

# IMSP060AZ: WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Version 1.3 (09/2024)



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**Departments: HR**

**Document Owner: Group HR Director**

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| Document History |           |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------|-----------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Version number   | Edited By | Date reviewed | Summary of changes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1.0              | HR        |               | New Policy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 1.1              | HR        | May 2020      | Inclusion of wellbeing, training for managers around mental health awareness, signposting support to Mental Health First Aiders, increasing effective communication through people management and leadership, working practices are progressive and grow productivity and increase employee retention. |
| 1.2              | HR        | May 2023      | Integration of Mental Health Data Policy & Amended appendices and process clarified for supporting MH in the workplace                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1.3              | HR        | Sept 2024     | Minor amends following recommendations from Mind Policy Review as part of Index 2023/24                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

## 1. PURPOSE

We are committed to achieving high levels of employee wellbeing across our workforce by creating a supportive working environment for both physical and mental health, but also recognising the positive impact working practices have.

Through our approach to leadership and people management we promote a positive mental health and wellbeing culture for our workforce. We strive to create an open and supportive culture, where we can identify and reduce the causes of stress at work and enhance mental health and wellbeing. Where we identify mental ill health, we provide the appropriate support for those employees, whether this is work related or personal and taking into account individual needs e.g. race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender

identity, having a disability or health condition, experiences relating to pregnancy, parenting or caring responsibilities, living in poverty or being an older or younger worker.

The wellbeing and mental health of our workforce drives productivity and the Company's success. To ensure this policy embeds into our culture and daily practices we have a Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy Group that ensures effective implementation.

We recognise our moral and legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that our employees' health is not put at risk by excessive pressures or demands arising from our working practices.

This policy takes account of our obligations under the Health and Safety at Work 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.

## **2. SCOPE**

The scope of this policy can be summarised as follows:

- Increasing the wellbeing of our employees by effective communication through people management and leadership.
- Ensuring our adopted working practices are progressive and grow productivity and increase employee retention.
- Encourage honesty and openness to facilitate mental health issues being identified and reported. Ensure effective support by increasing awareness and understanding across the workforce. The business strives to ensure all employees feel confident in being able to raise any concerns they have about their work or working environment to others, and for those listening to understand what that means and what action should be taken.
- Ensure we signpost the support that is available and this is visible and known by the workforce together with the availability of sufficient numbers and trained MHFAiders to promote this.
- To recognise the important role of the MHFAider to support our Group commitment to mental health and wellbeing.
- To ensure Mears Group follows recognised standards of good practice in providing support for employees who are experiencing poor mental health.

- To ensure information from confidential conversations is recorded, stored securely and used appropriately.
- Mental health is part of the wider wellbeing agenda within our workplace complemented by access to information and resources that increase employees' knowledge and awareness on key health areas.

### **3. DEFINITIONS**

Wellbeing – the state of being comfortable, happy and healthy.

Mental Health - the ability to cope with day-to-day pressures of normal life.

Stress - the adverse feeling which is experienced when excessive pressures or other types of demand are placed on someone's ability to cope with daily life.

Mental Health First Aider (MHFAider) - refers to an employee who has been trained in mental health first aid, to support and improve the mental health of the Company's employees and to provide interventions that proactively help employees who may be developing a mental health issue.

Wellbeing Initial Discussion Form – used to assist in facilitating a conversation with an employee when we become aware that they are experiencing poor mental health and/or wellbeing. This form is for use by MHFAiders and line managers.

Wellbeing Action Plan – used to record and monitor actions taken in response to concerns discussed and support to be put in place.

### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Whilst our Senior Management Team have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, we believe that to promote good mental health at work all employees should be aware of their obligations under this policy and the process that should be followed when they are informed that one of their colleagues is experiencing stress or poor mental health.

Employees are responsible for reading, understanding, and facilitating this policy. Employees must speak to their line manager if they experience or are aware of a situation that may lead to a mental health problem.

