



Health and Wellbeing Policy

Information sheet

Information box

For further advice contact: People Team

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Version control

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8.0	Glyn Coles, Health and Safety Lead Officer	April 2020	Shortened policy, developed new gateway guide and linked to revised policy
9.0	Glyn Coles, Health and Safety Lead Officer	January 2023	Updated website links
10.0	Vicky Price, People and OD Manager	January 2026	Full review of policy

Equality impact assessment

An equality impact assessment has been carried out and this policy is not deemed to adversely impact on any people on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership or Welsh language.

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Introduction

Organisational approach

Estyn recognises that a healthy, content and resilient workforce is a productive one. We are committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy work environment that promotes and supports the health and wellbeing of colleagues;
- establishing working arrangements where colleagues feel they can maintain a healthy work-life balance;
- fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect where colleagues are treated fairly and supportively;
- encouraging colleagues to live a healthy lifestyle;
- raising awareness of the factors which can influence health and wellbeing; and
- supporting staff where they experience problems such as mental health issues, alcohol, drugs or substance misuse.

This policy should be read alongside our [wellbeing strategy](#), which sets out our approach and priorities for wellbeing from 2026-2029.

Health and wellbeing issues covered

This policy contains practical guidance for both colleagues and managers which is designed guide to support common wellbeing issues. It focuses on five pillars of wellbeing as adopted by the wellbeing strategy:

- [Mental](#)
- [Physical](#)
- [Financial](#)
- [Occupational](#)
- [Social](#)

Mental health

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.

Living with a mental health problem can often have an impact on day to day life, making things that others might not think about a bit more difficult.

Around one in four people will experience a mental health problem in any given year. Depression affects around one in 12 of the whole population.

It is important not to ignore your mental health.

- Poor mental health can have a harmful effect on your physical health, emotions and mood.
- Your mental health can also affect your relationships with family, friends and colleagues.
- Poor mental health can lead you to take decisions which may not be in your best interests.
- Poor mental health may affect your ability to complete normal day-to-day activities.

Fear of stigma can isolate people with mental health conditions. Don't let it deter you from seeking help. Sources of external support can be found [here](#).

Looking after yourself

You should always be aware of your own mental health, and understand how your actions can affect the mental health of others.

Steps to maintain your own mental well-being include:

- taking part in activities that help you relax
- maintaining a good work life balance
- speaking to someone you feel comfortable with, when you have any concerns
- talking to your manager if your mental health is being affected by something in the workplace
- understanding how the [Employee Assistance Programme](#) can help
- knowing what support is available both in the workplace (your line manager, a trusted colleague or the People Team) and [external sources of support](#).

Your role as a manager

As a manager, you can play a key role in supporting colleagues with their mental health. There are a number of actions you can take to support colleagues::

- be approachable and listen to concerns
- make early referrals to Occupational Health, via the People Team
- seek advice from the [Employee Assistance Programme](#)

- identify and address work-related issues that might contribute to mental ill-health
- complete a [stress risk assessment](#) or wellness plan where appropriate
- encourage the individual to see their GP, if appropriate
- setting realistic work objectives

Also think about whether the individual would benefit from:

- coaching and/or mentoring, or resilience training
- changing their working pattern (see [flexible working policy](#))
- [workplace adjustments](#)

Please remember that the mental health condition may constitute a disability under the [Equality Act 2010](#).

Stress and burnout

What is stress and burnout?

Pressure and stress are different. Pressure can be positive; it can motivate, stimulate and keep you interested in work. But, too much pressure can cause stress.

Stress and burnout occurs when the pressure becomes excessive. Long-term exposure to stress can lead to health problems and can worsen existing ones.

Some common warning signs are:

- an inability to concentrate
- problems remembering things or completing day to day tasks
- eating and sleeping more or less than usual
- being unwell more often than usual
- depression/general unhappiness
- isolation from others.

There are several factors that can lead to stress including:

- the demands of the role and responsibilities
- the control an individual has
- the support an individual is receiving
- relationships with colleagues
- organisational change.

Outside the workplace, factors like divorce or bereavement can increase the pressure on colleagues.

