

Scope & Purpose

Hercules PLC is committed to promoting, protecting and sustaining the positive mental health and wellbeing of all staff. We recognise that mental health fluctuates, and we will foster a psychologically safe workplace, prevent harm, and provide timely support. This policy sets out values, responsibilities, procedures and measures to achieve these aims. Mental health conditions and the effects of stress can affect anyone, regardless of their position in the organisation. This Policy applies to all employees, learners, volunteers and contractors.

Definitions

- Positive mental health: the ability to realise potential, cope with normal stresses, work productively and contribute to the community (aligned to WHO).
- Reasonable adjustments: changes to job or workplace to reduce disadvantage for a person with a disability or long-term condition (Equality Act 2010).
- Psychosocial risks: work-related factors that may cause stress, burnout or mental ill-health (e.g., workload, role clarity, autonomy, relationships, change).

Why it matters to Hercules

Whilst most of us have positive mental health and wellbeing most of the time, our mental health can change. There may be times when we are 'thriving', times when we start to struggle, and times when we develop a diagnosable mental health condition. 1 in 6 UK workers are currently experiencing a mental health condition, and 1 in 4 workers will have some form of mental health condition in any one year. Therefore, in Hercules PLC we may have 15% of staff who are experiencing some mental health condition such as anxiety, depression, or feeling the effects of undue stress. These conditions might last a long or a short time or they might come and go. And just as we help our employees to keep physically well and support them through physical illness or disability, we undertake to do the same for our staff with respect to mental health and wellbeing. We aim to help all staff keep mentally well and to support them through periods of poor mental health whether they remain at work or take time off.

How it fits with Hercules PLC mission

Hercules PLC strives to work ***"together with our clients and workforce, one vision, one team, one solution"***. We value our employees and believe that each employee plays an important part in contributing to our goals.

What the policy aims to do

The purpose of this policy is for Hercules to establish, promote and maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all our staff and learners through workplace practices, and encourage staff to take responsibility for their own mental health and wellbeing. We pursue this aim using a whole organisation approach (see below) which includes promoting positive mental health for all staff, recognising and addressing sources of stress in the workplace, and supporting those staff who are experiencing poor mental health. This policy sets out what help is available to support all staff to have positive mental health and wellbeing, how to access help, what procedures to follow, what documents to use, and how we measure and report on its impact. By developing a positive culture and by implementing practical, relevant and effective practices we can contribute to Hercules' success and sustainability. Overall, this policy aims to:

- build and maintain a workplace environment and culture that promotes positive mental health and wellbeing and prevents discrimination (including bullying and harassment)
- increase employee knowledge and awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues and behaviours
- recognise and address sources of stress in the workplace
- support those staff who are experiencing poor mental health
- reduce stigma around depression and anxiety in the workplace
- facilitate employees' active participation in a range of initiatives that support and promote mental health and wellbeing for all staff.

Principles and Commitments

Hercules undertakes:

- to adopt a 'whole organisation approach' described in an annual plan or pledge that is reviewed by the Board and to have staff wellbeing on all Board agendas.
- to appoint a Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead on the Board and workplace champions in key parts of the organisation and to have staff wellbeing on all team meeting agendas.
- to promote staff wellbeing by engaging proactively with staff, identifying and offering wellbeing initiatives following the 5 Ways to Wellbeing (developed by the New Economics Foundation - see Appendix A), e.g. keeping active, organising social events, CPD events on wellbeing, volunteering or fundraising etc.
- to provide training for line managers and all staff to raise mental health awareness and support better wellbeing.
- to have fair and non-discriminatory recruitment practices and to welcome applications from people with mental health conditions.
- to identify and effectively address sources of stress in the workplace following the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) stress at work guidance e.g. flexible working, appropriate induction, training when roles change, training on customer care etc.
- to ask regularly about employees' wellbeing; to be aware of common mental health conditions and the impact these can have at work; to talk with employees about their work in the context of their mental health and wellbeing; to make reasonable adjustments to work during periods of poor mental health or recovery; to comply with the Equality Act 2010.
- to enable conversations about mental health without stigma.
- to provide information about and promote access to helplines and/or local services as appropriate.

Responsibilities:

Board and CEO:

- Champion mental health at Board level to have staff wellbeing on all Board agendas
- Appoint a Mental Health & Wellbeing Lead and ensure appropriate resourcing

Hercules PLC Managers have a responsibility to:

- ensure that all staff are made aware of this policy.
- Create supportive team environments, schedule regular well-being check-ins and workload reviews.
- Facilitate access to support (EAP, OH) and signpost crisis resources
- actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including its goals.

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- manage the implementation and review of this policy.

Wellbeing Champions / Mental Health First Aiders

- Offer initial listening and signposting; do not diagnose or provide therapy
- Escalate concerns appropriately and maintain confidentiality boundaries

In turn we encourage our employees to:

- Speak up early if struggling; engage in constructive conversations about support and adjustments
- understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required.
- support fellow staff in their awareness of this policy.
- support and contribute to Hercules' aim of providing a mentally healthy and supportive environment for all staff.

All staff have a responsibility to:

- take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing as well as their physical health
- take reasonable care that their actions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other people in the workplace
- alert their line manager (or, if this is not possible, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead) if they notice that their mental health is slipping or that they are struggling at work
- alert their line manager, or their colleague's line manager, if they believe that one of their colleagues is struggling with their mental health or wellbeing so that their colleague can be supported promptly and so that they themselves can be supported.
- take part in constructive conversations about what support or reasonable adjustments can be made to support them at work or on their return to work after a period of illness
- stay in touch during time off work
- avoid using stigmatising language about people with mental health conditions and avoid discriminatory behaviour.

Crisis Management and Immediate Support

- If someone is at immediate risk of harm: call Emergency Services (999) and inform Security/HR as per local procedure.
- Encourage the person to contact their GP, NHS 111, or crisis helplines; do not leave someone in distress alone if safe to stay.
- Managers must record the incident, debrief the team sensitively, and initiate post-incident support.
- Provide clear signage and intranet pages with local crisis numbers and internal contacts.

Access to Support and Reasonable Adjustments

- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP): confidential 24/7 support. Access details are published on the intranet and on noticeboards.
- Occupational Health referral where appropriate.
- Reasonable adjustments may include flexible hours, workload changes, role clarity, quiet space, phased return, or temporary alternative duties.
- Return-to-work plans: co-create and review; include triggers, support and measures of success.

How Hercules measures the impact of this policy

As an organisation, Hercules acknowledges that measuring and reporting the impact of this policy and procedures is key to achieving its aims, i.e. promoting and maintaining the mental health and wellbeing of all our staff. We are therefore committed to the effective measurement of the impact of this policy and to reporting on it regularly.

- Monitor: absence and turnover related to mental health; incident reports; survey indicators (stress, stigma, inclusion).
- staff survey data about stress and stigma - optional for staff to complete.
- number of new referrals/utilisations in regard to counselling / EAP. (anonymised trend data).

How this policy is communicated

Hercules will ensure that:

- all staff receive a copy of this policy at induction
- this policy is easily accessible by all members of the organisation
- employees are empowered to actively contribute to and provide feedback on this policy
- employees are notified of all changes to this policy.

How often this policy will be reviewed

This policy will be reviewed annually. Effectiveness of the policy will be assessed through:

- feedback from staff and management.
- reference to the impact measurements detailed above.
- review of the policy by management to determine if its overall objectives have been met and to identify both barriers and supports to ensuring that progress is sustained.

The CEO shall review this policy annually or following significant changes.



Brusk Korkmaz
Chief Executive Officer
Hercules PLC

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