



ALBION SAFEGUARDING
MENTAL HEALTH
& WELLBEING
STRATEGY
2021-2025





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1 Foreword

Our People - 'Shaping futures and affecting lives' every day...

West Bromwich Albion's vision as a football club is to positively impact the economic, environmental and community interests.

Our core strength in achieving this is in our people, who strive to make a difference and who keep our staff and scholars safe and well, whilst giving people opportunities to be the best they can be, changing and shaping lives in the most positive way we can.

We recognise that in today's increasingly complex and fast-paced world there is a general concern about the pressures in people's lives that can have an impact on mental health and wellbeing. We also recognise that the nature of our industry is such that staff and scholars may be exposed to fast moving and challenging situations.

Through our commitment to making mental health and wellbeing a club priority and by encouraging all staff to take responsibility for positive mental health and wellbeing, we believe that staff can fulfil their roles and operate within an environment that enables them to stay mentally fit with a positive sense of connection with others.

Through this strategy, we aim to describe how we will support the mental health and wellbeing of our staff over the next four years and how we will encourage the enjoyment of work and life, providing the tools and support to cope with the stresses and occasional sadness of life's challenges.

The strategy will also outline how the Club intends to mainstream mental health awareness through engagement with staff and partners. It describes how our culture enables everyone to speak out openly about mental health concerns and how they are given access to positive and professional support without judgement.

Our main ambition for mental health & wellbeing is simple and that is to maintain a healthy and productive workforce and class leading Academy structure.

By creating a more proactive and preventative approach to mental health, we understand the importance of removing stigma and we are committed to treating mental health with the same passion and drive as we do with physical health problems.

This strategy will assist the Club in continually improving and positively impact upon more lives both in our club and the communities we represent.



2 Introduction & Background

Causes of Mental Health Ill Health

Recognising our Legal Duties

The benefits of taking action

Mental health is central to our quality of life, our social and emotional wellbeing, our personal experiences, our family life, all of which can impact on our work and performance.

The subject of mental ill health and wellbeing, in particular the stigma attached to mental health issues, the devastating effects it can have, and the support required to reduce and mitigate the associated impacts, has grown in prominence over the last number of years.

Mental ill health alone comes in many guises and can be very destructive if left undiagnosed or untreated. At least one in four of the population will experience a mental health problem at some point during their life and it is estimated that mental ill health in England costs in the region of £105 billion each year.

Treatment costs are expected to double in the next 20 years. This has led to concerted efforts from the Government, health bodies and both public and private sector organisations to spotlight the challenges around mental ill health and provide the appropriate support and treatment.

The total costs of workplace self-reported injuries and ill health in 2018/19 was £16.2 billion. Ill health causes the biggest proportion of total costs at around 66% (£10.6 billion), with injury resulting in around 34% of total costs (£5.6 billion).

Ill health contributes to a greater proportion of total costs, despite injuries accounting for a greater proportion of cases, as ill health cases result in more time off work on average, which drives higher costs.

To date, the Club has put in place a number of interventions which have raised awareness and have put heightened emphasis on the support available to staff.

The Club has resourced the establishment of two trained Mental Health first Aiders and in recent months a Safeguarding Operating Group has been created. The Operating Group which is comprised of a cross section of people from across the Club will provide leadership, advice and will coordinate the work required to progress and support the Club's aspiration to be a beacon for mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

We also believe that mental health and wellbeing, like safeguarding, is everyone's responsibility and whilst it is an essential part of every leader's role, all staff are encouraged to take a proactive approach towards enhancing their own mental health and wellbeing, and to support that of their colleagues.

The delivery of this strategy and the intention to improve the mental health and wellbeing of our employees and scholars is directly in line with the Club's Core Values where we strive to be inclusive, acting with compassion, making a difference and doing the right thing.

Causes of Mental Health Conditions

We all have mental health in the same way as we all have physical health. Just as we take steps to protect and improve our physical health, it's also important to take steps to protect and improve our mental health, sometimes called emotional wellbeing.