Looking after yourself

You can do a lot to help your own health and well-being. Below are actions you can take to help with stress:

- find what helps you relax
- talk to someone
- discuss any work pressures with your manager
- understand the impact of what you eat and drink
- get active
- get enough sleep

Your role as a manager

As a manager, you play a key role in supporting colleagues with stress. There are a number of actions you can take to support, including:

- setting realistic objectives
- delegating work appropriately
- monitoring and reviewing individual and team workloads, taking into account overnight stays and travel for inspectors
- Working with colleagues to ensure that last minute changes to work programmes are minimal for inspectors
- providing colleagues with the right level of training, autonomy and control over their own work, including sufficient and appropriately distributed admin and PDT time for inspectors
- being accessible and encouraging colleagues to be open if they feel under pressure
- taking a consistent and fair approach to management
- addressing problems as soon as they arise
- proactively encouraging colleagues to take their annual leave and wellbeing time to help achieve a work/life balance
- reminding colleagues to take time away from work and taking regular breaks.
- completing a [stress risk assessment](#) with individuals showing signs of stress to identify and address areas of concern.

It is vital to act early to identify and address the causes of stress while the individual is still at work.

Physical health

Musculoskeletal disorders

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are injuries or pain in your joints, ligaments, muscles, and the structures that support limbs, neck and back. MSDs are very common and can affect everyday activities. Those who are affected by MSDs may notice:

- recurrent pains
- numbness or 'pins and needles'
- muscle weakness
- stiff, painful joints
- swelling.

Looking after yourself

There are several steps you can take to reduce your chances of developing a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD):

- get active
- maintain a balanced and healthy diet
- maintain a good posture whilst standing, sitting, driving and sleeping
- follow workplace procedures for manual handling and the use of Display Screen Equipment
- select the right equipment and setup
- take regular short breaks, every 20-30 minutes to stand, stretch, or walk around can significantly reduce the risk of musculoskeletal disorders

Your role as a manager

Factors in the workplace can contribute to musculoskeletal problems. Managers are key to preventing these problems in the first place as well as helping colleagues manage these issues, when they do occur.

Things you can do as a manager include:

- completing relevant health and safety training regularly
- encouraging colleagues to take regular breaks
- talking to the individual to find out how the condition is affecting them and how you can support individuals
- organising a Display Screen Equipment/workstation risk assessment
- seeking Occupational Health advice, via the People Team

- making the individual aware of other information and the support available to them
- implementing workplace adjustments in a timely manner

If you think your work or equipment is contributing to your pain, you should talk to your manager.

Healthy living – keeping active and healthy eating

Keeping active

Exercise can have a positive effect on managing and reducing stress, and improving wellbeing.

For most adults, the NHS recommends at least:

- 150 minutes of ‘moderate aerobic activity’ each week; and
- two sets of strength exercises which work all major muscles.

These exercises do not need to be difficult. They can involve activities which are enjoyable e.g. sports or dancing, or can be incorporated into everyday life, like walking a dog.

It is easy and often free to increase the amount of physical activity you undertake. This can have an immediate effect by:

- reducing your risk of major illness
- helping you to maintain a healthy weight
- boosting your self-esteem, mood, sleeping quality and energy
- reducing your risk of stress, depression and dementia.

Healthy eating

A balanced and healthy diet can help you maintain a healthy weight. Your diet can also affect your:

- mood and energy
- mental health
- risk of high blood pressure, and a range of other health problems.

The average man should consume 2,500 calories and woman 2,000 calories to maintain a healthy weight. Food labels can help you keep track of your daily intake.

All of us should enjoy a treat from time to time, but a healthy and balanced diet may contain:

- plenty of fruit and vegetables
- plenty of starchy foods, such as bread, potatoes and pasta
- some meat, fish, eggs, and other sources of protein
- some milk and dairy foods
- just a small amount of food or drink high in fat or sugar.

Smoking, alcohol and drug misuse

Smoking

Smoking is one of the biggest causes of preventable death and disease in the UK.

Research has shown that smoking can:

- impact your health
- worsen your sense of taste
- affect your appearance
- reduce your levels of fitness
- have a negative effect on the health of those around you.

People who feel supported are more likely to quit smoking for good. Friends, colleagues, and significant others can play a big part in helping a person become smoke free.

Alcohol misuse

According to UK's NICE guidance, moderate drinking is unlikely to cause much harm, however, alcohol misuse through either:

- binge drinking i.e. over consumption in a short session; or
- alcohol dependence can have serious effects on health.

