

VERSION: 2

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Learner Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

"Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community."

(World Health Organisation)



1. Policy Statement

“Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

(World Health Organisation)

- 1.1 Protocol aims to promote positive mental health for every member of our community by using a whole company approach, underpinned by specialised and targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable learners.
- 1.2 By providing a supportive and healthy environment protocol aims to enrich the experiences of all learners, promoting a culture of mental wellbeing and emotional resilience where it is easy to seek help and where learners have the motivation and skills to support their peers.
- 1.3 In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, Protocol aims to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures, Protocol can promote a safe and stable environment for learners affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.
- 1.4 Good mental health is defined as:
 - 1.4.1 feel relatively **confident** in yourself and having positive [self-esteem](#);
 - 1.4.2 feeling and expressing a range of emotions;
 - 1.4.3 building and maintaining **good relationships** with others;
 - 1.4.4 feeling engaged with the world around you;
 - 1.4.5 living and working productively;
 - 1.4.6 coping with the [stresses](#) of daily life; and
 - 1.4.7 adapting and managing in times of change and uncertainty (adapted from [Mind UK](#)).

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy describes Protocol's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for learners.
- 2.2 The policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.
- 2.3 The policy aims to:
 - 2.3.1 support and develop wellbeing and emotional resilience in staff and learners;
 - 2.3.2 promote positive mental health in all learners;
 - 2.3.3 increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues;
 - 2.3.4 alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health;
 - 2.3.5 provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues; and
 - 2.3.6 provide support to learners experiencing mental ill health

3. Staff Responsibility

- 3.1 Staff have a responsibility to promote the emotional resilience, wellbeing and positive mental health of learners.
- 3.2 Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a learner should speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team. If there is concern that the learner is in danger of immediate harm, then safeguarding and child protection procedures should be followed. If the learner presents a medical emergency, then the procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.
- 3.3 Where a referral to Children And Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or another external service is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4. Teaching about Mental Health

- 4.1 The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by learners to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of the tutorial programme for learners on Study Programmes.
- 4.2 The specific content of tutorials is determined by the specific needs of the cohort but there will always be an emphasis on enabling learners to develop their skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.
- 4.3 Protocol follows appropriate guidelines to ensure that mental health and emotional wellbeing issues are taught in a safe and sensitive manner.

5. Resources for Mental Health and Wellbeing

- 5.1 Protocol has the following resources to provide support for mental health and well-being:
 - 5.1.1 Be Safe team – Safeguarding;
 - 5.1.2 Personal Development Coaches/Tutors for 16-19 learners;
 - 5.1.3 Learning Support and Inclusive Learning Advisors;
 - 5.1.4 Healthy Minds Matter, provides a range of information and resources for mental health and wellbeing, including guidance on managing learner disclosure, so that staff can support and signpost learners;
 - 5.1.5 Staff training; and
 - 5.1.6 Links with and support from external agencies e.g., CAMHS; Emotionally Healthy Schools programme; drug and alcohol services

6. Signposting

- 6.1 Protocol ensures that staff and learners are aware of sources of support within Protocol and in the local community.

- 6.2 Protocol displays relevant sources of support in communal areas such as the Website, Moodle, classrooms, corridors, and toilets. Posters, leaflets and online resources highlight services and information of support to learners.
- 6.3 By highlighting sources of support, Protocol increases the chances of learners seeking help by ensuring learners understand:
 - 6.3.1 what help is available;
 - 6.3.2 who it is aimed at;
 - 6.3.3 how to access it;
 - 6.3.4 why to access it; and
 - 6.3.5 what is likely to happen next.

7. Warning Signs

- 7.1 Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a learner is experiencing mental health or wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the Be Safe team.
- 7.2 Possible warning signs include:
 - 7.2.1 physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental;
 - 7.2.2 changes in eating or sleeping habits;
 - 7.2.3 increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn;
 - 7.2.4 changes in activity and mood;
 - 7.2.5 talking or joking about self-harm or suicide;
 - 7.2.6 abusing drugs or alcohol;
 - 7.2.7 expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope;
 - 7.2.8 changes in clothing, e.g., long sleeves in warm weather;
 - 7.2.9 secretive behaviour; and
 - 7.2.10 lateness to or absence from Protocol or employer.
- 7.3 It is important to note that any change in the usual behaviour or presentation of a learner may indicate poor mental health and this should be considered as a possible explanation.

8. Managing Disclosures

- 8.1 A learner may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff and so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.
- 8.2 If a learner chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.
- 8.3 All disclosures should be recorded using the Safeguarding Report Form and immediately passed on to the Be Safe team.
- 8.4 Staff should listen rather than advise, with full consideration of the learner's emotional and physical safety.

9. Confidentiality

- 9.1 Staff must be honest about the issue of confidentiality. Staff should never share information about a learner without first telling them. Ideally staff should receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff, an external agency and/or a parent/carer in line with our safeguarding policy and where there is a risk of harm to the learner themselves or others.
- 9.2 If a learner gives staff reason to believe that there may be underlying safeguarding or child protection issues, a referral to the Be Safe team must be made immediately.

10. Training

- 10.1 All staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues in addition to their regular safeguarding training. Staff who require more in-depth knowledge will have access to relevant training and additional training for staff will also be supported throughout the year.
- 10.2 Protocol staff can discuss their own training needs with their line manager both during their Personal Development Review or in a Feedback Review and at other times of the year as a need becomes evident.
- 10.3 Parents/carers are signposted to relevant information and training through the Protocol website.

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