

## **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

<p><b>INVESTMENT, OUTCOMES AND GOVERNANCE CABINET MEMBER</b></p>
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### **STRESS AND WELLBEING POLICY**

<p><b>1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT</b></p>
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| <p>1.1 To outline and seek approval for a new Stress and Wellbeing policy.</p> |
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**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 All employers have a legal duty, under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, to protect workers from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and acting on it.
- 2.2 Currently, the procedure for managing stress at work is part of the Health and Safety Management System established during the shared service arrangement with North East Lincolnshire Council, and is derived from their policy and systems.
- 2.3 Where a risk assessment is deemed appropriate, the generic risk assessment procedure in the Health and Safety Manual is currently adapted to suit.
- 2.4 To build on the council's current wellbeing offer to keep employees safe, well and supported, whilst ensuring we meet our statutory obligations under health and safety legislation, a new Stress and Wellbeing policy has now been developed.
- 2.5 The policy focuses on employee, manager and organisational responsibility to:
- Encourage and promote good health and wellbeing;
  - raise awareness of, and act on, reduced wellbeing;
  - facilitate and participate in open conversations, and risk assessments, to determine individual need and identify potential adjustments;

- seek, or signpost to, appropriate support and act on advice.
- 2.6 To support the new policy, a risk assessment template has also been developed. By using the template, an employee experiencing reduced wellbeing can reflect on various elements of their role, divided into the HSE management standard areas, and then work with their manager to develop an action plan to address any areas identified as 'medium' or 'high' risk.
- 2.7 It is proposed that the policy and risk assessment template are reviewed in twelve months' time to assess whether their introduction has had a positive impact on employee wellbeing and attendance.

### 3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 Option one – approve the new Stress and Wellbeing policy.
- 3.2 Option two – reject the draft policy.

### 4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Option one – approving the new policy builds on the council's existing wellbeing offer and provides a framework to identify and mitigate reduced wellbeing. This demonstrates to our workforce that their wellbeing and safety is a priority, and having employees who feel safe and well supports us to deliver on our priorities and outcomes for the people and place of North Lincolnshire. Having a specific risk assessment also enables us to better meet our statutory duties, as an employer, to assess and mitigate stress in the workplace.
- 4.2 Option two – rejecting the draft policy would retain the use of the current Stress, Mental Health and Wellbeing procedure established by North East Lincolnshire Council. This framework doesn't fully reflect our current organisational culture, particularly our focus on promotion of employee health and wellbeing, the importance of enabling open, supportive conversations, and encouraging self-responsibility.

### 5. **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)**

- 5.1 There are no resource implications beyond manager and employee time to engage in supportive conversations and participate in risk assessments. Any adjustments identified as a result of these assessments must be reasonable, balancing individual need and service delivery. Enabling employees to remain safe and well will help to mitigate sickness absence and reduced performance, and support resilient and efficient service delivery.

6. **OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)**

6.1 None.

7. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

7.1 Please see Section 8.

8. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

8.1 The Safety Solutions team, Be Yourself at Work staff networks and Welfare Officers have been consulted on the draft policy and had opportunity to comment.

8.2 The trade unions have been consulted on the new policy and are supportive.

8.3 There are no conflicts of interest to be reported.

9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That the Stress and Wellbeing policy be approved.

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report – None.**

**Principles.**

- We believe that successfully delivering services to keep our customers safe, well and resilient depends on having employees whose wellbeing and safety at work is a priority, and who do not experience long-term, excessive or negative pressure.
- We recognise that, at times, any employee can experience reduced wellbeing or negative pressure, at work or in their personal life, which may impact their ability to contribute fully to the role they do.
- Employees work in many complex and challenging situations, and it will not always be possible to remove all factors which impact our employees' wellbeing. However, we will ensure, as far as possible, that the effects of these situations are minimised through appropriate assessment, management, training and support.

**Wellbeing**

Wellbeing is made up of many facets of health, including, good mental, emotional and physical health, and a healthy lifestyle.

**Stress**

Stress itself is not an illness but the natural adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure and demands imposed on them. Over time, it can impact on well-being. Management of day-to-day stressors help to ensure a person's ongoing wellbeing and happiness is maintained.

**As an employer, we will:**

- Positively promote and protect the health and wellbeing of our employees at work, by providing an understanding and supportive environment that values mental and physical wellbeing equally.
- Enable managers and employees to undertake training at an appropriate level to recognise and manage stress at work.
- Provide a risk assessment template to identify causes of stress at work, guidance on action required to reduce or eliminate the risks, and information on sources of support.
- Encourage employees to express any concerns openly and to actively seek help and support without the fear of stigma, victimisation, or being considered weak, incompetent or at fault.
- Recognise that wellbeing is unique to each employee and negative pressure affects people in different ways: consideration, support and reasonable adjustment will take account of individual need.

## As a manager, I will:

- Demonstrate supportive and sympathetic behaviours to ensure employees feel comfortable to speak openly.
- Begin an open conversation, if I believe an employee is showing signs or symptoms of reduced wellbeing or stress.
- Recognise that I have a critical role in identifying indicators of stress at work due to my knowledge of my team and the employees in it.
- Carry out stress risk assessments and implement any recommendations, involving team members in finding solutions where possible.
- Ensure that where an employee indicates that they are experiencing stress or reduced mental health, a supportive referral to occupational health is offered.
- Consider any recommendations made by occupational health, or other healthcare professionals, and discuss these with employees.
- Consider using the Making Reasonable Adjustments guidance and tools as a framework for assessing an employee's individual needs and developing an action plan.
- Ensure employees are provided with the opportunity to have regular one-to-one meetings, which include a discussion about their wellbeing, as well as engaging in the My Conversations framework.
- Monitor employees' working hours and workloads to ensure that they are not excessive and an appropriate balance between work and personal life is maintained.
- Proactively manage annual leave and flexi-time levels to ensure employees are taking regular breaks for their wellbeing and work-life balance, and in compliance with Working Time Regulations.
- Provide employees with clear expectations with supporting feedback, coaching and training as required.
- Promote and encourage team members to access any health and wellbeing initiatives.

## As an employee, I will:

- Recognise the importance of maintaining good health and wellbeing and support others to do so.
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of reduced wellbeing and stress in myself and talk to my manager as soon as possible if I feel this may affect me at work.
- Seek advice from my GP, or other healthcare professional, if I feel I need specialist support with my mental wellbeing.
- Undertake relevant training on identifying and managing stress.
- Manage and prioritise my workload effectively, raising any concerns with my manager at the earliest opportunity.
- Work with my manager to plan periods of annual leave to ensure I take regular breaks from work.

- Be actively involved in risk assessments and discussions about how any issues identified might be resolved.
- When appropriate, make use of the free and confidential Welfare Counselling Service provided.
- Talk to my manager, or another source of appropriate help, if I feel a colleague is showing signs or symptoms of reduced wellbeing or stress.

## Sources of support.

### Internal

[Safety Solutions](#)

[Human Resources](#)

[Confidential Welfare and Counselling service](#)

[Trade unions](#)

[Occupational health \(referral through HR\)](#)

[Be Yourself at Work \(BYAW\) networks](#)

[Learning Lincs](#)

### External

GP or other healthcare professionals

[Access to Work Mental Health Support Service](#)

[Samaritans](#) (Telephone: 116 123)

[NHS](#)

[Mind](#)

[Calm](#)

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Last updated	

## Stress and wellbeing Stress risk assessment template

This template should be used when an employee has indicated that they are experiencing stress or reduced wellbeing at work.