MHFAiders are responsible for providing initial support and guidance on where to find specialist support to any employee who contacts them, ensuring that the Wellbeing Initial Discussion Form is completed and stored securely on their personal drive until they are

able to upload the documentation onto a Service Now case. Once uploaded to ServiceNow, local copies of the documentation must be deleted.

Line managers are responsible for following the process as set out below when they become aware that an employee is experiencing poor mental health and/or wellbeing. The line manager may become aware because the employee is taking frequent time off for sickness, they are absent from work long-term, they have declared a long-term mental health condition in Workday or changes in behaviour/performance at work have been identified.

The HR team will be responsible for providing advice and guidance to managers on the process to follow when an employee is experiencing poor mental health and/or wellbeing, advice on reasonable adjustments or other support that could be put in place and ensuring the Wellbeing Initial Discussion Form and/or Wellbeing Action Plans are uploaded to Workday and accessible by HR only. Should the documents need to be accessed in the future, this access will be limited to HR, or the authorities in the case of safeguarding and/or legal requirements.

The Health and Safety team are responsible for providing advice and guidance to line managers on an employee's ability to carry out their role safely.

## **5. POLICY**

Increasing the wellbeing of employees by effective communication through people management and leadership.

We strive to achieve effective communication that delivers a valued and principled approach to the leadership required within the Company in line with our culture and values. By reinforcing the Company's approach to dignity at work, adding social value and responsibility, we encourage volunteering and investing in the communities we serve. Our approach to fairness and inclusion embraces difference and secures our employee engagement linked to the Company's values. We achieve this by having clearly defined standards of behaviour and conduct that are known, understood and reinforced across the business.

It is important to the Company that employee voices are heard. Our open communication through Connect and the Voice of the Colleague forum encourages employee feedback, as do the various employee surveys that take place. We strive to ensure open and honest feedback is identified, considered, and responded to in a responsible and proactive way.

Through effective leadership, our management teams are encouraged to embrace the letter and spirit of the Company's ambition to have a truly inclusive culture where management style embraces teamwork, fostering positive relationships across the workforce, benefitting the wellbeing of our employees.

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Ensuring our adopted working practices are progressive and grow productivity and increase employee retention.

Promoting a healthy working environment through our culture is key to physical and mental health. Whereas physical safety is recognised through our Health & Safety policies, mental health is addressed through the management of stress and ensuring our managers are capable of dealing with difficult conversations within the workplace and signposting employees to appropriate resources. (Please see below). Providing rewarding and satisfying work, where all our employees can be the best they can be is achieved not only through our working environment, but also through our approach to how we organise work and thereafter manage the performance of our employees carrying out the work.

Promoting work-life balance is key to ensuring employees remain refreshed and productive and to achieve this we will consider flexible working arrangements where this works effectively for the employee and the business. (See Flexible Working Policy)

The goals and ambitions of the Company are effectively cascaded and are measured at annual Performance Reviews. Setting employees objectives and ensuring they receive open, honest feedback is key to their wellbeing and will have a positive impact on attendance, employee retention, engagement, avoiding presenteeism and other adverse impacts a disengaged workforce can have on the Company.

Bridging the gap will be done via carefully crafted meaningful development plans and opportunities for learning through communicated routes of progression within the Company. (Please see Performance Management Policy).

### Mental Health

We all have mental health, it is the ability to be able to cope with the normal pressures associated with day-to-day life, and it is our state of 'wellbeing'. Individuals' mental health will change naturally over time and also in response to internal factors, such as genetics or brain chemistry, and external factors including life experiences.

Positive mental health allows people to realise their full potential, cope with the stresses of life, work productively and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

Mental health can also influence the ways in which we handle stress. In turn, stress can affect an employee's physical and mental health and wellbeing, impacting their behaviour, performance and relationships with other employees.

We recognise that all individuals are different and people with the same mental health condition can experience different symptoms and to a different extent. We therefore strive to tailor support to employees' specific needs.

Stress is the adverse feeling which is experienced when excessive pressures or other types of demand are placed on someone's ability to cope with daily life. Stress is not an illness but, excessive or sustained work pressures can lead to stress.

