

Employers: Are you considering Mental Health recruitment and employment issues?

How to use this checklist

This checklist aims to help employers assess how well their organisation is addressing mental health issues. If you work through the questions you will get pointers on the action needed to ensure that you are a fair employer to people who experience mental health problems, and that your working conditions and practices support people to work to their potential and stay well.

There are suggestions on where to get further information and advice on what action to take.

		The Checklist	Y/N	Get help from:
Fairness at work	1	<p>Does your equal opportunities policy refer to mental health status or use of psychiatric services?</p> <p><i>Even if you intend 'disability' to include people who experience mental health difficulties this will not be recognised unless you make it explicit. The policy needs to be available to all employees and actively implemented.</i></p>		National mental health organisations; mental health employment schemes
	2	<p>Have all those involved in recruitment and people management been made aware that mental illness may be covered by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA)?</p> <p><i>Compliance with the requirements of the DDA is legally required for employers of fifteen or more people and would constitute good practice for all employers.</i></p>		Disability Rights Commission and Helpline; mental health organisations; Employers Forum on Disability; the Employment Service
	3	<p>Have managers received information and training about DDA responsibilities and how to make adjustments for employees, including those with mental health needs?</p> <p><i>Adjustments around mental health needs are very individual. An 'off the shelf' approach does not work. So managers need to be aware of the kinds of adjustments that the organisation needs to make. A single point of contact should enable the organisation to make full use of its own expertise and of external sources of information and advice.</i></p>		Disability Rights Commission and Helpline; mental health organisations; Employers Forum on Disability
	4	<p>Are applicants with known mental health problems considered on an equal footing with all other applicants?</p> <p><i>Your recruitment procedures should prevent discrimination against applicants with past or present mental health problems; positive steps might include allowing interviewees to be accompanied if necessary.</i></p>		
	5	<p>Have employees been informed about their rights and duties under the DDA and are they actively encouraged to seek adjustments if necessary?</p> <p><i>If employees are encouraged to think through what would enable them to do their jobs effectively you are more likely to get solutions that are agreed and effective.</i></p>		Disability Rights Commission and Helpline; mental health organisations; Employers Forum on Disability
	6	<p>Have managers received information and training that makes it clear that mental health problems do not preclude the ability to take on new challenges?</p> <p><i>Misplaced sympathy or defensive management practices can result in discrimination and suppression of potential. Do not make assumptions about what will be 'too stressful' for an employee when considering promotion and career development.</i></p>		Personnel or Human Resources Department; Training Department; Mental health organisations

Fairness at work (cont)	7	<p>Does the organisation involve people with experience of mental health problems in developing its policies and practices?</p> <p><i>There is no substitute for the expertise that comes from experience. Where it is feasible you could consult with employees with personal experience of mental health problems, or consider consulting a mental health organisation.</i></p>		Local mental health organisations
	8	<p>In its relations with the wider community does the organisation acknowledge and include people who experience mental health problems?</p> <p><i>One in four of us will at some time experience a mental health problem and about one per cent of the population has a diagnosis of schizophrenia or manic depression. Are customers treated with respect and sensitivity, and does advertising avoid negative stereotypes?</i></p>		<p>Mental health organisations;</p> <p>Your customer care and external relations departments;</p> <p>Mental Health Media</p>
Wellbeing at work	9	<p>Do you seek (confidential) feedback from employees about working conditions and practices?</p> <p><i>Employees can tell you what causes them to feel stressed, whether they feel valued and what they find helps them to do their jobs and stay well.</i></p>		Health & Safety Executive; mental health organisations
	10	<p>Does the employee have a genuine degree of control over how and at what pace they do their work?</p> <p><i>Lack of discretion and flexibility over how to get the job done is one of the main causes of stress at work.</i></p>		Health & Safety Executive
	11	<p>Is supervision used effectively to manage individual workloads and plan work with the employee's abilities in mind?</p> <p><i>The quality of supervision is a key factor in enabling people to give their best and maintain wellbeing. Good communications skills, flexibility and the ability to give constructive feedback in a sensitive way all contribute to quality.</i></p>		Training Department
	12	<p>Are there well-publicised and understood mechanisms for employees to contribute their views and be appropriately involved in planning and decision-making?</p> <p><i>Lack of consultation and involvement can cause stress, while using the knowledge of the whole organisation can only help it to function well.</i></p>		<p>Management;</p> <p>Management consultants</p>
	13	<p>Are employees given clear information about their roles and responsibilities, and how they contribute to the overall aims of the organisation?</p> <p><i>Conflicting demands and lack of clarity about the scope or responsibilities of the job can cause stress.</i></p>		<p>Line managers;</p> <p>Personnel or Human Resources Department</p>
	14	<p>Does the organisational culture encourage co-operation and discourage bullying and unhealthy work habits such as working too many hours?</p> <p><i>If an organisation runs on fear it is going to generate more stress.</i></p>		Health & Safety Executive; Andrea Adams Trust
	15	<p>Is there a named person that employees can speak to in confidence if they need support?</p> <p><i>Having someone to confide in helps protect against depression; people can begin to solve problems when they talk about what is worrying them.</i></p>		British Association of Counselling
	16	<p>Are there procedures to help managers to respond effectively to a member of staff who appears to be showing signs of mental health problems?</p> <p><i>A person who is becoming unwell may not ask for help and managers need to know what they should do if they have concerns about one of their staff.</i></p>		Personnel or Human Resources Department