

2.12 Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

1. Introduction

URBED are committed to support the health and wellbeing of our employees, and this includes mental health. Mental health is complex and can affect people in different ways, sometimes we might experience mental health concerns that can be temporary and are related to specific moments in our lives, or we might experience difficulties with our mental health longer term. Our mental health may change over time, just like our physical health does. The purpose of this Policy is to support and encourage all staff to talk about their mental health without prejudice or stigma, to share what support is in place at URBED and where else support and help can be found.

As an employer, we are signed up to the 'Where's Your Head At?'¹ manifesto. We recognise that:

1. Everyone has mental health – it doesn't discriminate, so every organisation needs to stand up, tackle the stigma, and prioritise mental health in the workplace.
2. We need to build a diverse and inclusive workplace to lead to a happier and healthier working environment where people feel free to bring their whole selves to work.
3. We need to treat mental and physical health equally in the workplace. Strengthening how mental health is protected under health and safety legislation is a key part of this – every employee has a right to mental health first aid just as they do physical first aid.
4. Employers need to turn mental health awareness into positive action and develop a 'whole organisation' approach to workplace mental health by striving to implement the six 'core standards' for a mentally healthy workplace as set out in the Government's Thriving at Work review.
 - I. Produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan
 - II. Develop mental health awareness among employees
 - III. Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling
 - IV. Provide employees with good working conditions
 - V. Promote effective people management
 - VI. Routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing.

¹ <http://www.wheresyourheadat.org/manifesto/>

1.1 Scope of policy

This policy covers all employees (including those on fixed-term contracts).

1.2 Aims of policy

This policy sets out our commitments and procedures for creating a workplace that supports the mental health and wellbeing of staff, in a way that attends to both. Any employee who has any questions about this policy or about any other aspect of his/her entitlements should contact the Personnel Group.

1.3 Legal Considerations

The following pieces of legislation apply to this policy: Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASWA), Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA), Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Equality Act 2010, Mental Health (Discrimination) Act 2013.

Date of original policy:	September 2019
Signed on behalf of the directors by (name and job title):	Helen Grimshaw, Senior Consultant and Director.
Signature:	
Date of adoption of current version:	25 September 2019
Version No.	2.12

2. Our commitments

We're committed to taking all reasonable steps to make sure that we:

- listen to you if you tell us about your mental health concerns
- keep information about your mental health confidential
- support you if you're experiencing mental health issues, making reasonable adjustments where needed
- treat you with respect
- not making judgements or assumptions about you because you've told us about a mental health issue
- help all our colleagues to be more aware about mental health
- create a work environment that encourages a healthy work/life balance
- treat any issues of bullying and harassment in relation to mental health issues seriously (see our Equal Opportunities & Dignity at Work Policy).

2.1 Our response to an episode of mental ill health

2.1.1 Telling us

If you're living with a mental health issue, we know it can be a difficult step to tell people about it. But we encourage you to talk to the personnel group (or any colleague you feel comfortable with), so we can give you the support you need. You can mention it in your next one-to-one or ask to meet with them just to talk about this. Whatever works for you.

We won't judge you. We will listen to you and talk to you about what we can do to help. You might feel it's enough for us just to be aware of what you're experiencing. Or we might need to make changes to your work or work environment to help – there's more information about reasonable adjustments in the section below. You can discuss and agree what will happen next.

We may suggest a range of resources and organisations, to get some help and advice. We will support you in making and attending a GP appointment if you wish to, during work hours, just like any other doctor's appointment. If you tell anyone about your mental health concerns, they'll keep this confidential and won't share this information unless you say it's okay – except if we've got serious concerns for your safety or that of others.

2.1.2 Making reasonable adjustments

There might be reasonable adjustments we can make at work to help you with your mental health issue. These could be permanent changes, or just temporary ones to help while you need it.