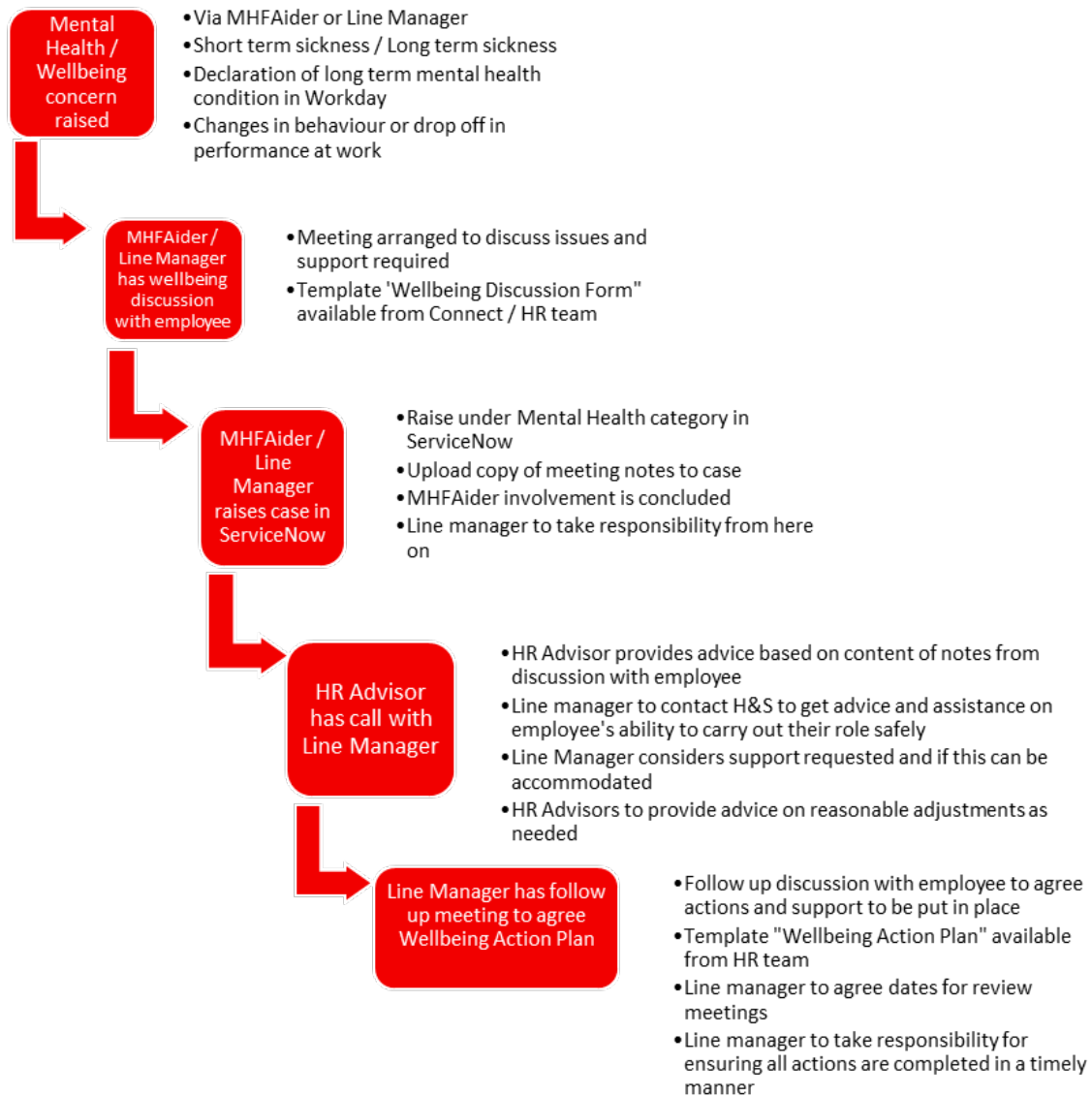
There is therefore an important distinction between working under pressure and experiencing stress. It is healthy and essential for employees to experience challenges within their lives that cause positive levels of pressure i.e. to make decisions within a challenging situation. Certain levels of pressure can be motivational and can improve and drive performance, it can enable individuals to meet their full potential and provide a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. However, when pressure becomes excessive, stress is often the consequence, and stress can have a detrimental impact on someone's mental and physical health.

