

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

Chorley Council aims to promote a harmonious and healthy working environment, to engender trust and co-operation between colleagues and to foster an environment in which staff treat each other with dignity and respect. The Council recognises that it has a duty of care towards its staff and a legal obligation to provide a safe and healthy working environment. We believe that staff are our most important asset and that staff contribute more effectively to the success of the Council and achieve job satisfaction if they are healthy and happy at work.

This policy is intended to provide guidance for managers on the practical implementation of emotional wellbeing support and stress risk assessment. Useful contacts and information on the support available for employees can be found in the [Health and Wellbeing guide](#).

2. DEFINITIONS

Emotional wellbeing is “A positive sense of wellbeing which enables an individual to be able to function in society and meet the demands of everyday life; people in good mental health have the ability to recover effectively from illness, change or misfortune.”

Stress is not an illness in itself, however it can cause illness. The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as, ‘An adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed upon them.’ Chorley Council has a legal duty to protect employees from stress at work.

3. CHORLEY COUNCIL’S AIMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council aims to support the mental health of employees by:

- Encouraging staff to maintain and improve their physical and psychological health.
- Offering support to staff through the Occupational Health Service including access to confidential counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).
- Ensuring good communication throughout the Council.
- Providing information and training to help staff develop their skills and maximise their contribution to the success of the Council.

The Council aims to reduce stress in the workplace, wherever possible by: -

- Providing a safe & healthy environment in which to work.
- Striving towards a workplace free from harassment and victimisation.
- Striving towards the equal treatment of employees by managers and colleagues.
- Effective workload allocation and feedback on performance.
- Supporting managers to enable them to identify stress and to manage stress appropriately.
- Providing information to employees to help them identify if they are suffering from stress and providing advice and guidance to help reduce it.

4. MANAGER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide opportunities for employees to discuss their mental health at return to work (RTW) interviews, 1:1 meetings, and job chats.
- Foresee and identify potential causes of stress within the workplace, risk assess this, and take appropriate action to effectively manage and reduce any negative impact on health and wellbeing, (using the HSE Management Standards as a guide -Appendix A).
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities and are fully trained to carry out their duties.
- Monitor workloads and working hours to ensure that staff are not overloaded.
- Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend training as requested.
- Provide support and rehabilitation for individuals and facilitate access to professional help for workplace, personal or mental health problems.
- Utilising coaching skills

5. EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be open and honest, where possible, with their manager about their own emotional wellbeing.
- Engage fully with Occupational Health services and interventions.
- Share and discuss any concerns about foreseeable or existing causes of stress within the workplace with their line manager
- Raise concerns, confidentially if they so wish, over their own or colleagues' wellbeing to their line manager or Human Resources.
- Be aware of the value of communicating issues/problems and take reasonable steps to manage their own mental health in keeping with health recommendations.
- Tackling personal stress is an individual's responsibility; however the Council will endeavor to support individuals where it is practicable and reasonable to do so.

6. OUTCOMES

By achieving greater emotional wellbeing the authority will promote:

- A healthier, more motivated workforce.
- A culture where the health, safety and wellbeing is paramount to employees.
- Increased morale and commitment.
- Enhanced productivity and performance.
- Improved recruitment, retention and rehabilitation.
- Employees who are more resilient and better able to cope with change.

POLICY PROCEDURE

1. MANAGERS

Managers should ensure that tasks involving particularly emotionally challenging aspects are properly risk assessed, and arrangements implemented to manage these risks.

Managers should look for the signs that an employee's emotional wellbeing is being adversely affected; this can lead to changes in work performance, emotional, physical and mental behaviours. Below sets out some examples of how employees may be affected:

Work performance

- Attendance becoming excessive or extremely poor.
- Regular bouts of recurring illness
- Impaired performance, uncharacteristic errors and indecision
- Loss of motivation/commitment
- Lapses in memory
- Increase in accidents
- Lack of holidays

Emotional

- Anxiety and depression
- Lack of sleep
- Anger, frustration, moodiness, irritability and sensitivity
- Loss of confidence
- Lack of self esteem

Physical

- Weakened immune system
- Raised blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Tenseness, tiredness, appetite disturbance, nausea, headaches.
- Digestive problems
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Lack of interest in personal appearance/hygiene

