

1 July 2024

Our Ref: FOI 448

Request

We received your request on 18 June 2024 for the following information:

I would ask that you provide me with:

1. Your mental health/ stress risk assessment template
2. Any Mental Health/ Stress Risk assessment guidance documents for managers you use.
3. What training do you provide for managers to carry out the above?
4. What role does your competent person have in the organisation and what are their duties in relation to your mental health/ stress risk assessments?
5. Confirm when was the last time you conducted a mental health staff survey.
6. Any other information you would like to share that might help me in my area of research.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Our response

1. Your mental health/ stress risk assessment template

Please find attached our Individual Stress Risk Form and our Wellbeing Action Plan template.

2. Any Mental Health/ Stress Risk assessment guidance documents for managers you use.

Please find attached our Health and Wellbeing Policy. In our Health and Wellbeing Policy we detail when Individual Stress Risk Assessment and Wellbeing Action Plans should be undertaken.

3. What training do you provide for managers to carry out the above?

We have an internal training course called Stress Management Training. This course is delivered by colleagues in Human Resources and Health and Safety. This course is designed to inform Line Managers on how to undertake Stress Risk Assessments for their department and with individual staff. We also carry out Health and Wellbeing Masterclasses with Line Managers which includes a case study example of a Wellbeing Action Plan.

4. What role does your competent person have in the organisation and what are their duties in relation to your mental health/ stress risk assessments?

Our Health and Wellbeing Policy details the roles and responsibilities.

5. Confirm when was the last time you conducted a mental health staff survey.

The Housing Executive undertook 'We Invest in Wellbeing' accreditation through Investors in People to help us to continue to support employees wellbeing and identify what we could do better. This involved a survey in December 2023 where employees had the opportunity to answer questions in relation to how engaged the Housing Executive is with wellbeing, how supported and valued they feel and whether we listen to employee needs. The results from this survey will feed into our action plan for moving forward.

6. Any other information you would like to share that might help me in my area of research.

The Housing Executive have over 30 training Mental Health First Aiders across the organisation. The Mental Health First Aiders are trained to recognise the warning signs of mental ill health and offer support to those who may be experiencing a mental health problem.

This concludes our response.

HousingExecutive

Health & Wellbeing Policy

Issue Details

	HousingExecutive
Title	Health & Wellbeing Policy
Aim	The aim is to provide advice and support to line managers and employees on areas related to Health and Wellbeing.
Last reviewed	September 2023
Last updated	September 2023
Staff affected	All
Author(s)	Health & Wellbeing Team and Health & Safety Services
Approved by	Executive Team
Equality screened	March 2023
Date of next review	September 2026
Policy Owner	Health & Wellbeing Team and Health & Safety Services

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Housing Executive is committed to supporting our people to improve their health and wellbeing in line with our [People Strategy](#) and our [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#). Looking after health and wellbeing in the workplace, including promoting positive mental health, makes good business sense. Taking steps to better support the health and wellbeing of our employees can help to reduce the severity, duration and quantity of mental ill health in the workplace. Healthy employees will work more productively, interact well with colleagues and make a valuable contribution to the workplace.
- 1.2 Our Health & Wellbeing Strategy sets out the need for us to take a holistic approach to managing health and wellbeing and includes both physical and mental health and wellbeing. The intention of this policy is to clearly set out our key responsibilities with respect to health and wellbeing and ensure that these are appropriately applied to any area of health and wellbeing which could impact an individual in the workplace.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this policy, the term 'health and wellbeing' refers to both physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- 1.4 This policy is supplemented by specific areas of guidance on a range of health and wellbeing areas. We are committed to providing a wide range of guidance in response to the needs identified within the Housing Executive and therefore it is anticipated that our guidance will be continually developed.
- 1.5 The Housing Executive's expectation is that guidance will be followed by managers and employees when dealing with specific health and wellbeing matters at an individual level. Some examples include stress, menopause, suicide, domestic abuse and the list of areas is not exhaustive.
- 1.6 We are committed to improving health and wellbeing in partnership with managers, employees, trade union colleagues and external partners (such as occupational health providers) to create and embed a culture of health and wellbeing.
- 1.7 We recognise that we also have statutory responsibilities in this area and these are set out in detail under our [General Health and Safety Policy](#), therefore both policies must be considered together.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all Housing Executive employees.