We recognise that there is still stigma and misunderstanding about mental health in society and the workplace. We aim for every employee to feel that they have the option, permission and that they feel safe to discuss their mental health at work. By embedding our policy into practice, we strive to increase awareness, break the silence and create a truly inclusive culture.

We all play a part in supporting our own and fellow employees' positive mental health at work, by reinforcing a responsible culture and creating awareness to issues that we identify.

#### Mental Health First Aiders

Where an employee has sought guidance from a MHFAider, the MHFAider is required to follow the process set out below. They will also be required to provide anonymised reports on a monthly basis to the Learning & Development team. These reports will be standardised to ensure data is captured and measured for effectiveness. The report will contain statistics relating to time spent in hours providing any support to employees, how many have been approached by employees, an indication of concerns i.e. personal or work, the number of wellbeing plans that have been completed and the branch the employee is based at.

Process:Manager Training and Skills dealing with Mental Health

We strive to train our managers to be skilled and capable in having conversations with employees who are experiencing mental health issues. We have incorporated mental health awareness training into our induction and mandatory training. Throughout our training we recognise the importance of being able to spot the early warning signs, enhancing managers' confidence to have supportive conversations with employees.



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MHFAiders receive regular refresher training on core skills as well as being engaged in Continuous Development Plans.

We recognise that good people management will help manage and prevent stress which can be linked to many mental health conditions. Underpinning this, equipping our management team to effectively embrace Performance Management and proactively manage conflict will create positive working environments that foster employee wellbeing, resilience, trust and confidence.

#### Signposting support

MHFAiders and Line Managers are trained to identify expert sources of support, whether that is recommending a visit to the employee's GP or recommending an occupational health assessment is discussed with their line manager. In addition to the Employee Assistance Programme various mental health charities are supportive to the distinct situations:

Mind - [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

Rethink Mental Illness - [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

Samaritans - [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

Remploy Mental Health Support - [www.remploy.co.uk/mentalhealth](http://www.remploy.co.uk/mentalhealth)

Cruse Bereavement Care – [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

#### Confidentiality and Protection

Any report made under this policy will be treated in the strictest of confidence. Everyone, including all MHFAiders, is responsible for observing this confidentiality when supporting an employee who is experiencing mental health issues or because they are otherwise involved in the operation of a policy or procedure dealing with mental health. Any breach of this confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action.

There will be occasions when matters reported may have to be disclosed to others. For example, where duties need to be reallocated within a team or where, as the result of reported bullying or misconduct, a disciplinary investigation and/or proceedings take place. If this is the case, matters will be discussed before any action is taken where appropriate. Furthermore, if an employee discloses any intention to harm themselves or others to a MHFAider or employee of the business then they will support them by making this information available to the relevant personnel/emergency services.

Employees who report that they are experiencing mental health issues, support an employee in making such a report or who participate in any investigation connected with this policy will be protected from any form of intimidation or victimisation. If this has not been the case, the employee should notify their line manager or HR team. They may also raise a complaint in accordance with our Grievance Procedure.

### Further Information

For further information, guidance and support on the implementation of this policy employees should speak to their line manager, HR Business Partner or HR Advisor Team.

## **6. OTHER RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

Management of Attendance Policy  
Flexible Working Policy  
Data Protection Policy  
Grievance Policy  
Fairness and Inclusion Policy  
Safeguarding Policy  
Health & Safety  
Bullying & Harassment Policy  
Performance Management Policy  
Disciplinary Policy

## **7. APPENDICES**

Wellbeing Initial Discussion Form  
Wellbeing Action Plan

## Appendix 1: Wellbeing Initial Discussion Form

|                 |  |                  |  |
|-----------------|--|------------------|--|
| <b>Date</b>     |  | <b>Time</b>      |  |
| <b>Location</b> |  | <b>Attendees</b> |  |

The purpose of this discussion is to open up a dialogue between us in order to understand your needs and experiences and ultimately better support your mental health.