It is important to understand that emotional wellbeing is about wellness rather than illness and is not merely the absence of a mental health condition. Good emotional wellbeing does not mean you're always happy or unaffected by your experiences. But poor emotional wellbeing can make it more difficult to cope with daily life.

One in four employees in the United Kingdom are likely to be affected by a mental health condition and in any given year around three million people in the UK experience some form of anxiety or depression, with around 15 people taking their own lives in the UK – every single day.

There are many reasons why someone may have a mental illness but not all of reasons effect us in the same way, however some common factors that could potentially result in a period of poor mental health include:

- childhood abuse, trauma, or neglect
- social isolation or loneliness
- experiencing discrimination and stigma
- social disadvantage, poverty or debt
- bereavement (losing someone close to you)
- severe or long-term stress
- having a long-term physical health condition
- unemployment or losing your job
- homelessness or poor housing
- being a long-term carer for someone
- drug and alcohol misuse
- domestic violence, bullying or other abuse as an adult leading to trauma

Although lifestyle factors including work, diet, drugs and lack of sleep can all affect your mental health, if you experience a mental health problem there are usually other factors as well.

Research suggests that some mental health problems may run in families. For example, if you have a parent with schizophrenia, you are more likely to develop schizophrenia yourself. But no one knows if this is because of our genes or because of other factors, such as the environment we grow up in, or the ways of thinking, coping and behaving that we may learn from our parents. Although the development of some mental health problems may be influenced by our genes, researchers haven't found any specific genes that definitely cause mental health problems.

Regardless of the cause, with much of our lives being spent at work, the workplace is a very influential environment when it comes to our emotional wellbeing and we therefore have a duty of care to create a positive and supportive workplace that could ultimately make the difference in someone's life.

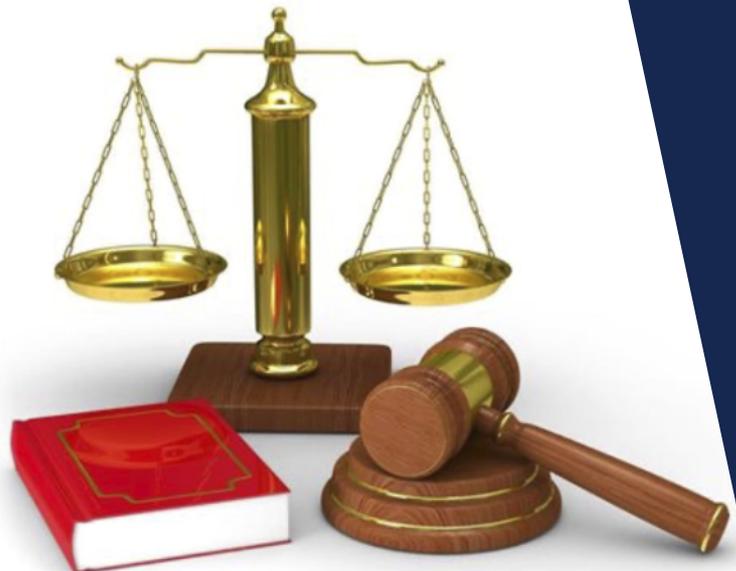


Recognising our Legal Duties

West Bromwich Albion Football Club recognises its legal duties to tackling stress and anxiety which could lead to mental and physical ill health.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) expects us to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments for stress, and to take action to tackle any problems identified by that risk assessment.

They also set out Management Standards to define the characteristics, or culture, of an organisation where the risks from work-related stress are being effectively managed and controlled. The Management Standards cover six key areas of work design, that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor mental health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence.



3 The Primary Causes of Stress

In developing and implementing its Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy, the Club is mindful of the primary sources of stress at work which include:

DEMANDS

This includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.

SUPPORT

This includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

ROLES

Whether individuals understand their role within the organisation and whether the Club ensures that they do not have ambiguous roles.

CONTROL

How much say an individual has in the way they do their work?

RELATIONSHIPS

This includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

CHANGE

How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

The Club has other legal obligations including the Equality Act 2010 which relate to mental health in the workplace.

