HEALTH & WELLBEING AT WORK – STRESS MANAGEMENT

1.0 BULLETIN AIM

1.1 The NIGALA’s Health & Wellbeing at Work bulletin has been developed to promote and encourage health and wellbeing at work.

1.2 The NIGALA recognises the invaluable contribution employees and self-employed panel members make to its organisational performance and acknowledge that the wellbeing of staff is of paramount importance.

1.3 The purpose of this bulletin is to:

- Support the effectiveness of its staff in their duties which contribute to achieving the organisation’s objectives.
- Seek to enhance the ability of employees and self-employed panel members to benefit from health and wellbeing solutions.
- Promote health and wellbeing through its management policies, support services, and information networks.
- Prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, those circumstances detrimental to mental health and wellbeing.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The NIGALA will seek to meet its corporate commitment through the following objectives:

- Provide all staff with personal development, access to appropriate training for their job and line management support to succeed.
- Communicate and engage with staff on matters relevant to role within the workplace in an open and timely fashion.
- Identify and reduce workplace stressors.
- Promote health and safety in the workplace providing a safe working environment and reducing the risks of accidents.
- Ensure all employed and self-employed panel members feel supported in their work.
- Develop and implement the relevant policies and procedures which will support the needs of employed and self-employed panel members.
- Promote the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of employed and self-employed panel members.
- Create an organisational culture in which the promotion of employed and self-employed panel members’ health and wellbeing is a central consideration.
2.2 The NIGALA’s Health & Safety Committee will continue to review and keep up-to-date health and safety policy and bulletins procedures as required to meet legislative procedures and contribute to the health and safety of all employed and self-employed panel members.

2.3 All employed and self-employed panel members will take responsibility for their own and others health and safety in the workplace. Risk assessments will be conducted regarding the physical environment in which employees and self-employed panel members work, where applicable, in accordance with the NIGALA’s Health & Safety Policy Statement, Risk Assessment bulletin and the NIGALA Risk Assessment Programme.

3.0 DEFINITION

3.1 In the context of the workplace the Health and Safety Executive defines stress as,

“The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them.”

3.2 The World Health Organisation defines health as,

‘A state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity’ (www.who.int).

3.3 Wellbeing covers the physical and mental health of an individual. The NIGALA recognises that mental health is as important as physical health.

4.0 EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITY

For this section employees will mean all employed and self-employed panel members.

4.1 Employers have a ‘duty of care’ to its employees for work-related stress. In particular, a supportive and responsive line manager who works to understand the needs of employees’. Adopting the HSE good practice ‘Managing the causes of work-related stress: A step-by-step approach using the Management Standards’\(^1\) the NIGALA are committed to continually improve the management of workplace pressures that can result in work-related stress through risk assessment and evaluation.

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4.2 MANAGEMENT STANDARD APPROACH (6 STANDARDS)

(i) Demands:
Includes issues like workload, work patterns and the work environment.

The Standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/to be achieved:

- The organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work.
- People’s skills and abilities are matched to the job demands.
- Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees.
- Employees’ concerns about their work environment are addressed.

(ii) Control:
How much say the person has in the way they do their work.

The Standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/to be achieved:

- Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work.
- Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work.
- Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work.
- The organisation encourages employees to develop their skills.

(iii) Support:
Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

The Standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.
What should be happening/to be achieved:

- The organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support employees.
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff.
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues.
- Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it.
- Employees know how to access the required resources to do their job.
- Employees receive regular and constructive feedback.

(iv) Relationships:

Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

The Standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/to be achieved:

- The organisation promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness.
- Employees share information relevant to their work.
- The organisation has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour.
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour.

Managers should take into consideration that a person’s behaviour may be disability related i.e. autism.

(v) Role:

Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.

The Standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.
What should be happening/to be achieved:

- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible.
- The organisation provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities.
- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon employees are clear.
- Systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.

(vi) Change:
How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

The Standard is that:

- Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/to be achieved:

- The organisation provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes.
- The organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals.
- Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs.
- Employees are aware of timetables for changes.
- Employees have access to relevant support during changes.

5.0 Employee Responsibility (Employed and Self-Employed)

5.1 All employed and self-employed panel members are expected to:

- Treat each employed and self-employed panel member with dignity and respect as an individual.
- Work with colleagues in a positive and empowering manner.
- Take advantage of training and information sources.
- Bring to the attention of line manager any issues of work-related illness that is felt to be having an adverse impact on them or their colleagues and comply with any steps taken by line manager to reduce or eliminate risks.
- Report any injury or illness associated with work, including when aware of experiencing increased levels of pressure.
- Uphold confidentiality (wherever safety is not at risk).
- Recognise the limits to what they can do and seek advice at the earliest opportunity (speak to your line manager or OHS).
- Read all communications, making sure you understand the reasons for decisions and provide feedback if required.
- Take an active part in any discussions or stress risk assessments, making sure to complete any questionnaires and share ideas for promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace.
- Accept opportunities for counselling or specialist services when recommended.
- Recognise that you have a responsibility for your own ‘personal stress’ (outside of the workplace) and try to help yourself where possible. CARECALL (employee assistance programme) is available to employed staff and can be contacted on 0800 800 0002.

### 6.0 Benefits

#### 6.1 Wellbeing Benefits

There is a clear link between wellbeing activity in the workplace and employee engagement and it is expected that the full application of the policy will provide the following benefits.

#### 6.2 Organisational Benefits

- Improved attendance at work and reduction in absence rates.
- Increased commitment and satisfaction from employees and self-employed panel members leading to increased productivity.
- Improved employee and self-employed panel member retention thereby reducing the cost of organisational turnover.
- Retention of key skills.
- Achievement of organisational objectives.

#### 6.3 Employee Benefits

- Employees and self-employed panel members will understand their role and their ‘fit’ within the organisation.
- Increased morale and engagement at work.
- Employees and self-employed panel members feel more involved in decisions that affect them.
- Reduced stress levels.

### 7.0 Information/Services

#### 7.1 If you feel that you are suffering from stress please consult with your GP at the earliest opportunity and speak with your Line Manager so that you can get timely help.
7.2 Please refer to the NIGALA intranet for access to the documentation listed below:

**EMPLOYEES:**
- Occupational Health Service (refer to H&S Bulletin 10).
- Flexible Working Policy which includes:
  - Compressed Working Time
  - Flexi-Time Scheme
  - Job Sharing Scheme
  - Personalised Hours
  - Annualised Hours
  - Part-Time Working
  - Remote Working
  - Family Friendly Policies
  - Career Break Scheme
  - Carer Leave
  - Adoption Leave
  - Paternity Leave
  - Parental Leave
- Absence Management Policy.
- Bereavement Leave Policy.
- Special Leave Policy.
- Carecall Service.

**EMPLOYEES & SELF-EMPLOYED PANEL MEMBERS:**
- Adverse Incident Policy.
- Competence and Capability Policy.
- Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Grievance Policy.
- Harassment and Bullying Policy.
- Personal Protection Policy.
- NIGALA Lone Working Policy and Procedure.
- Whistleblowing Policy.

**GUIDANCE:**