

WELLBEING AT WORK POLICY & PROCEDURE

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## **Policy**

### **1. Scope**

This Policy covers all colleagues and students.

### **2. Purpose**

This Policy sets out Elim's commitment to promoting a progressive, engaging and healthy working environment that is supportive to colleagues.

Elim will support and promote good mental and physical health and wellbeing of all our valued colleagues through the provision of the Elim CARES values culture, workplace practices and work environment.

We also want to encourage and support you to take responsibility for your own mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Elim wants a culture that puts people first, so we can all balance work, our aspirations and personal life and feel fulfilled. We also recognise that improved health and wellbeing can support colleagues to be more resilient and creative in the delivery of customer services, and the achievement of our vision and strategic goals.

### **3. Values and principles**

Elim Housing colleagues, customers, Board, and stakeholders have developed Elim CARES values that determine how we work together to deliver our services and achieve our business plan objectives and vision.



#### **CUSTOMERS FIRST**

Customers are at the heart of our services and decision making.



#### **ASPIRATIONAL & ACCOUNTABLE**

We are ambitious for our customers, colleagues and stakeholders. We work with integrity, learn from mistakes and do what we say we will.



#### **RESULTS**

We work hard and deliver great results for our customers and for Elim.



#### **EVERYONE'S VIEW MATTERS**

We listen to understand, improve and build our services.



#### **SUPPORTIVE**

We tackle challenges head on and inspire each other to achieve our potential.

The Elim CARES values outline how we communicate, interact, and behave with each other, our customers and stakeholders. They should be demonstrated in how we deliver our services, and all colleagues should role model and embody these values and the behaviours and culture they represent. Elim believes in creating a working environment where its employees are treated fairly and with respect and in line with Elim CARES values.

#### **4. Policy Statement**

Elim recognises that all colleagues throughout their lives have events that may affect their health and wellbeing and their ability to perform their role.

This policy aims to create a workplace culture that promotes health and wellbeing amongst Elim colleagues, we will do this by:

- Making clear what resources and support are available to support your mental and physical wellbeing and how to access these resources.
- Training managers to support you and your mental and physical wellbeing.
- Promoting health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Raising awareness and facilitating open and honest discussions about health and wellbeing issues.

This policy directly links to the Wellbeing at Work Procedure that accompanies this document. The procedure sets out in more detail the practical measures that Elim have in place to support your health and wellbeing.

#### **5. Legislation, Regulation**

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, HSE Management Standards for Work-Related Stress 2004 and The Equality Act 2010.

#### **6. Policy breach**

Any breach of an Elim Policy or Procedure may be subject to formal disciplinary proceedings.

#### **7. Policy owner**

The Head of HR & OD is the Policy owner.

#### **8. Policy date and review**

This Policy was drafted in October 2022.

#### **9. Approval**

Consultation on this policy was made with all colleagues between 11/07/22 – 29/07/22 including to all colleagues through email, to the Colleagues Council and at the Elim Conference on 20/07/22. This Policy was approved by SLT on 11/10/22.

## **Procedure**

### **1. Scope**

This Procedure covers all colleagues and students.

### **2. Governing policy**

This Procedure sits under the Wellbeing at Work Policy.

### **3. Purpose**

The aim of this Procedure is to create a workplace culture that promotes and supports the health and wellbeing of all colleagues at Elim and provide signposting to managers and colleagues on where to gain further support.

### **4. Mental Wellbeing**

Mental Wellbeing is defined as 'a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community' (World Health Organisation, 2022).

Your mental wellbeing can vary over your lifetime as your circumstances change. Elim will create a supportive culture that promotes good mental wellbeing and facilitates open conversations about colleague's mental health and wellbeing.

#### **4.1 Awareness for colleagues and managers**

All colleagues are required to complete mental health awareness training. This will be assigned to you when you join the organisation.

All line managers are required to complete mental health awareness training to understand how best to support their team with mental health issues.