These include making reasonable adjustments for staff with a mental health condition, protecting the privacy of a staff member who has a mental health condition, and ensuring that we do not take any adverse action against a staff member because of their mental health condition.

More recently, there has also been an emphasis on the ageing workforce, due to greater life expectancy, and against a backdrop of increased retirement ages, it is inevitable that there will be an increase of staff in the older age groups. This places more emphasis on creating a healthy workforce to sustain an older population of staff who may have greater health needs in the workplace.

5 Cornerstones of our Strategy

Leadership & Responsibility

Communication & Education

Support & Intervention

Culture & Compassion

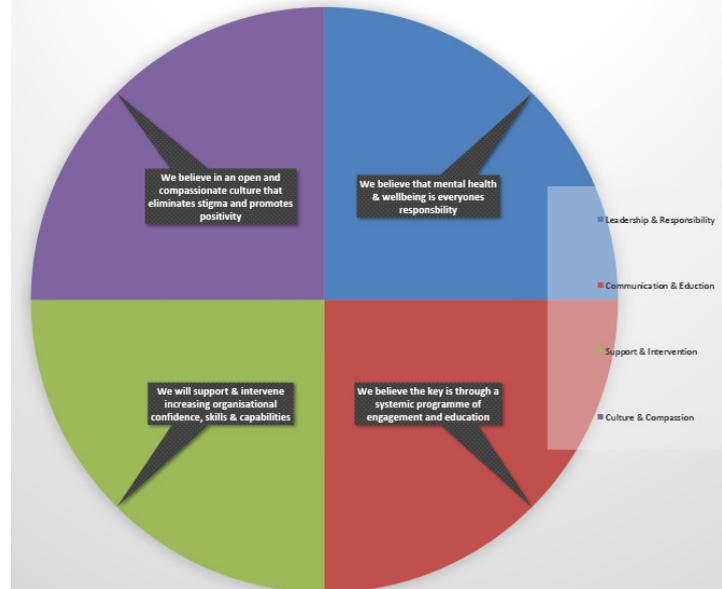
This Strategy has been developed in partnership with all levels of WBAFC managers, staff and the Safeguarding Operating Group to provide a framework that enables the entire Club to support positive mental health & wellbeing.

Our approach and aspiration are simply to prevent and treat mental health with the same commitment, passion and drive as we do with physical health problems. We also believe that like safeguarding, mental health and wellbeing is everybody's responsibility and there is an expectation that any stigma associated with mental health will be challenged and removed through education.

Regardless of whether mental ill health arises the Club already has a range of effective interventions and processes in place to support employees and scholars. The level and type of support varies and can be tailored to individual need based on the circumstances and cause.

These interventions are kept under regular review to ensure that they support this strategy and provide maximum benefit to staff. Consideration of new interventions and support mechanisms is also ongoing and by constantly reviewing our approach, we believe we can become even more proactive and identify mental health & wellbeing problems at an earlier stage.

4 Key Elements



Everybody in the Club is expected to support mental health and wellbeing and mental health will be a strategic priority for everyone.

This will be achieved by:

- Normalising mental health through regular engagement with staff / scholars and ensuring staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding mental health in the workplace.
- Adhering to relevant policy and guidance and participating in training and development activities relating to mental health issues.
- Maintaining an ongoing dialogue with line managers about stress and mental wellbeing of self, and in support of colleagues.
- Actively seeking out support and/or engaging in feedback processes concerning developments to support their own mental health or to support colleagues.
- Ensuring a consistent and positive approach to mental health and where appropriate, providing targeted individual mental health support.



Senior leaders and Board members are in a strong position to positively influence the working environment, management practices and experiences of employees.

They have pledged a long-term commitment to improving the mental health of staff and scholars within the Club which will be achieved by:

- Demonstrating a visible, active commitment and speaking openly about mental health in the workplace.
- Treating mental health with the same level of parity as physical health and integrating good health and safety management into all business decisions, policies and procedures.
- Direct involvement in mental health activities and progressing plans in conjunction with the Safeguarding Operating Group.
- Supporting investment and the allocation of necessary resources to further develop the skills and capabilities within the Club to address mental health issues and risks.
- Communicating a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and any form of discrimination or judgement associated with mental health.
- Providing flexible working conditions that promote employee mental health.

