

Employer's guide to supporting mental health in the workplace



Southdown works closely with individuals, employers and other third sector organisations to ensure individuals with mental health problems are able to either remain at work or to return to work.

We have collated this pack to provide you with some basic information to support you to retain your staff.

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First, a quick disclaimer...

This Southdown Employment Support services resource pack is aimed to provide resources that employers could use in a supportive manner with their employees.

These resources could be used to support both you and your employees in a non-judgmental and objective capacity. They are not designed to provide you with legal advice about your employer responsibilities although they may make you aware of fundamental rights and responsibilities for yourselves and your employees. We always encourage employees to follow their company's existing policies and procedures in addition to gaining further support. All legal advice must be gained through a lawyer or a legal representative.

Although we try to ensure the resources are up to date, we are not responsible for third-party materials, including their accuracy, completeness, timeliness, validity, copyright compliance, legality, quality, or any other aspect thereof. The third-party materials and links are provided solely as a convenience to you, and you can access and use them entirely at your own risk and subject to such third parties' terms and conditions.



Retaining/returning to work

ACAS Resources

ACAS Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service provides free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law.

The ACAS site includes advice, templates, training, news and updates:
www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1461



Other general resources for employers

How to support staff who are experiencing mental health issues

Managers deal with health problems on a regular basis. While they are usually confident in dealing with issues with physical health, they may be less sure of how best to approach the subject of mental health.

You can gain an overview of the whole subject, with guidance and sources of help:
www.mind.org.uk/media-a/4661/resource4.pdf

Challenging conversations and how to manage them:

www.acas.org.uk/acas-guide-to-challenging-conversations-and-how-to-manage-them

Wellbeing in the workplace

Wellbeing resources in the workplace

Five Ways to Wellbeing

A set of evidence-based public mental health messages aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole population:

www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing

Frontline worker self-care activities

This has a selection of activities to support wellbeing:

www.yumpu.com/en/document/fullscreen/63215228/frontline-keyworker-self-care-acts

Managing mental health at work – case studies:

www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/case-study

Mental health at work – tool kits:

www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/toolkit

Mental Health at work – resources:

www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/resource

Mindful Employer

A national initiative that promotes positive mental health awareness in the work place. Their website has various resources and lists of employers who are committed to being “mindful” employers. This includes a 10 step toolkit for employers:

<https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/organisation/mindful-employer>



Wellbeing in the workplace

Wellbeing resources in the workplace (cont.)

Mental Health Directory of Support

Offers various support services for overall wellbeing and positive mental health in Sussex:

For East Sussex:

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/socialcare/healthadvice/mental-health/directory

For West Sussex:

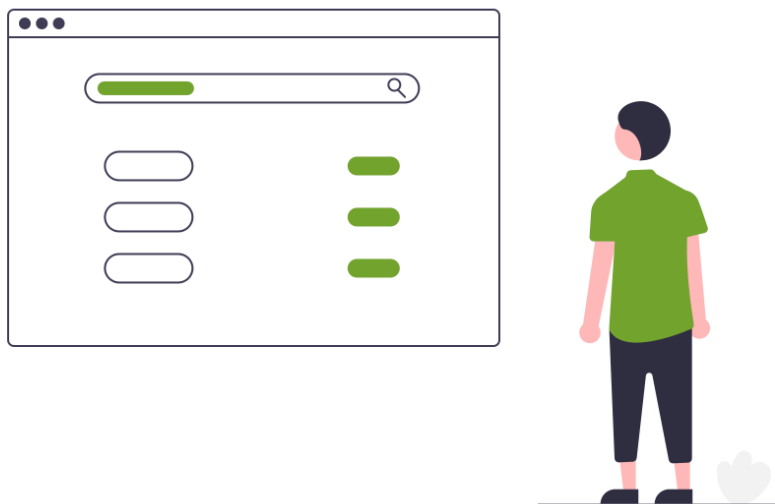
www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/your-space/health/emotional-wellbeing-and-mental-health/emotional-wellbeing-information-and-support

For Brighton and Hove:

www.mindcharity.co.uk/advice-information/directory-of-services

Across Sussex:

www.sussexcricket.frog.net



Sussex Mental Healthline - 0800 0309 500 (Freephone)

This offers support and advises you on where to get help for yourself or someone you are concerned about. For callers whose first language is not English, a telephone interpreter can be arranged for other community languages, by phoning the helpline and letting them know the language needed. There's more information about the service here:

www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/sussex-mental-healthline

Wellbeing in the workplace

Disclosure information

Disclosure relates to whether an employee wants to tell you, as their employer, about their mental health problem. There are a number of articles explaining how to support employees with mental health conditions, and the benefits of inclusivity by incorporating this within the workplace, including:

Added value: mental health as a workplace asset:

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/added-value-mental-health-as-a-workplace-asset.pdf

How to support mental health at work:

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-support-mental-health-work

Access to Work

Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support grant scheme that aims to support disabled people start or stay in work. It can provide practical and financial support for people who have a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition: www.gov.uk/access-to-work

There is an employer fact sheet about the service:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-guide-for-employers/access-to-work-factsheet-for-employers

Wellness Action Plans

Wellness Actions Plans (WAPs) are an easy, practical way to help individual employees to support their own mental health at work. There is guidance available for managers or supervisors who are interested in introducing these at:

www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-your-staff/employer-resources/wellness-action-plan-download



Absence through sickness

Fit notes

A fit note must be provided by an employee if they are off sick for more than 7 days in a row (including non-working days). The fit note may also make recommendations on how the employer could support the employee. It will indicate whether the employee is considered 'fit for work' and may also give details of any relevant restrictions. As an employer you can consider potential short or long-term adjustments to facilitate a return to work.

