

7.24 Wellbeing at Work Policy *(This policy is non-contractual)*

Purpose

MG ALBA supports a structured approach to wellbeing in ensuring our people can engage with the strategic work of the business, transition into agile working patterns, live and work within a supported healthy work-life balance environment and engage with their chosen path of personal development. Our Wellbeing at Work Policy details the aims and outputs of this policy.

This policy applies to all employees, Board members, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers and interns.

Aims

MG ALBA commits to providing a healthy working environment that supports:

- Preventative health and wellbeing practices and behaviours as part of the workplace culture
- A preventative health environment which will support a resilient, motivated and productive workforce
- Re-enforcing that our people are our most important assets, and we value our ability to provide and foster a safe and healthy workplace and culture

Benefits

MG ALBA are committed to investment in wellbeing in our working practices, recognising that wellbeing at work can

- Reduce absenteeism
- Reduce presenteeism & leave-ism
- Increase productivity
- Increase employee retention
- Contribute to our brand & community value

Promise

- To sustain our business, whilst meeting personal individual and team needs
- To be an inclusive employer of choice
- To put our people first
- To destigmatise difficult conversations and support people to grow and develop in dealing with difficult issues
- To ensure our workplace is a 'good place to be'!

Format

Working in consultation with the Investors in People “We Invest in Wellbeing” framework, MG ALBA will:

- Consult with staff and line managers on having confidential, 1-1 wellbeing check in conversations
- Include wellbeing on the agenda at management/health & safety/risk group meetings
- Include wellbeing as part of the annual appraisal process
- Survey staff regularly on wellbeing at work
- Consult with the Investors in People, Corporate Risk and Business Continuity Working Groups in matters relating to wellbeing at work
- Provide ongoing support and training to staff and management
- Encourage referrals to occupational health support services and counsellors if appropriate

Responsibilities

MG ALBA have a legal obligation and duty of care to provide a safe workplace where wellbeing is approached from a pro-active perspective and risks to health and wellbeing are identified and mitigated as far as possible. MG ALBA have a legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that health is not put at risk by excessive pressures or demands arising from the way work is organised. As individuals, we also are all responsible for wellbeing and the way that we do that is through guidance, observation, support, coaching and reporting in a safe and trusted manner. It's important to recognise that we all have unique life circumstances and situations, and that life and work events are processed differently. Our culture is one of safety and wellness and we should always look out for each other, notice any changes, and recognise when people may need help or support. Specific guidance is provided within this policy.

This policy takes account of MG ALBA's obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Employment Rights Act 1996, Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Working Time Regulations 1998 and Equality Act 2010.

Wellbeing Procedures

Mental Health at Work

Mental health problems are believed to be experienced by one in four adults, with mental health concerns being the second most prevalent reason for employee absence. This policy uses the term 'mental health problem' to include signs of stress and anxiety and mental health conditions that have been diagnosed by a medical professional, such as depression or PTSD.

MG ALBA understands the positive impact that healthy and engaged employees make to the success of the business. As such, MG ALBA pledges to provide initial and ongoing support and help for employees going through mental health problems. The purpose of this policy is to assist with creating an open and honest workplace where line managers and employees can discuss mental health problems, and to ensure the necessary support is known and offered to employees when needed.

Legal Obligations

MG ALBA understands the role it has in ensuring that health and safety legislation is adhered to. MG ALBA undertakes to create a safe workplace where risks to mental health and wellbeing are limited as far as possible. Additionally, MG ALBA understands the protection employees with a disability have against discrimination under the Equality Act 2010, including the obligation for employers to introduce reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.

Recruitment

Unless it is related to the specific requirements of the job, MG ALBA will not ask applicants at any stage of the recruitment process for information regarding any previous health issues, in order to ensure potential employees are not discriminated against because of their mental health history.

Indicators

To prevent mental health problems escalating, early intervention is important. In many cases, obvious indications that an employee is suffering from a mental health problem may not be present, however, early signs can include:

- behavioural, mood or temperament changes, especially when communication with others
- decrease in productivity and focus
- inability to make decisions and problem solving
- showing signs of tiredness or being withdrawn and unable to take part in hobbies they usually participate in
- reducing intake of food or increasing intake of alcohol, cigarettes etc.