Support & Intervention

Providing the tools and support required to address mental health & wellbeing challenges amongst our Staff & Scholars.

As a Football Club, we understand the importance of supporting, so by providing a positive and safe place to work we will ensure that both staff and managers have the tools and support that they need in respect of mental health.

A lot of provision is already in place and work will continue to ensure that we are able to offer comprehensive support to staff.

Key areas of focus revolve around the following:

- Supporting the retention and rehabilitation of all employees as appropriate through reasonable adjustments that include phased return to work, flexible working, supporting treatment or variations to role, hours and work location.
- Ensuring staff & scholars have access to resources for reporting instances of bullying or harassment in any form. The promotion of the reporting system 'My Concern'.
- Monthly meetings of the Safeguarding Operating Group, who act as a reference group for the Club to action and oversee the delivery of projects and proposals that affect the mental health and wellbeing of staff.
- Providing professional counselling facilities via the Club's Occupational Health Provider, Able Futures, Unum Lifeworks and dedicated FA Service Providers to support staff's mental health.
- Providing resilience training, peer support and supervision for staff engaged in emotionally demanding work.
- Extending Mental Health First Aid training to a wider audience across the Club, to promote accessibility and enable more proactive and timely support.
- Establishing a process to monitor and address risks in respect of exposure to serious incidents.
- Prioritising mental health and offering reasonable adjustments and flexibility in respect of working hours, work location and duties to support mental health recovery.
- Developing, implementing, and monitoring individual Wellness Action Plans where work related illness has impacted.
- Ensuring that general wellness and emotional wellbeing is a standards item on PPD reviews for all staff and for Scholar Reviews.
- Developing effective partnerships with specialist organisations to support the implementation of elements of our strategy, e.g., wellness days, healthy eating, and exercise initiatives.
- Encouraging the promotion and creation of informal activities and events relating to wellbeing.
- Considering the working and educational environment for staff and scholars during facilities modernisation to identify opportunities to improve spaces and facilities to support wellbeing.



Culture & Compassion

Creating a healthy and supportive environment where staff feel valued, empowered, and able to declare if they need help.

We understand that a healthy and supportive culture and work environment is reliant on good leadership and a consistent and positive approach to staff wellbeing.

To achieve this, it is important that our leaders demonstrate compassion and proactive consideration of the mental health and wellbeing of staff in their day-to-day work.

We believe this is key to creating an open and inclusive environment that promotes trust and enables staff to be themselves and feel comfortable in seeking out support around their mental health when required.

We regularly seek feedback from staff through surveys with specific wellbeing content, and we will continue to engage with staff to measure the impact of our approach to mental health.

Feedback to date has helped us to identify the following priorities:

- Incorporating mental health & wellbeing training within leadership development and induction programmes for all levels of staff.
- Ensuring all policies have due regard to the elimination of discrimination and promote an environment that enables staff and scholars to flourish and seek support without judgement or retribution.
- Normalising discussions around mental health & wellbeing to raise awareness of available support whilst promoting transparency and open dialogue.
- Incorporating consideration of mental health within project planning and change management processes and providing safe and open communication forums where staff and scholars can express opinion and be open to new ideas.
- Promoting zero-tolerance of discrimination against staff and scholars who have a mental health condition through training for managers and all staff.
- Promoting the identity and value of Mental Health First Aiders and Wellbeing Champions across the Club.
- Providing opportunities for staff and scholars to give feedback about issues related to mental health with options to give feedback anonymously, (e.g., through staff surveys, suggestion scheme, team meetings, dedicated email accounts and My Concern)
- Working closely with staff groups to solicit feedback on how we can improve the mental health support we provide and to create a culture of inclusiveness on all matters relating to mental health & wellbeing.
- Recognising that we are all unique and will all respond differently to individual situations and keeping the individual at the heart of our strategy is key to its success.



