

# Leadership Pledge of Support

*“We pledge to work with others to put trauma informed and responsive practice in place across our workforce and services.*

*We will deliver services that wherever possible are actively informed by people with lived experience of trauma.*

*We will recognise the central importance of relationships that offer collaboration, choice, empowerment, safety and trust as part of a trauma informed approach.*

*We will respond in ways that prevent further harm, and that reduce barriers so that people affected by trauma have equal access to the services they need, when they need it, to support their own journey of recovery.”*

Examples of the ways in which you can take forward a commitment to this pledge are:

## **1. Value the Contribution of People with Lived Experience**

**Listen and learn:** leaders must listen to and learn from people who have experienced trauma to understand what changes need to be made. Experts by experience need to be involved at every stage of the process that they can be. We should recognise where people are affected by trauma, as well as their unique strengths and values.

**Workforce support:** leaders should recognise that a large number of the workforce who are providing services will have experienced their own personal trauma, and our organisations need to provide a culture where people are supported to share their experiences if they choose to and value the strengths they bring.

**Recruitment:** organisations may be in a position to consider creating more roles and recruit more people with lived experience of trauma into their organisation, including in leadership roles.

## **2: Show Courageous Leadership and ‘Walk the Walk’.**

**Role models:** it is essential that leaders at all levels of any organisation or system are courageous, willing to take risks and ready to role model the values of trauma informed practice in their own everyday behaviours.

**Shared vision:** leaders should continually influence and communicate a shared vision and ongoing commitment to the ambition of trauma informed and responsive services. Leaders have a key role in promoting positive messaging, using their position to influence and educate staff through their own passion and belief and by providing clear communication.

**Remove any culture of blame:** leaders should encourage all staff to move away from a culture of shame or blame when things go wrong and take a positive approach to meeting challenges.

**Positive change:** practically, leaders can support changes in the workplace such as promoting policies that prioritise engagement and building understanding, rather than zero tolerance and a focus on negative behaviours.

**Collaboration** across organisational boundaries should be the norm.

### **3. Support Staff Training and Development in Trauma Informed Practice**

**Encourage use of available training resources and putting training into practice:** the National Trauma Training Programme provides a central resource and practical tools for the whole workforce to use which encourages consistency in knowledge, skills and language. These resources should be promoted across our workforce to develop staff confidence and understanding in how to respond to psychological trauma, where required. Organisations should provide an ongoing context and culture that actively supports the workforce to put into practice the knowledge and skills they have learnt in training.

**Recognising existing progress:** many sectors and workforces have already made significant progress in this area over a long period of time and we want to build on those existing partnerships, relationships and experiences and enhance the progress that is already underway rather than this being viewed as something 'new' or 'starting again'.

**Recognising workforce concerns:** leaders should engage with staff from the outset to build relations and understanding. Some staff may have concerns that they will be expected to provide specialist counselling or therapy or have to 'fix things' and will need reassurance that to become trauma informed is not to develop specialist skills but to understand a few science based principles that will help them to adapt their usual practice to be more responsive in general.

### **4. Prioritise Staff Wellbeing**

**Build in ongoing support for staff wellbeing:** we need a workforce who know that we value their wellbeing. We also need to make sure that training on trauma is supported and sustained through active implementation, supervision and coaching and a continued focus on staff wellbeing. This means building in enough time and resources where staff can talk, reflect, and be listened to, supporting their own and each other's wellbeing. Supervision

support should be jointly designed with staff, it should be high quality and the purpose of this time should be clear.

**Raise awareness of the benefits:** we need to raise awareness among the workforce that a trauma informed way of working will most likely bring positive benefits outcome for them and for the people they support. Some staff may need to see clear evidence of the positive outcomes that trauma informed practice can have. It can be useful to identify effective trauma informed champions within an organisation who can influence others. We also need to recognise the impact of trauma among staff, educate staff to recognise the signs and set clear policies and procedures to support staff wellbeing.

## **5. Monitor, evaluate and improve**

**Feedback:** trauma informed practice requires continuous monitoring of feedback from people who use services and staff who work in them to ensure they are meeting ever-changing needs. We need to have feedback systems where evidence and data is collected, analysed and most importantly acted on as part of a quality improvement cycle using implementation science.

**Capture people's stories:** our National Performance Framework encompasses our shared core values of kindness, love, dignity and compassion and can guide us on our long term collective outcomes. We need to think differently in how we measure outcomes and move away from solely a focus on numbers and performance indicators to a more qualitative, deeper understanding of the complexities of people lives. Stories, capturing people's personal experiences, play a crucial role in shaping our understanding and influencing change. We need to continually gather these stories and share them.