We will cover:

- ☐ approaches you will take and behaviours you can adopt to support your mental wellbeing
- ☐ early warning signs of poor mental health that we can look out for
- ☐ any workplace triggers for poor mental health or stress
- ☐ potential impact of poor mental health on your performance, if any
- ☐ what support you need
- ☐ actions and positive steps we will take if you are experiencing stress or poor mental health
- ☐ an agreed time to review any support measures that have been put in place to see if they're working
- ☐ anything else that you feel would be useful in supporting your mental health

Confidentiality:

The information in this form will be held confidentially within ServiceNow when advice is being sought from the HR Advisory team and regularly reviewed by us together. It will then be added into your record in Workday. You only need to provide information that you are comfortable sharing as it can help us to agree, together, how to practically support you in your role and address any health needs.

In order to fulfil our duty of care to keep you safe at work, we will be obliged to break confidentiality if you are experiencing a crisis. If we believe that you are at serious risk of harm, we will call the emergency services.

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How are you currently feeling?                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                               |
| When did you start to feel like this?                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                               |
| What do you think has caused you to feel this way?<br>(For example, problems at home, significant change in personal life, difficulties at work or a combination of factors)? |
|                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Have you spoken with anyone including your GP about how you are feeling? If so, when and who did you speak with? If not, why did you not feel able to talk to someone?        |
|                                                                                                                                                                               |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Do you have support networks outside of work? Do you need any help to identify external organisations that could assist you?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| What support could we put in place to assist you at this time?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Have you experienced similar issues at all in the past? If so, when? How did <b>you</b> overcome them (if indeed you did)? What support did you receive? Did it help?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| What coping strategies do you already use for dealing with poor mental health?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| How might experiencing poor mental health impact on your work?<br>(For example you may find it difficult to make decisions, struggle to prioritise work tasks, difficulty with concentration, drowsiness, confusion, headaches)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Are there any early warning signs that we might notice when you are starting to experience poor mental health?<br>(For example changes in normal working patterns, withdrawing from colleagues)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| What support could be put in place to minimise triggers or help you to manage the impact?<br>(For example extra catch-up time with your manager, guidance on prioritising workload, flexible working patterns, consider reasonable adjustments)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Are there elements of your individual working style or temperament that it is worth us being aware of?<br>(For example a preference for more face to face or more email contact, a need for quiet reflection time prior to meetings or creative tasks, negotiation on deadlines before they are set, having a written plan of work in place which can be reviewed and amended regularly, clear deadlines if you have a tendency to over-work a task, tendency to have particularly high or low energy in the morning or in the afternoon) |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| If we notice early warning signs that you are experiencing poor mental health – what should we do?<br>(For example talk to you discreetly about it, contact someone that you have asked to be contacted)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What steps can you take if you start to experience poor mental health at work? Is there anything we need to do to facilitate them? |
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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (For example you might like to take a break from your desk and go for a short walk, or ask your line manager for support) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------|
| Is there anything else that you would like to share? |
|------------------------------------------------------|

Thank you for taking the time to speak to me today.

Next steps: MHFAider/Line Manager – Raise a ServiceNow case. HR Advisory team to provide advice to the line manager prior to holding the next meeting.

Appendix 2: Wellbeing Action Plan

|                            |                                                          |                            |                                                          |                           |                                                                         |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date/Time                  |                                                          | Location                   |                                                          | Attendees                 |                                                                         |
| Start Date                 |                                                          | Follow Up Meeting Required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | Date of Follow Up Meeting |                                                                         |
| External Referral required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | Referral details           |                                                          | Plan status               | Completed <input type="checkbox"/><br>On-going <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Specific Issue Identified | Solution to be implemented | Implementation date | Person responsible | Completed |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------|
|                           |                            |                     |                    |           |
|                           |                            |                     |                    |           |
|                           |                            |                     |                    |           |
| Additional Comments:      |                            |                     |                    |           |