



# Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act was passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2019, however work was paused to allow everyone to focus on efforts on the Covid-19 pandemic. The provisions in the Act will now come into force in April 2024.

- The Act is applicable to all health and care staff in Scotland.

## The Guiding Principles of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019

1 (a) that the main purpose of staffing for Health and Care services are:

- To provide safe and high-quality services
- To ensure the best care outcomes for people (this includes adults, children, and young people) who use services.

To achieve these principles, 8 headings need to be considered:

- 1) Improving standards and outcomes for people-matching guidance
- 2) Staffing for care services to be arranged-taking account of people's particular needs, abilities, characteristic and circumstances.
- 3) Respecting the dignity and rights of people
- 4) Taking account of the views of people and staff
- 5) **Ensuring the wellbeing of staff**
- 6) Being open with people and staff about decisions on staffing
- 7) Allocating staff efficiently and effectively
- 8) Promoting multi-disciplinary services, as appropriate

## Policy

This policy seeks to meet the expectation within the Act, of '**ensuring the wellbeing of staff**'. It also seeks to support staff in dealing with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and current pressures affecting the mental health and wellbeing of the early years workforce.

Further information around the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 and its implementation can be found through the [Care Inspectorate's Safe Staffing Programme](#)

This policy will also take into consideration the wider importance of the implementation of the [Equality Act 2010](#) which makes it illegal to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their race or ethnicity, their disability, gender or sexual orientation, their age or

religion. We will exercise due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, thus ensuring that staff have a positive working environment which supports good mental health and wellbeing.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Old Rayne Preschool aims to provide a safe environment where all employees are treated fairly and with dignity, and where staff feel confident enough to raise issues relating to mental health and wellbeing.

Old Rayne Preschool recognises that supporting the mental wellbeing of our employees is important for both individuals and the organisation.

Good staff mental health and wellbeing can:

- v have positive impacts on children, including stronger relationships with children.
- v increased productivity of staff members
- v reduced absences from work in relation to sickness (both short term and long term)
- v staff being able to manage stress better and develop healthier coping strategies.
- v improved job satisfaction, which can support retention.
- v ensure that staff feel valued, supported, and invested in.

## **1. AIM, PURPOSE, AND OUTCOMES**

**The aim of this policy is to:**

Set out the framework for our organisation to provide a positive environment which promotes and supports a positive state of mental health and wellbeing for our employees and those we work with.

The policy also aims to ensure those who are experiencing mental health issues are supported through several measures with respect, confidentiality and without discrimination.

**Purpose and Outcomes:**

Our organisation plans to implement this policy to achieve the following aims:

- To promote good mental health and wellbeing of all staff through effective communication of our policies and best practice.
- To increase the awareness of our workforce regarding issues associated with mental health and wellbeing and to develop the skills and knowledge of managers, supervisors, and staff to deal with these issues.

- To provide support to staff experiencing a mental health problem while in employment and upon return from any absence, whilst preventing discrimination.

## **2. SCOPE**

### **Who is the policy intended to benefit or affect?**

This policy applies to the entire organisation including employees and third-party contract staff. Where applicable, due consideration should be given to our policy and its goals when dealing with people outside of our organisation.

## **3. PRINCIPAL CONTENT and FRAMEWORK**

We will meet the aims, purpose, and outcomes of this policy through the following framework:

### **3.1 By Supporting each other:**

- We will put up a staff wellbeing board and keep it up to date.
- We will make time to talk about mental health and wellbeing in team meetings.
- We will hold regular staff social or team building events, including regular wellbeing activities.
- We will help staff to recognise when a colleague is experiencing a mental health difficulty and to know how to support them.
- We will value each other's qualities and interests.
- We will provide staff with a space to have private and confidential conversations about their mental health and wellbeing.
- We will provide opportunities for peer support and feedback.
- We will encourage feedback from staff about management procedures and working relationships.
- We will review and develop policies and practices as a team (for example, ensuring that our setting is free from bullying and harassment, discrimination, and racism)

### **3.2 Supportive management**

#### **We will:**

- Appoint a dedicated organisational wellbeing officer appointed
- Ensure all staff have the opportunity to contribute to the mental health and wellbeing policy.
- Share the mental health and wellbeing policy and include it in the staff induction process and referenced within the organisation's Staff handbook.
- Provide support for staff who experience mental health difficulties at work, including for those returning to work after absence due to a mental health issue.
- Include a positive statement and information about mental health and wellbeing in the recruitment process.
- Have an out-of-hours policy to reduce workload.

- Have a management open door policy.
- Hold regular supervisions where staff feel confident and comfortable to discuss their mental health and wellbeing needs.
- Have processes to encourage positive feedback, praise, and encouragement, between staff member, managers and parents and carers.
- Provide opportunities for flexible working.
- Provide the opportunities for staff to take regular breaks.
- Provide the opportunities for managers to access support.
- Ensure staff are aware of useful resources and training which will support their own mental health and wellbeing e.g., Team ELC Wellbeing Hub, Healthy Working Lives

### **3.3 The Physical Environment**

#### **We will:**

- Display clear, visible information about accessing mental health and wellbeing support, including helplines and access to confidential services.
- Provide a space for staff when they are feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or needing some time out.
- Provide an appreciation box for staff to share positive messages with each other.
- Provide treats to help everyone feel valued.
- Hold regular offsite activities.
- Hold wellbeing days.

### **3.4 Outside Support**

#### **We will:**

- Offer training to support mental health and wellbeing, to help spot the signs and symptoms of mental health difficulties and to promote wellbeing.
- Provide training to support minoritised groups.
- Signpost to external and local support, such as counselling services.
- Link up managers from different settings or having a peer support scheme for managers.

### **3.5 Management within Old Rayne Preschool will:**

- Read and understand this policy.
- Help staff experiencing mental health and wellbeing to feel supported, and to be effective in their role.
- Ensure staff are aware of sources of help, information, and support.
- Be prepared to have open discussions with staff and treat the conversation sensitively and professionally.
- Be aware of sources of support both for themselves and for staff requesting any reasonable adjustments.
- Be understanding and make fair decisions, in line with this policy, with respect to requests for reasonable adjustments.
- Ensure an ongoing dialogue and review arrangements regularly to check that any reasonable adjustments agreed remain appropriate and adequate.

- Managers have an important role to play in ensuring that anyone experiencing mental health and wellbeing issues get the same support and understanding as if they had any other physical health or wellbeing issue.

### **3.6 Principles for managing staff with mental health and wellbeing issues:**

- Effective management of team members suffering with mental health and wellbeing issues can help to improve team morale, retain valuable skills and talent, and reduce sickness absence.
- Good people management is fundamental to supporting employee health and well-being, spotting early signs of mental ill health or distress, and initiating early conversations about what support might be available.
- It is important for managers to recognise that other people can be indirectly affected by a staff members mental health and wellbeing, for example, if a person's partner experiences significant physical or psychological symptoms, they may be concerned for their wellbeing and feel increased levels of stress. In some cases, people can experience relationship problems or difficulties at home during this time. These issues can have an impact on staff in the workplace and managers should be understanding and supportive of staff members in these circumstances.
- It is also important to recognise that some staff members may not want to discuss their mental health and wellbeing issues. Any conversations should be kept strictly confidential and be dealt with sensitively, and information should only be shared when consent has been provided by the staff member concerned
- Everyone has different experiences and managers should not make any assumptions.

## **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **4.1 Employees should:**

- Ensure they are familiar with this policy.
- Communicate with their line manager as appropriate.
- Raise any issues or concerns, and seek help from a line manager, HR, occupational health, or a mental health first aider.

### **4.2 Managers should:**

- Show a positive attitude to employees and job applicants with mental health issues, including having positive statements in recruitment literature
- Ensure that all staff involved in the recruitment process are aware of mental health issues and the Disability Discrimination Act
- Do not assume that those with a mental health issue will be more susceptible to workplace stress, or will necessarily take more time off than other applicants
- Ensure that all line managers have received mental health first aid training, or have the skills to manage mental health in the workplace
- Ensure they are familiar with this policy.

- Ensure they communicate with staff effectively and sensitively.
- Support the principles and procedures in the policy.
- Provide current, relevant information and signposting to services and awareness training as appropriate.
- Assist with communication of the policy throughout the organisation.
- Monitor and review the policy.
- Help to identify reasonable adjustments.
- Ensure emergency contact details for staff are kept current.

## **5. PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ISSUES**

- Learn to understand the importance of physical activity for managing stress and maintaining mental wellbeing
- Learn to understand the importance of healthy eating for both physical and mental wellbeing
- Encourage and support one another in making healthier eating choices
- Staff should consider seeking medical advice from their GP in the first instance or accessing your employee assistant programme if your setting has one.
- Staff should not feel that they simply must 'put up' with how they are feeling as a part of life.
- GPs may also discuss lifestyle and how symptoms can be managed through changes that may help improve individuals longer term mental health and wellbeing
- Make a list of symptoms both physical and mental, and noting feelings and changes that have occurred and preferences for treatment can be helpful prior to attending an appointment with a GP or other appropriate health professional
- Where appropriate staff could also consider and note potential reasonable workplace adjustments and discuss these with their manager.

### **5.1 Talking to a manager about mental health and wellbeing**

Staff should ask for a discussion in a location that offers a comfortable level of privacy and ensure that enough time is allocated to explain the situation. They should write down the issues to be raised beforehand and take this to the meeting, along with any suggestions about reasonable adjustments resulting from GP discussions or from other relevant research.

If necessary, staff may ask for someone to accompany them to help focus on the issues they need to raise. This should be agreed with the manager in advance.

If workplace adjustments are required, this will need to be discussed with the appropriate line manager.

### **5.2 Considering adjustments**

A risk assessment may be deemed necessary to best support an employee's mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

What is reasonable in the circumstances for individuals should be discussed and agreed between the staff member and their manager.

## Monitoring of this Policy

It will be the responsibility of Sophie Startin to ensure that all staff, including new or temporary staff, are familiar with this policy and to monitor that it is being implemented. This policy should also be brought to the attention of all parents, visiting professionals and any other individuals accessing the setting. The responsibility of all to implement the policy should be highlighted. Monitoring and evaluation of the policy will be achieved through both formal and informal observation of practice. We will carry out regular consultations with staff and parents to ensure this guidance is being implemented.

## EYS SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

**Team ELC Wellbeing Hub** The hub provides a range of practical wellbeing support for all the amazing people who work in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). There is something here for everyone!

## EXTERNAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND ADVICE

<https://www.healthyworkinglives.scot/Pages/default.aspx>

[Healthy Minds Resource - NHSGGC](#)

[Team ELC Wellbeing Hub | Early Years Scotland](#)

[Positive mental wellbeing - resources to support children and young people | Learning resources | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

[Early years staff wellbeing: a resource for managers and teams | Early Years in Mind | Anna Freud Centre](#)

[Wellbeing measurement for early years settings \(annafreud.org\)](#)

[Mental health services at NHS 24 | NHS inform](#)

[Mental health | NHS inform](#)

[Get help with mental health - mygov.scot](#)

[Workplace Wellbeing Policy Guide | St John Ambulance \(sja.org.uk\)](#)