

Simple Overview to Supporting Staff with Health Conditions

Everyone, at some point, will have to manage having Health Condition(s). Some will be minor and acute, so simply dealt with and finished quickly. Others will have more serious conditions that could be chronic (long-term) and will have to be managed more robustly at work.

If you are the **line-manager** or **supervisor** of the staff member having to manage a health condition(s) the following simple advice can help you make a more informed decision(s) on how to move forwards.

Understand the Health condition

- Take a look at a suitable website to understand the condition, symptoms, causes, diagnosis possible treatment and life outcome or self-help advice. Suitable websites include
 - www.nhs.uk
 - www.mind.org.uk
- Speak to the staff member about how they are and how it affects them, remember everyone is different and issues can vary especially if they have other conditions to manage

Medication changes

- Be aware of potential side effects, again look at the websites above to gain a good understanding and access the findings against the staff members job role
- Note. Some medications, like HRT and anti-anxiety drugs can cause a rapid euphoria once taken, you should be aware that it could result in unexpected actions and comments while they are getting used to the medication and can typically take 6 weeks to regulate (but this again depends on the staff member and the medication)

Support actions and ideas

- Allowing *open* discussions between the line-manger and the staff member actively supports both parties through this process (remember that the line-manager will need support from their line-manager, also)
- Where appropriate, encourage discussions between the staff member managing the health condition and their colleagues, as a wider workplace support network will develop and should remain throughout the process (additionally, all staff will feel more supported by the business and a good “wellbeing” culture will develop)
- Start and finish times might have to be adjusted to allow for medication, transport or other restrictors that the health condition causes (this can also benefit your business as it could extend the working day or create other opportunities)
- Rest breaks may have to be flexible on when they can be taken to allow for medication, food, drink and toilet breaks; so to assist in enabling the staff member to feel more “stable” (this approach is good for all staff, where possible, as it helps to improve general wellbeing and trust in staff)
- Flexible working; working from home for part of a week and at the workplace for the rest of the week could allow the staff member not to get “so tied” from travelling or just allowing them to get a little more rest/sleep over the week (being at home constantly is not always positive for mental wellbeing, so a mix is beneficial as it supports “belonging” and having access to the workplace support network)

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