- 2.2 Whilst some areas of this policy are not applicable to agency workers, line managers should be alert to the health and wellbeing needs of all workers and following discussion with the individual should contact the Human Resources team regarding any concerns relating to agency workers so that these can be raised with the relevant agency.

3.0 Policy Aims

- 3.1 The aim of this policy and the associated guidance is to provide advice and support to line managers and employees on the following key areas:

- Ensuring our people understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to health and wellbeing
- Embedding a culture where conversations about health and wellbeing are important and are managed effectively
- Ensuring the correct policies and procedures are in place to support health and wellbeing
- Ensuring the correct guidance, information and toolkits are available on a range of specific health and wellbeing matters
- Improving mental health awareness in the organisation and promoting positive mental health
- Supporting employees experiencing health and wellbeing issues
- Effectively managing stress in the workplace.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy.

4.2 Director of Corporate Services (DoCS)

The Director of Corporate Services will ensure the effective operation of this policy and procedure.

4.3 Assistant Director Human Resources - HR Advisory and Assistant Director Health and Safety Services

The Assistant Director of Human Resources and Assistant Director of Health and Safety Services will ensure the day-to-day implementation of this policy and procedure.

4.4 Health & Wellbeing Team

The Health and Wellbeing Team is responsible for actively leading and promoting health, safety and wellbeing across the organisation in accordance with this policy and associated guidance.

4.5 Health & Wellbeing Steering Group

The Health and Wellbeing Steering Group is responsible for supporting and improving the health and wellbeing of employees in line with the People Strategy and this policy and associated guidance.

4.6 Line Managers

Line managers are responsible for:

- Promoting a health and wellbeing culture in their teams, including leading by example
- Following guidance provided by the Housing Executive with respect to specific health and wellbeing matters
- Being aware of the signs and symptoms of stress and changes in individual employee behaviours and ensuring early intervention
- Signposting individuals to ensure they receive the support needed to address their health and wellbeing needs
- Developing Wellbeing Action Plans (**see Appendix 1 & 2**) with individuals when health and wellbeing concerns come to light
- **Undertaking Individual Stress Risk Assessments** (See **Appendix 4**) and managing individual concerns, in line with H&S Guidance - [What are the Management Standards for work-related stress? | Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland \(hseni.gov.uk\)](https://www.hseni.gov.uk/what-are-the-management-standards-for-work-related-stress/) and HR policies. (**See Appendix 3** for a Stress Management flowchart which explains what to do and when).
- Taking appropriate management action in line with the Housing Executive's Attendance Management Policy when an employee reports that the reason for their absence is related to their health and wellbeing (this includes developing a Wellbeing Action Plan and completing an Individual Stress Risk Assessment if related to work).
- Taking appropriate and timely management action when an employee reports work related stress e.g. completing an Individual Stress Risk Assessment.
Supporting Document 1 provides information on the Health and Safety Executive Management Standards related to work related stress, and gives practical steps for line managers to follow when they suspect an employee is suffering from work related stress.
- Undertaking Departmental Stress Risk Assessments for the teams they manage (Contact a member of the Corporate Health & Safety Team for further guidance)

- Attending Stress Management and General Health and Safety Risk Assessment Training to learn how to undertake Stress Risk Assessments and other risk assessments as appropriate for their teams and with individual employees. See Gateway - [Pages - Internal Compliance/Health and Safety Training Flyers](#) – for training dates and information on how to book places.
- Obtaining relevant information, training and guidance as necessary to assist them in their management role and in managing work related stress. See Guidance Document 1 for guidance on stress and the links below for further information & guidance:
[People Managers' Guide to Mental Health](#)
[Advice for Managers on Mental Ill Health Conditions](#)

NOTE: In the event that the employee indicates their work related stress is in relation to their working relationship with their line manager then a suitable nominee can carry out the Wellbeing Action Plan and Individual Stress Risk Assessment.

4.7 Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with this Health & Wellbeing Policy and associated guidance
- Keeping up to date with health and wellbeing courses available through the Learning Zone to support their health and wellbeing
- Raising issues of concern promptly with their line manager, occupational health or a mental health first aider so they can be addressed at an early stage
- Taking responsibility for your own health and wellbeing e.g. availing of health & wellbeing support mechanisms when recommended by medicals professionals.

