



INTRODUCTION

Positively contributing to the mental health and wellbeing of our beneficiaries forms part of our core objectives as a charity. We cannot do this effectively without utilising the same practices in our workplace. We are committed to maintaining a workplace and environment for everyone who is involved with our activities which promotes and supports good physical and mental health and wellbeing for all.

We recognise that higher levels of health and wellbeing make us more motivated and open to creativity, innovation, growth and development. It makes us more productive, enhances the fulfilment and enjoyment we experience in our work and increases our capability to manage the inevitable stressful elements of life and work.

The most effective way to promote and support good physical and mental health and wellbeing is to have suitable practices integrated into the day-to-day operations of the organisation. These are reviewed at least annually by the leadership team and Board of Trustees.

The principles of this policy apply to any employees, volunteers, casual workers, freelance contractors, students, trustees or anyone else working on behalf of Mortal Fools. It applies to all those taking part in our activities and projects.

LIMITATIONS

As with any job, it is expected that there will be elements of the work of Mortal Fools which staff find challenging, difficult and stress-inducing. This is a normal factor in life and work. It is the policy of Mortal Fools to implement practices and systems which mitigate for this sufficiently so that staff and other stakeholders come to no harm from undertaking their work, and additionally to support staff to develop the knowledge and personal capabilities to manage this effectively.

RESPONSIBILITY

Safeguarding an environment and working practices that support good health and wellbeing is the shared responsibility of all staff members and stakeholders. We will do this by making all stakeholders aware of this policy and its intentions.

Staff are encouraged to:

- Understand this policy and seek clarification from leadership when required.
- Consider this policy while completing work-related duties and at any time while representing the organisation.
- Support fellow staff and beneficiaries in their awareness and implementation of this policy.
- Personally contribute to maintaining a physically and psychologically safe, healthy and supportive environment for all.

KEY AREAS OF PRACTICE:

The following areas of organisational practice and operations are in place to support general health and wellbeing of staff.

Positive relationships, Accessibility and Equitable Inclusion

These are foundational principles of how we work at Mortal Fools.

- All staff have a line manager who they meet with either weekly or fortnightly and who is their go-to person to support them with their development, and all work-based issues.
- All staff members are asked to complete an *access and inclusion statement* as part of their *Induction* process stating their needs, key identity criteria and working preferences, with the information used to provide support, equipment and cross-organisational working practices to best enable everyone to thrive at work. This is reviewed in line management meetings.
- Our *Induction* process includes the creation of a staff profile, where key information about their preferences, needs and strengths are created for sharing and display in the office.
- We have a *Working Culture Guide*, structured using the PERMA™ Framework for mental wellbeing, which all staff receive training in, and which sets out the expectations for how we each contribute to cultivating positive working culture.
- We operate as an anti-discrimination organisation, committed to eradicating all forms of discrimination from all areas of our operations. To support this we utilise critical friends, mystery shopper-style feedback, specialist training and are open to continual feedback, learning and growth.
- To include the voices and influences of all staff, regular reflection and evaluation takes place across all areas of work, including opportunities for the whole staff to contribute to strategic organisational development.
- The majority of staff are trained as Mental Health First Aiders.

Working Patterns and Operations

The way we go about our work, how we work and the systems we have in place can be used to positively impact our health and wellbeing at work. We use:

- Flexible working hours, enabling staff to strike a balance between hours that suit the needs of their wider lives with the needs of the organisation, and work responsively in the day-to-day and minimise presenteeism*.
- Flexible working locations, two offices in key operational areas and the option to work a proportion of hours from home.
- Company closure weeks, where everyone takes time off to rest simultaneously, minimising the need to 'catch up' after time off.
- Regularly scheduled whole company team meetings to keep everyone informed of what's happening in the wider company, outside of their specific area of work.
- Structuring meetings to include:

- Quick personal check-ins from all staff present, helping cultivate awareness, empathy, and trust amongst colleagues.
- Repeating agendas and an allocated chairperson to support efficiency of time.
- Facilitating meetings and activities to be inclusive e.g., giving spaces for quiet thinking in meetings to enable introverted preferences to contribute more easily.
- Encouraging different forms of meeting e.g., walking meetings or change of location.
- Using Slack as a work-only communication channel, helping staff boundary work from messaging systems also used in their personal lives.
- Providing sufficient paid leave to support adequate rest and avoid stress and ill health from over work, including discretionary *Personal Days*.

