

Mental health and wellbeing policy

Contents

<i>Version</i>	<i>1</i>
Policy statement	2
The purpose of the policy	2
Definitions and terminologies	2
Interactions with other policies	2
<i>This policy and our Confidentiality Policy.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>This policy and our Disciplinary Procedures.....</i>	<i>3</i>
Responsibility of Southern Ultrasound.....	3
Responsibility of staff	3
Resources for staff who provide support for others.....	3
Policy Standards.....	4
<i>Monitoring processes</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Distribution and Awareness Plan</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Approval & Review.....</i>	<i>4</i>
Appendix - Equality Impact Assessment.....	5

Version

V1	28/08/18	policy creation
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Introduction

Southern Ultrasound recognises that mental health is as important as physical health and accepts that, on average, one in four people will experience a mental health difficulty in the course of a year and that such problems can cause real and lasting damage, both to the individual and to the community. The Company also recognises that the majority of people who experience mental health difficulties can get over them or learn to live with them especially if they are supported early on.

This Policy aims to ensure that staff and feel supported in their work with **Southern Ultrasound**.

Policy statement

It is the policy of **Southern Ultrasound** to:

- promote mental health and wellbeing through its management policies, support services, information networks and by liaising appropriately with external agencies;
- prevent, so far as is practicable, those circumstances detrimental to mental health and wellbeing;
- provide an environment in which staff who have mental health difficulties receive suitable support and adjustments to their work or study circumstances to allow them to achieve their fullest potential.

The purpose of the policy

Southern Ultrasound' Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

- supports the effectiveness of its staff in the work they perform;
- seeks to prevent the unwanted development that, in responding to one individual's mental health difficulty, Southern Ultrasound might also be significantly affecting other people's mental health. For example, a member of staff who has to deal with a colleague who has mental health difficulties may find that personally distressing and disruptive to other commitments. This policy is to help individuals to respond successfully to those difficulties.

Definitions and terminologies

The term "mental health difficulties" is one which encompasses a wide range of experiences which affect an individual's ability to balance his/her life. The difficulties can range from stress and anxiety through to serious mental health conditions diagnosed and treated by the health services.

Although a difficult definition to give in precise terms, it is important to avoid the use of negative terms with stigma attached which may deter staff from accessing the support required. The inappropriate use of medical terms which might mislead, and label unnecessarily, must be avoided.

Staff are encouraged to respond to individual needs rather than labels.

Interactions with other policies

Southern Ultrasound' Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy interacts with and refines several of its already established policies.

The Company's duty of care towards its staff is determined externally by legislation such as the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Human Rights Act (1998), Data Protection Act (2018), Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001).

The Company exercises that duty of care through this Policy and through the following related policies, procedures and notes for guidance:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints and Grievance Procedures
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy

Whilst mental health and well-being issues may be relevant to the application of the above policies, the relationship between this policy and the following other policies, procedures and notes for guidance is especially important:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure

This policy and our Confidentiality Policy

While all dealings with staff are subject to the Company's Policy on Confidentiality, it must be emphasised that this is often of paramount importance with regard to those experiencing mental health difficulties. However, it must also be emphasised that confidentiality may be necessarily breached in certain circumstances where the individual is deemed to be a risk either to him/herself or to other people.

If there is a conflict between these two statements, then it should be stressed that the safety of the individual and/or the safety of other members of our community takes precedence over confidentiality.

This policy and our Disciplinary Procedures

The behaviour of some individuals experiencing a mental health difficulty may be very disruptive and may contravene Disciplinary Codes and/or be detrimental to the wellbeing of other members of Staff or our Service-users.

Formal action may be suspended where an individual has declared to the company a mental health difficulty in order to bring to the individual's attention the effects of the behaviour, and to seek to identify suitable support to moderate that behaviour.

Responsibility of Southern Ultrasound

- promote the emphasis towards good mental health and wellbeing and consideration of this goal within all relevant aspects of its operation.
- provide central support and promote external agencies able to offer advice/care.
- produce and disseminate Guidance Notes to this Policy to offer practical step-by-step procedures
- provide training and guidance to staff.
- encourage a non-stigmatising community to enhance the effectiveness of its actions.
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy through its annual reporting schemes.

Responsibility of staff

All staff are expected to:

- Acknowledge if they have a mental health issue and inform Company management
- maintain a non-stigmatising community.
- treat each member of staff with a mental health difficulty as an individual, not a problem or a condition.
- take advantage of training and information sources.
- uphold confidentiality (wherever safety is not at risk).
- recognise the limits to what they can do.

The Company recognises that where individuals help a colleague experiencing mental health difficulties, each person has boundaries or limits to his/her knowledge, responsibilities and competence, and that these boundaries must be respected.

Resources for staff who provide support for others

On occasion, an individual may become more deeply involved in offering support and becomes in effect an "informal carer". The Company recognises the value of such help to individuals out with the more formal support services but also recognises the possible stresses which might arise. It thus encourages such individuals to seek advice and support from the appropriate external support services on caring for both the affected person and themselves.

Policy Standards

Monitoring processes

The Director(s) monitor lateness related issues, via reports from the Service Managers. Monitoring of this policy, together with its implementation, shall be performed by the IG Lead.

Distribution and Awareness Plan

All staff are made aware of the policy as part of their induction training. If there are any significant changes to the policies that affect the way in which staff initiate or respond, these are communicated to them via team briefs and staff meetings.

A copy of the policy is available to all staff via the Policy sub-folder of the Company's on-line Governance Framework folder, and can be accessed 24/7 from any location with Web Access. A hard copy version is retained at all sites of operation.

Approval & Review

This policy has been approved by the undersigned and will be reviewed annually and any time there is a change in the Law, Guidance or Best Practice Recommendations.

Policy Created: 24/08/18

Kevin Rendell



Policy last reviewed: v1 13/03/19

Director & IG Lead

Appendix - Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment has been performed on this policy and procedure. The EIA demonstrates the policy is robust; there is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken.

		Y/N	Comments
1.	Does the policy/guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
	▪ Race	No	
	▪ Ethnic origins (inc. gypsies and travellers)	No	
	▪ Nationality	No	
	▪ Gender	No	
	▪ Culture	No	
	▪ Religion or belief	No	
	▪ Sexual orientation including lesbian, gay and bisexual people	No	
	▪ Age	No	
	▪ Disability - learning disabilities, physical disability, sensory impairment and mental health problems	No	
2.	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	No	
3.	If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	NA	
4.	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative?	NA	
5.	If so can the impact be avoided?	NA	
6.	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?	NA	
7.	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	NA	