

Mental health: promote, prevent and treat

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Owner: **Assistant Director People Services**
Responsible work team: **Wellbeing**

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the Brigade's arrangements how it will **promote** good mental health, will seek to **prevent** poor mental health, and will **treat** (support) staff who experience mental health challenges during their employment.
- 1.2 The Brigade is committed to ensure that all individuals are treated fairly, with dignity and respect in their working environment, and therefore recognises that staff may need additional consideration, support, and adjustments during times of mental ill health.
- 1.3 To ensure that staff feel confident to be able to discuss their mental health and to ask for support/reasonable adjustments to their working practice, this policy has been developed to:
 - (a) **PROMOTE**
 - (i) Provide staff in our organisation with information to raise wider awareness and understanding of mental health.
 - (b) **PREVENT**
 - (i) Provide staff/managers with options that can be accessed to assist in helping prevent poor mental health taking hold.
 - (c) **TREAT**
 - (i) Outline what support is available to all staff who may experience episodes of poor mental health.
- 1.4 The Brigade's commitment to this responsibility is outlined in its internal publications; the Delivery Plan, Togetherness Strategy, People Services Strategy and Wellbeing Strategy and various policies, as well as being independently supported by the engagement with external stakeholders, the results of which include the Brigade being a signatory to the Time to Change* pledge promoted by the mental health charity MIND, and being accredited by the GLA's London Healthy Workplace Charter award to Excellence level (highest award)**.

* Signed by the Commissioner in February 2017 committing to challenge mental health stigma and promote positive wellbeing within the service.

**Awarded in April 2017 demonstrating that health and wellbeing are embedded in LFBs corporate culture and values.

2 What is mental health?

- 2.1 It is important to understand that everybody has mental health; best described as 'a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community' (World Health Organisation).

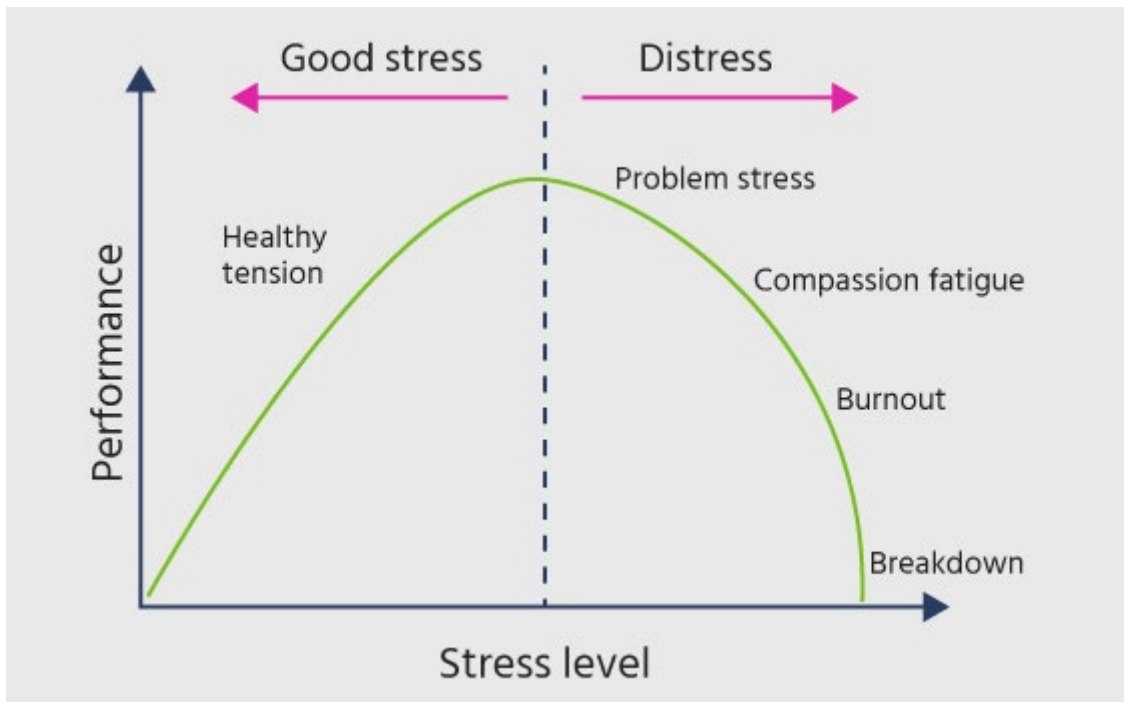
Mental health: From wellness to illness

- 2.2 Mental health should therefore not be thought of a solely static state, it fluctuates, so we are never always just mentally well or ill, people range from having excellent mental health to experiencing major mental health problems, illustrated as per below.