**Presenteeism refers to when people are at work despite being sick, over-tired or unproductive. Being present, whilst not able to do their work effectively.*

Working Environment

The spaces and physical settings in which work takes place should be pleasant and suitable for the various types of work which we undertake.

- We have designated “Quiet” and “Noisy” offices at our main base in Ashington to suit introvert and extrovert preferences, together with access to further quiet-working, breakout and meeting spaces. Introvert and Extrovert Offices and breakout spaces.
- We provide ergonomic equipment for all workstations in the offices, and (where funding allows) additional equipment and support for setting up suitable workspaces when staff are working from home.
- To promote healthy office environments which are a suitable temperature, without excessive noise pollution, with comfortable lighting and which are smoke free. Ventilation, adequate personal space, safe thoroughfares, accessible buildings*
- Free tea, coffee, drinks and snacks are usually available in each office base.

**We recognise that our main office base at YMCA is only accessible by stairs. Should this be unsuitable for any staff, alternative arrangements will be made.*

Social Time

Social, non-work-focused time spent with colleagues deepens understanding, trust and cooperation. We organise a combination of compulsory (fully funded by the company) and optional social activities (usually at least part-funded) for staff, throughout the year including:

- Away Days
- Social Activities like trips to the beach, to see shows, meals out.
- After-work activities.

Training & Development Opportunities

There is an annual budget to cover paid-for staff training and development. This is offered alongside internal training to support the personal and professional development of staff members including, but not limited to:

- Signposting to other providers and resources, detailed [HERE](#).

- Free access to our open CONNECT training sessions.
- Professional development training and attendance at learning and networking events, where appropriate within staff roles.
- Specialist training in practices to support wellbeing e.g., Cultivating Resilience and Mental Health First Aid.

Pay Rates and Benefits

Feeling appropriately paid for their work helps staff to feel valued, which builds motivation, loyalty and productivity. This includes:

- Paying higher salaries than regional norm in cultural businesses, with salaries reviewed at least annually.
- Accreditation as a Living Wage Employer, meaning all staff earn at least an externally determined national living wage.
- Paying higher employer pension contributions and holiday leave than the statutory requirement.

Wellbeing Support Fund

This discretionary fund is designed to provide bespoke, time-limited intervention support for individuals to work on / improve health or wellbeing issues which are proven to be negatively affecting them at work. The fund is administered within the following parameters:

- As a registered charity, we are required to account for all expenditure and demonstrate how this supports the delivery of our charitable objectives.
 - Any purchases of physical items (e.g., exercise balls / mats) made by the charity remain the property of the charity.
 - Any paid for services e.g., counselling, mentoring or physiotherapy must be paid for via a direct invoice from the service provider to the charity. Any payments made directly to staff members would be subject to tax and national insurance deductions.
- Applications to this fund are made via line managers and assessed by a panel of at least two members of senior leadership. Applications must cover:
 - Challenge / need identified.
 - Action already tried to address this.
 - Potential benefit to staff member, with specific goals
 - Cost*
 - Timeframe
 - Feedback and progress statement provided at end of process.

*Whilst applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis, it is unlikely that requests amounting to more than £500 for a single person in any one year will be approved.

If staff find themselves in a crisis, we have Mental Health First Aiders on staff and / or line managers can refer them on to other specialist support and service providers.

Other related policies and Guides:

This policy should be read alongside other related documents, including:


- *Health and Safety Policy*
- *Flexi-time Management and Leave Policy*
- *Safer Spaces Policy*
- *Anti-Bullying, Equality and Diversity, and Whistleblowing Policies*
- *Guide to Line Management*
- *Working Culture Guide (scheduled for creation in Autumn 2023)*

MONITORING AND REVIEW

As a learning organisation, we are committed to striving for excellence in all that we do. We will consistently reflect and evaluate how we can improve our practices and systems to support the health and wellbeing of our staff and all who work with us.

The effectiveness of this policy will be assessed through:

- Feedback from staff and other stakeholders
- Any changes in legislation or
- A review of the policy by senior leadership and trustees to determine if objectives have been met and to identify barriers and enablers to ongoing policy implementation.

Date Policy Adopted:	September 2023
Reviewed by:	
Sue Spencer – Trustee	Kiz Crosbie – Artistic Director (CEO)
	
Approved by Board:	11 th December 2023
Next Review Due:	September 2024