If you are misusing alcohol, it is important to seek help from those closest to you, or organisations that can offer advice.

The signs of misuse are not always easy to spot, but below are some of the most common warning signs:

- a drink is required first thing in the morning to steady the nerves
- the daily limit for alcohol is regularly exceeded
- alcohol affects the ability to complete tasks like attending a meeting
- withdrawal symptoms, like shakiness or trembling
- lying to others to hide drinking habits
- others are worried about someone's drinking habits.

Drug misuse

Drug misuse is harmful to health in both the short-term and the long-term, and could lead to addiction.

If you are misusing drugs, it is important to seek help from those closest to you, or organisations which can offer advice.

The signs of misuse are not always easy to spot, and each drug has its own side effects.

Below are some general indications that someone may be misusing drugs:

- sudden weight loss or weight gain
- deterioration of physical appearance and personal grooming habits
- unusual smells on breath, body, or clothing
- tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination
- unexplained need for money or financial problems
- sudden change in friends, favourite hangouts, and hobbies
- sudden mood swings, irritability, or angry outbursts
- appears fearful, anxious, or paranoid, with no reason.

Your role as a manager

As a manager you can play an important role by:

- talking to colleagues who you believe to have an alcohol or drug problem or are simply drinking too much
- signposting the individual to appropriate support including Occupational Health, the Employee Assistance Programme, their GP or alcohol / drug services
- assessing the individual's ability to undertake work, especially when this involves driving
- agreeing reasonable time off for day clinics and treatment.

You should refer to the People Team for immediate advice and guidance if you are aware that an individual:

- is involved in producing, supplying or trading illegal drugs
- uses illegal drugs on work premises and external workplaces
- is drunk or under the influence of drugs at work, and especially if they drive as part of their duties.

Financial wellbeing

The [Money and Pensions Service \(MaPS\)](#) refers to financial wellbeing as feeling secure and in control, alongside being financially resilient, confident and empowered. Concerns about money often impacts mental health. Supporting the financial wellbeing of colleagues is beneficial both for them and for the business.

Finance wellbeing is making the most of an adequate income to enjoy a reasonable quality of life and having the skills and capabilities to manage money well, both on a daily basis and for the future. It isn't just about how much money we have. It's about feeling secure and in control.

It is also about making the most of money day to day, dealing with the unexpected, and being on track for a healthy financial future.

Looking after yourself

You can take several practical steps to support your financial wellbeing:

- review your income and expenses regularly so you understand where your money is going
- plan and stick to a realistic monthly budget
- set aside savings, even small amounts, to build financial resilience for unexpected costs
- seek advice early if you're worried about debt or money management
- make use of available benefits such as pension, salary sacrifice schemes and discounts
- access free, confidential advice from our [EAP](#) or recognised organisations such as the Money and Pensions Service, StepChange, or Citizens Advice
- talk openly with trusted colleagues or friends if financial worries are affecting your wellbeing

Your role as a manager

Financial health remains as one of the most difficult subjects to tackle. The stigma is real and part of a complicated cultural and psychological relationship between an employee and employer.

As a manager you can help us by:

- normalising the conversation about money worries at work: showing concern and empathy can help to break down any stigma
- make sure your colleagues are fully aware of all the benefits we currently offer and how to make the most of them
- know where to signpost for money and debt advice.

Occupational Wellbeing

Occupational wellbeing is about feeling valued, motivated, and supported in our roles. It relates to having meaningful work, fair workloads, opportunities to grow, and the ability to raise concerns in a safe and constructive way. When colleagues feel engaged and supported in their career development, they are more likely to thrive, contribute positively, and stay resilient.

Looking after yourself

You can do a lot to help maintain and improve your occupational wellbeing:

- take ownership of your professional development by identifying goals and learning opportunities
- discuss your career aspirations and any concerns with your manager during 1:1s
- seek constructive feedback and use it as a chance to grow
- recognise your own achievements and take pride in your contributions
- maintain healthy work boundaries and take regular breaks to prevent burnout
- ask for support or adjustments if you are finding aspects of your role challenging
- reach out to colleagues for collaboration and peer support

Your role as a manager

As a manager you can help us by:

- holding regular 1:1s and development conversations
- ensuring workloads are fair and aligned to organisational priorities
- encouraging colleagues to access opportunities for learning
- create space for feedback
- show recognition for achievements.

