Boxmoor Construction Mental Health Policy

Policy statement

Boxmoor Construction is committed to creating a healthy and safe working environment for all its workforce, and one that is supportive of employees experiencing mental health problems.

Boxmoor Construction recognizes that good mental health is fundamental to general wellbeing and acknowledges the benefits in morale and productivity in the workplace, of supporting employees to be able to achieve healthy working lives.

Boxmoor Construction recognizes that mental health problems can be triggered by factors both internal and external to the workplace.

Boxmoor Construction recognizes that mental health impairments, which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an individual's ability to carry out day-today activities, are likely to make the staff member a disabled person under the Equality Act 2010[1].

In accordance with equality legislation, Boxmoor Construction will work actively to eliminate discrimination against and harassment of disabled people, promote positive attitudes to disabled people and encourage disabled people to participate in public life.

Boxmoor Construction believes that any form of harassment, bullying, victimisation, or intimidation is unacceptable behaviour, undermines the dignity of an individual, is morally wrong and has a detrimental effect on the provision and delivery of services. This includes harassment and bullying related to disability and an individual's mental health problems. For this reason, it will not be tolerated.

Boxmoor Construction recognises that bullying and harassment around mental health problems may include:

1. Making public the nature of the person's mental health problem without consent
2. Using offensive and discriminatory language to describe a person or their mental health problem
3. Spreading malicious rumours about the person's mental health problem or their behaviours

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4. Belittling, ridiculing or undermining the person due to their mental health problem
5. Excluding the person from workplace or social activities.

Harassment and bullying will be treated as disciplinary offences and appropriate disciplinary action, including warnings, compulsory transfers (without protection of

wages or salary), and dismissal for serious offences, may be taken against any employee who violates the bullying and harassment or dignity at work policy and other relevant policies

Boxmoor Construction also recognises that it has a responsibility to protect employees from bullying or harassment at work by members of the public and contractors. All staff have the right to be treated with respect by the public they provide services to or work with.

Aim of the policy

The aim of this policy is to:

- promote mental health and wellbeing for all staff
- promote an open and supportive culture where mental health problems can be raised and dealt with effectively
- communicate and promote Boxmoor Construction's commitment to identifying and tackling organisational issues that negatively impact on mental health
- ensure appropriate risk assessments are regularly undertaken to prevent, identify and control sources of work-related stress and ensure that the outcomes of risk assessments are reported and acted upon
- provide employees experiencing mental health problems with access to professional assistance and support
- ensure that no worker, either current or potential, is discriminated against either directly or indirectly because of their mental health problem
- reduce barriers to employment for disabled people with mental health problems and consider and accommodate all reasonable adjustment needs.

Scope of policy

This policy applies to all staff who are employed by Boxmoor Construction on and off the premises, including those working away from their main office or normal place of work and regardless of their type of contract

This policy is supported by and developed with the trade unions representing the employees.

Definitions

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines **mental health** as "a state of **mental well-being** that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral

component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right. And it is crucial to personal, community and socioeconomic development."

Mental health problems vary markedly from clinically diagnosed conditions such as schizophrenia or borderline personality disorder through to depression and general anxiety disorder (for a full range of mental health problems, search: 'types of mental health problems' on the Mind website www.mind.org.uk). It is important to recognise that many people with mental health problems will never had a formal diagnosis.

Stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them."

The Health and Safety Executive recognises that the risks of workplace stress can lead to physical and/or mental ill health and, potentially, suicidal ideation, intent and behaviour.

Stress isn't a mental health problem in itself, but it is closely linked as it can cause mental health problems such as anxiety and depression or make existing problems worse, while mental health problems can in turn cause stress.

Therefore, the control of stress is a crucial component in creating a working environment that minimises the incidence of mental health problems.

Reducing work-related stress and anxiety

Boxmoor Construction recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

Boxmoor Construction will use the HSE Stress Management Standards to help identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.

Boxmoor Construction will consult with trade union safety representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress and they will be meaningfully involved in the risk assessment process.

Boxmoor Construction recognises that workload can influence mental health, and that working in excess of contracted hours can impact on the wellbeing of staff.

Boxmoor Construction is committed to:

- monitoring working hours arrangements to always ensure compliance with Working Time Regulations in terms of limits on working time, gaps between start and finish times, rest breaks and annual leave

- training managers to identify where workloads are exerting excessive pressures, take action to reduce or reallocate workloads, as well as work with staff in prioritising demands as part of workload management
- encouraging staff to raise workload concerns, investigate those concerns and take appropriate action
- encouraging staff to take their full annual leave and planning of workloads to maximise the opportunity to take leave.

Boxmoor Construction recognises that the uncertainty created by organisational change can greatly aggravate stress and lead to a greater incidence of mental health problems amongst staff.

Boxmoor Construction is committed to

- consulting with trade union safety representatives on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress
- conducting change through fair and consistent procedures that put communication with staff, listening to staff concerns and addressing staff concerns through negotiation with trade union representatives at the heart of the process
- undertaking equality impact assessments of any proposed large-scale organisational change that includes consideration of the potential impact on the mental health of staff
- monitoring consequences of change including assessing signs of increased pressures on staff and the need for appropriate remedial action in order to protect staff health and safety, to guard against a deterioration in staff morale and motivation, and to maintain standards of service.

Suicide prevention

Boxmoor Construction will provide information for all staff to raise awareness about mental health issues and suicide prevention.

Boxmoor Construction will ensure all staff know about the resources available for support, both from within the organisation including occupational health and the employee assistance programme, and from external organisations (see section headed Further information below).

Boxmoor Construction will aim to foster a work environment in which colleagues feel comfortable talking about problems that have an impact on their ability to do their job effectively and supporting each other during tough times.

Boxmoor Construction will identify and reduce work-related stressors that can negatively impact mental health.

Boxmoor Construction will sensitively manage and communicate the suicide or suicide attempt of an employee in a way that minimises further distress, including providing specialist support services for staff where appropriate.

Boxmoor Construction recognizes that the death of a member of staff through suicide can have a profound and lasting impact on their colleagues, particularly if the suicide happens at work. Workers may also be affected by the suicide of a friend, family member, service user, client or supplier, the relative of a colleague or somebody else known in the workplace.

Staff will be given the opportunity to seek help through the employee assistance programme, occupational health provider Express medical or counselling and to talk about what has happened. Counselling will be available both as group support and face-to-face sessions for individuals as appropriate.

After a suicide or suicide attempt of an employee, all risk assessments will be reviewed for work-related stress and mental health.

Promoting mental health and wellbeing

All staff are encouraged to develop their own wellness action plans to support their own mental health at work, and to discuss any aspects of this with their line manager and/or Occupational Health.

Research by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) has identified five key things we can all do in our everyday lives to improve our wellbeing:

Connect with other people:

- Staff are encouraged to connect with each other more by trying to speak to each other, rather than relying solely on emails or messaging.
- Line managers will use team meetings and team away days as opportunities for everyone to share experiences and get to know each other in an informal and relaxed way.

Be active:

- Informal awareness-raising events open to all staff about physical and mental health and wellbeing, including healthy eating, will be made available for all staff.
- Staff are encouraged to walk up the stairs rather than use the lift.

Keep learning:

- The review of an employee's participation in training and learning opportunities, related to both personal and career development, is a key aspect of all staff supervision and appraisals.

Take notice of the world around you:

- Staff are encouraged to take time out away from their desks and office during their lunch break.
- All teams are encouraged to have a 'clear the clutter' day.

Do things for the community and other people:

- Staff are encouraged to act as buddies and mentors to new employees and appropriate training will be provided.

Support for staff with mental health problems

Reasonable adjustments

Staff experiencing mental health problems are encouraged to inform their line manager and/or Occupational Health While this is not obligatory, it is recommended that they do so to facilitate making reasonable adjustments.

Medical information about employees will be kept strictly confidential unless they agree to disclosure. Its use will conform to data protection regulations.

Boxmoor Construction will consider and accommodate all reasonable adjustment needs of employees experiencing mental health problems and will do so within a reasonable timetable as agreed with the staff member. All decisions made about adjusting will be documented.

Boxmor Construction will consult a variety of sources of information on adjustments including:

- the employee
- the employee's GP, such as through a 'Fit for Work' Statement
- any specialist mental health support that the individual may be receiving, such as a community psychiatric nurse or consultant psychiatrist occupational health services
- any occupational health service provided by Boxmoor Construction

Boxmoor Construction recognises that a mental health problem may impact on the ability of staff to conduct their role and will consider whether workplace adjustments would address any issues.

Staff will be provided with an opportunity to disclose mental health problems impacting their work early on within appraisal, capability and disciplinary procedures.

Flexible working

Responsibilities of managers – general principles

Line managers should ensure that all employees are aware of this policy and understand their own and the employer's responsibilities. Training on issues affecting the mental health and wellbeing of staff including recognising the symptoms of stress and mental ill health, the health and safety of staff, reducing work-related stress and anxiety, suicide prevention and postvention (activities in the aftermath of a suicide), support for staff with mental health problems, promoting mental wellbeing and good management practice will be provided to all managers.

Line managers should promote good mental health in the workplace, and talk about mental health and stress within teams, to reduce or remove any stigma attached to mental health issues.

Medical information about employees will be kept strictly confidential unless they agree to disclosure. Its use will conform to data protection regulations.

Line managers should grant paid leave of absence for the required period of time for medical appointments including psychotherapy and counselling appointments, and on-going treatment of long-term mental health conditions.

Line managers should conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments focusing on reducing workplace stressors within their area of management.

Line managers should ensure there is good communication between themselves and staff including those who are working from home, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.

With the support of HR, line managers should also:

- ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties
- ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities
- monitor workloads to ensure that staff are not overloaded
- monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking
- monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.

Line managers or Occupational Health where requested should discuss the support options available for employees experiencing mental health problems, and encourage them to access workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required

Line managers will consider all requests for support sympathetically and will not discriminate against those employees who are experiencing mental health problems. All employees must be treated fairly and consistently. Employees need to be confident that they will not be treated less favourably if they disclose their mental health problem or take up any support available.

Boxmoor Construction will take seriously and investigate any complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation, using the agreed procedures and respecting confidentiality.

A line manager's failure to actively implement the bullying and harassment or dignity at work policy within their area of responsibility or to fail to deal with harassment and bullying when they become aware of it, could constitute a breach of the policy and disciplinary action may be taken. Managers have an additional responsibility to be exemplars of acceptable behaviour.

If a line manager feels that a member of staff may be suicidal, they should encourage them to seek help from their GP, the employee assistance programme, the Samaritans (https://www.samaritans.org/) or to talk to a trusted friend or family member. If it's felt that the individual is in immediate danger of taking their own life, they should dial 999 and call an ambulance, and not leave the person alone.

Responsibilities of all employees – general principles

Boxmoor Construction encourage employees to inform their line manager and/or occupational health if they are experiencing mental health problems so that any necessary support can be arranged.

Employees should raise issues of concern regarding work-related stress with their trade union safety representative, line manager or Occupational Health.

Boxmoor Construction encourages employees to speak to their GP when they are experiencing mental health problems and to get appropriate medical support. Whilst staff will be expected to endeavour to arrange any medical appointments including for psychotherapy and counselling, outside of normal working hours so as to minimise time off work, it is accepted that such appointments are not always available and paid leave will be granted.

All employees have a duty to assist in the creation of a safe working environment, where unacceptable behaviour including harassment, victimisation or discrimination is not tolerated.

Employees should report any instances of harassment, victimisation or discrimination experienced because of their mental health problem.

If an employee is found to have harassed, victimised or discriminated against another employee in relation to their mental health problem, then they will be seen as having committed a disciplinary offence, more details in the bullying and harassment or dignity at work policy

Information and training

All staff will be informed of this mental health policy. A copy of the policy will be made available to staff on the site, and a copy will be provided to new employees on induction.

In addition, training about mental health and wellbeing and about this policy will be given to all employees, including supervisors, managers and new staff. This will include information on what support is available for staff with mental health problems, and, for managers, on what their responsibilities are.

Boxmoor Construction will provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices and will provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the company's agreed stress management strategy.

Occupational health and safety staff will provide specialist advice and awareness training on stress, and train and support managers in implementing stress risk assessments.

This mental health policy will also be brought to the attention of contractors and agency staff who will be required to comply with the policy as part of their contract.

All staff, contractors and agency staff will be informed of the organisation's bullying and harassment or dignity at work policy.

Review and monitoring

Boxmoor Construction will ensure that all new employees, supervisors and managers will receive induction on the policy.

Adequate resources will be made available to fulfil the aims of this policy. The policy will be widely promoted, and copies will be freely available and displayed in *Boxmoor Construction*'s offices and sites

This policy will be reviewed and management, on a regular basis.

Further information

Employee assistance programme – provide details of your workplace EAP

Mind - providing advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They direct callers to sources of local support through its helpline

available Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm. Tel: 0300 123 3393 Email: info@mind.org.uk www.mind.org.uk

Mind Cymru - Mind in Wales, working to ensure everyone in Wales has access to the mental health information, support and services they need. www.mind.org.uk/aboutus/mind-cymru/

SANE - UK-wide mental health charity offering an advice line, 4.30-10.30pm every day of the year. Tel:0300 304 7000 www.sane.org.uk

Breathing Space - Scottish charity offering an advice line for anyone feeling low, anxious or depressed. Advice line available Monday-Thursday 6pm to 2am and Friday 6pm to Monday 6am. Tel: 0800 83 85 87 http://breathingspace.scot

Lifeline - the Northern Ireland crisis response helpline service for people who are experiencing distress or despair. Advice line available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Tel: 0808 808 8000 www.lifelinehelpline.info

Samaritans - UK wide charity offering support for all forms of acute distress. The advice line is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Tel: 116 123 www.samaritans.org

Better Health – Every Mind Matters - a national campaign and digital platform with the aim of equipping people to take simple, early steps to look after their mental health, improve their mental wellbeing and support others.

NHS.UK - providing advice, tips and tools to help individuals make the best choices about their health and wellbeing.

Date: 13-01-2025

This agreement will be reviewed on: Date 13-01-2026

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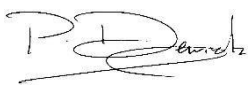
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