

# **Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough**

## **Health and Wellbeing Policy**

### **Policy statement**

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is committed to supporting all employees and has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all its employees. It aims to establish a positive health and wellbeing culture that includes awareness and understanding, effective processes, and positive behavior by staff at all levels.

Work can have a positive impact on our health and wellbeing. Healthy and well motivated employees can have an equally positive impact on the productivity and effectiveness of a business.

The growing awareness of work-life balance has also made us aware of the relationship between our mental and physical wellbeing and the job we do.

### **Work is good for your health**

Studies show that work is generally good for your health. As well as a financial reward it gives many of us self-esteem, companionship and status.

Healthy workplaces have:

- Leaders who help employees see where they fit into the bigger organisational picture
- Effective line managers who respect, develop and reward their staff
- Consultation that values the voice of employees and listens to their views and concerns
- Relationships based on trust and shared values
- Healthy and motivated people who go that extra mile, give good customer service, have less absence, provide commitment and creativity and have high levels of trust between employees and managers.

Trust is nurtured by involving employees in decision-making and developing an open style of communication.

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is committed to developing and maintaining a healthy workplace.

## **The purpose of the policy**

This policy provides a framework within which Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will encourage and facilitate working practices and services that support employee health and wellbeing; minimise wherever possible the detrimental impact of work-related anxiety or harmful stress on all staff and their work; and ensure that staff are appropriately supported in their workplace.

It is the policy of the Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to:

- promote health and wellbeing through its management policies and support services;
- prevent, so far as is practicable, those circumstances detrimental to health and wellbeing;
- provide a culture where all health and wellbeing issues can be discussed openly in a supportive way;
- provide a working environment free from bias and stigma, and where staff who have health difficulties receive appropriate support and adjustments to allow them to achieve their fullest potential;
- monitor and review indicators of organisational health and wellbeing, and to take steps to respond where issues are identified;
- seek to ensure that those who support or manage staff who are experiencing health and wellbeing issues are themselves supported as they respond to the needs of colleagues;
- improve understanding and awareness of health and wellbeing issues and the support available;
- ensure effective policies are in place for managing people issues such as communication, absence, grievances and sickness absence.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all staff.

While recognising that Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has a legal obligation to manage work-related factors that could harm employees' health and wellbeing, including work-related anxiety or harmful stress, we acknowledge that the majority of those who describe their wellbeing as poor attribute this to a combination of problems both at work and outside work in their personal life. This policy, therefore, makes no distinction between work-related and personal factors in supporting employee health and wellbeing.

## **Definitions, terminologies and legal responsibilities**

### **Wellbeing and mental health**

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

### **The law**

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has a statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all its employees. The Act also places a general duty on the employee to cooperate with his/her employer to enable that duty to be complied with. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will support and promote policies and practices which uphold this statutory duty.

### **Anxiety or Harmful Stress**

Anxiety of harmful stress is a physical and psychological reaction when pressures and demands are beyond an individual's ability to cope. In the workplace, it is important to distinguish between excessive pressure and demands from those that are reasonable and provide stimulating and challenging work. Much will depend on an individual's ability to cope with the pressures and demands placed upon them and different individuals will have differing abilities to cope.

### **Interactions with other policies and guidance**

This Policy supports and is aligned with other policies and guidance. Particular attention is drawn to the Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Data Protection and Safeguarding Policies.

While all dealings with staff are subject to the organisation's policy on Data Protection, confidentiality is often of paramount importance to those experiencing wellbeing difficulties. However, that confidentiality may be necessarily breached where the individual is deemed to be a risk either to themselves or to other people. The safety of the individual and/or the safety of other members of our community must take precedence over confidentiality.

## Equality Policy

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is committed to ensuring that it makes every reasonable effort to provide a supportive, inclusive environment for staff with disabilities and staff that acquire disabilities during the course of their employment. The aim is to remove barriers and/or make reasonable adjustments to the working environment and/or policies, procedures and processes which could disadvantage staff with disabilities, and, wherever possible, support disabled staff<sup>1</sup>.

## Responsibilities

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is responsible for:

- promoting a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect;
- providing support, recognising that different people have different abilities and capacities to cope with change and potentially stressful situations;
- ensuring that there is advice and guidance on procedures to support staff experiencing health and wellbeing issues, and their colleagues/line managers;
- encouraging a non-stigmatizing work environment for all staff;
- ensuring sensitivity in disclosure and maintaining confidentiality unless it is clearly unsafe to do so.
- supporting the management of sickness absence and monitoring employee turnover.
- providing advice and guidance to managers and employees and signposting support
- for work-related health and wellbeing issues.
- facilitating appropriate arrangements to support individuals experiencing health and wellbeing issues; and their managers.
- supporting managers experiencing problems with employee performance and attendance;

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<sup>1</sup> [Healthwatch policy - Equality and diversity | Healthwatch Cambridgeshire](#)

## Managers

All Managers are responsible for ensuring that safety issues reported to them, as line managers, are addressed at the appropriate level and in a timely manner.

### **Managers are responsible for:**

- risk assessing work-related anxiety or harmful stress within their department;
- providing staff with wellbeing awareness information;
- defining clear roles for employees and ensuring that the employees are competent to undertake their roles;
- treating team members with consideration and dignity, and supporting steps taken to promote a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect;
- ensuring that any member of their staff who is affected by health and wellbeing issues is appropriately and sensitively supported;
- ensuring that they are aware of guidance, policy and available support and advisory services in relation to health and wellbeing;
- supporting and encouraging flexible working practices wherever practical to do so;
- taking action where the performance and/or behaviour of a staff member may cause stress to their colleagues.

## Staff

All employees have a responsibility to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions. This includes:

- taking responsibility for their own health and wellbeing;
- informing their manager of health and wellbeing difficulties so that appropriate support can be put in place;
- raising concerns with their manager about work-place pressures and asking for help;
- participating in appraisals and responding to training and development opportunities;
- treating all team members with consideration and dignity and supporting steps taken to promote a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect;

- contributing towards a non-stigmatising culture;
- upholding confidentiality (wherever safety is not compromised);
- supporting peers within appropriate limits and boundaries.

#### Wellbeing support

To encourage a healthy culture Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is committed to supporting:

- The establishment of employee wellbeing champions
- A lead Director for wellbeing
- A range of activities to promote individual and team wellbeing.

#### Further information

ACAS Health, work and wellbeing checklist

<http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/8/n/Health-work-and-wellbeing-accessibleversion.pdf>

**Approved by Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Board of Directors**

Date: July 2021

**For review: July 2023**

**Responsible Officer**

Chief Executive Officer Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough