

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Parish Clerk | Email: clerk@kepc.info

1. Introduction: Kidmore End Parish Council is committed to providing a working environment and management practices which promote positive wellbeing and good health, which supports employees. The council is committed to building an inclusive and supportive working environment for all their staff. The council recognises the value of maintaining the health and wellbeing of their employees and that employees' wellbeing and performance are linked.

1.1 The parish council also recognises that working conditions and environment can have an enormous impact on mental health and wellbeing and welcomes the continued involvement of employees in implementing this policy.

- Flexible working, including working from home.
- Provide quiet spaces for short-term recuperation, rest, and management of symptoms.
- Enable unplanned leave where required to assist with management of symptoms.

2. Purpose and Scope

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to encourage employees to achieve a healthy work life balance and enable them to gain access to appropriate support and opportunities when experiencing the effects of physical or mental health conditions. Whilst exercising its duty of care towards employees, the parish council acknowledges that it should be encouraging employees to take more personal responsibility for their lifestyle choices, health, and wellbeing.

2.2 This policy provides guidance:

to councillors and all employees on how to prevent, identify and manage wellbeing in the workplace.

- to develop strategies intended to improve health at work.
- on relevant support to employees ensuring that concerns are raised both proactively and in a timely manner

3. Introduction to menstrual health and peri/menopause Menstruation and peri/menopause are natural biological processes.

3.1 Kidmore End Parish Council aims to create a workplace culture where menstrual health and peri/menopause are openly discussed to enable them to work collaboratively to identify appropriate support or adjustments that enable staff to perform at their best.

3.2 Menstrual cycle and symptoms: The menstrual cycle is governed by natural changes which usually result in monthly bleeding. This process typically happens in a 28-day cycle; however, there are significant individual variations. Irregularity of the cycle can be more common in the years leading up to menopause.

3.3 Kidmore End Parish Council acknowledges that menstruation and menopause affect each person in diverse ways so no adjustment will be made without fully discussing it with the staff member.

4. Legal Responsibility & Policy Support

Kidmore End Parish Council recognises its duty of care to its employees and its legal obligation to support employee wellbeing at work under the terms of:

- Employment Rights Act 1996 (legislation.gov.uk)
- The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) (legislation.gov.uk)
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) (legislation.gov.uk)
- Human Rights Act (1998) (legislation.gov.uk)
- Data Protection Act (1998) (legislation.gov.uk)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (legislation.gov.uk)
- Equality Act (2010) (legislation.gov.uk)

5. Mental Well Being

5.1 The NHS identifies five helpful steps to positive mental wellbeing that, according to research, can really help to boost mental wellbeing:

5.2 Connect – connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues, and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships.

- Be active – you do not have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find a healthy activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.
- Keep learning – learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence.
- Give to others – even the smallest act can count, whether it is a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.
- Be mindful – be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body, and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

5.3 Taking care of your own mental health and wellbeing is extremely important to perform well at work and maintain a healthy life. The parish council is committed to tackling the stigma around mental illness and making accessing help easily available and

confidential. If employees find themselves in a crisis and require assistance there are several options for help within Sonning Common Parish Council.

6. Talk to us:

5.1 Where any employee feels unwell due to mental health issues, it is vital that they contact their Line Manager, a member of the HR Committee, or the Chair of the Council to discuss the issue. They will then explore what options are available with you to address the issue.

7. Stress

How to manage and reduce stress - stress is a feeling of being under abnormal pressure. This pressure can come from various aspects of your day-to-day life.

8. Resources

8.1 There are several specialist organisations which can offer help and advice in dealing with specific problems such as bereavement, debt, addiction, and mental wellbeing:

- **Cruse – T: 0808 808 1677** E: helpline@cruse.org.uk Offers support for bereaved people. Also supports those bereaved by pets. W: www.cruse.org.uk (England)
- **StepChange Debt Charity** - T: 0800 138 1111 W: webchat available (check website) Comprehensive debt advice. Mon-Fri 0900-20.00 & Sat 0800-16.00 www.stepchange.org
- **Drinkline** - T: 0300 123 1110 W: webchat available (check website) National helpline for anyone concerned about their or others alcohol consumption. Hours may vary. www.drinkaware.co.uk
- **Frank** – T: 0300 123 6600 Text: 82111 E: frank@talktofrank.com W: Webchat available (check website) Friendly, confidential drugs advice. www.talktofrank.com
- **GamCare** – T: 0808 802 0133 W: webchat available (check website) Information, advice, support, and free counselling for problem gambling. 24hrs a day, 7 days a week. www.gamcare.org.uk
- **Mind** – T: 0300 123 3393 Text: 86463 E: info@mind.org.uk Advice, support, and information around mental health issues, including self-harm. Mind has a legal advice line in England and Wales. Mon-Fri 0900-18.00. www.mind.org.uk
- **Samaritans** – T: 116 123 E: jo@samaritans.org . You can also write to Samaritans or visit a branch to speak to someone face to face. Whatever you are going through, you can call Samaritans free at any time, from any phone. www.samaritans.org

9. Physical Health

- **NHS 111** – T: 111 Health advice and reassurance. 111 is free from landlines and mobiles. www.nhs.uk (England)

10. Responsibilities

10.1 Kidmore End Parish Council will:

- Provide a safe and healthy working environment.
- Offer training and workplace support.
- Treat everyone with dignity as outlined in our Policies.
- Be mindful of equality, diversity and inclusion as outlined in our Equality and Diversity Policy and the Civility & Respect pledge.
- Implement agreed policies and procedures.
- Information and training to enable employees to develop their skills and experience and maximise their contribution to the parish council via 1:1's and performance reviews.
- Monitoring employee health. This will be achieved by talking to staff both individually and in group settings and working with employees to help identify health problems and fitness for work issues at an early stage.
- Promoting wellbeing via training, the work culture, and the resources available to all staff.
- Promoting a healthy work/life balance by offering flexible working.
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and co-operate with the Council with any measures taken to reduce stress.
- Consider granting permission to contact specialists or their GP for further information if the illness is persistent or would be considered under the Equality Act 2010 as a disability.

11. Related Policies

11.1 This policy applies to all employees of Kidmore End Parish Council and should be read in conjunction with our other policies and procedures. These policies have been written with the needs of the employee at the centre, and the council recognises that employees who are happy and well at work will perform their best. Please refer to additional workplace policies:

- Code of Conduct.
- Health and Safety Policy

11.2 This policy is reviewed annually by the HR Committee and submitted to the full council for approval.