

Mental Health Charter

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Charter Commitments

We recognise that many people experience mental ill health during their lives and that, with the right help at the right time, they can recover.

We believe that everyone in the workplace has a responsibility to create an environment that promotes wellbeing and to look after their mental health.

We positively engage in agreeing reasonable adjustments with our applicants, employees and service users. As an employer and service provider, we will work to create a workplace culture that promotes equality of opportunity and respect for those with mental ill health and provide a positive service to people with mental ill health.

We note that those with mental ill health suffer particular disadvantages in the workplace and in accessing goods and services. Therefore this Charter focuses on the area of mental ill health. However, we recognise that many of the Charter commitments relate equally to those with other disabilities including physical, sensory, learning and hidden disabilities. We will keep the effectiveness of the measures we adopt under review to ensure that they are working towards achieving our Mental Health commitments.

www.equalityni.org/MentalHealthCharter #MHCharterNI

1.

To create an open and inclusive workplace culture which displays respect for those with mental ill health

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Action points

1.1 We will seek to provide a mentally healthy workplace by:

- Recognising the business case for making mental health a boardroom priority.
- Positively engaging those with mental ill health and their representatives in the development and review of all relevant employment policies.
- Providing appropriate information about the prevalence of mental ill health in Northern Ireland, how this impacts on the workplace and the benefits of creating a mentally healthy, resilient workplace.
- Monitoring key employment policies to ensure those with mental ill health enjoy equality of opportunity both in accessing and remaining in employment.

1.2 We will challenge mental ill health stigma in the workplace by:

- Signing up to workplace campaigns and the regional Change Your Mind campaign which aims to start positive conversations around mental health and break the silence of stigma.
- Providing mental health awareness training for all staff and specific management training, which may include mental health first aid training.
- Supporting managers, staff and volunteers through proactive coaching, training and advice to be confident in engaging with staff experiencing mental ill health.
- Encouraging line managers to take a proactive interest in the wellbeing of staff and to recognise when there is a need for external support such as counselling.

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2.

To promote equality of opportunity and challenge discrimination in the workplace

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2.1 We will ensure our policies and procedures promote equality of opportunity for people with mental ill health by:

- Auditing employment policies, practices and procedures to ensure they comply with equality legislation.
- Adopting employment policies, practices and procedures that seek to promote good practice.
- Creating and implementing procedures that seek to allow staff to perform their job successfully following disclosure of mental ill health.

- Providing proforma reasonable adjustment plans, with information about where to access internal and external support, including from local mental health organisations.

2.2 We will ensure that line managers have the appropriate support in managing people with mental ill health by:

- Providing training and information to line managers about how the reasonable adjustment duty applies to people with mental ill health.
- Considering coaching for managers to allow them to manage employees with mental ill health in a positive way.

3.

To promote equality of opportunity in recruitment and selection for those with mental ill health

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3.1 We will encourage those with mental ill health to apply for employment with us by:

- Positively engaging those with mental ill health and their representatives to identify and address barriers to employment.
- Considering the use of positive action measures where appropriate, including the use of a welcoming statement and reserving posts for disabled people.

3.2 We will implement reasonable adjustment measures to recruitment & selection processes and procedures by:

- Auditing our recruitment and selection policies in respect of our duty to make reasonable adjustments.

- Providing training on the reasonable adjustment duty to all employees involved in recruitment and selection.
- Adopting the Equality Commission's guidance on the monitoring of disability.
- Accessing government and other support programmes designed to assist disabled people in accessing work.

3.3 Where appropriate we will introduce positive action measures such as:

- Use of a welcoming statement.
- Targeted recruitment.
- Ringfencing posts for disabled people including those with mental ill health.

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4.

To identify and provide sources of information and support regarding mental ill health

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4.1 We will provide sources of information and support by:

- Availing of resources offered by relevant support organisations.
- Availing of resources offered by specialist bodies including the Equality Commission and Disability Employment Service.
- Engaging directly with relevant applicants, employees and services users affected by mental ill health.

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5.

To adopt every customer counts recommendations - working towards taking positive steps to make services accessible to people with mental ill health

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5.1 We will seek to promote equality of opportunity in terms of how we provide goods and services to disabled customers, including those with mental ill health by;

- Adopting the [Equality Commission's template ECC Customer Services Policy](#)

- Providing training to all front-facing staff on disability etiquette and relevant legislation dealing with disability and the provision of goods and services. This training will give focus to customers with mental ill health.
- Monitoring and evaluating the customer experience of disabled people, including those with mental ill health.

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