



APPRENTICE (LEARNER) MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

Introduction

- 1.1. Skills to Group is committed to widening participation, increasing retention and achievement and supporting progression for all apprentices (learners).
- 1.2 Central to this commitment is the wish to offer an appropriate programme of study, with support, to apprentices (learners) with mental health difficulties. This support will be designed to meet individual requirements within resource constraints.
- 1.3 Skills to Group encourages applications from any apprentice (learner) who is able to benefit from our courses and who meets the entry requirements. However, care will be taken to ensure that we are not setting an apprentice (learner) up to fail as we are aware that this may compound any existing mental health problem. We aim to ensure that an individual is able to meet the demands of the course, has the potential to succeed and comply with the Apprentice (Learner) Responsibilities.
- 1.4 In addition Skills to Group is committed to raising awareness of mental health issues and challenging stereotypes. This will include the provision of staff development as appropriate.

What do we mean by Mental Health?

- 1.5 Mental health issues are relevant to all of us. Everyone has a state of mental health that may fluctuate throughout his or her life. Mental health can be affected by a number of elements including social, personal, economic and environmental factors. It is estimated that one in four adults will experience a mental health difficulty during their lifetime.
- 1.6 The most common symptoms of mental illness are depressed feelings and withdrawal but other signs include:
 - Anxiety and panic attacks
 - Mood swings
 - Obsessions and compulsive behaviour
 - Phobias
 - Disruptive behaviour
 - Depression
 - Paranoid feelings
 - Delusions
 - Neglect to personal appearance and hygiene
 - Eating disorders
 - Alcohol or drug dependence
 - Self-harm and suicidal feelings
- 1.7 It is important to remember that professional diagnosis relies on observation of a cluster of behavioural symptoms over a period of time. In an educational setting we can only act upon observable behaviour that may be verified by others as a cause for concern.

Scope and Aim of Policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all apprentices (learners) of Skills to Group including both full and part time in all settings.

2.2 The purpose of the policy is to create a culture in Skills to Group that positively promotes wellbeing.

Its aim is to ensure that:

- All apprentices (learners) who are experiencing mental illness are treated fairly, sensitively and with respect.
- Each apprentice (learner) is offered the support that they need to cope with their particular mental health needs.
- Skills to Group is not discriminating against those with mental ill health.

Procedures

3.1 The purpose of the Skills to Group Apprentice (Learner) Mental Health Policy is to establish a coherent approach when responding to apprentices (learners) with mental health issues.

3.2 Skills to Group has specific statutory responsibilities towards apprentices (learners) whose mental health conditions fall within the definition of disability under the law. Skills to Group will ensure that apprentices (learners) with a mental health illness are not discriminated against and that reasonable adjustments are put into place to support their learning.

3.3 We aim to provide a supportive environment that enables apprentices (learners) with mental health difficulties to realise their full potential and to successfully complete their course.

3.4 Skills to Group makes every effort to support apprentices (learners) with mental health problems and makes reasonable adjustments. Whilst acknowledging that the disciplinary procedures are applicable to all apprentices (learners), an alternative route is available to those with mental health issues, through the Fitness to Study Policy. This could include a case conference involving academic and support staff. The intention of the meeting is to ensure a consistent approach to support the diverse needs of the apprentice (learner) and staff at Skills to Group.

3.5 Skills to Group aims to facilitate and promote wellbeing by:

- Encouraging apprentices (learners) with mental health difficulties to seek support as soon as possible. Where necessary an assessment for counselling or a referral to an external agency is requested.
- Providing a full range of apprentice (learner) support services at Skills to Group.
- Promoting understanding and recognition of mental health difficulties.
- Providing guidance and support to staff on the care of those presenting with mental health concerns.
- Taking care to ensure that the apprentices (learners) and staff are aware of the policy on confidentiality of personal information provided by the apprentices (learners).
- Endeavouring, where possible, to accommodate special arrangements for individuals with long-term health problems e.g. flexible timetable, deferment and/or exam concessions.

3.6 Skills to Group is committed to providing a supportive learning environment. It is not able to provide the resources or facilities of a mental health facility or a therapeutic community.

Support is provided as far as possible to enable apprentices (learners) with mental health issues to continue learning, however, Skills to Group does not provide services that are available in the community and through the National Health Service.

Counselling

- 3.7 If counselling is considered appropriate, it is provided through a range of external integrated approaches. If considered necessary we liaise (with consent) with the apprentice's (learner's) general practitioner, CAMHS or hospital consultants.

The Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

- 4.1 The responsibility for the wellbeing of apprentices (learners) is defined in general as a "duty of care" of Skills to Group for the safety of all apprentices (learners). Skills to Group needs to exercise its duty of care for all apprentices (learners), including those with mental health difficulties.
- 4.2 This involves ensuring that neither apprentices (learners) nor staff are put a risk. There is an ethical requirement for staff to be aware of their own personal and professional limitations when supporting apprentices (learners). Where staff do not have the appropriate skills or training to deal with mental health issues, referral should be made to the counselling and welfare team.

The Roles and Responsibilities of Apprentices (Learners)

- 4.3 Apprentices (learners) need to take responsibility to communicate their needs and seek support. This can be achieved by:
- Completing the health questionnaire on enrolment at Skills to Group for existing mental health conditions or illnesses.
 - Taking care of their own mental health, for example taking prescribed medication and accessing support services.

Associated Policies and Procedures

- Fitness to Study Policy
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality Act 2010
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Special Educational Needs and Disability code of practice: 0-25 years 2014

Mental Health First Aid

In order to ensure adequate mental health first aid provision and awareness, it is our policy that we:

- Have sufficient numbers of trained personnel to support those students who are experiencing mental and/or emotional difficulties.
- Respond promptly to calls for assistance
- Provide first aid support within their level of competence
- Summon medical help as necessary

- Record details of support given

Safeguarding Co-Ordinator

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator is responsible for:

- Responding promptly to calls for assistance in high risk cases and safeguarding and child protection issues
- Making referrals to appropriate agencies
- Summoning immediate medical help if required
- Informing parents and carers

Useful Links

Here is some useful links to supportive agencies

Samaritans <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>

Mind UK <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

For Young People www.kooth.com
www.youngminds.org.uk
www.keep-your-head.com

Document Control

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if deemed necessary

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Authorised By

Signed



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