

EMPLOYEE WELLBEING POLICY

1.0 Introduction.

- 1.1 NFDC has developed an employee wellbeing policy to manage its obligations to maintain the mental health and overall wellbeing of all staff. It covers the organisation's commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health, health promotion initiatives, communication and training on health issues, the range of support available for the maintenance of good mental health and our commitment to handling individual issues.

2.0 Objectives

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to set out our commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of our employees. It will set out how we will fulfil our legal obligation, describe the responsibilities of both managers and employees and list the range of services and specialists available to help employees maintain health and wellbeing. We recognise that wellbeing and performance are linked and that by improving employee's ability to handle pressure and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improved individual and organisational performance.

3.0 Organisational Commitment

- 3.1 We have legal obligations under health and safety legislation to manage risks to the health and safety of employees. This includes operating the business in a way that minimises harm to employee's mental health, for example by ensuring that the demands of jobs are not unacceptable and having policies and procedures in place to support individuals experiencing mental ill health at work.
- 3.2 We will put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing, together with appropriate training and support. It will seek to foster a mentally healthy culture by incorporating these principles into manager training sessions and running regular clinics to raise awareness of mental health issues at work.

4.0 Line Manager Responsibilities

- 4.1 Line managers will put in place measures to minimise the risks to employee wellbeing.
- 4.2 In particular line managers must ensure that they take steps to reduce the risks to employee health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring that the right people are recruited to the right jobs and that a good match is obtained between individuals recruited and job descriptions;
- Keeping employees in the team updated on developments at work and how these might affect their job and workload;
- Ensuring that employees know who to approach with problems concerning their role and how to pursue issues with senior management;
- Taking appropriate prompt action when matters are brought to their attention
- Making sure jobs are designed fairly and that work is allocated appropriately between teams;
- Ensuring work stations are regularly assessed to ensure that they are appropriate and fit for purpose.
- Act as role models for appropriate behaviour, and care for their own mental health and overall wellbeing

5.0 Human Resources Responsibilities

5.1 Human Resources will develop organisational wide policies and procedures to protect the wellbeing of employees. They will assist managers in supporting individuals and liaise with Occupational Health or other external individuals or companies with the object of helping employees to maintain good mental health and general wellbeing.

6.0 Occupational Health Responsibilities

6.1 Occupational Health will provide a comprehensive service designed to help employees stay in work or return to work after experiencing mental health problems or any physical health problems. This will include medical assessments of an individuals' fitness to return to work following referrals from Human Resources. A phased return to work or adjustment of duties may be recommended.

7.0 Employees Responsibilities

7.1 Employees must take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing by adopting good health behaviours (for example in relation to diet, fitness, alcohol consumption and smoking) and informing their manager if they believe work or the work environment poses a risk to their health.

8.0 Health Promotion Initiatives

8.1 NFDC will engage in a range of health promotion initiatives designed to raise awareness of health and lifestyle issues affecting mental health and wellbeing and line managers and employees are expected to participate.

We will run training courses on:

- Stress Management
- Mental Health First Aid Training
- Mental Health for managers sessions
- Dignity at work sessions
- Dealing with difficult customers/situations
- Mindfulness sessions

Other opportunities that are offered to employees include:

- Flu jabs for operational employees
- Health checks are organised each year. These are free for staff on bands 1-4 who work over 18.5 hours per week. Other employees can book a health check at a reduced rate of £35. (2019)
- Reduced membership fees at Leisure Centres. (under review)

8.2 Employees will also be encouraged to establish clubs and groups designed to foster wellbeing, for example lunchtime walks, table tennis or pilates.

9.0 Training and communications

9.1 Line managers are responsible for ensuring all employees are up to date with corporate matters in order to feel connected to the goals of the Council. Regular meaningful communication with their team should be two way, allowing employees to raise matters as well as receive information. Communication should be through one to one meetings, team meetings, emails and forestnet as appropriate to the matter in hand.

9.2 Line managers and employees should regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to cope with ever changing job demands.

9.3 Line managers must give employees regular feedback on their performance and allow them the opportunity to raise any concerns that they may have. Line managers should work with employees in a supportive way to achieve required goals, reviewing these at regular appropriate intervals.

10.0 Smarter Working

10.1 The Councils move towards smarter working allows many employees much greater flexibility in their work life balance with the ability to work off site and within the community delivering services to the public.

- 10.2 For employees this can lead to increased productivity and a greater sense of overall wellbeing as a result of being more in control of working hours as agreed with their manager.
- 10.3 The work café provides employees with a modern environment in which to relax during lunchtime encouraging cross service conversations or an informal meeting place during the day.
- 10.4 An almost hidden benefit of the smarter working is the decrease in commuter mileage. This benefits both the individual and the council in terms of its' environmental objectives.

11.0 Other Measures Available

- 11.1 Other measures available to support employees in maintaining good health and wellbeing include:
- NFDC has 12 trained Mental Health First Aiders – see information on Forestnet
 - Procedures for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviour including our grievance procedure.
 - Structured approach to managing ill health including Occupational Health referrals as required.
 - Reduced Gym Membership at Leisure centres.(under review)
 - Flexible Working Opportunities
 - Employee Assistance programme including counselling support on a range of issues.
 - Dependants Leave, Parental Leave and Compassionate Leave policies.
 - Sabbatical leave policy.