

Author: T Earle	Rev. 1.	Issued by: HR	Issue Date: April 2021	Last Review: Jan 2022
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1. Purpose

We understand the positive impact that healthy and engaged employees make to the success of our business and that mental health will play a significant role in an employees' state of mind.

We appreciate that individuals can experience periods - sometimes prolonged periods - of poor mental health in the same way as with physical health. We commit to providing support for employees going through mental health problems because we recognise such employees can provide a substantial contribution to the success of this company.

We actively encourage all employees to seek help where necessary from either management or an appointed MHFA.

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'mental health problem' includes mental health conditions that have been diagnosed by a medical professional as well as signs of stress and anxiety.

2. Legal Obligations and Compliance

We understand that, as a company, we must comply with health and safety legislation. We undertake to create a safe workplace in which we will actively take measures to limit risks to mental health and wellbeing.

We also acknowledge our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in respect of making reasonable adjustments for employees suffering from a disability.

3. Company Commitments

In addition to our legal obligations, ACL have taken the additional measure to train and appoint several Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA), the role of which is to:

- Understand the important factors affecting mental ill health
- Identify the signs and symptoms for a range of mental health conditions
- Listen non-judgementally and hold supportive conversations
- Direct people to professional help

We should point out that MHFAs' are not trained therapists or counsellors and cannot give a clinical diagnosis as to what mental health issue a person is suffering from. They should not be seen as a replacement for proper treatment of mental health issues. Instead, they are a way to identify both the symptoms and causes of mental health problems and suggest ways that both things can be resolved.

Anyone seeking assistance from a MHFA should do so in the knowledge that this will be treated with the upmost confidence. Information will only be shared with your Manager and the HR team or the emergency services if the MHFA feels that the employee seeking help is in danger of causing harm to themselves or others or is unable to continue in their current job role.

All Managers have a duty of care to support and provide advice to their employees, their responsibilities are outlined below. We have also appointed MHFA's in addition to this support. The MHFA team members come from a range of different departments and job roles within the business to create a diverse and accessible support network that better serves the needs of our employees. In addition to the MHFA's, Managers also have a duty of care to support and provide advice to their employees as necessary, their responsibilities of which are outlined below.

Managers' responsibilities

In the first instance the Manager will invite the employee to a private meeting and ask them to talk openly about their mental health problems. The manager will not make presumptions about how the mental health problem is impacting on the employee personally and professionally. Initial action will include checking how the employee is getting on at work, in the same manner as if the employee was suffering from a known physical health problem.

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In a more general sense, managers will strive to create an environment in which employees feel capable of approaching their manager to discuss their mental health.

Employee responsibilities

Any support required by the employee is likely to be known by the employee themselves. We actively encourage employees to be open and honest about their mental health and to inform their manager or a MHFA 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.

Behaviour which is deemed by us as being harassing or bullying in nature which is either a contributory factor to an employee's poor mental health, or is in reaction to the employee's current situation, is unacceptable and will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

Wellbeing Plan

a. Employee action plan

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

The manager will ask the employee to review the plan to ensure it meets their requirements, with medical support as necessary, and then it will be set in place with their manager. Any information in the plan, and the plan itself, will be kept confidential and reviewed on an ongoing basis by both the employee and their manager.

b. Managing absence and return to work

Where the employee is absent by reason of their mental health concerns, their manager will communicate with the employee at regular intervals during their absence as agreed with the employee. Our 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 meeting will take place and any return to work plan agreed between the manager and the employee to ensure necessary steps can be taken to support the employee to remain in work.

c. Occupational Health Referral

With the employee's consent, a referral will be made to an external occupational health expert who will undertake an assessment on the employee's current condition in order to ascertain how we may provide appropriate support to the employee. The employee will be asked to agree that any report produced in connection with any such examination may be disclosed to ACL and that we may discuss the contents of the report with our advisers and the relevant Occupational Health practitioner(s). If the employee does not agree to the disclosure of the report this may have serious repercussions on our ability to facilitate your return to work and/or consider any reasonable adjustments. We therefore expect cooperation at all times.

4. Confidentiality

Information concerning an employee's mental health is defined as sensitive personal information. This information will only be disclosed to others where necessary. Information relating to an individual's health will not normally be shared internally or externally with third parties without express written consent. However, employees should be aware that if consent is not given then the company and your colleagues may not be able to make any reasonable adjustments required. On rare occasions it may be deemed necessary to share information with a third party such as emergency services without your permission.

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5. Continual Improvement

In accordance with our ISO 9001:2015 accreditation all ACL policies will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure we continue to meet our legal obligations and that they remain effective and representative of our company. Continual improvement is a strategy to keep the company focused in improving the ways we manage our business functions to ensure the ongoing success of our company as well as achieving our core objectives.

6. Communication

Open communication is a key value within ACL and as such we strongly encourage all stakeholders to play an active role in all that we do and regularly seek feedback/suggestions. Should you have any concerns regarding the contents of this policy or any others then please email your comments to hr@acl.uk.com

Access to all policies is available via the People HR app. Employees will be alerted to updates as they occur.

Useful Contacts

NHS	www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/ or www.nhs.uk/livewell/mentalhealth Call NHS 111.
Mind	www.mind.org.uk Call 0300 123 3393 Text 86463
Samaritans	www.samaritans.org.uk Call 116 123
SHOUT	www.giveusashout.org Text 'shout' to 85258