Line Manager Responsibilities

When dealing with an employee with mental health concerns, line managers should be open, welcoming and friendly. They should invite the employee to regular private meetings and ask them to talk openly about their mental health problems. The line manager should not make presumptions about how the mental health problem is impacting on the employee personally and professionally. Initial action should be to check how the employee is getting on at work, in the same manner as if the employee was suffering from a known physical health problem.

Employee Responsibilities

Any support required by the employee is likely to be known by the employee themselves. MG ALBA actively encourages employees to be open and honest about their mental health and to inform their line manager of any issues at an early opportunity to allow these to be addressed. There is also an expectation on all employees to conduct themselves in a helpful and open-minded manner towards colleagues who have mental health problems.

Action Planning

With support from the HR Advisor, where a line manager identifies a mental health issue, they should work alongside the employee to create a personal wellness action plan that provides for proactive management of their mental health. This will support ongoing open communication between line managers and employees and will result in mutually agreed steps being set in place that can be monitored on an ongoing basis.

A wellness action plan should cover:

- actions and measures that can support the employee's mental health
- symptoms and triggers for poor mental health
- the impact mental health problems have, or could have, on the employee's performances
- any workplace supported required from their line manager or colleagues
- any positive actions the employee can take when suffering from poor mental health
- a review process to ensure the workplace support is having the required effect.

To ensure the plan meets the employee's requirements, it should be drafted by the employee themselves, with medical support as necessary, and then set in place with their line manager and the HR Advisor. Any information in the plan, and the plan itself, should be kept confidential and reviewed on an ongoing basis by the employee, the HR Advisor and their line manager.

Workplace Adjustments

A disability is defined as "a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial long-term effect on normal day-to-day activities". MG ALBA is legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments to an employee's role or workplace if they have a disability that places them at a disadvantage when performing their role. MG ALBA will endeavour to consider all reasonable workplace adjustments for any employee who is suffering from a mental health issue.

Examples of adjustments include:

- adjusting hours of work or the location of work, including within the building itself
- adjusting or reallocating duties of the job role
- making amendments to the workplace environment, for example adjusting lighting in the employee's office
- amending absence triggers before disciplinary action is triggered.

Once the adjustments are agreed, they will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are having the required effect.

Managing Absence and Return to Work

Where the employee is absent by reason of their mental health concerns, their line manager will communicate with the employee on a regular basis during their absence. The employee returning to work may help with their recovery, so early intervention and support from MG ALBA is important. MG ALBA's sickness absence policy will apply to the employee's absence as normal, subject to any reasonable adjustments in place for the employee.

Upon the employee's return from absence, a return-to-work plan will be discussed and agreed between the line manager and the employee to ensure necessary steps can be taken to support the employee to remain in work. This can include introducing a temporary return on amended working hours, removing stressful duties during a phased return, and providing additional workplace support as necessary.

Confidentiality

Information concerning an employee's mental health is classed as a special category of personal data. This information will only be disclosed to others in line with the MG ALBA's Privacy Notice, contact Catriona Neally for full policy details.

Training

Formal training on managing mental health in the workplace will be provided to all line managers and appointed Mental Health First Aid personnel.

Wellbeing Checklist

Without a healthy mind, body, accomplishing your daily work goals can be difficult. If you work from home, you know that sometimes you can experience loneliness, isolation, and the inability to switch your mind off. Regardless of where you are working from, it is imperative to take care of yourself and your wellbeing. Below is a checklist of suggestions to help you take care of your own wellbeing, regardless of where you are working from.

Create a schedule and stick to your routine

- Schedule short breaks throughout the day.
- Include fun activities for the day in your break schedule.

Stay physically active and healthy

- Engage with exercise you enjoy, this helps lower anxiety.
- Encourage your co-workers to work out together if appropriate.
- Stay hydrated, make sure you drink sufficient water.
- Take a few minutes to stretch regularly.

Get creative; stimulate your mind

- Engage in arts or crafts activities that interest you.
- Listen to music that calms you.
- Listen to a podcast.
- Read or listen to audio books.