Mental

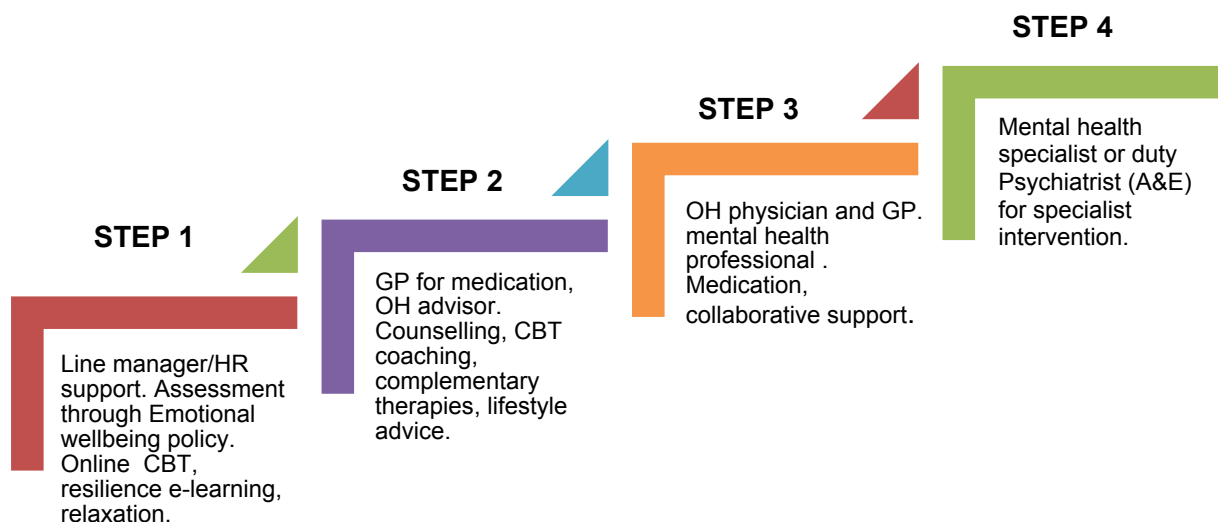
- Impaired perception, concentration, memory, judgement, decisiveness, accuracy, motivation and creativity.
- Increased use/dependence on caffeine, cigarettes, alcohol or drugs.

If a manager notices these signs they should arrange to have a private discussion with the employee and ask them:

- During the last month, how often have you felt down, depressed or hopeless?
- During the last month, how often have you had little interest or pleasure in doing things?

Managers should also ask these questions in all Return to Work (RTW), 1:1, and during the job chat, when an employee and manager are discussing the health & wellbeing section of the job wheel.

If the answer to either of these questions is anything other than “not at all” then the stepped care approach should be initiated as depicted below:



Most employees will be effectively supported at Step 1 and Step 2.

Step 1

All employees enter the process at Step 1 which may include online CBT, resilience e-learning, relaxation, signposting to other agencies, and/or an emotional wellbeing assessment. If a workplace issue is identified as a contributing factor to the illness support should commence with an assessment of their emotional wellbeing facilitated by HR Services and using the HSE Stress Management Standards approach (Appendix A).

Step 2

If an employee refuses support at Step 1, or if they remain unwell after interventions at Step 1, they should proceed to Step 2 for Occupational Health advice. The Occupational Health Advisor may recommend counselling, CBT, complimentary therapies, or GP support.

Step 3

If an employee refuses support at Step 2, or if they remain unwell after interventions at Step 2, they should proceed to Step 3 for support through an Occupational Health physician and mental health services.

Step 4

If an employee's health continues to deteriorate they will need the support of mental health specialists. **If you are concerned about the immediate health or wellbeing of an employee or where there is risk to life dial 999 and ask for an ambulance.**

2. EMPLOYEES

Employees may self-refer at Step 1 of the above process by contacting HR Services.

3. EMOTIONAL WELLBEING ASSESSMENT

An Emotional Wellbeing Assessment (EWA) should be undertaken with any employee who discloses workplace stress, and offered to all employees identified as experiencing poor emotional wellbeing. It should be completed in a timely manner and facilitated by HR Services.

STEP 1 IDENTIFY THE ISSUES

The "Wheel of my life" tool can be used to support the discussion and is included at Appendix B.

Where it is identified that the area of concern is work, the EWA will be based on the risk assessment approach recommended by the HSE for tackling work related stress. The risk assessment approach should consider the factors of: demands, control, support, relationships, role, and change; these are detailed fully at Appendix A. The risk assessment tool (Appendix C) can be used to guide the discussion.

STEP 2 RECORD THE FINDINGS

The findings of the EWA must be recorded using the action plan (Appendix D)

An action plan will:

- help you set goals to work towards;
- help you to prioritise;
- demonstrate that you are serious about supporting an employee to address concerns;
- provide something tangible to evaluate and review against.

An action plan is a key part of your risk assessment and should at least include the following:

- what the problem is
- how the problem was identified;
- what you are going to do in response;
- who is responsible for each action;
- some key milestones and dates for them to be reached;
- a commitment to provide feedback to employees on progress;
- a date for reviewing against the plan.

