

Staff well-being in social care: rationale

1. The well-being of employees is recognised as vital to the business needs of all organisations. The well-being of staff responsible for delivering care and support services has a direct effect on the quality of care and support provided.
2. These factors place upon all social care organisations the responsibility to develop effective procedures for staff support and well-being. At periods of significant change and transformation the need to pay attention to staff well-being is greater.
3. Procedures that support staff are necessary to ensure that the work and working conditions do not damage the physical or psychological well-being of employees.
4. Staff well-being may be judged effective when it contributes to any of the following organisational outcomes:
 - an increase in the extent to which employees are able to enhance the well-being and satisfaction of others including service users and colleagues
 - an increase in the extent to which employees feel good about the organisation for which they work
 - an increase in the extent to which employees feel valued by the organisation for which they work
 - an increase in team identity and effectiveness
 - an increase in the extent to which employees understand, and are committed to, clear and realistic organisational goals and priorities
 - an increase in the extent to which employees are equipped and supported to develop good practice
 - a reduction in sickness absence
 - a reduction in staff turnover
 - a reduction in the number of disciplinary or grievance cases
 - a reduction in work related stress or distress
5. The effectiveness of staff well-being requires regular formal monitoring of both objective indices (such as absence and turnover rates) and subjective indices (such as employee satisfaction and stress levels). Both types of indices will include measures appropriate to relevant human resource legislation in areas of equality and diversity, discrimination, harassment and health and safety.
6. Although staff well-being may be delivered in a variety of ways to suit the particular requirements of an organisation, the following general principles are crucial:
 - all types of employee should have equal access to staff well-being provision
 - the core provision should be free and available within working hours (without penalty)
 - all employees should be aware of the existence of the staff well-being provision, its nature and purpose
 - all employees suffering from serious work-related problems of a personal nature should be able to access confidential counselling or consultation to try and resolve it
 - all employees have a right to privacy regarding personal matters, a staff well-being function cannot require employees to disclose personal information
 - all employees should expect that their staff well-being needs will be met by personnel with appropriate specialist training or qualifications, whether employed by the organisation or external specialists contracted to the organisation
 - all employees should expect that effective work will be recognised by public praise and validation
 - all employees should expect their employer to provide appropriate opportunities for professional supervision and continuing professional development
7. Underlying the rationale for staff well-being is the understanding that listening and respect are at the core of effective human relationships.

Employees who experience a positive and attentive response to their own anxieties and criticisms will be in a better position to adopt the same attitude towards others – both people who rely on care services and co-workers.

Staff well-being in social care: essential elements

8. Respect for the employee entails recognising that there are clear limits to what can be expected of an employee, and that work roles and working environments may place stresses on employees.
9. The essential elements of a staff well-being approach include:
 - personal support for the employee
 - an opportunity for the employee to openly express work related difficulties, anxieties, and frustrations, with the expectation of support and, where appropriate and possible, practical help
 - an opportunity for the employee to develop by relating the theory and practice of the job to personal experience
 - the involvement of the employee in the choice of suitable individuals to provide supervision/mentoring. Particular awareness should be given to the needs of those (e.g. black/ethnic minority employees, female employees) who are likely to be dealing with institutionalised discrimination, and for whom supervision/mentoring will be an important means of addressing this.

10. The provision of a staff well-being approach has two distinct aspects:

a **proactive** component directed at assisting employees to maintain good physical health and mental well-being; and

a **reactive** component directed at assisting employees to recover from physical ill health or mental distress.

11. A proactive staff well-being approach includes education, training and assistance developing good organisational practices towards employees. Education will include helping employees to be aware of the nature and causes of stress. It will encompass general health education. It will also increase awareness of the nature of good organisational practice. Training will include the provision of opportunities for employees to acquire skills or enhance their skills in areas such as: relaxation, mediation, assertiveness, listening, team building, group support and peer counselling. Assistance will include contributions towards the formulation and dissemination of organisational policy and practice in such areas as:

- violence to staff
- disciplinary and grievance procedures
- procedures for redundancy
- early retirement
- procedures for supervision, appraisal, and mentoring

This requires that the staff well-being function is clearly represented at senior management level.

