



Policy Document

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. Minute no:

Review Date:

1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This is the overarching policy for Mental Health and Wellbeing. It is underpinned by Section 3 of the *Witney Town Council Staff Handbook* (August 2025 edition).
- 1.2 This policy outlines Witney Town Council's commitment to protecting, promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all employees. The Council recognises that good mental health is essential for a productive, safe, and supportive work environment.
- 1.3 Mental health is our state of emotional, psychological and social wellbeing, it affects how we think, feel and act and how we cope with pressure of everyday life.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all Council employees, including part-time, full-time, temporary, agency, and contract workers.

2. Policy Statement

2.1. The Council is committed to:

- Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.
- Reducing stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health.
- Supporting employees experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Raise awareness of wellbeing services and support mechanisms available to employees and encourage access to the services.
- Complying with all relevant UK legislation and guidance.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Human Resources (HR)

- Develop and maintain resources on mental health.
- Support Senior Managers and Line Managers in dealing with cases.
- Deliver training sessions and implement awareness initiatives.

3.2 Senior Management Team

- Demonstrate commitment to mental health through leadership.
- Allocate resources to support policy implementation.
- Deal with any conflict quickly and make sure the workplace is free from bullying, harassment, racism or discrimination.

- Ensure all staff have clear job descriptions, objectives and responsibilities, and provide them with good management support, appropriate training and adequate resources to do their job.
- Ensure a physical environment that is supportive of mental health and wellbeing including sound, ergonomically designed workstation or working situation with appropriate lighting, noise levels, heating, ventilation and adequate facilities for rest breaks.
- Ensure good communication between managers, staff and teams, particularly during periods of organisational change.
- Maintain confidentiality unless disclosure is legally required.

3.3 Line Managers

- Promote open conversations about mental health.
- Complete risk assessments where stress or mental health issues are identified.
- Provide support and reasonable adjustments as required.
- Provide systems that encourage predictable working hours and reasonable workloads.
- Monitor workloads and working hours to ensure that staff are not overloaded and not overworking.
- Monitor holidays and TOIL to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.

3.4 Employees

- Take responsibility for their own mental wellbeing.
- Seek help and consider pursuing opportunities for counselling through information provided or their own GP.
- Speak to their manager if they experience mental health concerns.
- Undertake any relevant training when identified.
- Recognise that they have a responsibility for their own personal mental health and should take appropriate meal breaks and raise concerns over workloads with their Line Manager. Holidays and TOIL should be taken to ensure they are taking a break from work when necessary.
- Respect the wellbeing of others.

4. Creating a Mentally Healthy Workplace

4.1 The Council will:

- Foster an inclusive workplace culture.
- Creating a culture that supports and guidance to those with a mental health issue.
- Offering help, support and guidance to those with a mental health issue.
- Provide access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Promote mental health awareness through training and events.
- Embed wellbeing into work practices and planning.
- Conduct regular stress risk assessments in accordance with the HSE's Management Standards.

5. Support for Employees

5.1 The Council offers non-judgmental support to any staff member experiencing a mental health issue by providing:

- Access to confidential counselling and guidance and EAP services through a 24/7 helpline for professional and personal problems.
- Occupational Health support.
- Assisting those returning to work after a period of mental ill health by:
 - Making any reasonable adjustments to the role/environment.
 - Retaining and supporting staff who develop mental ill health.
- Peer support through trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) who can signpost to external resources such as Mind, NHS, and ACAS.

6. Training and Awareness

6.1 The Council will:

- Deliver mental health awareness and stress management training.
- Train staff in mental health first aid (MHFA) and active listening skills to support other staff members. Contact details of current MHFA's are displayed on all staff notice boards.
- Include wellbeing in induction processes for new employees.

7. Absence Management and Return to Work

7.1 Absences related to mental health will be managed sensitively and confidentially. Return-to-work interviews will explore whether further support or adjustments are required.

8. Confidentiality

8.1 All mental health disclosures will be handled sensitively and used only for its proper purpose. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as information might have to be disclosed when an issue results in formal proceedings or in order to protect an individual from harm or causing harm.

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 This policy will be monitored through:

- HR reports on absence trends.
- Staff surveys on wellbeing.
- Feedback from wellbeing champions or health and safety representatives.

9.2 A formal review will take place every two years or sooner if required by legislation or organisational change.