed
September 2023

Next review
September 2025

**This policy and procedure has been adopted by Merton Mencap
through its Executive Committee which remains responsible for its review**

Introduction

Merton Mencap (the charity) recognises its duty of care to look after the health and safety of its employees, including their wellbeing.

The aim of this policy and procedure is to:

1. create and embed a workplace culture that promotes and supports staff wellbeing
2. proactively help staff to feel valued, supported and healthy at work
3. ensure the charity supports staff who disclose health conditions and disabilities in a practical and confidential way.

Policy

We recognise that people are individuals, with different mental and physical needs. Our approach is to promote wellness across the charity and to respond to our staff's individual circumstances if they disclose a health condition or disability which may require our support.

1. Recruitment

We believe looking after the wellbeing of our staff starts at the very beginning.

We will do this by:

1. including details of our '**Disability Confident Committed**' accreditation which makes clear our commitment to supporting employees with health conditions and disabilities, including those with family caring responsibilities;
2. offering to make reasonable adjustments at **interview** to accommodate health needs and disabilities; and
3. asking new staff after they have accepted our job offer whether they have a health condition or disability which could affect their work so we can seek to accommodate **reasonable adjustments in order to support** them in their role.

2. Initial Induction

We believe a high-quality, personalised initial induction is key to ensuring a person's employment with us starts positively, as it sets the tone as to what to expect whilst working for the charity. An essential aspect of this is to help them feel welcome and adequately informed about the support the charity is able to extend to them during their employment.

We will 'set the tone' by:

1. allocating sufficient time for all new staff and their manager to have an **induction** which will include an initial induction schedule within our **Induction Pack**
2. providing the new staff with a **risk assessment of their role** and talking through the training and measures to keep them and their colleagues safe
3. providing the new staff with a **risk assessment of any service** they will be involved with and talking through the measures to keep them and our client base safe
4. organise dates for **supervision** for the year ahead which includes a standard agenda item about the **staff member's health, both mental and physical**, and whether any support is needed
5. providing the new staff with details of **relevant policies and benefits** related to their health and wellbeing, eg Health & Safety, Lone Working Policy, Employee Assistance Programme etc
6. providing relevant **training** which aims to support wellbeing, eg safe home-working for homeworkers

3. Health Plan

We will provide all regular contracted staff with the opportunity to join the charity's Health Plan. Our Health Plan includes components which support mental and physical health including access to:

1. Employee Assistance Programme (**EAP**) which includes confidential counselling support, free of charge, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
2. 24-hour GP online services.
3. A range of voluntary health-promotion workshops on wide-ranging health conditions, eg supporting good mental and physical health, gender specific conditions, managing stress effectively.

4. Occupational Health support

The charity has an arrangement with a SEQQHS-registered¹ occupational health provider. They are an external specialist organisation who supports work-place health and wellbeing, for example by providing management with advice and recommendations intended to help support reasonable adjustments to assist a staff member to return sustainably to work following prolonged absence/s from work.

5. Mental health first aider

In general, the role of a mental health first aider in the workplace is to be a point of contact for an employee who is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. This interaction could range from having an initial conversation through to supporting the person to get appropriate help.

We will appoint an appropriately trained mental health first aider to support staff who may be experiencing a mental health crisis or developing mental health problems. Our mental health first aider will aim to support by:

1. identifying warning signs and seeking emergency support if needed
2. listening actively and non-judgementally
3. providing support and reassurance
4. signposting and guiding staff to appropriate resources.

Our mental health first aider is not intended to provide long term support to staff. Their role is to offer a confidential, listening ear and assistance, such as by advising the person about available professional support.

It should be noted that if the mental health first aider is unavailable, the person requiring support should seek other support, such as via our EAP (provided as part of our existing Health Plan) or by contacting their GP or local statutory services.

6. Responding to disclosures

The charity recognises that individuals respond and react in various ways to health conditions and disabilities.

For this reason, if a staff member discloses a health condition or disability, we will always take an individual approach to the support we are able to offer.

As such we will meet the staff member, in confidence, to understand more about the nature of the health condition/ disability and how the condition manifests itself to them.

We will offer the staff member the opportunity to speak to someone other than their line manager if they feel more comfortable doing so, eg to occupational health.

Depending on the circumstances, we may:

1. assess the risk of the condition/disability on them, their colleagues and others (eg service users, the wider business)
2. seek the support of occupational health on deciding adjustments and adaptations; and
3. seek the support of the staff member's treating consultants on any proposed changes to the staff member's role.

Our aim, throughout, is to ensure that the charity responds to the staff member's unique circumstances. We will confirm in writing to a staff member the nature of the support that the charity provides, to make clear to the person that we've understood their circumstances and the support we are making and help that is available. The charity will remain flexible and approachable, eg any reasonable adjustments or adaptations that are made may be altered as the person's circumstances change.

We may provide a staff member's line manager with training in relation to the staff member's health condition or disability but this should not replace the individual support provided to the staff described above which must be bespoke to them.