12. The supervision/mentoring function is a confidential relationship which may be fulfilled by a single individual, or by a variety of individuals or groups with defined roles. The placing of all of this role on the line manager may not be appropriate.
13. Reactive staff well-being includes provision of suitably qualified personnel to assist individuals or work groups experiencing difficulties to overcome them in productive ways. This may take a number of forms. Opportunities for individuals to receive confidential personal counselling or consultation outside the line-management function or the opportunity for work groups to call upon the services of an independent team consultant to help them address and resolve working or interpersonal difficulties are both potentially beneficial.

14. A staff well-being service should be capable of addressing the particular needs of staff:

- who are expecting uncertainty and change
- who are victims of assault, abusive or threatening behaviour
- who are experiencing problems in their personal life that adversely affect their work
- whose relationship with colleagues is problematic
- who are subject to discrimination or harassment within the workplace or as they carry out their duties
- who are involved in disciplinary or grievance procedures
- who are alienated from the organisation as a result of drawing attention to malpractice (whistle-blowing)
- who are experiencing stress from the nature of their work

Support for staff well-being

15. Commitment to staff well-being by senior management is essential for its success. This commitment should be formalised in workplace agreements with a shared responsibility on management and the workforce to sustain these agreements.

16. There is a limit to the support a line-manager can offer. S/he is also responsible for appraisal, disciplinary matters and promotion, as well as being held responsible for the work performance of his/her subordinates. Organisations need to recognise both the strengths and the limitations of the line-manager's role in the provision of staff well-being, supporting the line-manager to develop skills that are appropriate to his/her role, but relieving him/her of inappropriate responsibilities by the development of alternative but complementary support systems.

17. The HR and/or training department of an organisation is often addressing care needs of staff through training work, implicitly and without formal recognition of the fact. Such work should be legitimised as an integral part of the total planned staff well-being provision.

18. All staff, including managers, require training in using the staff well-being provision for themselves and others.

19. It is essential that the work of personnel supplying specialist staff well-being services within any organisation be adequately supervised. Because of the specialist nature of the work, and its confidentiality, such supervision may require input from outside the organisation.

20. In the contracting out of staff well-being services, there should be a requirement for service providers to demonstrate how they supervise and support their staff.

Monitoring and evaluating staff well-being

21. Monitoring and evaluative procedures need to be built in to the staff well-being provision at the planning stage. These should include:

- regular employee surveys to assess the needs and the priority issues to be addressed
- assessment of resources that are put into staff well-being, whether material, financial, or human
- assessment of the activity level of the staff well-being function, including number and type of staff using the provision
- assessment of the impact of the staff well-being provision, including service user responses and organisational measures linked to periodic general staff surveys
- a plan for how any data collected will be used.

22. An Audit Tool is a valuable approach to checking effectiveness and commitment to staff well-being. The Audit Tool which has been developed alongside this Statement of Best Practice includes evaluating factors such as: respect, motivation, morale, teamwork, workload and support. They are crucial elements to ensure quality care outcomes for people receiving services.

This guide and audit tool is being made available as a resource on the SCIE's people management website.

Staff well-being in social care: Developing a management guide and audit tool

An introduction to 'staff well-being'

It is universally acknowledged that workplaces and the nature of work have changed dramatically in recent years. Demographic trends, technological advances, new legislation and changing attitudes have all had an effect on work, management and expectations. These developments have (and continue to have) a substantial impact on the activity of social care work.

In the context of these broad changes the competition for talent is increasing and it is evident that workers are becoming more selective in their employment choices and the commitment to the organisation that employs them.

During the development of the ideas that form the basis of this paper we have worked with groups of social care managers from a range of social care organisations and a variety of care settings. This has enabled us to test our thinking and to refine the questions and the audit methodology.