Social Wellbeing

Social wellbeing is about fostering positive, respectful relationships and a sense of belonging across the organisation. It includes creating opportunities to connect, collaborate, and build community both inside and outside of work. Strong social connections support resilience, inclusion, and overall wellbeing, particularly in a hybrid and remote working environment.

Looking after yourself

You can support your own and others' social wellbeing by:

- taking time to build positive relationships with colleagues
- joining in with social and wellbeing activities organised by Estyn
- making an effort to include others, especially new colleagues
- showing kindness and respect in all interactions
- keeping in touch with friends and family outside of work
- supporting colleagues who may be isolated or going through a difficult time
- being open to diverse perspectives and experiences
- remembering that we all have a role in creating an inclusive, supportive community

Your role as a manager

As a manager you can help us by:

- encouraging team working and cross team working
- supporting inclusive practices
- facilitating opportunities for collaboration.

Sources of support

Employee Assistance Programme

The Employee Assistance Programme is a 24 hour, 365 day telephone and online service which offers:

- independent and confidential support
- trauma and critical incident support
- advice on a range of issues including anxiety, stress, health, debt, addiction, domestic violence, family problems and workplace difficulties
- assistance for managers advising on how to help their colleagues manage stress and other issues
- counselling.

You are able to contact your EAP by accessing [Vivup](#) or calling 0800 023 9387.

Occupational Health

Your health, or the health of someone you manage, impacts wellbeing, performance and attendance. The Occupational Health Service (OH) can help with this.

This service can advise:

- managers on preventing or resolving health-related problems

- colleagues on managing their condition
- on workplace assessments and adjustments.

If you would like to make a referral to Occupational Health Provider, please contact the [People Team](#).

Workplace Adjustments

Workplace adjustments are changes to work or working practices that support people who are experiencing barriers in the workplace.

Workplace adjustments can range from a physical change to someone's working environment to changes in communication and altered working patterns.

They are based on the concept of reasonable adjustments, as outlined in the Equality Act, 2010, but go beyond the statutory minimum. It is a legal requirement that we offer adjustments to disabled colleagues.

Guidance on workplace adjustments can be found [here](#).

External support

- [NICE – Workplace health management practices](#)
- [The Charity for Civil Servants](#)
- [CIPD Behaviours that support, health, wellbeing and engagement](#)
- [MIND - Depression self help tips](#)
- [NHS Choices – The importance of sleep](#)
- [NHS Choices – Live Well](#)
- [Civil Service Sports Council website](#)
- [Help Guide – Stress at work](#)
- [HSE – Management Standards](#)
- [NHS Choices – Mindfulness](#)
- [SANE](#)
- [Papyrus - prevention of young suicides](#)
- [Wales NHS – Mental Health](#)
- [MIND – Crisis services](#)
- [Samaritans](#)
- [NHS Inform – Handling stress](#)

- [HSE – Stress - Management Standards](#)
- [Preventing Repetitive Strain Injuries at Work: Tips and Techniques | Worksafe UK](#)
- [Managing musculoskeletal disorders in the workplace: prevention and practical solutions | British Safety Council](#)
- [HSE – Working with display screen equipment](#)
- [HSE – Taking action](#)
- [NHS Choices – Move more, sit less](#)
- [NHS Conditions – Back pain](#)
- [Back Care – Top 10 tips for back pain](#)
- [NHS - Physical activity guidelines for adults](#)
- [NHS Better health – Get active](#)
- [British Heart Foundation – Eating Well booklet](#)
- [NHS - Better Health](#)
- [Healthline – Calorie Counter Applications](#)
- [NHS Choices – Underweight adults](#)
- [NHS Choices – Weight loss guide](#)
- [NHS – Better health Quit Smoking](#)
- [Smokefree.gov – 12 practical tips to help you quit](#)
- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#)
- [Drink Aware](#)
- [NHS Choices - Alcohol](#)
- [Talk to Frank – Drugs advice](#)
- [Addiction – Drug, alcohol and mental health assistance](#)
- [NHS Choices - Drugs](#)
- [Citizen advice – Financial advice](#)
- <https://www.stepchange.org> – Financial advice
- <https://www.nationaldebtline.org>