



Mental Health at Work Plan

Table of Amendments		
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Contents

1	Executive Summary	4
2	Vision	4
3	Objectives	4
4	Responsibilities	4
5	Thriving at Work	5
6	Senior Management commitment	6
6.1	Pledge through Maritime UK and Chief Executive commitment	6
6.2	Demonstrate accountability	6
6.3	Promote effective people management through line managers and supervisors	6
7	Promote mental health within the workplace	6
7.1	Produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan	6
7.2	Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling	6
7.3	Provide employees with good working conditions and ensure they have a healthy work life balance and opportunities for development	7
8	Meet statutory Occupational Health Requirements	7
8.1	Mental Health Support Services	7
8.2	Routinely monitor employee health and wellbeing	8
9	Provide campaigns and training	9
9.1	Awareness sessions for all	9
9.2	Senior Managers training	9
9.3	Develop mental health awareness among employees	9
9.4	Ensure provision of tailored in-house mental health support and signposting	9
9.5	MHFA and support	10
10	Establish a programme of activities meeting the needs of Mind, Body and Soul	11
10.1	Mind – mental health, mindfulness and resilience	11
10.2	Body – nutrition, sleep, hydration, exercise	11
10.3	Soul – yoga, meditation, social interaction	11
11	Reporting	12
11.1	Increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting	12
11.2	Employee Assistance Programme (HR).....	12

1 Executive Summary

The Port of London will meet the requirements and expectations of the core and enhanced standards of the 'Thriving at Work' report by Stevenson and Farmer.

2 Vision

To raise awareness of mental health issues, reduce stigma, promote mental wellness and support people with mental health issues.

This will be supported and promoted by the Executive Committee and specifically through the Director of Human Resources, through an agreed annual programme and series of campaigns and engagements.

3 Objectives

The objectives of the Mental Health at Work Plan are set out below. These objectives are key to delivering our vision and are explained in further detail through sections 6 to 11:

- To meet statutory Occupational Health requirements in relation to mental health
- To establish a programme of activities meeting the needs of mind, body & soul
- To promote mental health within the workplace
- To demonstrate Senior Management commitment to mental health in the workplace
- To ensure an appropriate level of reporting to improve measures in place for mental health
- To ensure that awareness of mental health issues is promoted by way of campaigns and training.

Note: This document should be read in conjunction with the Occupational Health Plan.

4 Responsibilities

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team is responsible for setting the objectives for the mental health at work plan and ensuring that a three-yearly programme is developed to meet these objectives. They are also responsible for ensuring training is provided in line with the programme and booking such training as required. They will also chair a minimum of four Mental Health Group meetings annually in order to ensure the programme is being embedded and the organisation is involved in decision making.

Employer

The PLA takes reasonable care for the health and safety of employees in the workplace. This includes a duty towards people who may have poor mental health, and

towards other employees (if there is a risk of a staff member with a mental health issue doing harm to others).

The PLA has nominated a member of the Executive Committee as responsible for Health, Safety and Wellbeing within the PLA, who is the Director of HR. A non-executive board member has also been nominated the same duty.

Human Resources

Human Resources are responsible for providing support and assistance to those suffering poor mental health in line with the plan. They will provide functions such as reasonable adjustments and work with the individual and the line manager to help ensure they are able to continue fulfilling their role. The HR Team will help provide reporting data with regards to sickness and absence to identify where improvements may be made to this plan or the programme. HR will also provide screening at pre-employment health checks which will cover mental health.

Line Managers

The relationship line managers have with their staff is crucial when it comes to how employees respond if they're experiencing poor mental health. Line managers need to recognise and be open, so people know they can disclose that they are struggling. This will also help to ensure people can get timely and appropriate support if they need it. Managers need to have the skills and confidence to manage situations effectively and sensitively and start the process of supporting staff in a positive and proactive way.

Mental Health First Aider

A Mental Health First Aider in the workplace is a person any individual can approach if they are struggling with their mental health. The MHFA will triage and assess the individual based on the skills obtained from their Mental Health First Aid Training. They can then help the signpost the individual to get the support they need.

All staff

Employees also have a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions, this includes:

- Informing their employer if they feel the pressure of the job is putting them or anyone else at risk of ill health
- Suggesting ways in which the work might be organised to alleviate the stress
- Informing their employer if they are suffering from a medical condition that appears to be long-term and is affecting their ability to carry out day to day tasks, including memory and learning
- Discussing any reasonable adjustments that could be made to assist them in performing their job.

