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Stori Cymru

Stori Cymru began as Hafan Cymru more than thirty years ago, to help people living in fear of domestic abuse. Today, we're here for anyone in a situation that makes it hard to live safely at home. That could be due to mental health problems, substance misuse, domestic violence, or other challenges. We provide the space, support, and skills for those times when people are ready to build themselves a brighter, safer future.

Why did you sign the pledge?

We signed the Time to Change Wales pledge to show our commitment to supporting our staff with wellbeing issues and mental health concerns and to tackle stigma in the workplace in every form. Our people often deal with clients coping with the effects of domestic abuse, substance misuse, housing issues and various daily traumas, and as such, our commitment to them needs to account for post-incident support, stress support and general mental health support to ensure that they can, in turn, continue to support their clients effectively. We see this as a circle; our staff can't support our clients if we don't support the staff. Who cares for the carers? Who supports the supporters? It's our responsibility as an organisation to do this in a methodical, proactive manner – the TtCW pledge and action plan guidance gives us firm visibility in what we do, how we do it and what we want to achieve to benefit our staff and clients.

At Stori, we are acutely aware of the effects of modern-day living on everyone's mental well-being. Pressures inside and outside of the workplace affect us all. The recent cost-of-living crisis, pressures in the sector we operate in, and the wholesale changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly changed all of our lives and probably accelerated change (both good and bad) in the workplace and beyond. We want to recognise and support our colleagues with their well-being and mental health, and we want to be a great place to work for great people. Signing this pledge and carefully considering our actions and goals to promote positive mental health and well-being isn't just a nice thing to do; it's vital to our success as an organisation.

How will you promote mental health awareness in your organisation?

We have a few mechanisms in place to promote mental health awareness at Stori Cymru. We have fantastic in-house trainers who offer mental health first aid to all staff. My role (Health, Well-being & Engagement Advisor) itself deals with things that not all organisations formalise, namely well-being and engagement, along with my role in health and safety. People's safety isn't just a physical thing; it's very much a mental thing, too.

We have a Well-being Committee called the 'Well-being Champions' who act on a few levels:

- They are there to help support people who are feeling a strain on their mental health.

- They are a voice for staff to raise any initiatives or concerns, and we discuss what we can do/would like to do to improve positive mental health outcomes.

We then feed these to the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee via our staff-led 'People Panel'. We have the ear and buy-in of those at the top of our organisation to ensure that Stori isn't just a talking shop — it's a place of action on mental health and well-being.

Stori also has a staff portal where we post about well-being events, initiatives, and nationally recognised themes. Staff can comment and engage with these posts to show that we aren't being didactic; we are open to having conversations on mental health, too. We also have external social media channels to promote initiatives like Time to Change Wales and other like-minded campaigns/organisations to our staff, clients, service users and beyond.

What long-term actions will you take to enable a positive mental well-being environment in your workplace?

We intend to strengthen and embed our Well-being Champions across the organisation. We are currently working on a guide that they can use to offer the best advice and signpost information on mental health.

Stori has added a staff celebration element to our annual staff engagement days so we can hear from all the staff about what they want to see happen in the organisation while celebrating their achievements together.

- **Mental Health Awareness Week in May**

We will promote this awareness week to our staff via our portal (Stori Home). We will look to host drop-in sessions via Teams where staff can come and discuss any mental health concerns with our Champions as a group or in a private channel. We recently trialled this during Time to Talk Day, and it was a great success. We hadn't envisaged quite so many remote workers dialling in just for some company while they lone worked, rather than due to any specific mental health concern. It was a very positive experience. We would like to run it again in May and make it a regular event going forward.

We also offer an Employee Assistance Programme and will look to find the best solution with the most useful features to promote well-being as we move forward. We will continue to use our annual staff survey to collect anonymous feedback and weigh the data and concerns against previous years' results to see if we are improving in the right areas to make our staff feel valued, respected, and heard.

All of our well-being decisions are staff-led; we want our people to tell us how they could be best served to improve their well-being – they know what they need better than anyone else. Finally, we will continue to identify those themes, events and trends that affect our people the most and endeavour to promote a positive well-being culture where mental health is taken seriously, and steps are taken to make Stori a brilliant place for everyone to work in.