Ongoing training and support is available, and all colleagues are encouraged to speak to their line manager or the HR team if there is any additional information they need to support their understanding or awareness of mental health.

#### **4.2 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**

The EAP service from Health Shield is available to you 24 hours a day, seven days a week through Health Assured. Just Call 0800 028 1963 quoting Elim.

The EAP service has qualified, experienced counsellors on hand to support you and focus on guiding you through stressful situations when you need it most. They help you to balance the pressures of work, home and your personal life when things become overwhelming.

The confidential support available includes:

- Emotional support
- Telephone counselling
- Practical information
- Up to eight face-to-face counselling sessions including cognitive behavioural therapy

You can receive help on a range of subjects, to include:

- Debt
- Housing

- Consumer issues
- Adoption
- Family related matters
- Work related problems
- Domestic abuse
- Stress
- Medical information

If you reach your limit of sessions and still require support, please contact HR who will be able to look into further support available.

#### 4.3 Mental Health First Aiders

Elim's Mental Health First Aider's are a point of contact for any colleague who is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. This interaction could range from having an initial conversation through to supporting the person to get appropriate help.

As well as in a crisis, Mental Health First Aiders are valuable in providing early intervention help for someone who may be developing a mental health issue. Mental Health First Aiders are not trained to be therapists or psychiatrists, but they can offer initial support through non-judgemental listening and guidance.

Mental Health First Aiders are trained to:

- Spot the early signs and symptoms of mental ill health.
- Start a supportive conversation with a colleague who may be experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress.
- Listen to the person non-judgementally.
- Assess the risk of suicide or self-harm.
- Encourage the person to access appropriate professional support or self-help strategies. This might include encouraging access to internal support systems such as EAPs or in-house counselling services.
- Escalate to the appropriate emergency services, if necessary.
- Maintain confidentiality as appropriate.
- Protect themselves while performing their role.

Details of your Mental Health First Aiders and how to contact them can be found [here](#)

They can also be contacted on [mentalhealth1staid@elimhousing.co.uk](mailto:mentalhealth1staid@elimhousing.co.uk)

Your Mental Health First Aiders run regular awareness events through the year and share resources [here](#).

#### Mindfulness Sessions

Your Mental Health First Aiders run regular mindfulness sessions through the year. Mindfulness is a great skill to have and can be practiced every day. There are many benefits to mindfulness to include:

- Increases our ability to regulate emotions
- Decreases stress
- Reduces anxiety and depression.
- Boosts your memory
- Increases focus

We would encourage you to take 15 minutes out of your working day to attend sessions if you would benefit from them.

#### 4.4 Wellness Action Plan

Wellness action plans are a practical tool to help you identify and take ownership of what keeps you well at work, what causes you to become unwell, and how to address a mental health problem at work should you be experiencing one.

It also opens up a dialogue between you and your line manager, to help them better understand your needs and experiences and therefore better support your wellbeing. This can lead to greater productivity, better performance and increased job satisfaction.

We would encourage you to take some protected time to complete a [Wellness Action Plan](#) to share with your line manager in a one to one. More information on how to complete your Wellness Action Plan can be found [here](#).

A guide for line managers in supporting their team with Wellness Action Plans can be found [here](#).

#### 4.5 Stress at work

Mental and physical health problems have many causes, including stresses in the workplace and your life outside of work. These could include relationship breakdowns, financial issues and bereavement and loss.

In times of continuous change, we acknowledge the importance of a supportive environment and positive working culture, which includes identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

The benefits of an effective joint approach between Elim and colleagues in managing stress potentially include;

- Increased colleague wellbeing and morale.
- Increased job satisfaction and better work / life balance.
- Increased colleague motivation and effectiveness whilst at work.
- Reduced absenteeism.
- Increased positive outcomes for our customers.

Details of our commitment to supporting you with any stress at work are in our [Stress Management in the Workplace Policy](#).