5 Thriving at Work

The PLA is still working on breaking down the barriers surrounding mental health; however, we are making a start in raising awareness and encouraging an open, safe company culture. In order to assist with breaking down these barriers, the organisation has made the decision to adopt the Thriving at Work approach. The Thriving at Work approach adopts six core standards and four enhanced standards to provide a well-rounded and holistic approach to mental health in the workplace. The objectives outlined in Section 3, will help the PLA meet these standards.

6 Senior Management commitment

6.1 Pledge through Maritime UK and Chief Executive commitment

The PLA are working with Maritime UK and other organisations to develop a Mental Health pledge for the maritime sector. This pledge will be adopted by the PLA and signed by the Chief Executive to demonstrate our commitment to stamping out the stigma around mental health.

6.2 Demonstrate accountability

Accountability to both the pledge and mental health within the organisation will be demonstrated not only by the senior management commitment, but also in the way we treat and address mental health.

Senior management will participate in events, training and open conversations. We will be accountable to this by ensuring an effective and engaging programme is implemented throughout the organisation.

6.3 Promote effective people management through line managers and supervisors

Senior management, line managers and supervisors will promote effective people management through day to day engagements and activities, actively engaging in people-focused training. They will provide praise and constructive criticism to help develop individuals and actively promote wellbeing and work-life balance. Furthermore, they will promote this by allowing employees to be part of the decision-making process and have a say (as much as possible) in how they deliver their work.

7 Promote mental health within the workplace

7.1 Produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan

The HS&W Team has produced this document to enable the implementation of Mental Health programme that will support the needs of the organisation and its employees.

The Mental Health at Work Plan will be communicated via the usual document release process and will be promoted as part of department updates.

7.2 Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling

Open conversations

Some people have felt empowered to share their stories and the team of mental health first aiders (MHFAs) are proud of the fact that people can be more expressive and honest about mental health. However, more needs to be undertaken in this area with the promotion and communication of the availability of mental health first aiders.

The HS&W team and MHFAs will promote 'Walk and Talk' and 'Coffee and Chat' sessions to allow conversations to take place.

Inevitably, employees can start a conversation at any time, whether that be to a Mental Health First Aider, manager, or colleague. If employees do not feel confident about approaching one of these people, they can use the HS&W Contact App and they will be contacted confidentially by a Mental Health First Aider.

Open engagement forums

Employees within the PLA are involved in the mental health dialogue and work-based decision-making process. There is a core team of 29 mental health first aiders, who are actively engaged, review information and data to help promote mental health awareness in the company. This could be through an information drop, a campaign or external speaker coming in to promote mental wellness.

Any member of staff is also able to make suggestions for the group (either directly or via submitting a PLA Idea) and have input into developing the outcome.

7.3 Provide employees with good working conditions and ensure they have a healthy work life balance and opportunities for development

The Port of London Authority recognises the importance a work-life balance. Flexible working can increase employee motivation, build better relationships between the PLA and its workforce, improve employee retention, reduce absence, attract new talent, promote work-life balance and reduce employee stress.

The PLA is committed to providing the widest possible range of working patterns for its workforce, both management and employees need to be realistic and to recognise that the full range of flexible working options will not be appropriate for all jobs across all areas of the business.

All requests must be made in writing, following the Flexible Working procedure (OP 11.27). The request will be considered on a case-by-case basis, will not set precedents but consider reasonable adjustments to their working arrangements.

8 Meet statutory Occupational Health Requirements

8.1 Mental Health Support Services

When someone is unwell

Early intervention can minimise the effects of stress and poor mental health, so it is critical line managers are able to recognise signs that their staff are struggling. Understanding mental health issues is important because it will create a more inclusive workplace. By the same token, misunderstanding often leads to unnecessary conflict and disruption.

Case management of any person who is unwell through a mental health issue or general illness will be managed by the Human Resources team, supporting the Line Manager. A bespoke approach will be provided to the individual, using any, and all the tools at our disposal. If the person needs greater help, they will be requested to attend

their GP to enter the NHS process. Through Human Resources team and/or the Line Manager will maintain direct contact with the individual throughout this process.

When the person is due to come back into the office / work environment, reasonable adjustments to their working conditions will be considered, if required. These adjustments will be monitored and discussed for a period of time after the person returns to ensure that the working conditions do not adversely affect or return the individual back to a previous poor mental health state.

Nb. This type of support will also be provided to personnel who have been involved in or part of a significant incident.

Occupational Health referrals

A manager can refer an individual to the PLA's Occupational Health Physician if they believe that they are suffering from mental health issues. The Occupational Health Physician will undertake their own assessment and make recommendations to the Director of Human Resources and relevant Line Manager for action and support as required.

