

## **Mental Health Policy**

This is our policy and procedure forms part of your Staff Handbook. The purpose of this handbook is to explain our expectations of behaviour and personal conduct and to set out our policies on important matters that affect you as an employee. Metropolitan Electrical Services Ltd reserves the right to amend the contents of this handbook in order to meet changing requirements.

### **1. Introduction**

Metropolitan Electrical Services Ltd is committed to ensuring that no employee should be injured or made ill through their work and also recognises that mental health is an integral part of overall employee wellbeing. Consequently, Metropolitan Electrical Services Ltd believes that mental wellbeing is essential to staff engagement and productivity at work. This policy sets out the framework for Metropolitan Electrical Services Ltd to provide a positive environment which promotes and supports mental wellbeing for our employees and others within the workplace.

The policy also aims to raise awareness and address the perceived stigma of poor mental health at work. Further, it aims to ensure that those experiencing mental health issues are supported through a number of measures with respect, confidentiality and without discrimination.

This policy applies to the entire organisation including employees and third-party contract staff. It should be used in conjunction with all other policies and referred to when dealing with any other element of company operations.

### **2. Promoting mental wellbeing at Metropolitan Electrical Services Ltd**

Mental health problems and stress can affect any staff member regardless of their position within the organisation. Metropolitan Electrical Services Ltd is committed to providing a positive working environment and appropriate support in order to have a positive effect on our staff's mental health.

Metropolitan Electrical Services Ltd will promote a culture of positive mental health and wellbeing to all staff by:

- Educating staff and managers to identify and manage mental health and stress effectively.
- Providing assistance, advice and support to staff suffering with mental health issues.
- Identifying potential workplace stressors and conducting suitable and sufficient risk assessments (including mental health risk assessments) to eliminate, reduce and/or control the risk of stress.
- Adopting a positive approach to employing staff with a history of mental health problems by reviewing employment practices to ensure that people with mental health problems are not excluded, explicitly or implicitly.
- Having mental health champions within the workplace who can be a confidential contact should the employee not want to discuss directly with their line manager.
- Providing staff various platforms to express views.

- Ensuring that the mental health policy overarches all our other relevant workplace policies

### **3. Identifying mental health issues**

A pattern of uncharacteristic behaviour that continues for some time may indicate an underlying mental health problem. Managers and staff need to be aware and sensitive to a colleague who may exhibit changes in behaviours, and offer support appropriately.

These can include for example:

- Absenteeism.
- Significant changes in mood.
- Unusual deterioration in standard of work, reduced productivity, poor decisions or indecision.
- Poor morale or lack of co-operation.
- Uncharacteristic mistakes.
- Frequent complaints of tiredness, aches and pains.
- Alcohol or drug misuse.

### **4. Managing stress at work**

Metropolitan Electrical Services Ltd considers that the management of stress is essential particularly during change and any temporary increased pressure on resources. Whilst it may not be possible to eliminate all work-related stressors, the aim is to create a culture in which the issue of workplace stress is treated sensitively and seriously. If staff are suffering from non-work-related stress, Metropolitan Electrical Services Ltd will offer support for the member of staff wherever appropriate.

Where work-related stress has been identified as a hazard, Metropolitan Electrical Services Ltd will assess the associated risks to relevant staff health and wellbeing through the risk assessment process. Relevant staff will be consulted during this process in order to ensure full participation in any subsequent preventative/protective control measures identified. These specific risk assessments will be monitored for effectiveness at regular intervals by relevant management.

### **5. Responsibilities of managers**

- Ensure that individuals suffering from mental health issues are treated fairly, sympathetically and consistently, whatever the cause.
- Consider staff concerns seriously, investigate and, wherever possible, address work or other organisational factors that may contribute to individuals' stress levels or other mental health issues.
- Ensure there is meaningful and constructive consultation and communication during times of organisational change.
- Make adjustments for individuals that allow them to attend counselling or any other support, wherever this is possible within the operational demands of the service.
- Manage any related sickness absence in accordance with the Metropolitan Electrical Services Ltd sickness policy.

- Encourage staff to consult Occupational Health, their own GP, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), or counsellors, should concern over an individual's mental health arise.
- Ensure staff have appropriate information on preventative measures and support available.
- Ensure regular 1-2-1 meetings between line managers and staff are taking place in order to relay any factors of the job that may induce stress, such as excessive workload or overly stretching performance targets, etc
- Provide sufficient communication to keep employees adequately informed about any information that may impact the organisation and/or their specific roles.
- Manage conflicts effectively and ensure that the workplace is free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and prejudice.