World Health Organisation - 2012

2.3 In a work context mental health is usually represented as per the diagram below.



MindEd 2021

2.4 Ensuring that staff do not move from 'Good stress' to 'Distress' is a primary aim of this policy.

3 London Fire Brigade and mental health

3.1 LFB believes that the PROMOTE, PREVENT and TREAT approach toward mental health wellbeing will provide staff/managers with a clear and referenced framework that they will be able to use to ensure that their own mental health wellbeing, and that of colleagues, is a constant consideration when undertaking their roles.

4 Promote

- 4.1 The Brigade believes that promoting mental health is integral to personal wellbeing, building effective working relationships and establishing a positive workplace culture. To promote mental wellbeing the Brigade will use:

Communication channels

- 4.2 Use its existing communication channels – **Hotwire**, **Shout**, Your LFB Update, Viva engage and staff briefings – to alert staff to mental health initiatives, services, and resource availability.

People and teams

- 4.3 Use dedicated staff and teams/groups to promote and engage with staff on matters relating to mental health.

- (a) **Counselling and Trauma Service (CTS)** – the Brigades in house team will promote its professional counselling service provision to all staff using written materials, audio/visual resources, and face to face engagements. Information on CTS can be found on [Hotwire](#). Direct contact can be made using counselling@london-fire.gov.uk.



- (b) **Mental Health First Aid and Trauma Team Lead** – this officer will take responsibility for promoting, recruiting, and supporting the work of LFB Mental Health First Aiders (LFB MHFA) using written materials, audio/visual resources, and face to face engagements. Contact LFBMHFA@london.fire.gov.uk.

- (c) **Wellbeing Team** – this team will promote and offer a wellbeing service provision to all staff focused not only on mental health, but also physical and workplace wellbeing using written materials, audio/visual resources, and face to face engagements. Contact wellbeingteam@london-fire.gov.uk.



- (d) **Equality Support Groups (ESGs)** – these groups are essential to the delivery of the LFBs commitment to promoting equality, embracing diversity, and fostering inclusion and togetherness. They are all able to provide advice, guidance and sign posting support to staff about mental health wellbeing matters. A list of LFBs ESGs and contact details are available [here](#).

- (e) **LFB Mental Health First Aiders (LFB MHFA)** – LFB MHFAs will proactively engage with staff on a face to face basis and/or via Teams to account for any working from home status to begin conversations related to mental health. LFB MHFAs will be promoted via poster images, by the wearing of LFB MHFA pin badges and e-mail LFB MHFA sign off banners.



- (f) **Trade union representatives** – trade union representatives will continue to engage with LFB to ensure that mental health wellbeing is a primary consideration in developing policies/guides/strategies, and when dealing with staff who may require additional performance support.

- (g) **Wellbeing Dog** – the Wellbeing Dog handler and dog will visit LFB establishments and promote mental health wellbeing via face-to-face engagements and be available to talk on a one to one basis if requested by staff.
- (h) **Safe to Speak Up** – this initiative allows all staff, and anyone working on LFB premises, to raise a concern and/or suggest improvements about any matter related to working for LFB, including mental health wellbeing, without fear of reprisals or consequences. Contact CCSafeToSpeakUp@london-fire.gov.uk.

Career/employment stages

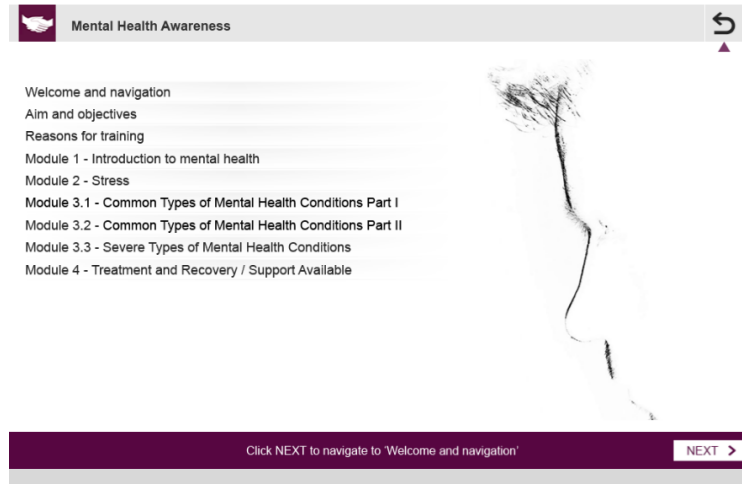
- 4.4 The Brigade will use specific stages of a person's employment/career with LFB to reinforce and promote mental health wellbeing, including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Induction/onboarding to the organisation.
 - (b) Promotion(s).
 - (c) Change of role/responsibilities.
 - (d) Training/development programmes.
 - (e) Exiting the organisation.