If you are feeling stressed at work, we would encourage you to seek support from your line manager or HR. Your line manager will be able to conduct a [stress management risk assessment](#) and together you can agree a plan to help improve the issues you are experiencing.

If you are experiencing financial issues, you should seek expert financial advice. Elim can support you in the short term with salary advances (subject to approval).

#### 4.6 One to ones

Your one to ones with your line manager are a great opportunity to share any issues you are experiencing with your physical and/or mental wellbeing. We would encourage honest and open discussions to enable your line manager and Elim to best support you.

Guidance for line managers on a variety of mental and physical wellbeing topics can be found [here](#).

#### 4.7 Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is a way of studying our own experiences to improve the way we work. It underpins the ethos of working within a Psychologically Informed Environment and aids us to build the necessary skills to work in a psychologically informed way with each other and our service users.

Reflective Practice is led by colleagues who are trained facilitators. Reflective practice sessions for customer facing teams will take place every 4-6 weeks, however they can be requested at any time, eg after an incident, a death or a period of pressure for any team. If you feel you require an additional reflective practice session please contact your line manager or HR.

More information on Elim's reflective practice can be found [here](#).

#### 4.8 Occupational Health

Occupational health seeks to promote and maintain the health and wellbeing of colleagues, with the aim of ensuring a positive relationship between an employee's work and health. All colleagues are asked to complete a Health Questionnaire on offer of employment to enable colleagues to manage any existing conditions alongside their work.

Referrals are made by your Line Manager with your permission and can take place for a variety of reasons, to include: sickness absence, long term absence, diagnosis of a condition and following a VDU assessment. Following referral our Occupational Health provider, Split Dimension, will contact you to arrange a virtual or face-to-face meeting at a mutually convenient time and location. Occupational Health will then provide a report detailing their recommendations for support and reasonable adjustments for your Line Manager to discuss and agree with you.

Occupational Health support employees in remaining at work or returning to work earlier – and thus contributing to colleague's physical and mental wellbeing.

### 5. **Physical Wellbeing**

Elim will support and encourage you to look after your physical wellbeing is not only important for your physical health itself, your physical wellbeing and your lifestyle will also have an impact on your mental wellbeing.

People who exercise regularly have a lower risk of developing many long-term (chronic) conditions, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and some cancers. Research shows that physical activity can also boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reducing your risk of stress, clinical depression, dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Recommendations are that you should aim for at least 150 minutes a week of physical activity (NHS, 2021). The workplace is an important setting in which you can increase your levels of activity to benefit your health, for instance Elim would encourage you to consider the following small changes to your daily routine:

- Walk or cycle to work.
- Take regular breaks to stretch your legs.
- Have walking meetings.
- Stretch regularly.
- Go outside on your lunch break.
- Take regular screen breaks.

### 5.1 Physical health initiatives

We encourage you to take time out of your working day to get some physical activity. You might go for a walk, run or bike ride or exercise using equipment.

You should make sure you stand up from your desk regularly and stretch as well as having time away from screens.

### 5.2 Physical environment

Elim provides physical work environments that support your health and wellbeing. You should carry out regular VDU assessments and order any equipment required through the Office Manager. Your physical environment should be safe and compliant with Health and Safety. Any issues with your Office please report to your line manager or HR.

### 5.3 Healthy eating

Healthy eating is essential for good health and contributes to positive wellbeing. A healthy, balanced diet contains a variety of different types of food, including:

- Higher fibre starchy carbohydrates, such as whole wheat pasta, brown rice or potatoes with their skin on.
- Lots of fruit and vegetables.
- Fish, including oily fish such as mackerel.
- 6 to 8 glasses (1.2 litres) of water, or other fluids, every day to stop us getting dehydrated.

You should reduce your intake of:

- Saturated fats from foods such as butter or meat.
- Added sugar.
- Salt.

The workplace is an important setting in which colleagues can increase their intake of healthy foods to benefit their health and protect against illness. A healthy, balanced diet also helps people to recover more quickly from illness.