Through the support of the National Care Forum (NCF) and the Social Care Association (SCA) a Statement of Best Practice for staff well-being has been developed to underpin this management guide and the audit approach.

What is staff well-being and why does it matter?

Legislation and government policies have variously promoted family-friendly approaches, flexibility, employee involvement and initiatives to improve the balance of work and life, job satisfaction, staff retention as well as to minimise stress in the workplace. The Investors In People national standard has been extended to include recognition of the importance of work/life balance.

The phrase "staff are our greatest asset" is perhaps somewhat cynically seen as well-worn rhetoric. Nevertheless the sentiment has particular resonance in the social care sector where services are provided to some of the most vulnerable people in society. We support the view expressed in the Scottish Executive publication *Improving front line services: A framework for supporting front line staff* (2005) that good management practices lead to good staff support:

*"The better people are managed, the stronger their commitment;
the stronger their commitment, the better their performance;
the better their performance, the better the services provided."*

As with other sectors social care has changed considerably in recent years with additional regulations, higher expectations and demands. The nature of the work in social care brings other pressures and risks. The need for 24 hour cover results in the need for shift patterns and unsocial hours, weekend and bank holiday working. The ongoing pressure of limited resources also has an impact. Promoting whistleblowing brings additional pressures to management.

Recruitment (and the retention of staff) has become a major priority for employers in the care sector. In part this is due to increasing competition with other sectors. However social care is generally considered to have become more difficult and demanding work.

Staffing is the biggest single cost for social care employers. Investing in staff, is not only necessary, it is a service imperative. The problems, which result from things going wrong with workers, can be costly. Sickness absence, disciplinary procedures, high staff turnover hit the quality and reputation of services as well as the bottom line. Having systems in place to anticipate the difficulties and minimise the effects therefore also makes commercial sense.

What can be done?

Auditing the 'staff well-being' of an organisation enables a snapshot of the organisation and its effectiveness to be assessed and evaluated. This may focus on a range of factors, for example:

- Leadership and management style and culture
- Pay, terms, benefits and conditions
- Sense of pride and belonging
- Recruitment practices
- Induction, ongoing development and training
- Supervision and support systems
- Career development
- Mentorship
- Appraisal/reviews
- Organisation vision and strategy
- Staff communication and involvement
- Workplace factors
- Teamworking
- Volume of work
- Control of pressures, demands and timescales
- Uncertainty
- Information and communication
- Motivation, morale and job satisfaction
- Staff turnover
- Sickness absenteeism
- Prevalence of disciplinary/grievance issues
- Trust in management
- Attitude towards failure
- Incidence of violence and assault
- The management of risks and stress
- Risk management

(This list is intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive)

With the information drawn from the audit an improvement programme can be devised to address the specific difficulties highlighted.

What are the benefits and how should staff well-being be promoted?

Attention to a culture of staff well-being **improves retention and recruitment**. Workplaces that establish a reputation for valuing staff are more likely to retain staff. Such a reputation is likely to attract new recruits.

Workplace commitment and satisfaction can be enhanced through the development of a culture that recognises the value of staff well-being.

Staff trust, morale and motivation can also be enhanced. Small things can make a big difference. A culture in which staff well-being is used to demonstrate that staff matter and are valued will build morale and motivate.

A culture in which staff feel positively valued and empowered will **improve productivity**, effectiveness and thereby competitiveness.

Stress will be minimised because staff feel involved, committed and motivated – the creation of a virtuous circle.

All of the above will result in improved service quality.

How does the audit operate? Using the audit tool to assess both 'hard' and 'soft' indicators

Key elements of the audit involve a review of staff well-being. This checks and tests procedures and assesses current patterns of work practice. Exemplars can be drawn out for use as benchmarks with a particular emphasis on finding evidence to inform judgements.