5 Prevent

- 5.1 The Brigade believes that preventing staff experiencing episodes of poor mental health is integral to personal wellbeing, building effective working relationships and establishing a positive workplace culture. To put measures in place to help prevent staff from experiencing poor mental health wellbeing the Brigade will:

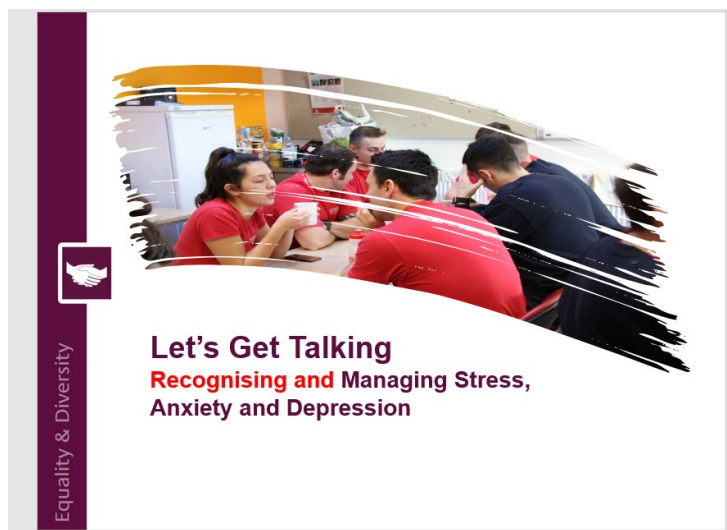
Training

- 5.2 Ensure that training interventions are available for all staff in order that they better understand their own and others' mental health wellbeing, and the role they play as individuals/managers in recognising and actively engaging with colleagues who may be experiencing episodes of poor mental health.
 - (a) **Mental Health Awareness** – available on the Big Learning Platform; clicking on the Big Learning icon on the desktop and searching for 'mental health awareness' using the Catalogue Search facility located on the left-hand button bar. This learning package has six interactive modules that are designed to help staff better understand mental health matters. The modules are broken down into small sections that focus on the signs and symptoms to look out for as well as explaining the range of help and treatment available.



This course is/will become a pre learning requirement for all staff that will be attending the Recognising and Managing Stress Anxiety and Depression learning intervention.

- (b) **Recognising and Managing Stress Anxiety and Depression** – a mandatory 1-day face to face training course for all staff that have a people management responsibility. This learning has been designed specifically for Brigade managers/leaders and places stress, anxiety and depression in context of the Brigade's working environment, whilst also providing managers/leaders with the skill sets to be able to engage with, and support colleagues experiencing episodes of poor mental health.



Signposting

- 5.3 Ensure the dedicated officers and teams/groups referenced in paragraphs 4.3 (b) to (g) inclusive are afforded the time and opportunity to engage directly with staff on all matters relating to mental health, and be trained and able to signpost/support staff to seek professional help from CTS or other external sources when their mental health necessitates such interventions.

- 5.4 These officers and teams/groups will also be able to offer guidance/advice/support to line managers when dealing with staff who may be experiencing episodes of poor mental health.

Policies and guidance documentation

- 5.5 Ensure that guidance and policy documentation is available to managers and staff, so they have a clear reference point and are aware of the proactive processes and procedures in place that are there to support them and reduce the impact and longevity of an episode of poor mental health.

- (a) **Policy number 915 - Recognising and coping with potentially traumatic events** - guidance for managers regarding station debriefs and CTS interventions after potentially traumatic events and/or critical incidents, and information about reactions an individual might experience and the types of coping mechanisms that should be considered to help ease the effects of such events.

Integral to this policy is the **Post Critical Incident Contact** procedure [PCIC Policy 2019.pdf](#)– guidance for staff outlining the procedure followed by Counselling and Trauma Service after a critical incident occurs. The aim of the contact is to reinforce normal processing of a traumatic event and prevent the development of potential longer-term complications such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This procedure not only allows for Counselling and Trauma Service to follow up with individuals where there may be specific concerns, but also how individuals can refer themselves to Counselling and Trauma Service for trauma-focussed treatment, should their symptoms persist.