The food we eat, and what we drink, not only have a physical impact on our body, but can also contribute to our mental health, resulting in improved levels of concentration, mental alertness and ability to cope with everyday stresses and strains.

Elim aims to support you in healthy eating by:

- Providing food preparation areas and a fridge for food storage.
- Providing access to cool drinking water for all employees.
- Encouraging all colleagues to eat their lunch away from their desk.

Information on healthy eating can be found [here](#) and through your Healthshield Profile.

### 5.4 Cycle to work scheme

The cycle to work scheme is part of the Government's Green Transport Plan aimed at promoting healthier journeys to work and reducing pollution. The scheme gives you the opportunity to save up to 42% on the cost of Bicycles and/or equipment. This is made possible by saving on Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions.

There are many benefits in participating in the scheme:



- Get a new bike and / or equipment.
- Cost is spread over weekly / monthly interest free payments (via salary sacrifice).
- Save money on travelling costs.
- Lose weight and tone up.
- Cycling improves your general health and well-being and reduces stress levels.
- Reduce your carbon footprint and help save the planet!

To check what savings you could make visit [here](#).

To apply to the scheme visit [here](#) and enter Elim's code B2W/21077.

## 5.5 Menstruation, Perimenopause and Menopause

Menstruation is the regular discharge of blood from the lining of the uterus. This can last anytime between 3 and 8 days and usually happens once monthly from puberty until the menopause. Symptoms include:

- Abdominal or pelvic cramping/pain.
- Lower back pain.
- mood swings, feeling upset, anxious or irritable.
- Fatigue.
- bloating or tummy pain.
- breast tenderness.
- Headaches.
- changes in appetite and sex drive.

The menopause is a natural stage of life, when a woman's oestrogen levels decline and she stops having periods. The perimenopause is the phase leading up to the menopause, when a woman's hormone balance starts to change. During this time a woman may start to suffer with menopause symptoms but is still having periods. Women are said to have reached the menopause when they haven't had a period for one year. Your GP can test your hormone levels to determine if you have experienced menopause.

The perimenopause and menopause can cause a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms that can last for several years. Elim recognises that peoples' individual experiences may differ greatly. Some of the most typical symptoms include:

- Psychological issues such as mood disturbances.
- Anxiety and/or depression.
- Memory loss.
- Brain fog.
- Panic attacks.
- Loss of confidence.
- Reduced concentration.
- Hot flushes (brief and sudden surges of heat usually felt in the face, neck, chest).
- Sleep disturbance that can make people feel tired and irritable.
- Night sweats (hot flushes that happen during the night).
- Irregular periods and/or periods can become light or heavy.
- Muscle and joint stiffness, aches and pains.
- Electric shock sensations.
- Recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs) including cystitis.
- Headaches.
- Weight gain.
- Palpitations (heartbeats that become more noticeable).
- Skin changes (dryness, acne, general itchiness).
- Changes in your hair texture.
- Reduced sex drive.

Elim understands that menstruation, perimenopause and menopause symptoms can be a challenge for women as they go about their daily lives, including at work. Elim is committed to developing a workplace culture that supports our colleagues experiencing the perimenopause or menopause in order for them to feel confident to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for reasonable adjustments at work. Simple measures could include:

- Leaving doors open.
- Ensuring that windows can be safely opened.
- Ensuring that it is possible to regulate the temperature in a room by turning down radiators (as long as this will be comfortable for all colleagues).
- Provision of fans.
- Fitting blinds to windows.
- Considering requests for changes to working arrangements, eg temporary part-time working.
- Flexibility around the taking of breaks, or increased breaks during the working day.
- Flexibility around attending relevant medical appointments.
- Ensure easy access to well-maintained toilet and washroom and if possible shower facilities.
- Take account of work schedules and allow access to facilities during the day.
- Flexibility where possible, around location of work as required.