Hard indicators are easier covering such aspects as financial performance and return, staff turnover, the cost of absences. Soft indicators are more difficult to measure and include such factors as employee commitment, satisfaction and goodwill.

The fact that they are more difficult to assess shouldn't mean they are ignored.

A simple questionnaire for staff (and managers) has been devised to use in order to focus attention on the issue of staff well-being. The questions are rated on a scale of 0 to 5 with 0 = "not at all" and 5 = "fully". The rating is designed to stimulate thinking and discussion. In this way it can be used in supervision, appraisal and team meetings. It is essential to be honest in answering the questions!

Staff well-being questions

In relation to your current work job/post in social care how well do you feel you are:

1. able to make your opinion count?
2. engaged and enthusiastic?
3. motivated?
4. in control?
5. part of a team?
6. enabled to learn and develop?
7. supported?
8. able to make a difference?
9. appropriately rewarded and recognised?
10. valued?

Suggested follow up questions:

11. does your score surprise you? Why? What are the reasons?
12. are there times when you would have scored more highly? Why?
13. are there any immediate practical steps, you or others, could take to improve the score? If so, what?
14. what other comments would you like to make?

Monitoring and review

Ensuring effective procedures and systems are in place is of course only the first step to building a culture of staff well-being. Managers will be judged by what they do and how they behave more than simply by what is in procedure documents or what they say! For this reason it is essential that consideration is given to the

processes of monitoring and review at the outset. It is an ongoing process. To be effective it needs to be undertaken regularly and it needs to actively involve staff.

All care services are now required to produce evidence of review as part of the routine quality assurance systems for regulation purposes and it makes sense to incorporate monitoring and review of staff well-being within these procedures.

Identifying good management practice in staff well-being – verifying the evidence

In services informed by good management practices it will be easier to verify the effect of a culture of staff well-being. It will be evident from observing services and/or feedback from people receiving services, other stakeholders and staff themselves that:

- Staff actually feel valued
- Staff are well motivated/morale is good
- Teamworking is well established and relationships between staff are good
- Management practices are supportive
- Workload is managed through appropriate delegation
- There is a commitment to staff well-being
- Work roles are clear and there are opportunities for feedback
- Career development opportunities are in place
- Achievable targets are set and reviewed
- Policies and procedures are explained and induction systems are followed

Examples and evidence

Commitment to staff well-being

Commitment to staff well-being is the starting point. For staff to 'feel' they are valued it is necessary for the commitment by the organisation, home/service or team to be evident. In other words, it has to be evidenced by the behaviours and the way in which people interact rather than be contained in written statements of intent.

- There are staff well-being systems in place and staff know about them
- Respect for diversity
- Fair rate and terms
- regular and effective supervision
- Staff are treated with respect
- Staff care policies provide flexibility
- There is no favouritism in the workplace

Other issues identified in discussions with managers around ensuring that staff feel they are valued include such aspects as:

- Dealing with interpersonal conflict/bullying behaviour
- Provide adequate training resources and access to training
- Career development opportunities
- Providing up-to-date information on staff care and support
- recognising the signs of stress early and providing appropriate support
- having realistic expectations
- the opportunity to use the skills learned
- debrief after critical incidents
- assess and act to reduce risk
- providing for regular breaks

Respect

Respect is a manifestation of being valued by the organisation, management and colleagues. It is as much an experience and therefore subject to perception and interpretation. Feeling respected will have a direct effect on work satisfaction. Respect is fundamental to conveying an attitude that staff are valued as individuals and that their contribution to the services is important.

- treated as an individual
- treated well/acknowledged
- opinions matter
- not 'put down'
- trusted
- 'adult to adult' relationships

Other issues identified in discussions with managers around ensuring that staff feel they are valued include such aspects as:

- issues address/resolved
- quality of workplace and facilities
- opportunities to reflect on and develop practice
- confidentiality
- well informed
- sick pay

Motivation

The sense of feeling valued and respected within the workplace has a direct relationship with levels of motivation. The two aspects need each other. It is difficult to feel motivated in settings where the behaviour of managers and colleagues are not felt to value your contribution.