4.8 Human Resources (including the Health and Wellbeing Team)

Human Resources will:

- Ensure the effective implementation of the Housing Executive's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, policies and associated action plans.
- Provide guidance for line managers and employees on this policy
- Help monitor the effectiveness of measures to improve health and wellbeing and reduce stress by reviewing sickness absence statistics and seeking feedback e.g. through surveys and focus groups.
- Provide support to line managers and employees in a changing environment and encourage referrals to Inspire and the occupational health provider, where appropriate

- Promote the use of Wellbeing Action Plans as an early intervention to support employee health and wellbeing and maximise attendance (**See Appendix 1 and 2**)
- Providing specialist advice and guidance to managers on specific recommendations that are highlighted during Wellbeing Action Plans and Individual Stress Risk Assessments.
- Provide access to training and online resources to help identify mental health signs and symptoms to enable quicker referrals to support services and increase the chances of an earlier and more effective recovery; and work with external providers to deliver training as and when required.
- Regularly upload information to promote health and wellbeing to Gateway and employee notice boards.
- Signpost employees to relevant external programmes such as the [Condition Management Programme](#) that can help individuals manage mental health conditions.

4.9 Health & Safety Services Department

The Health & Safety Service Department will:

- Provide training and guidance to line managers on the completion of Individual and Departmental Stress Risk Assessments.
- Promote the completion of the General Health & Safety Risk Assessment Training which is mandatory for all who manage others, projects or contracts.
- Provide advice and guidance in accordance with Health& Safety Executive Guidance on Stress at Work on identifying the risk factors, gather data and evaluating the risks associated with work related stress on exploring the problems and developing solutions at an organisation level.
- Health & Safety Advisors will provide advice and guidance to Managers on Stress Risk Assessments and on the General Health & Safety Risk Assessment process.

4.10 Trade Unions

Trade Unions will:

- Work with the Housing Executive to support managers and employees to develop a culture where everyone works together to look after health and wellbeing and maximise attendance.

5.0 Managing Health and Wellbeing

5.1 Promotion and Prevention

- 5.1.1 We are committed to promoting health and wellbeing and supporting employees to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

The Housing Executive believes that promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace can be hugely beneficial. Healthy employees are more likely to perform well, have good attendance levels and be engaged in their work. Taking steps to better support the health and wellbeing of employees can help to reduce the severity, duration and quantity of mental health concerns in the workplace.

- 5.1.2 A range of information on health and wellbeing will be regularly placed on our dedicated Health and Wellbeing page on [Gateway](#) and employee notice boards. The Public Health Agency also has a [Directory of services](#) which provides contact details of organisations that help improve mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- 5.1.3 Employees will have access to training and online resources to help them identify mental health signs and symptoms to enable quicker referrals to support services and increase the chances of an earlier and more effective recovery. The Housing Executive will work with external providers to deliver training as and when appropriate. We will seek to provide support linked to health and wellbeing concerns raised by our employees. For example, personal finances can be a significant stressor so we will provide financial webinars and also access to [sources of information](#) on managing finances on our dedicated Gateway page.
- 5.1.4 Line Managers and employees will be regularly reminded of health and wellbeing support services which are available, such as Inspire and Occupational Health and encouraged to avail of these as appropriate.
- 5.1.5 All employees will be reminded of the health and wellbeing initiatives available to promote good physical wellbeing, such as cycle to work, corporate gym membership etc. Healthy eating will also be promoted. Physical health checks will also be facilitated for employees to enable a better understanding of physical health needs.
- 5.1.6 The Health and Wellbeing Champions across the organisation will promote particular wellbeing activities/events and encourage colleagues to participate.

5.2 Early Intervention – Wellbeing Action Planning

- 5.2.1 Early informal intervention is key to support employee health and wellbeing and maximise attendance.
- 5.2.2 Wellbeing Action Plans (**See Appendix 1 and 2**) are a key early intervention which can be used at any time and for any health and wellbeing issue.

5.2.3 Ideally these plans should be developed prior to an absence arising if a health and wellbeing concern is raised which might impact on attendance.

5.2.4 A Wellbeing Action Plan must be developed where an employee reports work related stress and they are also recommended for concerns relating to mental health. In the case where **work related stress** is reported, the wellbeing action plan will trigger the requirement for an **Individual Stress Risk Assessment** to be completed. A note can be made on the wellbeing action plan to refer to the Individual Stress Risk Assessment for more detail and agreed actions.

The Wellbeing Action Plan will be carried out by the individual's line manager (or suitable nominee). A Mental Health First Aider or Health and Wellbeing champion can signpost individuals to the wellbeing action planning process as an example of a support tool available.

