

Employee & Athlete Welfare Policy

August 2024

Review due: August 2026

Introduction

Netball Northern Ireland recognises that our employees & athletes are our most valuable resource and the health and welfare of all is essential in achieving our strategic aims.

Netball Northern Ireland (NNI) as a NGB & employer has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees & athletes as far as reasonably practicable. It is also required to have in place measures to mitigate as far as practicable factors that could harm employees' & athletes physical and mental well-being, which includes work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are work-related and within the organisation's control.

This policy accepts the Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related stress as "the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them".

There is an important distinction between 'reasonable pressures' which stimulate and motivate and 'stress' where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

Aim and intent

To provide a framework for the provision of staff & athlete welfare support.

This policy recognises that there are many sources of work-related stress and that stress can result from the actions or behaviours of managers, employees or others connected with NNI.

The following cover the primary sources of stress at work that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. These are:

Demands – i.e. workload, patterns and the environment.

Control – i.e. how much say the person has in the way they do their work.

Support – i.e. the encouragement and resources provided by the organisation, management and colleagues.

Relationships – i.e. promoting positive relationships to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

Role – such as whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.

Change – such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated.

The Board and Managers acknowledge the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and that there is a persuasive business case, as well as a moral and legal duty, for taking steps to promote employee & athlete well-being as far as reasonably practicable. The Board and Managers are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

Role and Responsibilities

All staff & athletes have a role to play with regards to their own health and wellbeing at work and advised to raise any matters of concern. Staff & athletes also have a responsibility to be sensitive and responsive to the welfare of their colleagues/teammates.

NNI recognises the importance of the professional relationship between managers, staff & athletes, they have the primary responsibility for the welfare at work of their staff & athletes under their supervision.

The Board and managers will:

- Support steps taken to develop a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect
- Encourage initiatives and events that promote health and well-being.

Managers will:

- Treat individuals reporting to them with consideration and dignity, and will promote a culture of mutual respect within the staff/athletes they manage. They will not permit unacceptable behaviour and will take decisive action when issues are brought to their attention.
- Ensure that there is good communication within the team and there are opportunities for individuals to raise concerns about their work/practice.
- Attend training as appropriate in order to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress.
- Encourage their staff/athletes to participate in events and initiatives to promote well-being and more effective working.
- Take action in the interests of all their colleagues/teammates where performance by a member of staff/squad may cause stress to their colleagues/teammates.

Employees & Athletes will:

- Treat colleagues/teammates and all other persons with whom they interact during the course of their work with consideration, respect and dignity.
- Co-operate with the welfare policy, attending briefings and raise their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress on health.
- Raise concerns with their line/team manager if they feel there are work/practice issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being.
- Take responsibility for their own health and well-being by adopting healthy lifestyles.
- Take responsibility for their own development skills as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in the team and so reduce of the risk of stress.
- Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, thus helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues.

The Organisation will promote the welfare of employees & athletes by:

- Creating a working environment where potential work-related stressors as far as practicable are avoided, minimised or mitigated through good management practices.
- Increasing managers', employees' & athletes awareness of the causes and effects of stress.
- Developing a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health.
- Developing the competence of managers so that they manage staff & athletes effectively and fairly.
- Establishing working arrangements whereby employees & athletes feel they are able to maintain an appropriate work life balance.
- Encouraging staff & athletes to take responsibility for their own work/practice and effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.

Arrangements for employee & athlete welfare through good management practices

These include the following:

- Recruitment and selection procedures
- Clear job descriptions to ensure that the 'right' person is recruited for the job
- Training and Development procedures to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks/duties required of them
- Promotion and reward procedures
- Managing performance procedures
- Capability and absence management & return to work procedures to ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness
- Suitable adaptations for disability
- Harassment and anti-bullying procedures
- Flexible working and time off in lieu arrangements, and contact days with staff on maternity leave.

Confidentiality

Line/team managers should conduct meetings in a confidential manner. However, if the line/team manager believes that it is in the interest of the member of staff/squad to consult with another person, the permission from the member of staff/athlete will be obtained.

Full confidentiality cannot be extended to disclosures that identify;

- Breach in regulations or criminal law
- A situation where an individual may possibly be at risk of harming either themselves or other people.

Information, advice and support

Information, advice and support will be provided through line management, the range of information and advice available may include;

- Company policies and procedures relating to staff & athlete health and welfare
- Legislation relating to health and welfare of staff & athlete
- Contact details for support groups or organisations specific to their welfare needs.