6 Mental Health and Wellbeing, Governance & Monitoring

Involving our Staff & Scholars

Listening to our Staff & Scholars

Reporting upon our Performance

Involving our Staff and Scholars

To progress our work around positive mental health & wellbeing, the Club has formalised its governance and monitoring arrangements through the creation of a Safeguarding Operating Group.

This group is chaired by the WBAFC Head of Safeguarding or the WBAFC Safeguarding Lead and comprises of Department representation and a range of staff by invite from across the organisation who have skill, experience and/or an interest in safeguarding, mental health & wellbeing.

The purpose of the Safeguarding Operating Group is to review, manage and evaluate the implementation of this strategy and to help deliver associated action plans.

In addition to the establishment of the Safeguarding Operating Group, staff will also be invited to support the club's mental health agenda through other club groups which include: - The Equalities & Diversity Group - Mental Health First Aiders -and Staff Engagement Forums.

Every two years the Club engages with an external provider to conduct an independent Safeguarding Audit.

Also, the Club, through its HR Management will undertake an employee survey that solicits anonymous responses in the following areas:

PURPOSE AND INTEGRITY: This area considers views on job security; how individual roles contribute to the organisation and potential experiences of bullying or discrimination. (Roles, Relationships)



ENABLEMENT: This asks for perceptions around communications, managing performance and whether staff feel they have the tools and equipment to do their roles well. (Control, Support, Relationships, Change)

AUTONOMY: Seeking views regarding staff feeling able to get on with their job and being able to manage the demands of their role. (Control, Demands, Support)

REWARD: This area considers views on valuing and recognising staff and investing in their future careers. (Relationships, Support)

LEADERSHIP: This looks at perceptions on relationships with leaders and line managers and how the organisation manages change. (Support, Relationships and Change)

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING: Looking at specific questions to gauge the mental health and wellbeing of staff, and to identify the awareness staff have of the support available to them. (Support, communication)

With the continuation of the Covid-19 pandemic and the normal activities that staff undertake, it will be important to continue to promote positive mental health and wellbeing so that early and appropriate support can be provided.

Reporting on our Performance the Safeguarding Operating Group meets monthly and monitors performance by means of a Safeguarding action plan. Annual performance updates are reported to the Club Board.

7 Club Wide Mental Health & Wellbeing Policies & Resources

Impact Assessments

Associated Policies & Resources

Wellbeing Impact Assessments

The Club will be developing policy and change programmes and conduct regular reviews with regard to the potential impact on the mental health of staff.

The Club will introduce a wellbeing impact assessment that ensures any potential impacts and staff groups to be impacted are recorded and removed or mitigated where possible.

The Mental Health First Aider and Health, Safety and Contracts Manager will provide an oversight and guidance in the completion of wellbeing impact assessments.



Associated Club Generic Policies and Resources

The following policies and resources support the club's efforts to create and maintain a culture of positive mental health.

- Occupational health procedure
- Stress Management
- Flexible working
- Equality and Diversity
- Sickness/absence

8 Academy Specific Mental Health & Wellbeing Policies & Resources

This document sets out West Bromwich Albion Academy's commitment to the welfare and wellbeing of our staff and participants. This document compliments the mental health and well-being policy of the football club. It has been prepared in consideration of guidance and support from The Kaleidoscope Plus Group.

CREATING BRIGHTER FUTURES TOGETHER

In our academy we believe everyone has a role to play in promoting good mental health and well-being. Whether it be a young participant or a staff member, everyone may at some time need help and support or may just need someone to listen to them.

Our academy participants and staff shall be made aware of the role they can play in supporting one another and are committed to creating a culture and environment where good mental health can thrive and that everyone is listened to.

How do we intend to achieve this?

Our Board Commitment

The board and directors of West Bromwich Albion Football club are committed to ensuring that all academy participants and staff are supported to achieve positive mental health and wellbeing. This will be achieved through their provision of services and facilities from the club to achieve our goals.

Our aim is to create an environment where those that need support know they can talk and be listened to free from judgement and stigma. The board have agreed and signed this document together with the club wide Mental health and Wellbeing policy.