The reasonable adjustments we can make will depend on your circumstances and we will be able to talk about what these may be together, but to give an idea these are the types of changes that might help:

- having meetings with the Personnel Group or a senior member of staff more often
- agreeing that we'll tell you information face to face, so you can talk through how you feel about it – or that we'll send information to you in an email first, so you've got time to think through how you want to talk about it. Whatever helps in your situation
- changing some of your duties
- providing a light box, or somewhere to work with more natural light – which could help if you have Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)
- changing your start and finish times, or when you take your breaks. This might help you avoid situations you know are going to be stressful for you
- agreeing for you to work somewhere else at times if you need to
- Discuss how we can support you to access mental health care within your working hours

If you think you might need a change to your working pattern to help you cope with your mental health issue, talk to the personnel group in the first instance. Just so it's clear we'll deal with this as a possible reasonable adjustment, so you don't need to make an application under the flexible working process.

2.2 Promoting wellbeing

2.2.1 Wellbeing Action Plans

Wellbeing Action Plans can be used to help you identify what keeps you well at work, what causes you to become unwell and the support you'd like to receive to boost your wellbeing or to support you through a recovery. Wellbeing Action Plans are a great way of helping everyone manage their mental health - whether you've got a mental health issue or not.

By creating a Wellbeing Action Plan, you can plan in advance what works and doesn't work for you in managing your wellbeing, what support you might need from us and what you can do to support your own mental health.

We encourage all of our employees to complete a Wellbeing Action Plan template. You can either do this on your own and then share it with the personnel group, or collaboratively. Either way, once you've shared this with the personnel group it will be kept confidential and won't be shared with anyone else.

It's good to meet with the personnel group regularly to discuss your Wellbeing Action Plan and how you feel things are going. You can use your usual one-to-one, the formal review process or just ask them if you want a catch-up.

2.2.2 Mental Health Toolkit

The personnel group maintain a Mental Health Toolkit which contains resources and signposting to help everyone look after their own mental health and support others. This is accessible via our cloud-based server system.

We recommend that all employees complete the short course made available by Mind on Mental Health for Small Workplaces. This includes 3 modules covering Building your awareness, Looking after yourself and Supporting each other:

www.smallworkplaces.mind.org.uk

3. Feedback and learning

3.1 Ongoing staff development and training

As part of our regular programme of staff development and training, which includes skills and project shares, we will include mental health and wellbeing sessions. This is part of our strategy to encourage open discussions about mental health.

3.2 Collating feedback

We are committed to collating regular feedback from staff about what the organisation does well and what needs to improve to better support mental health and wellbeing. We welcome feedback at any time and in any format – verbally or written. This should be directed to the personnel group in the first instance.

We will also issue a formal prompt for feedback periodically, providing the option of an online survey for those who would prefer to feedback more anonymously.

3.3 Mental Health First Aid

Just as we have trained First Aiders within the office for physical ill health, we are committed to ensuring that we also have at least two employees trained as a Mental Health First Aiders (by MHFA England). By having two people trained we can ensure that support also exists for the Mental Health First Aiders when dealing with any issues. Further support (either internal or from external organisations) can be accessed if required.

3.4 Respect

We recognise that bullying can have a significant impact on mental health, both as a contributing factor and in response to known or perceived mental ill health. Any concerns about bullying (whether reported by an employee or observed by others) will be treated in line with our Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work and Disciplinary Policies. Acts of

discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or clients are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the cooperative's disciplinary procedure.

4. If you need further support

If you feel that you are experiencing a mental health problem, we will encourage you to explore and access the support you feel is suitable. This may include taking time off to see your GP. We can also support you in accessing other support, such as the services offered by organisations like the Architects Benevolent Society and the Care package associated with our membership of the Federation for Small Businesses (FSB).

5. Monitoring and Review

URBED review our practice and procedures regularly to take account of new best practice and changes to legislation. This policy will be reviewed by the Personnel Group and any changes approved by Directors.