The action plan needs to be agreed by everyone involved.

STEP 3 MONITOR AND REVIEW

Employees and managers should regularly monitor and review the action plan together. This may take place in more frequent 1:1 meetings.

Reviews should include :

- Monitoring against the action plan to ensure the agreed actions are taking place.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the solutions implemented

Monitor against the action plan:

Periodically check that agreed actions are being undertaken, eg that meetings are being held, and take written notes for records, or that there is evidence that certain activities have taken place.

Evaluate the effectiveness of solutions:

How you do this will depend on what kind of solutions you have developed. It is important to ask those involved whether they feel the solutions are having the desired effect.

The timing of your reviews will depend on how long it will take to implement each intervention and how long the employee expects it will take to have any impact. This could be days for a simple intervention (eg an adjustment to the physical environment), or months for piloting a complicated long-term solution (such as a new rostering system).

4. USEFUL LINKS

It may be appropriate to signpost an employee to other agencies for support. Some key contacts are included below:

MIND – the charity for better mental health: www.mind.org.uk

Action for Happiness: www.actionforhappiness.org

CBT overview: www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfoforall/treatments/cbt.aspx

NHS self-help therapies: www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/improve-mental-wellbeing.aspx

Samaritans: www.samaritans.org 08457 90 90 90

Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

APPENDIX A

HSE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS – RISK FACTORS

1. Demands

Includes issues like workload, work patterns, and the work environment.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- The organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work
- People's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands;
- Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees; and
- Employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed.

2. Control

How much say the person has in the way they do their work.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work;
- Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work;
- Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work;
- The organisation encourages employees to develop their skills;
- Employees have a say over when breaks can be taken; and
- Employees are consulted over their work patterns.

3. Support

Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- The organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support employees;
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues;
- Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it;
- Employees know how to access the required resources to do their job; and
- Employees receive regular and constructive feedback.

4. Relationship

Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- The organisation promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness;
- Employees share information relevant to their work;
- The organisation has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour;
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour; and
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour.

5. Role

Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible;
- The organisation provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities;
- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon employees are clear; and
- Systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.

6. Change

How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

The standard is that:

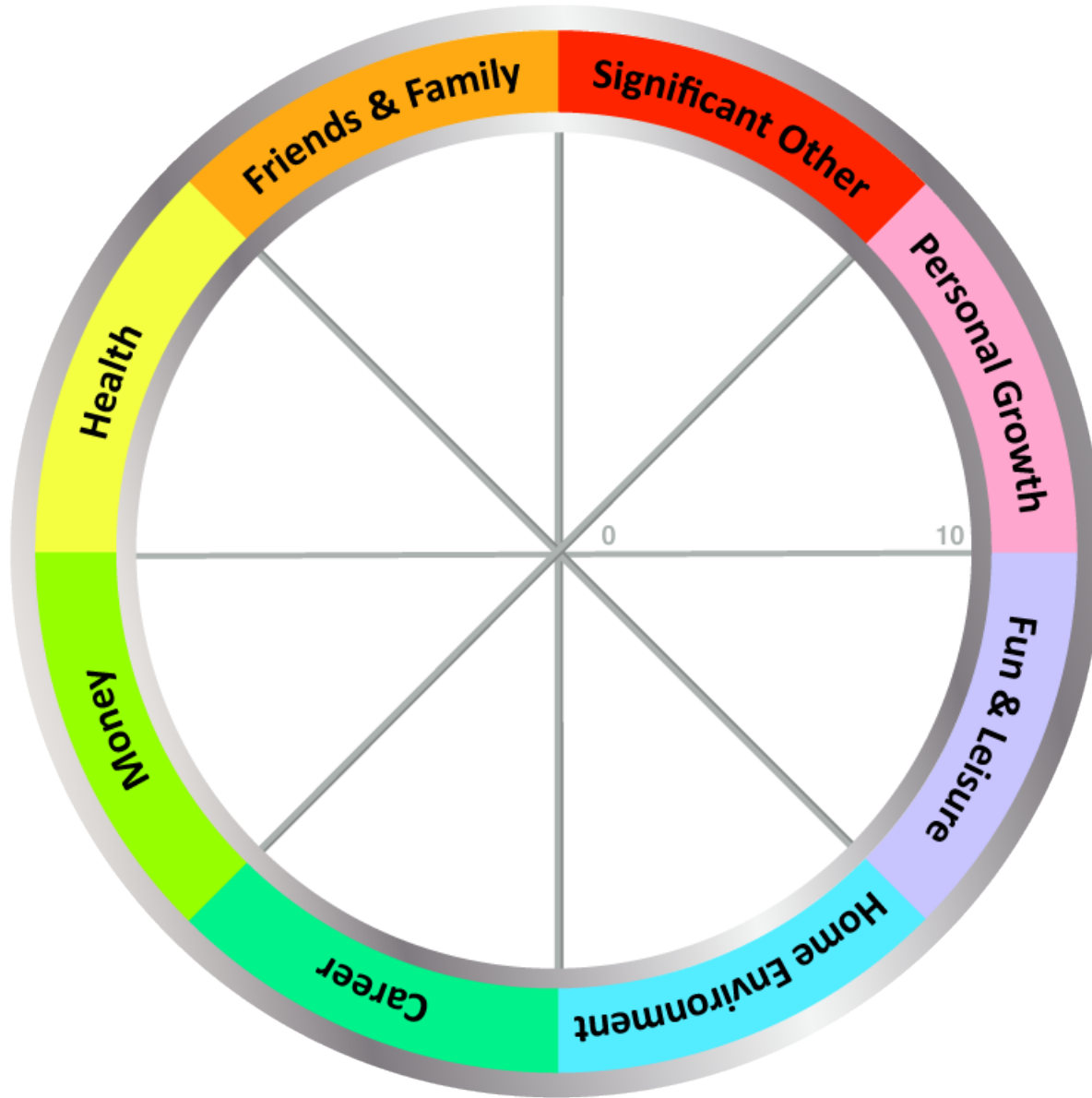
- Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- The organisation provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes;