Meditate and disconnect

- Disconnect from social media unless it is necessary to complete your job.
- Take a few deep breaths; breath in and out.
- Read a few pages of a book of your choice.
- Pray or meditate in silence.
- Light a scented candle, burn incense or use an essential oil diffuser.

Find your support system

- Schedule video calls with colleagues, friends, and family so that you are getting that social time.
- Speak to your manager if you are feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work.
- Seek regular professional help; speak to a therapist, psychologist, pastor etc.

Wellbeing Guidance – Burnout - Is this You?

Burnout is a state of physical and emotional exhaustion. It can occur when you experience long-term pressure in your job, or when you have worked in a physically or emotionally draining role for a long time.

Common signs of burnout:

- Feeling tired or drained most of the time
- Feeling helpless, trapped and/or defeated
- Feeling detached/alone in the world
- Having a cynical/negative outlook
- Self-doubt
- Procrastinating and taking longer to get things done
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Excessive drive/ambition/pushing yourself to work harder
- Neglecting your own needs
- Displacement of conflict (blame culture)
- No time for nonwork-related needs (withdrawing, loss of interest).
- Denial (impatience mounts, see faults in others)
- Isolation (social invitations are now a burden)
- Behavioral changes (irritability, upset, silence)
- Depersonalization (feeling detached from your life and control of it)
- Inner emptiness or anxiety (turning to other substances or activities)
- Depression
- Mental or physical collapse

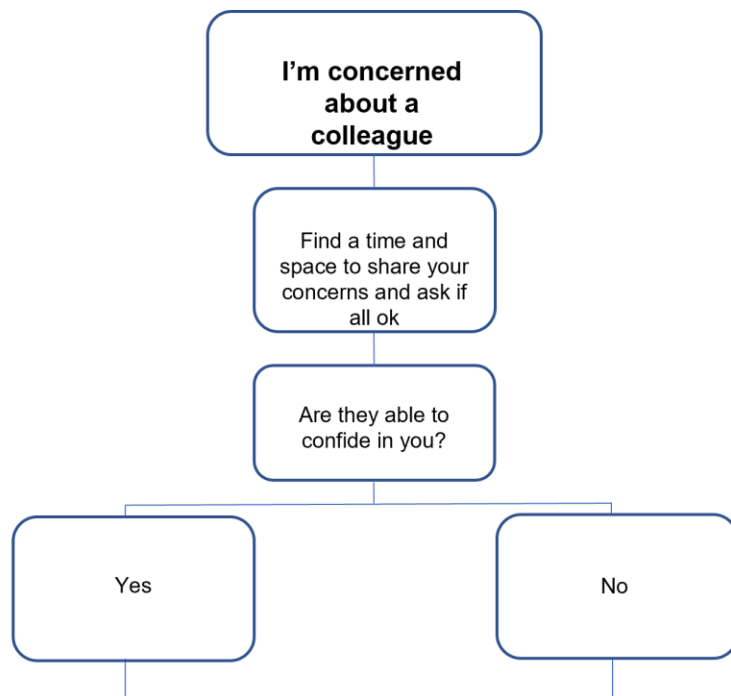
It's important to recognise that individuals may experience one or several of these signs, and they may not be occurring at the same time. Burnout is not something that tends to go away or resolve itself. It is important to address the underlying issues causing it.

You should also refer to the Stress Policy and stress risk assessments as a mechanism for seeking help and support through your line manager, the HR advisor or occupational health.

Wellbeing Guidance – Burnout – Are you worried for a colleague?

In our working lives it's often the case that we may first notice signs in the people that we work closely or regularly with. Our culture of safety and wellness means that we encourage everyone to look out for each other and notice any changes. It can often be a confidential conversation with a trusted colleague that will help someone take the next step to seek help. It's important to reassure anyone in this position

through active listening and if you are comfortable, to “ask again” if you believe someone is needing further support. Support is available from managers and to managers as detailed on the next page.



- Happy to share what's going on confidentially – remember their right to privacy
- Seek further support:
 - Line Manager
 - HR Advisor
 - Mental Health First Aiders
 - GP
 - Occupational Health
 - External support services
- Keep in dialogue but know when you need to signpost to seek further support (if not immediately)
- Agree check ins

- Not comfortable in speaking
- Not ready to speak
- No issues to address
- Remember rights to confidentiality and privacy