If you are struggling with menstruation symptoms, experiencing the perimenopause or menopause symptoms that impact on your work, we would encourage you to let your line manager or HR know so that appropriate support is provided. Elim's managers are committed and supported to respond to requests for adaptations or flexibility with sensitivity and an understanding of the different physical and emotional experiences that colleagues may face. Support is also available through your Employee Assistance Programme and from your Mental Health First Aiders.

You should also maintain regular contact with your GP who may be able to help you manage your symptoms.

## 5.6 Sickness absence

Elim recognises the importance of ensuring that colleagues are supported through any periods of absence and their subsequent return to work. [Elim's Sick Absence Policy and Procedure](#) outlines the support available to you, to include:

- Elim's enhanced sick pay.
- Support for long term absentees.
- Rehabilitation of long-term absentees.
- Occupational Health referrals.

Your Line Manager and/or HR are able to support you with any sickness absence issues.

## 5.7 Healthshield

Elim provides all colleagues with a Healthshield cash plan, giving you cashback for dental, optical, chiropody, hospital consultations, health and wellbeing treatments, dental accident, physiotherapy, chiropractic, osteopathy, acupuncture and homeopathy.

Each employee will be sent a welcome email by Healthshield within their first month of employment with a membership number (all membership numbers begin CN), use this to login to the members [area](#) to find out more about your plan and what amount of cash you are able to claim back.

If you are unable to locate your membership number please contact HR for assistance.

## **6. Working hours**

Elim understands that work is one part of colleague's lives but not the whole of it. We will support you in trying to balance your commitments outside of work.

### **6.1 Carers leave**

We understand that many of you have caring responsibilities outside of the workplace and how this can impact your wellbeing and work/life balance. Elim is supportive of colleagues with caring responsibilities. Colleagues who have to take time off work for emergency childcare or caring responsibilities are entitled to 3 days fully paid leave per rolling year (pro rata)

Please see [Elim's Family Policy](#) for full details of how Elim can support you.

### **6.2 Flexible Working**

Flexible working can help support your mental and physical wellbeing by giving you a positive work/life balance, allowing you to balance family commitments, freeing up time for exercise and reducing your commute time.

The [Working Flexibly at Elim Policy](#) details how Elim can support you, from a temporary change to your hours/location to a more permanent change to your terms and conditions. Elim will consider your request against the business needs to come to an agreement that works for both you and Elim.

### **6.3 Other leave**

Details of all other leave available can be found in Elim's [Annual and other leave guidelines](#).

## **7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

We recognise the impact on your wellbeing if you don't feel able to be yourself at work. Elim is committed to supporting and acknowledging colleague's wellbeing issues and ensuring that anyone working with us is not discriminated against because of their mental or physical health issues.

We want to ensure we have a diverse team of colleagues that reflect the communities we serve and a working environment that enables everyone who works for Elim to contribute, thrive and reach their full potential.

Elim's commitment to creating a truly diverse and inclusive culture is detailed in our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#).

## **8. Health and safety**

Elim is committed to achieving high standards of health and safety for all colleagues and is aware of its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. All colleagues are responsible for compliance to Elim's [Health and Safety Policy](#). All colleagues should take care of their own health and safety and notify their Line Manager of any safety issues that may compromise the health, safety or welfare of themselves or others.

Elim provides training to all colleagues on a variety of Health and Safety areas related to their role. Full details of training offered are detailed on the [training needs template](#).

## **9. Monitoring**

This Procedure will be monitored by the Head of HR & OD.

## **10. Procedure owner**

The Head of HR & OD is the Procedure owner.

## **11. Procedure date and review**

The date the procedure was created and the date by which it will be reviewed.

THIS PROCEDURE REPLACES ALL PREVIOUS PROCEDURES COVERING THIS ASPECT OF THE ASSOCIATION'S BUSINESS

Hannah Amor  
HR Officer  
October 2022

### **References**

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