The aim of a Wellbeing Action Plan is to:

- Support our people to improve their health and wellbeing
- Examine the factors impacting on the individual's wellbeing (remembering to consider any other guidance around stress, menopause, suicide, domestic abuse etc.)
- Highlight key issues and generate solutions
- Agree any immediate actions (e.g. Inspire Counselling, Occupational Health, GP etc.)
- Ensure that regular meetings are held to monitor progress.

Further guidance on developing these plans is available from Human Resources.

5.3 Management of Health and Wellbeing Issues

5.3.1 Employees who are absent from work due to mental health must follow the [Attendance Management Policy](#).

5.3.2 Where the employee reports that the reason for their absence is related to their mental health, the line manager (or suitable nominee) will ensure appropriate management action is taken and will arrange for a meeting to discuss the Wellbeing Action Plan.

5.3.3 Where it is a work related issue a Stress Risk Assessment must be completed. The line manager will also contact the Human Resources Business Partner, to determine if an Occupational Health referral is required and for further guidance and advice on any recommendations.

5.3.4 Line managers must be aware of their duty under the [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#) to consider reasonable adjustments for people who

have a disability and must ensure this policy is complied with as appropriate.

5.3.5 Line managers must also follow relevant supplementary guidance when dealing with specific health and wellbeing matters at an individual level. Examples include stress, menopause, suicide, domestic abuse etc.

5.3.6 To support employees who are absent, line managers will

- agree when and how regular contact will be maintained during the absence, in accordance with the Attendance Management Policy
- be positive, professional and supportive at all times
- agree what the team member would like their work colleagues to know about their absence and how they are doing
- avail of Occupational Health, where appropriate, to look at the ways the organisation can support the individual to return to work
- signpost to support available such as the Employee Assistance Programme and our online hubs.

5.3.7 When an employee is fit to return to work, the line manager will provide appropriate support to facilitate their return. If appropriate, the line manager may meet with the team member away from the workplace before they return to work to discuss any concerns they may have. The Wellbeing Action Plan and Individual Stress Risk Assessment must be kept under review upon the employee's return to work.

Appendices

Appendix 1 [Wellbeing Action Planning Flowchart](#)

Appendix 2 [Wellbeing Action Plan Template](#)

Appendix 3 [Stress Management Flowchart for Managers](#)

Appendix 4 [Individual Stress Risk Assessment Form](#)

Supporting Guidance Documents

1. [Managing Stress in the Workplace](#)
2. [Menopause Guidance](#)

The below guidance documents are currently under development:

Suicide

Domestic Abuse

INDIVIDUAL STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Name:	Job Title:	Date of Assessment:
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Reason for assessment (outline how the need for this assessment came to light, e.g. return to work following absence or identified as a result of a wellbeing discussion)

Issues being Reported by Employee (outline the factors being highlighted which are concerning the individual, do not include sensitive or personal medical information)

Current Support in Place (provide details of support mechanisms that have been put in place, e.g. referrals to Occupational Health, acces to Inspire)

Individual Stress Risk Assessment - Notes on Completing Form

- The line manager has discretion to structure their approach to the interview according to the individual circumstances of the case.
- Questions are outlined, listed in each category, and should be used as a “lead in” to further discussions, focusing on each of the possible sources of stress. Other probing questions may be asked as necessary.

NOTE: While the content of this document will remain confidential, Managers are required to forward a completed copy to their HR Business Partner, this will be filed in the relevant Personal file held by HR.

Your Information

Please be aware of UKGDPR and only provide what is necessary to aid your discussion regarding this assessment. Do not include sensitive or personal medical information.

What we do with your information

The Housing Executive is processing the information you provide on this form to carry out an individual stress risk assessment and is processing your information using the lawful basis of legal obligation.

Sharing your information with others

Your information will only be shared with the person who is undertaking your Individual Stress Risk Assessment and the HRBP, this will not be shared with anyone else.

How long we hold your information for

The Housing Executive will hold the information you have provided until you are Age 100 YEARS in line with the Disposal of Records Schedule for Personal files.

Privacy Notice

The Housing Executive is committed to protecting your privacy and maintaining your trust and confidence in how we handle your personal information. You can view the Housing Executive's [HR Privacy Notice](#) on the Data Protection Gateway page or you can ask Human Resources to post or email a copy to you.