## **6. Training**

To support staff members, as well as manage their own wellbeing, it is important that managers and other staff members, are educated on mental health issues in the workplace. This awareness will help to break down any potential stigma associated with mental health issues and will assist in recognising how to support a staff member in need. Metropolitan Electrical Services Ltd are committed to;

- Provide new employees with a comprehensive induction programme in order to ensure an understanding of the organisation.
- Provide all new joiners with details of established policies / procedures, corporate objectives and roles that they are expected to carry out.
- Implement mandatory training for all staff to encourage an open dialogue about stress and mental health.
- Provide adequate resources to enable managers to effectively implement the organisation's mental health policy.
- Encourage staff to have open conversations with line managers or the HR Manager regarding stress, excessive workloads and any other factors that may undermine personal mental health.
- Ensure that managers are aware of their obligations to promote a good working environment for their staff as defined within this policy. This includes conducting return to work interviews in a timely manner, following through on any concerns raised and conducting regular risk assessments.
- HR to ensure that new and existing managers are aware of their responsibilities towards their staff, including setting and managing performance in a manner that is consistent with Metropolitan Electrical Services Ltd policy.

## **7. Providing support to staff suffering with mental health issues**

It can be challenging to understand how to respond and support someone with mental health issues. If there is any doubt about how to proceed such matters, staff should consult a senior manager or the HR Manager for guidance. Managers are expected to;

- Deal with mental health related issues in a sensitive manner and refrain from the use of any judgement or prejudice based on personal feelings towards mental health issues.
- Proactively make employees aware of the Employee Assistance helpline, where staff can seek information, advice and support.
- Refer staff to a Mental Health First Aider or if necessary an Occupational Health Assessor in order to establish how to best support the staff member during their absence from work and establish a return to work plan. In the event that the staff member does not wish to consult occupational health, a medical report should be obtained from the GP with the consent of the staff member.
- Support a staff member in situations where they experience a period of absence from work due to mental health. Work with the employee and Occupational Health advisors / their GP to develop a 'Return to Work' plan that provides the best opportunity for the employee to return to work as soon as is reasonably practicable. Reasonable adjustments should then be made for the staff member to settle back into their work.
- Identify and remediate any factors within the workplace that are contributing to any negative mental health issues by carrying out a mental health risk assessment. This can be with the support and guidance of HR and/or Health and Safety if required. Determine whether any identified factors could affect other co-workers. HR/Line Manager should consult with other employees to ensure that any identified issues do not pose a risk to their wellbeing.
- Offer continued employment where practicable, subject to appropriate adaptations to the role.
- Ensure that the staff member receives paid sick leave as per the company sickness policy and ensure that the staff member remains informed about their entitlement.
- Designate a contact person (either the line manager or HR manager) as the point of contact for the staff member and keep a log of all the communication and correspondence.
- Keep the staff member informed of any relevant organisational changes.

## **8. Confidentiality**

Treat all matters relating to individual employees and mental health problems in the strictest confidence. A supervisor or line manager does not need to know the diagnosis or other personal information, unless the member of staff is willing to disclose this. Exceptions to this may occasionally occur if the health and safety of others, or indeed the staff member might be compromised.

If adjustments are being made, the manager should discuss with the employee how these are communicated to other staff. Anyone breaching such confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

## **9. Mental Health and the Law**

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, it is a duty of the employer to ensure the working environment should be safe and without risks to health (inclusive of mental health).

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require suitable and sufficient assessment of the nature and scale of risks to health in the workplace and the effective implementation of adequate control measures. Risk assessment includes identifying hazards, including those with the potential to harm mental health, and evaluating the risks involved.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against people with long term mental health problems (i.e. those which have lasted or are likely to last up to twelve months). Where a person has a disability, reasonable adjustments must be made. The Human Rights Act gives individuals the right not to suffer degrading treatment and the right not to suffer discrimination

## **10. Recruitment**

Having experienced a mental health problem does not mean that someone cannot be a valued member of staff, working efficiently and contributing positively to the workplace.

If the issue of mental health does arise during the recruitment process, it may be appropriate at the interview to ask the person if they require any kind of adjustment or support, both during the recruitment process and in order to do the job as specified.

Managers should not:

- Ask for information about the specific diagnosis, treatment, the history of the illness or any information that is not relevant to the work situation;
- Assume that a person with a mental health problem will be more vulnerable to workplace stress than any other employee.
- Ask for information about the specific diagnosis, treatment, the history of the illness or any information that is not relevant to the work situation;
- Assume that a person with a mental health problem will be more vulnerable to workplace stress than any other employee.

## **12. Available platforms to voice staff opinions**

- Focus Groups
- Team Meetings
- PDR review with line managers

### **13. Access to confidential, professional support services**

- We pro-actively make employees aware of our Employee Assistance helpline, where staff can seek information, advice and support in the event of any situation that poses a threat to their wellbeing. Such situations may include bereavement, relationship breakdown, debt concerns, legal worries and addiction. **This is a completely free service available 24/7 via Bupa and can be accessed by calling 0345 606 0802.** Where appropriate, line managers may also recommend a managed referral to the Employee Assistance service.

**Robert Warner (Signed)**

**Managing Director**

**Date Reviewed: 10/09/2019**

**Next Review Date: 10/09/2020**