- Control of workload/sense of autonomy
- Clarity of roles
- Sense of achievement
- Stimulated
- Positive feedback
- Feel able to air grievances

Other issues identified in discussions with managers around ensuring that staff feel they are valued include such aspects as:

- Effective delegation
- Good rewards
- Clear guidelines and direction
- Can express/explore and develop new ways of working
- Boundaries and confidentiality respected
- Appropriate access to written policies

Morale

Motivation and morale are often put together in considering work satisfaction. Morale has a particular resonance for describing the pervading spirit relating to a group within the workplace. As with so many of the 'softer' aspects of people

management skills, morale is a sense or feeling which can nevertheless have a significant effect on mood and feelings.

- sense of belonging and of ownership
- feeling safe
- feeling worthwhile
- recognition for contribution
- supported
- views sought

Other issues identified in discussions with managers around ensuring that staff feel they are valued include such aspects as:

- standards are acknowledged as good
- absence of bullying
- clarity of roles
- training appropriate to needs
- time out (esp. when stressed)
- recognised and listened to
- views sought
- consistent staffing
- good handover

Team work

Much has been written about teamwork and its importance in motivating staff and reinforcing a sense of belonging, worth and achievement. Dysfunctional teams can quickly impact, and undermine, any of a sense of satisfaction and value of individuals. Understanding the dynamics of teams, the importance of team roles, and knowing when and how to intervene are crucial skills of management.

- Team working is well established and appreciated
- Shared learning
- Mutual respect
- Complementary skills/qualities/styles
- Sense of achievement/satisfaction
- Effective communication

Other issues identified in discussions with managers around ensuring that staff feel they are valued include such aspects as:

- Co-operation
- Relationships between staff are good
- Good leadership
- Clear goals and clear roles
- Awareness of skills
- Opportunity for skills development
- Regular opportunities to meet
- Open/honest
- Questioning

Workload

The issue of workload is an obvious factor in staff well-being. It is an aspect that managers should be able to identify easily and quickly, in order that skills and competence, experience and abilities can be taken into account in managing the tasks. Disregarding the importance of workload will cause dissatisfaction to surface quickly or effect morale and motivation or cause staff to opt out.

- realistic demands and deadlines
- achievable targets
- involved in negotiation
- adequate resources
- opportunity for regular review
- sense of control over workload demands
- appropriate delegation

Other issues identified in discussions with managers around ensuring that staff feel they are valued include such aspects as:

- manageable within hours allocated
- clear purpose and clear roles
- sense of achievement
- time is allocated for non-direct care activities
- effort and efficiency evident

Support

Support is one of the antidotes to the problems of feeling overworked and undervalued. Support, and more particularly actually feeling supported, is at the core of staff well-being. It should be a key aspect of the way in which policies and procedures are described. It will be evident in the way in which such procedures are translated into

practice and staff are treated by supervisors and managers.

- regular effective supervision
- induction procedures are followed and documented
- valuing and respectful behaviour and interactions
- appraisal
- team meetings
- promote staff care in policies and procedures

Other issues identified in discussions with managers around ensuring that staff feel they are valued include such aspects as:

- inclusive approach
- back up for decision making
- effective teamworking
- safety and protection
- constructive feedback from colleagues and supervisors (and service users)

The status of social care work

The status of social care was the subject of a report by the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection to the Under Secretary of State for Care Services. *The status of social care – a review* (April 2007) makes specific recommendations to improve leadership and management, training and development and the way in which the sector is viewed by the public and the media. The recommendations have been supported by government and broadly welcomed across the care sector. These aspects of best practice represent key dimensions for an effective staff well-being culture within social care services.

The examples and evidence in the appendices provide a framework for assessing the extent to which organisations can demonstrate their commitment to staff well-being and developing a culture in which staff feel valued.