Possible Stressors	Questions / Comments
Demands: This includes issues such as Workload, work patterns and the work environment	Do you feel the demands of your job role and workload are realistic and achievable? If no, please explain:
	e.g. Unachievable deadlines / time pressures, intensive work, neglecting important tasks, fast pace of work.
	Do you take the breaks you are entitled to at work? If no, please explain why:
	e.g. Working very long hours, unable to take sufficient breaks and when these are taken.
	Is there any additional training required for this role that you feel would help you do your job? If yes, please provide details:
	This not only includes attendance at courses. Discuss other development opportunities with your line manager as part of your PDP.
	Are there any issues with your work environment? e.g. physical hazards, risk of violence and verbal abuse, unwanted distraction, disturbance, noise levels, vibration, dust etc. If yes, please describe:

<p>Control:</p> <p>How much say you have in the way you do your work</p>	<p>Do you feel that you have enough input into the way you do your work?</p> <p>If no, please explain:</p>
	<p>e.g. Choice as to break times, work speed, how and in what way work is completed, flexible working time.</p>
	<p>Do you feel included in decision making in your team?</p> <p>If no, how could this be improved?</p>
	<p>Do you feel that you are able to utilize your skills and initiative to do your work?</p> <p>If no, please provide further details.</p>
	<p>Do you think that you need to develop any new skills to help you undertake your work?</p> <p>If yes, please provide further details.</p>

<p>Support:</p> <p>This includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, your manager and your colleagues.</p>	<p>Do you feel that you receive enough support from your line manager to do your job?</p> <p>If no, please provide further details on how they could provide you with better support.</p>
	<p>e.g. Receive supportive feedback, encouragement, help with work problems, support with emotionally demanding work and when annoyed or upset.</p>
	<p>Do you feel that you receive enough support from your colleagues to do your job?</p> <p>If no, please provide further details on how they could provide you with better support.</p>
	<p>e.g. Help, support and respect from colleagues with work related problems.</p>
	<p>Do you feel you have a healthy work-life balance?</p> <p>If not, how could this be improved?</p>
<p>Relationships:</p> <p>Promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour</p>	<p>Is there good, clear communication within your team?</p> <p>If not, how could this be improved?</p>
	<p>Are you aware of the Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure and how to raise any issues in respect of Dignity at Work?</p>

<p>Role:</p> <p>Ensuring that your role is clear and that you do not have conflicting roles</p>	<p>Are you clear about your roles and responsibilities at work?</p> <p>If not, please explain:</p> <p>e.g. Clear expectations at work, know how to get the job done, clear duties and responsibilities, goals and objectives and how work fits in with the overall aim of the organisation.</p>
<p>Change:</p> <p>How organisational change is managed and communicated</p>	<p>Do you feel that you receive enough support from your line manager during change at work?</p> <p>If no, please provide further details on how they could provide you with better support during change at work.</p>
	<p>Do you feel that you receive enough support from the organisation during change at work?</p> <p>If no, please provide further details on how it could provide you with better support during change at work.</p>
	<p>e.g. Provide staff with timely information to inform them to understand the reasons for proposed changes; make staff aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs; make staff aware of timetables for changes; provide staff with access to relevant support during changes; provide training to staff to support any changes in their jobs if required.</p>
<p>OVERALL COMMENTS</p> <p>Refer to HSG218 - Managing the causes of work-related stress HSG218 (hse.gov.uk) to assist with suggested solutions.</p>	

Agreed Action Plan (agree specific actions to address concerns highlighted above)

Review Date:

1.

2.

3.

Signed:-

(Employee)

(Line Manager / Person undertaking assessment)

(Date)

Review Session (Comments):-

Further Review Date:_____

Wellbeing Action Plan

Employee Name:		Staff No.	
Line Manager Name:		Role:	

Stage 1: Initial Meeting

Date of Meeting:	
Reason for Wellbeing Meeting:	
Key Issues Identified eg : medical condition, welfare issue, other	
Notes of Discussion:	
Agreed Actions: Including any useful resources/agencies to contact eg. Access to Work, Inspire hub	
Agreed Review Date:	

Signed: _____

Employee

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Line Manager

Date: _____

Stage 2: Review Meeting

Date of Meeting:	
Attendees:	
Follow Up of Agreed Actions	
Notes of Discussion:	
Agreed Review Date	

Signed: _____
Employee

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Line Manager

Date: _____

Stage 3: Final Review Meeting

Date of Meeting:	
Attendees:	
Follow Up of Agreed Actions	
Notes of Discussion:	
Agreed Review Date	

Signed: _____
Employee

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Line Manager

Date: _____