Occupational Health Support

An external provider, who is a qualified Counsellor, will be able to support the OH Physician, Nurse and MHFAs to ensure that we support our employees with expert mental health guidance. They will ensure that any advice given is relevant to work and will have knowledge of individuals activities and working conditions to be able to identify the mental health support that is likely to be needed.

8.2 Routinely monitor employee health and wellbeing

Employees are encouraged to take all necessary action including seeking appropriate medical advice, to overcome or mitigate their problems.

The PLA is committed to treating employees fairly, consistently and with sensitivity during times of illness. To do this we provide managers with guidelines on how to identify, at an early stage, absence patterns which may give cause for concern so that these can be investigated and managed appropriately and in a sensitive manner.

The Human Resources Department report trends on sickness absence by monitoring the number and progress of cases. The trend report is submitted as part of the monthly Executive Committee Report. The PLA are identifying information that can be provided to employees which may help reduce the level of current sickness and absence. This may include a short, innovative session which identifies the health conditions which are avoidable by looking at lifestyle, eating and drinking habits. The information provided will not be to the detriment of individuals by expecting that they need to attend work (presenteeism), when they have genuine rationale for being absent, but is instead to be provided to help them identify whether they can make any changes which will help with their day to day function.

Pre-employment (HR)

The PLA will be identifying whether any individual has mental health issues as part of the pre-employment assessment. This information is solely reviewed by the Occupational Health Physician who will identify if there are any immediate adjustments that will need to be made.

The PLA is committed to equal opportunities during recruitment. The HR Team cover this as part of their recruitment and induction process.

Health support for new and existing conditions (Managed rehabilitation)

The PLA use its Occupational Health Physician (OHP) to assess precisely what adjustments or limitations would allow the employee to return to work following mental health issues. The PLA's OHP remains in a better position than a GP to evaluate against individual roles and responsibilities. Therefore, the PLA does not automatically allow an employee to return to work simply by providing a statement of fitness for work from their GP.

The use of the PLA OHP is even more important where an employee is or becomes disabled in terms of the Equality Act, as any recommendations for a phased return to work on a fit note must be viewed in light of the obligation under the Equality Act to consider 'reasonable adjustments' to facilitate an employee's return.

Wider support for staff is available through several our employment policies. Speak to a member of HR to find out more.

9 Provide campaigns and training

9.1 Awareness sessions for all

As part of the induction for all new starters, mental health awareness forms part of the key message they receive on day one. As part of the Day One Induction, all staff receive links to the Mental Health page on the PLA intranet and are encouraged to look through the resources available including the provision of Mental Health First Aiders and how to access services. All staff will receive Mental Health Awareness training as part of the ongoing training programme for Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

9.2 Senior Managers training

Managers will be provided the Managers Mental Health Awareness Training to assist and equip them in identifying if people are potentially suffering adversely with their mental health. It will also help them assist people with signposting and providing additional support. The course is based on the MIND Mental Health First Aid Light course but will be tailored to our needs. The course also includes how to identify common mental health problems and how to have active and effective conversations.

9.3 Develop mental health awareness among employees

Mental Health support, campaigns and information is communicated to staff regularly through the PLA Intranet site, newsletters, emails and through communication by the mental health first aiders.

We aim to ensure that any event that promotes mental health is available on multiple platforms to ensure good access by all members of staff.

A HS&W communication plan has been developed and is used as a programme to communicate mental health topics. Refer to the HS&W Communicate Plan which is available via the Controlled Document Library (CDL).

9.4 Ensure provision of tailored in-house mental health support and signposting

The PLA is committed to providing an open and trusting environment to ensure all staff feel comfortable to talk about any mental health issues they may be facing and to help break down the stigma related to such conversations. Work is being undertaken regularly and includes members of staff (of both senior and lower grades) sharing their experiences around mental health, signposting to external organisations, as well as HR and the Occupational Health Physician.

As part of this an annual Health and Wellbeing week is run in October that incorporates mental health. Throughout the week, a series of events are held which are both engaging and informative. The Executive team lead the way by introducing and explaining why it is important to them, each H&W week this message is filmed and posted on the PLA intranet for all to view.

Our managers will display positive behaviours that promote a healthy work environment and our Mental Health First Aiders are on hand to provide a safe space to share.

Suicide Prevention

The PLA is a member of the Thames Tidal Drowning Prevention Strategy, which ensures that there is life-saving equipment available next to the River Thames. This helps towards preventing suicide attempts in the London region.

Where PLA employees have been involved in suicide or attempted suicides by others, support and counselling is offered, to help prevent or manage mental health issues as a result.

Hypnotherapy

The PLA can provide, through a registered and insured organisation, hypnotherapy session to individuals who may need this support or assistance, to help overcome an issue, such as anxiety. Access to this is via Occupational Health Physician referrals only.

Counselling (HR)

In recognition of its commitment to help support health and wellbeing, the PLA offers a counselling support service provided by a local organisation. Access to the service is normally advised on management reports from the occupational health doctor.

9.5 MHFA and support

Mental health first aiders

The PLA support and promote mental health first aiders as a key resource in the organisation and those we may come across as part of our duties and daily activities. The organisation is aiming to achieve 30 individuals (approx. 1 in 15 of the workforce) to be mental health first aiders. Currently there are 29.

Supporting Mental Health first aiders

The PLA will provide support to the MHFA through an external provider.

10 Establish a programme of activities meeting the needs of Mind, Body and Soul

10.1 Mind – mental health, mindfulness and resilience

Mindfulness

Mindfulness sessions, initially focussing on Stress and Resilience are available to individuals for specific topics. There will be group sessions on topics which have been identified through trend analysis, which will be available to all employees.

The key to the mindfulness sessions is to ensure that employees understand how the body responds to pressure and how individuals can help themselves.

Wellbeing Workshops

Available to all staff, the PLA offers several different one-day well-being workshops delivered by a specialist external company. The qualified teams offer a confidential service providing advice and guidance which promotes health and well-being.

10.2 Body – nutrition, sleep, hydration, exercise

The **body** domain focuses on the importance of early intervention and enabling and empowering our employees to make healthy lifestyle choices to improve their physical health. This will focus on lifestyle behaviours such as good nutrition, smoking cessation, sleep hygiene, sensible alcohol consumption, physical activity, hydration, weight control, 'know your numbers' and flu jabs.

10.3 Soul – yoga, meditation, social interaction

Social networks

Individuals can engage and connect socially within the work environment through the PLA Sports and Social committee, the ability to relax and be present, having an identity, giving to others and doing the things that you enjoy.

All PLA staff also have access to the Yammer social network where they can post content and interact with others on what's going on in the organisation. More comfortable breakout space has also been provided in the Link at London River House.

The organisation also promotes togetherness through events such as the PLA Biathlon event each June and the Christmas Olympics that encourages all teams to take part in team events and have a laugh.

Multi-media

An area on the Intranet site has been set up to engage with people over mental health issues and to answer simple questions to get a signpost to relevant information and support. This can be found in the Occupational Health section of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing area.

A health, safety and wellbeing app will be provided to have the ability to call and engage with a mental health first aider. This will be anonymous via the telephone or

over a chat room. Alternatively, any individual can approach a Mental Health First Aider in person if they feel comfortable.

11 Reporting

11.1 Increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting

Internal Reporting

A set of clear mental health measures and information will be reported on a monthly basis, as set out in the Health and Safety Performance Indicators Process (OP 11.46). The information will be provided in the health and wellbeing section of the overall HS&W report which is sent to and can be accessed by all staff on the HS&W section of the PLA Intranet. The information is presented to the Executive Committee, who will challenge what is provided to ensure it gives appropriate indication to the performance of the Mental Health Plan. Information will be sufficient to provide understanding but limited so not to break confidentiality.

External Reporting

The PLA will share information with external organisations, such as Port Skills and Safety and the London H&S leads; information shared will be anonymised. This is to promote and share the work we are doing in Mental Health and to help the PLA in benchmarking against other organisations to improve performance.

11.2 Employee Assistance Programme (HR)

The PLA actively encourage and promote the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) through membership of the Westfield Healthcare provision. This independent service provides confidential advice and support. It can help you prepare for and cope with life's events and challenges. It will support you if you feel like you just don't know where to turn, or who to go to for the right information. The EAP provides advice on many topics, including:

- Consumer rights and legal information – benefits, housing problems, tax credits, disability, neighbour disputes
- Debt management and budgeting – creditors, financial health check
- Emotional support – poor work/life balance, illness, crisis, anxiety, loss, self-confidence, workplace pressure
- Family relationships – communication, marriage, civil partnerships
- Health and wellbeing – problems sleeping, fitness, weight management, alcohol, nutrition
- Work and career issues – change, team dynamics, work overload, conflict
- Housing – buying and selling, tenancy, neighbour disputes

Life can be a rollercoaster and many of the issues above are an inevitable part of life, but it often helps us to manage them positively if we have prompt access to the right information and support.

The team is made up of experts in helping you to identify, plan and manage life events, helping you to stay in control, happy, healthy and fully focused on life and work. It is okay to ask for help and this confidential and independent service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Westfield Healthcare expert advisors are there to help.