For guidance on the Fit Note see:

www.gov.uk/taking-sick-leave

More information is available from ACAS, including:

- ✓ Absence from work
- ✓ Fit notes and proof of sickness
- ✓ Off sick seven days or less
- ✓ Off sick for more than seven days

www.acas.org.uk/absence-from-work/fit-notes-and-proof-of-sickness



Statutory Sick Pay

Eligibility for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) should be made available in contracts of employment issued to employees, so make sure you are familiar with your company's policies and procedures.

More information is available from the government website, including:

- ✓ Eligibility criteria
- ✓ Exceptions
- ✓ Linked periods of sickness

www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay/eligibility

Benefits signposting

Guidance on Universal Credit for employers:

www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/universal-credit-and-employers/what-universal-credit-means-for-employers

Occupational health

What is occupational health?

Occupational health is a type of medical service for:

- ✓ supporting employees and employers
- ✓ encouraging a focus on wellbeing in the workplace

It can be used for both physical and mental health. As an employer you will have your own organisational policies around services such as these.

The occupational health report is a thorough overview of the employee's current medical status and their future capacity to return to work in a successful manner. It should only focus on the employees' fitness to return to work, and should not include other performance issues unrelated to their health issues.

There is more information about how they can be used and the types of assessments available from ACAS:

www.acas.org.uk/using-occupational-health-at-work



Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments

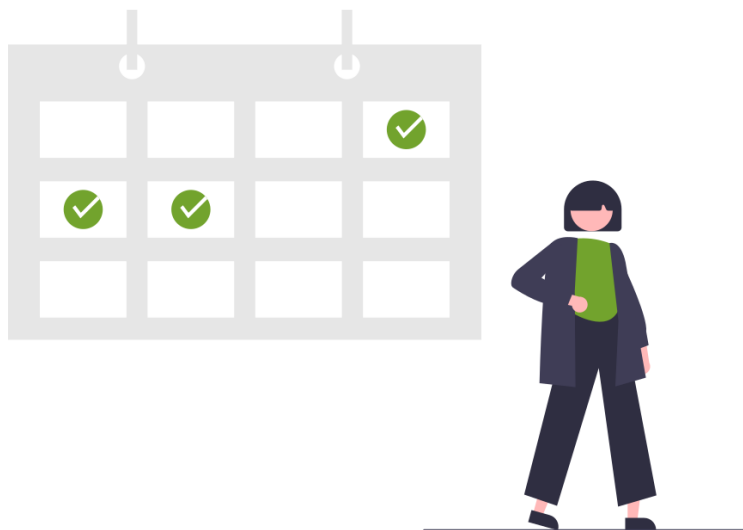
A 'reasonable adjustment' is a change to remove or reduce the effect of:

- ✓ an employee's disability so they can do their job
- ✓ a job applicant's disability when applying for a job

The reasonable adjustment could be to:

- ✓ the workplace
- ✓ the ways things are done

Reasonable adjustments can also be made to agree additional support for an employee or job applicant.



There is guidance available on reasonable adjustments through ACAS. This includes ideas on what an employer could consider changing, examples of reasonable adjustments, and good practice for employers:

www.acas.org.uk/reasonable-adjustments

Further useful information

Coronavirus (Covid-19) guidance for employers and employees

ACAS offers some regularly updated guidance:

www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus

The government offers advice around support if someone is working less hours than usual, or not working:

www.gov.uk/coronavirus/worker-support

Other sources of information and support

Protected characteristics

To identify whether someone has protected characteristics check here:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characterist



Equality Act 2010

You can check employer rights and responsibilities against the legal framework, the Equality Act 2010 here: www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

Work buddies and mental health champions / Mental Health First Aiders

Your organisation may have roles in place for mental health champions. They are employees or volunteers who raise awareness of mental health problems. They challenge the way people think and act in relation to mental health, breaking down stigma, and encouraging positive dialogue around mental health. More information can be found here:

www.time-to-change.org.uk/champions

General information about looking after your mental health

From Mind:

www.mindcharity.co.uk/advice-information/how-to-look-after-your-mental-health

Mental health and wellbeing hub approved by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust:

www.sussexcricket.co.uk/news/explore-sussex-cricket-brand-new-mental-health-wellbeing-hub

General advice:

A good source of general information about employment, benefits, government law and rights, and many other categories can be found here: www.advicenow.org.uk

Southdown's employment services are provided in partnership with Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and funded by Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex and West Sussex County Councils.



For further information about Southdown's employment services please visit:
www.southdown.org/employment-support