- The organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals;
- Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs;
- Employees are aware of timetables for changes;
- Employees have access to relevant support during changes.

Life Wheel



Instructions

1. Ask the employee to review the 8 categories on their Wheel of Life. The categories should together create a view of a balanced life for them.
2. Ask them to think about what success or satisfaction would feel like for each area.
3. Now ask them to rank their level of satisfaction with each area of their life by drawing a line across each segment. Ask them to place a value between 1 (very dissatisfied) and 10 (fully satisfied) against each area to show how satisfied they are currently with each category in their life.
4. The below table can be used to guide the discussion.

Life Wheel section	Discussion	Result
Health	Explore long and short term health concerns, ongoing investigations, medical advice, sickness absence.	Actions may include referral to Occupational health, flexible working, reasonable adjustments, or the Health and Wellbeing guide.
Friends and Family	Discussion about family situation and any potential stressors; children, school, family health, parents. Relationships at work, friendships and any conflict.	Flexible working, special leave. Signposting as necessary. Health and wellbeing guide.
Significant Other	Who is the significant person in their lives? Are there any issues in that relationship? Has there been a recent relationship breakdown?	Signposting as necessary. Health and wellbeing guide.
Personal Growth	Review training needs/H&S/Personal development plan/any new needs/requirements resulting in the discussion held. Discussion around PDP progress and objectives.	May result in development need e.g. job shadowing senior manager, placement in another service or with a partner, or actions set or agreeing to focus on a particular competency.
Fun and Leisure	What does the employee do in their free time? Is there anything they would like to participate in but don't? What are the barriers?	Health and wellbeing activities in the workplace. Community activities.
Home Environment	Discussion about home life; housing, co-habiting, location.	Signposting as necessary. Health and wellbeing guide.
Career	Can include discussions around work-life balance, resilience, feeling safe at work and stress management.	If a stress at work issue is identified this needs to be fully explored in line with the HSE stress management standards.
Money	Explore anxieties about debt, income, expenditure, and benefits.	Signposting as necessary. Health and wellbeing guide.

APPENDIX C

TALKING POINTS

Getting the right support

- Given relevant information
- Encouragement from colleagues and managers
- Understand the policies and procedures being used
- Able to influence decisions

Your skills

- Able to develop new skills
- Having a say in what you do
- Using your skills and initiative

Your job

- Workload
- Deadlines
- Working hours
- Skills needed to do the job
- Working environment
- Safety

Your role

- Receive feedback
- Understand how role contributes to “bigger picture”
- Clear about responsibilities and boundaries
- Feel empowered

NOTES

Issues outside work

- Friends and family difficulties
- Relationships
- Bereavement
- Debt
- Health problems
- Caring responsibilities
- Life changes
- Moving house
- Work-life balance

Dealing with change

- Able to ask questions and express views
- Able to influence decisions

Relationships at work

- Sense of fairness
- Able to deal with conflict
- Tensions within the team
- Clear standards of acceptable behaviour
- Able to tackle unacceptable behaviour
- Feel valued

APPENDIX D

ACTION PLAN

AREA OF CONCERN (Risk Factor)	CURRENT PROBLEM	RATING 1-5 (1 least stressful, 5 most stressful)	PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE	WHEN WILL THIS BE ACHIEVED?	FEEDBACK PROVIDED	ACTION COMPLETED