- (b) **Policy number 448 - Working with Choice: Flexible working options** – guidance for all staff about flexible working options that might be used as an intervention to avoid and/or cope with mental health challenges as a result of an individual's work/life balance not being properly aligned.
- (c) **Policy number 553 - Learning Support** – guidance for all staff about learning support provisions that might be used as an intervention to avoid and/or cope with mental health challenges as a result of an individual presenting with specific learning difficulties.
- (d) **Policy number 969 – Menopause** - guidance for all staff about the menopause that might be used as an intervention to avoid and/or cope with mental health challenges as a result of women experiencing menopausal symptoms and a tool for managers to help support them.
- (e) **Policy number 653 – Domestic Violence** – guidance to assist staff who are experiencing domestic violence which affects their wellbeing, and for managers who are supporting these staff.
- (f) **Policy number 690 – Managing stress within the LFB** – guidance for staff about the responsibility LFB has, to prevent/reduce the causes of stress/effects of stress and what actions are in place to achieve this goal.

Occupational Health Service

- 5.6 Ensure that as part of all Routine Periodic Medicals (RPMs) for operational staff, and wellbeing clinics for FRS staff, a mental health review is undertaken, and actions required as a result of this intervention are progressed appropriately.



6 Treat

- 6.1 The Brigade believes that having options in place to treat staff who present with mental health problems is integral to a person's longer-term personal wellbeing, sustaining and building effective working relationships and establishing a positive workplace culture where staff recognise that LFB is supportive of individuals who experience poor mental health episodes. To treat staff the Brigade will:

Internal treatment service provision

- (a) **Counselling and Trauma Service** – offer all staff access to our accredited, professional, and confidential counselling service available where people will be able to talk about their mental health and be provided with clinically approved interventions aimed at improving their condition(s).
- (b) **Occupational Health Service** – offer all staff access to professional occupational health practitioners where people will be able to talk about their mental health issues in a confidential environment, with support provided to access other service provision if required.



Signposting to external treatment service provision

- 6.2 Ensure that staff who want to be referred to an external mental health wellbeing service provider are supported to access their chosen service

- (a) **The Fire Fighters Charity** – a close working partner with a specific and professional psychological service provision offered to all fire service staff.



Telephone: 0800 389 8820

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk

- (b) **Sapper Support** – a 24/7 PTSD support helpline staffed solely by veterans from the military.

Telephone: 0800 040 7783

Text: 07860 018 733



- (c) **Shout 85258** – a 24/7 text service for staff that work in the emergency services and require mental health support.

Text: 85258



- (d) **Samaritans** - is a registered charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide.

Telephone: 116 123

e-mail: jo@samaritans.org



Self-help therapy

- 6.3 Ensure that staff are given advice and support to access options for self-help therapies available from the NHS and other service providers. CTS, LFBs Occupational Health Service provider (HML), the Wellbeing Team and Inclusion Team are all able to assist in this process upon request.

Workplace adjustments

- 6.4 Ensure that workplace adjustments are made to support staff experiencing mental health difficulties so that they are not substantially disadvantaged when doing their jobs.
- 6.5 Workplace adjustments will vary from individual to individual but will be effective and practical in order that a person can continue to discharge their role responsibilities.
- 6.6 In all instances advice in respect of what workplace adjustments should be considered and/or provided for staff requiring such an intervention can be sought from CTS, Occupational Health Service, the Wellbeing Team and/or the Inclusion Team.
- 6.7 Workplace adjustments can be recorded on your Workplace Adjustment passport. Please see details on Hotwire how to record this [here](#).

7 Records

- 7.1 Records should be sent to RecordsServices@london-fire.gov.uk and will be kept on your electronic personal record file (e-prf) being retained in accordance with [Policy number 788](#) - Electronic personal record files (ePRF) policy. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with [Policy number 351](#) – Data protection and privacy policy.

8 Help and support

Please contact the Wellbeing Team by email to WellbeingTeam@london-fire.gov.uk.

- 8.1 This policy may also be available on request in other alternative accessible formats as set out in [Policy number 290](#) – Guidance note on translation and interpretation. Please contact Communications on extension 30753 and by email to communications.team@london-fire.gov.uk to discuss your needs and options.

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	07/05/24	SDIA	H - 26/09/22	HSWIA	21/09/22	RA	
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	Reviewed as current with minor changes made.	24/04/2024
Page 9, para 8.1	Wellbeing team contact details updated.	20/05/2024

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

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Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification