



Taking Action to Support Staff Personal Health and Wellbeing

A Support Guide for HSE Managers

This 'Taking Action' Guide and Checklist assists managers in supporting the personal health and wellbeing of their staff by signposting them to relevant resources and creating a healthy workplace environment.

This Guide is for all HSE managers. It supports managers to deliver on the implementation of the Government's Healthy Ireland at Work Framework, The Health Services Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan and the HSE Healthy Workplace Resource Pack.

This Manager's Guide should be used with the HSE *Staff Health and Wellbeing Resources and Initiatives for Adopting Healthy Behaviours* brochure, which signposts staff to a suite of resources.



Healthy Ireland at Work: A National Framework for Healthy Workplaces in Ireland 2021 - 2025

This Framework integrates existing Government laws and policies. Taking part in good quality health and wellbeing initiatives in the workplace has multiple benefits for both workers and businesses.



Health Services Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan 2023 - 2027

This Plan identifies the strategic priority of 'Supporting Staff Personal Health and Wellbeing', focusing on enhancing the healthy behaviours of HSE staff and the creation of a workplace that supports these behaviours.



Health Service Executive Healthy Workplace Resource Pack

This Resource Pack identifies resources available to all staff in the HSE under the avenues of influence for a healthy workplace, as outlined by the World Health Organization.



Staff Health and Wellbeing Resources and Initiatives for Adopting Healthy Behaviours

This brochure presents resources that have been developed at a national level and are available to all HSE staff to support their personal health and wellbeing and to create a healthy workplace.



Resources referenced throughout this document are provided in the 'Useful Links and Resources' section on page 14.

01.

Introduction



A KEY PRIORITY

Staff Personal Health and Wellbeing in the HSE



Adopting and maintaining healthy lifestyle behaviours that support us to keep well day-to-day; stay well long-term; and nurture our social connections is essential for our overall physical and mental health and wellbeing. In addition, evidence shows that happy, well-motivated staff deliver better care and that their patients have better outcomes¹.

The *Health Services Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan (2023-2027)* is based on four strategic priorities, each with a set of actions. It identifies the value of its staff and the important role in supporting staff health and wellbeing. Emphasis is placed on staff health and wellbeing through its purpose statement, key principles with one of the four strategic priorities dedicated to supporting staff personal health and wellbeing. This strategic priority identifies five actions and eight measures of success for implementation.

Four Strategic Priorities



Embedding health and wellbeing in health service delivery



Strengthening partnership and community working



Supporting healthy behaviours from childhood through to healthy ageing



Supporting staff personal health and wellbeing

Purpose Statement

We will promote and support healthy living and healthy behaviours for all age groups of our population and our staff as part of our core business in the delivery of health and social care services.

One of the Six Key Principles

Provide a working environment that supports staff in their own health and wellbeing, demonstrating that we care about them by providing positive working environments where staff feel respected and valued.

Keeping Well

Supporting staff to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviours helps to reduce their risk of developing chronic disease. Chronic diseases, comprising of cancer, cardiovascular disease (CVD), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and diabetes continue to be the biggest challenge to our health². 74% of adults aged 58 and over are living with at least two chronic diseases³. At least 30% of cancers and 80% of heart disease and diabetes can be prevented by lifestyle changes to diet, physical activity, tobacco and alcohol use⁴. Behavioural risk factors, including smoking, poor diet, physical inactivity and heavy alcohol consumption, account for over 35% of all deaths in Ireland⁵.

Chronic diseases are largely preventable by adopting healthy lifestyle behaviours and creating healthier environments that support people to make healthier choices².

LIFESTYLE BEHAVIOURS SHOWN TO REDUCE RISK OF CHRONIC DISEASE

- Not smoking
- Reducing use of alcohol
- Healthy eating
- Active living
- Looking after mental health and wellbeing (e.g. social connectivity, stress management)
- Good quality sleep



Healthy Workplaces

It has been estimated that the average person spends one third of their life at work - that is roughly 90,000 hours over a lifetime⁹. The World Health Organization has identified workplaces as ideal places to influence lifestyle behaviours.

The term 'Healthy Workplaces' is broad, covering a variety of health, safety and wellbeing aspects that contribute to a healthy workplace.

The World Health Organization (WHO) presents these considerations as four integrated avenues/pillars and recommends that aspects within all four pillars are addressed based on identified needs¹⁰.

Physical Work Environment:

e.g. the building structure, chemicals, noise, ergonomics

Psychosocial Work Environment:

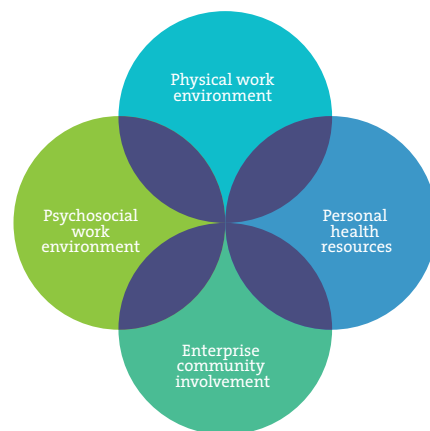
e.g. culture, values and beliefs, HR policies, work demands/workloads, work-life balance

Personal Health Resources:

opportunities and resources to support staff efforts to improve and maintain healthy lifestyle practices

Enterprise and Community Involvement:

working with local communities to support health



The HSE delivers on each of these World Health Organization (WHO) avenues/pillars through the collaborative work of Human Resources and Health & Wellbeing.

Healthy Ireland at Work: A National Framework for Healthy Workplaces in Ireland (2021- 2025)

The Healthy Workplace Framework is a Government strategy to enhance the Health and Wellbeing of Ireland's workers.

Its vision is that the health of Ireland's workers is improved. Changes in the culture, policies and practices in workplaces lead to improvements in physical health, mental health and wellbeing and work-life balance.



The Healthy Ireland at Work website shares learnings and provides the necessary supports and practical resources to create healthy workplaces for employees and organisations.

The HSE is committed to support the implementation of this Framework across its workplaces.

HSE Workplace Health and Wellbeing

The HSE is the largest employer in the State, with over 100,000 staff. Services are delivered in over 2,500 workplaces which include hospitals, community healthcare facilities and administration sites. Such a large workforce and extensive number of workplace settings provide the HSE with the opportunity to be an exemplar employer in supporting the health and wellbeing of its workforce.

Over the past number of years, HSE managers and staff have demonstrated incredible commitment and resilience in the most difficult of circumstances. The HSE continues to focus on:

- Increasing staff morale
- Building team cohesion
- Supporting mental health and wellbeing of staff
- Attracting, retaining and engaging a motivated workforce.

A suite of resources are available to support managers and staff in building a healthy workplace. These include: The HSE Healthy Workplace Resource Pack; the Staff Health and Wellbeing Resource Brochure; and this Manager's Guide.

Promoting and supporting healthy behaviours and healthy environments can lead to many positive benefits for managers, their staff and the overall organisation. These include¹¹:

BENEFITS OF WORKPLACE HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Increased:

- Physical and mental wellbeing of employees
- Work performance and productivity
- Staff morale, satisfaction and motivation
- Employee engagement
- Improved corporate image and attraction/retention of employees
- Improved return on training and development investment



Lower rates of:

- Absenteeism and sick leave
- Decreased incidence of presenteeism*
- Decreased frequency and cost of workers' compensation

* *Presenteeism: The practice of an employee being present at the workplace when ill, often leading to reduced productivity.*

Creating a Healthy Workplace is an important step to improving employee health and engagement and has enormous potential to benefit the organisation as a whole.

The HSE is committed to providing a supportive environment that protects and promotes the physical, mental and social wellbeing of its workforce.

02.

Taking Action to support Staff Personal Health and Wellbeing

Creating a Healthy Workplace

All HSE managers can take action to support their staff's overall health and wellbeing by:

- **Implementing HSE HR Policies and Procedures**
- **Supporting Staff Personal Health and Wellbeing**
 - ✓ Signposting staff to personal health and wellbeing resources
 - ✓ Creating supportive workplaces for staff personal health and wellbeing

Implementing HSE HR Policies and Procedures

The implementation of HSE HR policies and procedures is the foundation of staff health and wellbeing, which includes aspects such as Health & Safety, organisation of work and workplace culture.

Examples of HSE policies and procedures include: Tobacco Free Campus Policy; Policy for Prevention and Management of Stress in the Workplace; Dignity at Work Policy; Leave Entitlements; Breastfeeding Policy for Staff Working in the Public Health Service; Menopause Policy; Code of Standards and Behaviours; Performance Achievement; Work Positive^{ci} Tool.

HSE Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit (WHWU)

The aim of the WHWU is to ensure that staff can continue to be physically and emotionally well throughout their working life. A wide range of specialist and clinical services, expert advice, evidence-based interventions and supports to HSE staff and managers are provided by National HR's Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit (WHWU). These include: Occupational Health Services, the National Health & Safety Function and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) supports and training programmes.



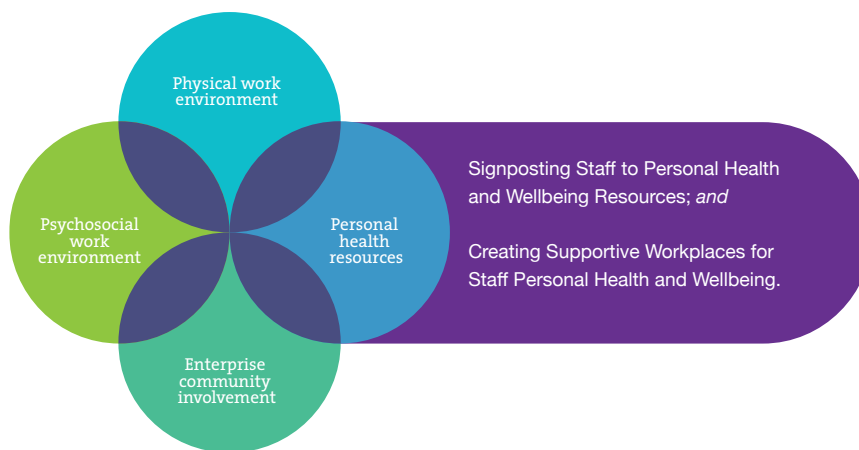
HSE HR focus on aspects of the physical and psychosocial workplace environments. For support and guidance on these aspects of healthy workplaces; along with HR Policies and Procedures, contact your local HR department.

Supporting Staff Personal Health and Wellbeing

By following this guide and completing the checklist, managers can take action to support their staff's personal health and wellbeing, which relates to positive lifestyle behaviours such as: being physically active, eating healthily, not smoking, reducing use of alcohol and looking after their mental and sexual health & wellbeing.

This guide focuses on the 'Personal Health Resources' pillar of the WHO's Avenues of Influence for a Healthy Workplace. The two key aspects in order to best support the personal health and wellbeing of staff are:

Signposting staff to personal health and wellbeing resources; and Creating supportive workplaces.



Staff Health and Wellbeing Resources and Initiatives for Adopting Healthy Behaviours Brochure

This Support Guide for Managers should be used with the *Staff Health and Wellbeing Resources and Initiatives for Adopting Healthy Behaviours* brochure which presents resources that have been developed at a national level and are available to all HSE staff.



These resources and initiatives support:

- Being physically active
- Eating healthily
- Not smoking
- Reducing use of alcohol
- Looking after mental health and wellbeing
- Looking after sexual health and wellbeing

Examples include:

- Know Your Numbers Wallet Card
- Free Online Exercise Videos (Pilates, Yoga, Strength & Conditioning)
- Free Nicotine Replacement Therapy and www.quit.ie
- Alcohol Self-Assessment Tool and Drinks Calculator
- Minding Your Wellbeing Support Booklet
- Sexual Wellbeing Supports and Services











The *Staff Health and Wellbeing - Resources and Initiatives for Adopting Healthy Behaviours* brochure is available to download or order from www.healthpromotion.ie.

TAKING ACTION:

2.1. Signposting Staff to Personal Health and Wellbeing Resources

The personal health and wellbeing of staff can be supported by signposting staff to evidence-informed resources and initiatives.

1		Get to know what national and local resources and initiatives are available in your area.
2		Share the national <i>Staff Health and Wellbeing Resources and Initiatives for Adopting Healthy Behaviours</i> brochure , which showcases the wide variety of personal health and wellbeing supports available to all HSE staff.
3		Communicate the availability of the staff health and wellbeing resources and initiatives in a variety of ways. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Signage displays (posters, digital screens or notice boards) in staff areas such as changing areas, kitchenettes, staff canteens or office spaces.• Digital communication channels such as email, staff newsletters or work-related WhatsApp groups.
4		Discuss periodically and signpost staff to the personal health and wellbeing resources available and include the signposting of these resources at team meetings, staff gatherings, information sessions and new employee inductions.
5		Support and promote HSE Health and Wellbeing and Healthy Ireland campaigns to staff. Examples include: QUIT months; Alcohol Awareness Week; World Mental Health Day; World Sexual Health Day; Men's Health Awareness Week.
6		Encourage staff to avail of the free screening services available to them as members of the public.
7		Check if there is a staff health and wellbeing committee in your location and how you can contribute to and support this committee.
		Check locally to see if there is a Staff Health and Wellbeing Incentive Fund available in your location.



Additional information is available at www.hse.ie/healthyireland.

TAKING ACTION:

2.2. Creating Supportive Workplaces for Staff Personal Health and Wellbeing

A healthy workplace environment provides opportunities to support staff in their efforts to improve and maintain healthy lifestyle behaviours.

2.2.1 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

Being active is very important for both our physical and mental health. The *National Physical Activity and Sedentary Guidelines for Ireland* recommend that adults should undertake regular physical activity and should limit the amount of time spent being sedentary. The HSE continues to support the implementation of these guidelines.





1		Promote the uptake of the free HSE online exercise videos (Pilates, Yoga, Strength & Conditioning, Chair-based Yoga) and facilitate their use in the workplace for staff groups.
2		Promote and encourage the use of walking routes and outdoor spaces in or around the workplace.
3		Encourage staff to take part in the annual HSE Steps to Health Challenge .
4		Work with facilities to map and signpost a safe walking route in or around your workplace through the Irish Heart Foundation's Slí@Work programme.
5		Inform staff of the Cycle to Work Scheme (a tax incentive scheme encouraging staff to cycle to and from work).
6		Advocate for the provision of cycling facilities - such as bike racks/shelters, storage, drying areas and showering facilities - if not already provided.
7		Promote the availability of cycling facilities to staff.
8		Progress the implementation of adjustable height desks where feasible when buying new or replacing existing desks for staff with sedentary roles.



The HSE's annual Steps to Health Challenge is a five week team-based challenge to encourage staff to walk a target of 10,000 steps per day.

2.2.2 HEALTHIER VENDING AND FOOD CHOICES

Eating a wide variety of nourishing foods every day provides the energy and nutrients we need for good health. Recommendations include limiting high fat, sugar, salt foods and drinks, and **aiming for five to seven servings of vegetables, salad and fruit each day**. The HSE continues to implement the *Nutrition Standards for Food and Beverage Provision for Staff and Visitors in Healthcare Settings*, offering staff a choice of healthier food.

1		Understand and support the HSE Vending Policy (2019) .
2		Use the Vending Machine Audit Tool to check for compliance with the HSE Vending Policy (site managers).
3		Report to (or bring to the attention of) the person who has responsibility for the vending services contract any concerns/queries regarding compliance . This may be a Facilities Manager or Catering Manager, or a General Manager with this responsibility.
4		Speak to the Catering or Facilities Manager to encourage participation in the Happy Heart Healthy Eating Awards . Catering and Facility Managers can access a suite of short online training modules for catering services on HSeLand.





The **HSE Vending Policy (2019)** applies to all vending machines that stock cold soft drinks, confectionary and snacks on HSE premises.

The Happy Heart Healthy Eating Awards provide access to expert guidance and support to catering services to help them meet the requirements of the **HSE Nutrition Standards for Food and Beverage Provision for Staff and Visitors in Healthcare Settings**.

2.2.3 HEALTHY MEETINGS

Activity breaks and healthy food options in meetings can increase productivity and creativity. The Department of Health's Healthy Meeting Guidelines offer practical suggestions on providing healthy food options and incorporating physical activity.




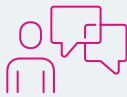



1		Follow the Department of Health's Healthy Meeting Guidelines when hosting workplace meetings, events and initiatives.
2		Remind staff of these guidelines when required, and encourage other departments to use these guidelines.



Consider the length of the meeting when deciding what food or drink to provide. If some attendees have to travel a long distance to the meeting, consider having healthy food and refreshments available on arrival.

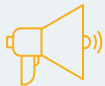


2.2.4 TOBACCO FREE WORKPLACES

Smoking contributes to increased sick leave and absenteeism, conflict at work between staff who smoke and those who don't regarding extra unofficial 'smoke breaks', increased cleaning and maintenance costs and risk of fire and accidents. Line managers and supervisors are responsible for inducting, training and supporting staff to ensure the implementation of and compliance with the Tobacco Free Campus Policy. Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health.

1		Highlight to staff the access to free nicotine replacement therapy and the 12-month long counselling support programme . Visit www.quit.ie .
2		Understand and support the implementation of the Tobacco Free Campus (TFC) Policy .
3		Complete the Supporting Staff to Communicate the HSE TFC Policy training on HSeLand and encourage staff to do same.
4		Include reference to the TFC Policy in staff recruitment and induction programmes, training and meetings .
5		Communicate the proactive role of staff as role models to service users in relation to their own cigarette/e-cigarette (vape) use.
6		Discuss breaches of the TFC Policy by staff under your management with the staff member concerned. Offer a referral to stop smoking services or to help manage nicotine withdrawal while at work. Take disciplinary action where appropriate.
7		Bring to the attention of security or appropriate site personnel any breaches of the TFC Policy by staff not under your management.


2.2.5 ALCOHOL

There is no 'safe' or 'healthy' amount of alcohol. Drinking within the recommended guidelines greatly reduces the risk of: high blood pressure and strokes; depression and anxiety; seven kinds of cancer; liver disease; and many other alcohol-related conditions. The estimated cost of the lost output per year due to alcohol-related absenteeism in Ireland's workplaces is €195 million¹¹. The HSE provides resources, including a directory of supports and counselling services, through www.askaboutalcohol.ie.

1		Promote and disseminate in the workplace alcohol education and information resources available on www.askaboutalcohol.ie and the HSE Drug and Alcohol Helpline.
2		Promote in the workplace the use of the alcohol self-assessment tool and drinks calculator available on www.askaboutalcohol.ie .
3		Make available for staff the alcohol-related information leaflets from www.healthpromotion.ie .




2.2.6 MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Mental health is an important part of overall health. Protecting and enhancing our mental wellbeing enables us to cope with challenging times. The workplace plays an integral part in shaping an employee’s mental health. The HSE continues to develop resources and initiatives for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

- 1  Encourage and facilitate staff to participate in programmes such as **Minding Your Wellbeing** and **HSE Stress Management**.
- 2  Create new or support existing **opportunities for social connection** and encourage participation in creative arts initiatives (e.g. staff choirs, social clubs, drama/variety groups).
- 3  Work with facilities and advocate for the provision of **dedicated quiet/outdoor spaces** (e.g. a quiet room, garden space, picnic benches).

2.2.7 SEXUAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Sexual health is an important part of our overall physical, emotional and mental health. It involves having a positive relationship with ourselves and with others with regard to sexuality, including the possibility of consensual, healthy and enjoyable sexual activity in adult life. The HSE is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for its employees. This includes providing a positive, respectful and psychologically safe work culture.

- 1  Promote and disseminate in the workplace **sexual health education and information resources** available on www.sexualwellbeing.ie, such as the Free Home STI Testing Service and the Free Contraception Scheme.
- 2  Support and embrace in the workplace national and local sexual health and wellbeing **campaigns, events and initiatives**, e.g. World Sexual Health Day, Pride Month.
- 3  Make available for staff **sexual health information leaflets** from www.healthpromotion.ie.

Healthy Ireland Surveys show that, in general, people are interested in making changes to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviours:



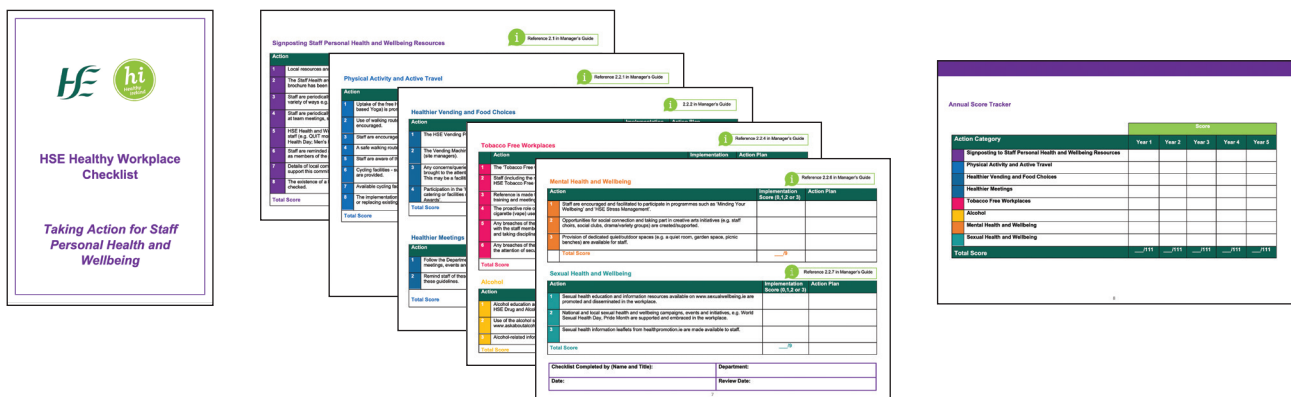
03.

HSE Healthy Workplace Checklist

HSE Healthy Workplace Checklist

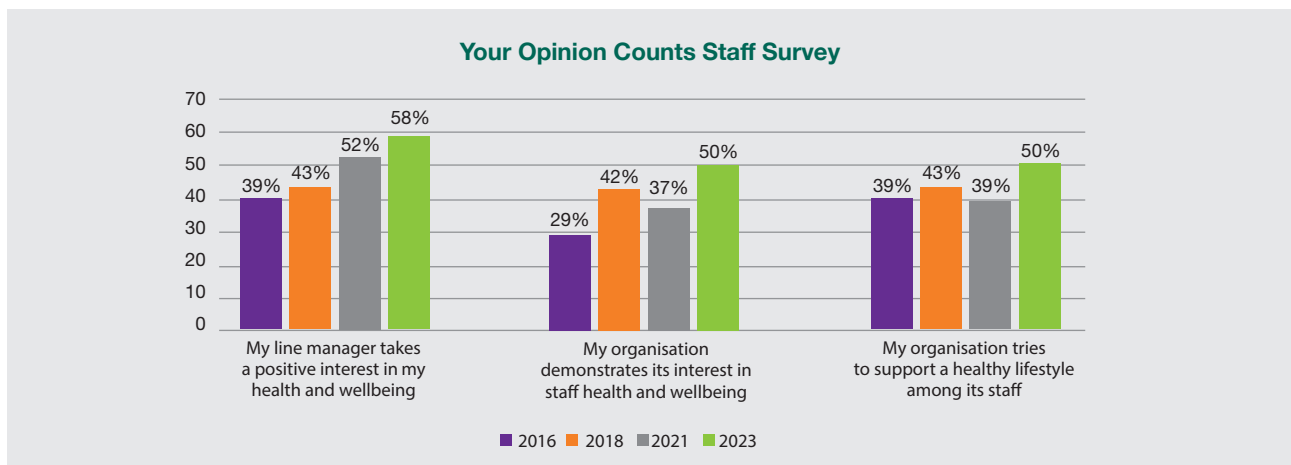
A Healthy Workplace Checklist is available to assist managers to identify what supports are in place for staff personal health and wellbeing and where improvements can be made. This checklist supports managers in reviewing the current status for each of the Action Categories as included in this Taking Action to Support Staff Personal Health and Wellbeing Manager's Guide.

In completing the Checklist, the manager assigns an implementation score for each of these Action Categories. This process enables the development of an annual Healthy Workplace Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to progress and measure implementation, chart progress and celebrate success. **The HSE Healthy Workplace Checklist is available from www.hse.ie/healthyireland.**



National Staff Survey – Your Opinion Counts

The HSE national staff survey 'Your Opinion Counts' gathers data on HSE workplace staff health and wellbeing. The Healthy Workplace Checklist and this Manager's Guide supports managers in taking a positive interest in their staff's health and wellbeing and the promotion of healthy lifestyles in the workplace.



Adapted from 'Your Opinion Counts' Survey Reports 2016-2023

04.

