



Fierce Employee Health and Wellbeing Policy **December 2023**

Introduction

This policy outlines Fierce's philosophy and procedures for effectively supporting staff (including freelancers) health and well-being. It is based on our core values:

- Trust: we foster an environment of trust where staff feel able to tell us what we need to know to be able to support them in the most appropriate way.
- Joy: we want our staff to enjoy both their jobs and their lives outside of work and support them to achieve that.
- Disruption: we appreciate that what may work for one member of staff could cause stress for another and will be flexible in finding ways to support staff however is most appropriate for them, and seek solutions through dialogue where conflicting needs may require people to compromise.
- Rigour: we continually check in with staff and ensure that the structures in place to support them are sufficient, with the understanding that people's health and wellbeing is not consistent.

Disclosure and Communication

Poor mental and physical health is something we all encounter to some extent at some point in our lives but we often do not talk about it because we don't want to be seen as vulnerable or have our ability to do our job questioned. We want to build a supportive working culture, and this starts with being open about the challenges we are facing; we can only help each other based on the information we know.

- We encourage open communication, normalising talking about our mental and physical health so that we can support each other. No one is required to disclose or talk about anything they don't want to, but we are all happy to talk about health if it is helpful. We have personal check-ins built into the start of team meetings to facilitate this.
- We ask people to disclose disabilities, long-term health conditions and mental health challenges after we have made an offer of employment; this is not compulsory but allows us to make reasonable adjustments and offer ongoing support. Similarly, if a physical or mental health issue arises during employment, we encourage employees to talk to their Line Manager or member of the team they are comfortable discussing it with so we can support them.
- We encourage anyone who would benefit from one, to share an access document with us. We do this at the point of interview but can also provide examples and support in writing one if this isn't something someone has done before.
- Our appraisal meetings always start with a wellbeing check-in to give staff an opportunity to formally raise anything they are struggling with.

Access Built into our Working Culture & Environment

Where possible we have designed our working practices and working culture with access in mind. This means that people don't necessarily have to disclose conditions or share information they are uncomfortable with as their needs can be met anyway. It also means these practices are not just there for those with specific diagnoses or living with disabilities but there for everyone if they need them.

- We have a flexible working and TOIL policy which allows for staff to fit their working hours around their needs and ensures that where people have exceeded their contracted hours, they are able to take time off.



- We have time off built into our working pattern including office closures between Christmas and New Year and for two weeks at the start of the month following our biennial festival.
- We try to make our office space as accessible and comfortable as we can whilst occupying a multi-tenant building. We have comfortable seating both in the main office and in a separate room for people who need to work away from their desk or take some time out during the day.
- We offer an Employee Assistance Programme which includes access to counselling and other forms of support all of which are confidential. Information about this is displayed in the office and provided as part of staff inductions.
- We have experience of and can support staff to write Access to Work applications and make claims.

Workplace Stress & Triggers

Despite the measures above there may be specific triggers or stresses that impact employee's physical and mental health at work. No one should feel unsafe at work and work shouldn't interfere with employee's personal lives.

- We acknowledge that the practices in this policy may have an impact on events going to plan and will monitor this so that our approach can inform our programming and delivery plans.
- We deal with work which can be deeply personal and may be triggering for some people, we ask people to tell us if they are not comfortable working on certain projects so we can work with them to develop coping strategies or alternative work plans.
- We understand that boundaries look different to everyone and will respect the boundaries people put in place. This may mean opting out of WhatsApp groups and not responding to messages out of hours, or for other people it might mean checking emails during time off so as not to feel overwhelmed on their return.
- Due to the nature of our work, there will be times when there is more to do and the working environment is more stressful. This should never be unmanageable for anyone, and we ask that people tell us if they are struggling with workload so we can make adjustments and offer the appropriate support.
- Similarly, there will be times when staff are asked to undertake physical tasks; we ask that everyone follows health and safety procedures when doing this and that they stop and tell someone if they are struggling. We can always find another solution rather than cause someone a physical injury.
- We try to avoid using complicated language in our policies and communications with staff; where this language is essential (eg in employment contracts) we offer to talk through it to make sure staff understand. We encourage everyone to ask if they don't understand something.
- We are clear about payment terms and consistent with paying everyone promptly, for wages, fees and expenses.
- We aim to build a working culture where everyone feels safe and valued; if for whatever reason we fail to uphold this culture, we have strong processes including Grievance and Disciplinary policies and procedures in place to deal with it.
- There may be times when working with external companies and partners, where our employees are not treated with the same level of respect and care that we expect internally, and may face issues such as ableism or racism. In these cases we will support the staff affected in whatever way is most appropriate for them, whether that be helping them to make a formal complaint, offering space for them to talk about it, or sourcing external support.



External Stress and Triggers

There will be moments during everyone's lives where their personal lives impact their working lives. We hope that by encouraging open communication and by building access into our working culture we will be able to support colleagues no matter their circumstances.

This policy is not complete and will continue to be reviewed and to evolve based on the needs of the particular staff team as that changes, and based on the impact it is having.

Other relevant policies:

Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy
Flexible Working and TOIL Policy
Grievance Policy and Procedures
Health and Safety Policy and Procedures
Leave Policy