### Self-assessment

- Where possible, the employee should complete the first section themselves; they should consider each of the statements and mark the extent to which they agree with it. If appropriate, they can access support with this from their manager, a trade union representative or HR.
- The employee should also consider whether there are any factors outside of work which may be impacting them, and whether they wish to share these with their manager to identify any potential support or adjustments.
- The manager should then arrange to meet with the employee to talk to them about the responses. The employee can have the option to be accompanied by a trade union representative or fellow council worker.
- Where the employee has indicated they 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with a statement, this must be entered into the Action Plan as a 'target area'.
- If the employee has identified any factors outside of work which are impacting them, these may also be recorded on the Action Plan.

### Action plan

- For each 'target area' consideration should be given to what is already in place to minimise the risk of that potential source of stress.
- Any remaining risk should then be categorised:
  - Low:** The risk is acceptable – no further action is required.
  - Medium:** Review existing controls and establish if additional measures could be implemented.
  - High:** Additional control measures must be implemented.
- Any 'medium' or 'high' risk areas must be addressed, and any actions required documented on the plan.
- A meeting should be arranged to review the action plan and the effect the measures put in place have had on the employee's wellbeing at work.

Stress and wellbeing  
Stress risk assessment template

**DEMANDS: Workload, work patterns, and the work environment.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My job description accurately reflects the work I do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can manage my workload within my contracted working hours.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My manager reviews individual/team workloads on a regular basis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't feel the need to regularly work beyond my contracted hours.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to take my annual leave entitlement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to take required breaks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to meet deadlines I am set.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to work at a pace I find comfortable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel able to request to work flexibly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are no unresolved issues with my working environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**CONTROL: Employees are empowered to work in an agile and innovative way.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am able to use my initiative in my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have flexibility in planning and prioritising my workload.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deadlines I am working to are not regularly changed by other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have choice over how I do my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Stress and wellbeing  
Stress risk assessment template

**SUPPORT: Employees are equipped with the skills, resources and support they need.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have access to all the training I need to do my job effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get regular feedback from my manager on the work I do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the opportunity for regular 'My Conversations' or team meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know who I can talk to at work if I feel my wellbeing is reduced.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I have a work problem, I feel able to approach my manager.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If work is challenging, I feel able to ask colleagues for support.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**RELATIONSHIPS: Positive behaviour is actively promoted and reflects our values.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I would feel comfortable speaking openly with my manager about something affecting my wellbeing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not exposed to any behaviour at work which makes me uncomfortable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not experience bullying at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not experience harassment at work (issues relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief, sex or sexual orientation).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel able to be myself at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not experience challenging behaviour from customers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I have a good relationship with my manager and/or colleagues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict within my team is dealt with quickly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**ROLE: Employees understand their role and role conflict is minimised.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I had the necessary induction when I came into post.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am clear about my duties and what is expected of me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are no conflicting demands within my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of my team's objectives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand how the work I do contributes to the council's priorities and outcomes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**CHANGE: Employees are inclusively engaged and consulted about change.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I'm consulted before and during periods of change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive regular updates during a period of change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am consulted about potential changes to my role.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am clear about the reasons for change which affects me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm given a set timescale for change which affects me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am given the opportunity to offer suggestions or ask questions about proposed change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**FACTORS OUTSIDE OF WORK**

The statements above mainly focus on factors at work that could impact your wellbeing. However, there could be factors outside work which have contributed to, or added to, the pressures you have experienced. These may have made it harder to cope with demands at work that you would normally be able to cope with.

You may want to share such issues with your manager, as they may be able to help at work and make adjustments; for example, being more flexible with working hours for a time, or just being able to be sympathetic to the pressures you are currently under. If you do not feel comfortable telling your manager about these things, you can also seek support from HR, your trade union representative or the council's Confidential Welfare and Counselling Service.

**Is there anything else impacting your wellbeing which is affecting you at work?**

**ACTION PLAN**

Target area	What is already in place to minimise risk?	Remaining level of risk (L/M/H)	What further action is required?	Lead	Timescale
		Please select			
		Please select			
		Please select			
		Please select			
		Please select			
		Please select			
		Please select			
		Please select			

<b>Signed (employee)</b>		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Signed (manager)</b>		<b>Date</b>	

<b>Date of review meeting</b>	
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