Useful Links and Resources

www.hse.ie/healthyireland

www.healthyworkplace.ie

www.quit.ie

www.askaboutalcohol.ie

www.sexualwellbeing.ie

www.healthpromotion.ie

www.makeeverycontactcount.ie

HSE Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit

Healthy Ireland at Work: A National Framework for Healthy Workplaces in Ireland (2021-2025)

Health Services Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan (2023-2027)

HSE Staff Health and Wellbeing - Resources and Initiatives for Adopting Healthy Behaviours

HSE Guidance for Health Promotion and Improvement and Healthy Ireland Staff

HSE Healthy Workplace Resource Pack

HSE HR Policies and Procedures

HSE Occupational Health

HSE National Health & Safety Function

HSE Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

HSE Coaching Service

HSE Online Exercise Programmes

HSE Make Every Move Count - National Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

HSE Steps to Health Challenge

HSE Cycle to Work Scheme

Slí@Work Programme

Healthy Eating Guidelines

Healthy Meeting Guidelines

HSE Vending Policy (2019)

HSE Vending Machine Audit Tool

HSE Nutrition Standards for Food and Beverage Provision for Staff and Visitors in Healthcare Settings

Happy Heart Healthy Eating Awards

HSE Tobacco Free Campus (TFC) Policy

Protecting HSE Staff from Second-hand Smoke in Domestic Settings Policy

Resources and Toolkits to Support the Implementation of a Smoke-free Health Service

HSE Minding Your Wellbeing Programme

HSE Stress Management Programme

How to set up a Choir for HSE Staff Health & Wellbeing

How to Order Resources from www.healthpromotion.ie

References

1. Health Service Executive. Healthy Ireland in the Health Services Implementation Plan (2015 – 2017). Available from: <https://www.lenus.ie/handle/10147/620159>
2. Health Service Executive. Health Services Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan (2023 – 2027). Available from: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/healthy-ireland/hse-health-services-healthy-ireland-implementation-plan-2023-2027.pdf>
3. TILDA report to inform demographics for over 50s in Ireland for Covid19 crisis. Multi-morbidity and Medication Usage. The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing; 2020. Available from: <https://tilda.tcd.ie/publications/reports/pdf/w5-key-findings-report/Chapter%204.pdf>
4. Department of Health. Tackling Chronic Disease: A Policy Framework for Management of Chronic Disease. Department of Health; 2008. Available from: <https://www.lenus.ie/handle/10147/45895>
5. OECD/European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, Ireland: Country Health Profile 2021, State of Health in the EU, OECD Publishing, Paris/European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, Brussels; 2021. Available from: https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-12/2021_chp_ir_english.pdf
6. Department of Health. Healthy Ireland Survey 2023. Available from: <https://assets.gov.ie/283794/3ef96218-68fb-4fa3-a0d2-ec687071db38.pdf>
7. Department of Health. Healthy Ireland Survey 2021. Available from: <https://assets.gov.ie/206555/260f3b84-bf78-41a2-91d7-f14c7c03d99f.pdf>
8. Department of Health. Healthy Ireland Survey 2019. Available from: <https://assets.gov.ie/41141/e5d6fea3a59a4720b081893e11fe299e.pdf>
9. Pryce-Jones J. Happiness at work: Maximizing Your Psychological Capital for Success. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell; 2010. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286135166_Happiness_at_Work_Maximizing_Your_Psychological_Capital_For_Success
10. World Health Organization & Burton, J. WHO Healthy Workplace Framework and Model: Background and Supporting Literature and Practices. World Health Organization; 2010. Available from: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/113144>
11. Department of Health. Healthy Ireland at Work: A National Framework for Healthy Workplaces in Ireland (2021-2025). Available from: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/445a4a-healthy-workplace-framework>
12. Department of Health. Healthy Ireland Survey 2016. Available from: <https://assets.gov.ie/16000/9e29f3fde1f048468485985093754bfd.pdf>

For the latest updates

HSE Healthy Ireland: www.hse.ie/healthyireland

HSE Health and Wellbeing: www.hse.ie/healthandwellbeing

Ezine: hsehealthandwellbeingnews.com

Health information publications: www.healthpromotion.ie

Join our mailing list: healthandwellbeing.communications@hse.ie

X @HsehealthW

YouTube @HSEHealthandWellbeing

HSE Talking Health and Wellbeing Podcast

**HSE Healthy Ireland
Health and Wellbeing**
Dr Steevens' Hospital
Steevens' Lane
Dublin 8, Ireland

Email: healthyireland@hse.ie

Version 1: September 2024