Induction

All Academy staff, volunteers, participants, and parents will be made aware of this policy and services available to them. All new staff and volunteers shall receive a mental health and wellbeing induction and shall receive awareness training either on-line or face to face. All eligible employees shall be informed of the 'Life works' scheme

where mental health support is available. Participants and parents shall be made aware of the support and services available to them through our publications, our notice boards and academy electronic systems. All scholars shall receive mental health and wellbeing workshops through the scholarship programme.

Training and CPD

All staff and volunteers shall receive guidance and awareness training annually. This shall be delivered either in house utilising safeguarding and the appointed mental health and wellbeing champions or make use of external, expert provision such as Kaleidoscope Plus Group.

Scholar and schoolboy Services

The academy shall promote and signpost the service of the Premier League and EFL. This will include 'Sporting chance' and access to independent Mental health and Wellbeing resources. The scholars shall have access to the Premier League online 'Safety-net'. All scholars shall have access to confidential Sports Performance Psychologists.

All schoolboy players and scholars shall be supported through the provision of a Player Care Manager and a wellbeing team. This team shall meet at least monthly and shall record and action

Mental health and well being concerns via the 'My Concern' reporting system

Partnerships

The academy shall look to forge links with local authority Mental health wellbeing services. Our Policies and procedures shall be reviewed by The Kaleidoscope Plus Group annually.

Governance and review.

This document and the academy Mental health and wellbeing support practices shall be subject to review continually and at the end of each season. The Policy shall be reviewed by The Mental Health and Wellbeing team for the football club and The Kaleidoscope Plus Group.

9 Action Plan & WBAFC Manifesto

WBAFC - Mental Health & Well Being Action Plan

The aim of this Mental Health & Well Being Action Plan is to promote positive mental health & wellbeing conversations and support for all members of the Club.

The objectives are:

- 1 To identify what information employees of the Club need about mental health & wellbeing.
- 2 To develop knowledge and understanding of mental health & wellbeing support mechanisms.
- 3 To provide a support network for all employees of the Club.

Activity	Who will this impact?	Expected impact	Resources	Responsibility	Deadline
Consult employees of the Club & Academy Scholars to find out what information they need about mental health & wellbeing, and how they would like to receive this information.	All employees of the Club & Academy Scholars will have the opportunity to respond to the consultation.	Employees of the Club & Academy Scholars will feel involved in activity development and will ensure information is relevant to the Club.	Consultation questions, online survey tool, standard item on PPD sessions with employees and standard inclusion on Academy Scholars programmes.	Department Heads and the HR & HS&C Managers	Two months after action plan agreement. Review annually.
Deliver mental health first aid training to key members of staff and scholars.	Staff members and scholars who receive training. Employees of the club and Academy scholars who need additional support.	Employees of the Club & Academy Scholars will feel more confident supporting others with mental health problems.	As required by the training providers.	Training to be coordinated by Department Heads and the HR & HS&C Managers	Three months after action plan agreement. Review annually.
Develop a peer support / mental health champion programme	Staff members and scholars who become peer supporters / mental health champions. Staff members and scholars who are supported by peer supporters.	Staff members and scholars will know who the peer supporters / mental health champions are and will feel more confident speaking about mental health.	Training materials and guidance for peer supporters / mental health champions. Promotional materials to raise awareness within Club.	Department Heads and the HR & HS&C Managers	Six months after action plan agreement. Review after six months.

Manifesto

We are **WEST BROMWICH ALBION**
and our hearts beat blue and white.

We **CELEBRATE DIVERSITY**,
CHAMPION our **COMMUNITY**
and **OPEN OUR DOORS** to **EVERYONE**.

We do things with **HONESTY** and **INTEGRITY**
and will never compromise our values as we strive
to succeed.

We don't buy success. We work for it.
We don't hope for success we believe we can earn it.
We come together as a Family to achieve our goals.

**To the world we're West Brom,
to our Family we are ALBION
and everyone is welcome.**

WORK • BELIEVE • ACHIEVE

“To the world we're **West Brom**,
to our Family we are **ALBION**
and everyone is welcome.”



Inclusivity



Integrity



Tradition



Innovation



Commitment



Aspiration

our values