*Des Kelly and Steve Battley
On behalf of the National Care Forum
and the Social Care Association
July 2008*

References and resources:

Health and Safety Executive (2001), *Tackling work-related stress: a manager's guide to improving and maintaining employee health and well-being*

Johnson, M (2004), *The new rules of engagement: lifework balance and employee commitment*, CIPD

Leary-Joyce, J (2004), *Becoming an employer of choice: making your organisation a great place to work*, CIPD

Scottish Executive and ADSW (2005), *Improving front line services: a framework for supporting front line staff*

Stredwick, J and Ellis, S (2005), *Wellness at work*

Social Care Institute for Excellence – www.scie.org.uk and www.scie-peoplemanagement.org.uk

Healthy Workplace Initiative – jointly sponsored by the Department of Health and the Health and Safety Executive, see: www.signupweb.net

Flexible working: the right to request and the duty to consider: a guide for employers and employees, see: www.berr.gov.uk

www.theworkfoundation.com

www.health-and-work.gov.uk

www.hse.gov.uk

www.employersforwork-lifebalance.org.uk

www.workwiseuk.org

Staff well-being is a sense of/feeling...



Staff Care Questions

Score the following questions on a scale of 0 – 5, with 0 being not at all and 5 being totally.
In the evidence column, identify or describe the reason for your score

In relation to your current post, how well do you feel you are	Score (0 – 5)	Evidence
1.able to make your opinion count?		
2.engaged and enthusiastic?		
3.motivated?		
4.in control?		
5.part of a team?		
6.enabled to learn and develop?		
7.supported?		
8.able to make a difference?		
9.appropriately rewarded and recognised?		
10.valued?		

Review date:

Suggested follow up questions:

1. Does your score surprise you? If so, why?

2. Are there times in the past when you would have scored more highly? Why was this?

3. Are there any immediate practical steps, you or others, could take to improve the score? If so, what?

4. What other comments would you like to make?

Once you have completed this exercise we suggest you discuss your findings with your line manager or supervisor and develop an action plan.

Suggested Managers/supervisors log and action plan

Once staff have completed the questionnaire transfer the results onto the log below. This will enable you to see patterns and identify areas for action or attention for individuals and for the team.

?'s staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total

Actions required to increase individual and team scores:

This Statement of Best Practice was written by Des Kelly and Steve Battley. It draws on work by the Centre for Occupational Studies at the University of Keele published in 1991. It has been the subject of workshop discussions with Home Managers and has been considered by the NCF Human Resources Committee.

We are grateful for the supportive feedback received from the CSCI, SCIE and the Residential Forum. In addition we hope to be able to gain further endorsement of other organisations within the care sector committed to promoting best practice in staff well-being.

Join the NCF

The NCF members are not-for-profit care providers. They are united by a common social purpose in which a commercial business approach to the provision of services enables reinvestment in services and development. By bringing together the entrepreneurial drive of a business approach with the ethos of public service, not-for-profit organisations offer an innovative model of service delivery to the care sector.

The NCF embraces the diversity of the care sector and includes within membership a wide range of services. This includes: home care, housing with care, day care, intermediate care, outreach, residential and nursing care, and specialist provision for all adults and older people receiving care and support services through the not-for-profit sector.

If you are interested in joining the NCF and would like more information please contact the NCF office on 024 7624 3619 or visit our website www.nationalcareforum.org.uk

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Join the SCA

Social Care Association (SCA) is a professional association that welcomes as members all involved in social care, whatever their involvement and wherever they work. SCA exists to promote good practice in social care.

SCA believes that the application of good practice in any setting happens finally between the person using services and the social care worker. Our purpose and business is supporting that person to practice well.

SCA membership is open to individuals and corporate bodies. SCA also provide a range of services available to members and non-members which are based around our guiding principle of promoting good practice.

**For further information telephone
020 8949 5837 or visit the website
www.socialcareassociation.co.uk.**

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