HS 023 Healthy Mind Policy

(should be read in conjunction with the Wellbeing Policy and associated Guidance)

Version 7

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1	18/09/06	Initial Issue		
2	Aug 08	Complete re write following review		
3	May 11	Reviewed GBD no changes Other than addition of compliance audit questions		
4	Apr 2016	Reviewed and re-written to update policy responsibilities and add Individual Risk Assessment Guidance		
5	Dec 2022	Review of policy following COVID-19 pandemic and alignment with SAS Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2024		
6	April 2023	Consultation within Health & Safety and Wellbeing Teams		
7	November 2024	Changed to new format, name of policy changed to Healthy minds and re -written.		

Approvals: This document requires the following signed approvals.

Name:	Date:	Version:
Health Safety and Wellbeing Group	23/01/2025	1
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Linked Documentation:

Document Title:
Wellbeing Policy
Health Passport
Health Passport Guidance for line manager
Health Passport Guidance for employees
Wellness Monitoring Procedure
SAS Trauma Management Workplan
TRiM Network Procedure
Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment:

1. Introduction

Scottish Ambulance Service (The Service) is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees (including volunteers) and acknowledges that prevention and early intervention are vital, and recovery is possible with the right support and resources. By creating a culture where everyone has a basic awareness of mental health and wellbeing, it can help to eliminate stigma and discrimination and develop a more understanding workplace which values mental health equally alongside physical health. This commitment is outlined in the 2030 Strategy and Staying Well, protecting the health and wellbeing of our people Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

In addition, good and fair work is recognised as good for health and we are also committed to creating good and fair work in order to support individuals to thrive and improve their wellbeing whilst working in the Scottish Ambulance Service.

We know that pressures can cause a negative response and, if excessive and enduring, can lead to stress-related ill health (including physical and mental health conditions).

The service is committed to providing a healthy workplace for its workforce and actively promotes measures to improve the physical and mental health of its employees.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all who work for or carry out work for the Service, including volunteers and work experience students.

3. Aim and Purpose

3.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure we cultivate a climate that supports a proactive approach to mental health and provides awareness and education about wellbeing and empowers individuals to take responsibility for their health. We want to foster resilience to help colleagues cope with the effects of trauma and stress and create a supportive environment so that colleagues and teams feel comfortable discussing their pressures and where supportive conversations become normal practice. (See Appendix C).

3.2 The purpose of this policy is to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of our workforce by recognising and managing pressures at work, as well as supporting employees to cope with pressures outside work.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for Health, Safety and Welfare for the Service.

4.2 The Director of Workforce is responsible for:

- Ensuring that workplace health, safety and welfare procedures are constantly reviewed in line with relevant legislation.

- Ensuring that arrangements for liaising with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are in place.

4.3 Service Directors and Heads of Service or departments will:

- Demonstrate Service value lead behaviours as the foundation for a supportive workplace culture.
- Acknowledge legal duties and ensure risks to individuals and the organisation associated with stress and mental health at work are managed.
- Attend any training courses that support a healthy mind.

4.4 Operational and Non-Operational managers will:

- Demonstrate Service value lead behaviours as role models for a supportive culture.
- Attend any training course that support a healthy mind.
- Manage risk at team level.
- Review Health Passports where applicable
- Adhere to any individual wellbeing action plans.
- Engage in open and supportive conversations when they recognise early warning signs. or employees/ peers raise concerning from risk assessments undertaken.

4.5 The Head of Health and Safety will ensure systems are in place for:

- Ensuring training is in place that supports a healthy mind.
- Managing psychosocial risks at organisational and team level.
- Individuals to raise concerns about their own or a colleague's wellbeing
- Appropriate Occupational Health Support for those impacted by poor mental health.

4.6 Human Resources will:

- Attend any training course that supports a healthy mind.
- Ensure the attendance management process adequately supports those impacted by mental ill health and supports a safe and timely return to work (where required)
- Support managers (where required) to complete Health Passports with individual staff members dealing with mental health issues.

4.7 Wellbeing and Organisational leads will:

- Support H&S Department to develop and implement the Healthy Minds policy.
- Support H&S and HR Departments to review mental health provisions, training, activities at organisational, team and individual level.
- Support a Service value lead culture through training, mentoring and coordination of the SAS Health and Wellbeing strategy.
- Design and deliver training that supports a healthy mind.

4.8 Occupational Health (OH) will:

- Support the policy and provide specialist advice and support to managers, working within the agreed Service Level Agreement.
- Provide specialist support and advice to individuals who are experiencing the negative effects of mental health
- Support managers in implementing any reasonable adjustments identified through and individuals' attendance at OH.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with mental health issues and advise them and their managers on a planned return to work
- Refer staff to workplace councillors or specialists' agencies where appropriate and as required
- Advise managers and staff on occupational stressors and the risk assessment process Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce mental ill health.
- Inform the Service of any developments in the field of mental health at work, including the National Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group

4.9 Partnership will:

- Demonstrate Service value lead behaviours.
- Consult, encourage and advise members on the Healthy Mind Policy, and the Health Passport processes.
- Encourage engagement in all processes and training that supports a healthy mind
- Support individuals to raise concerns and engage in the process or support if required.

4.10   All employees will:

- Demonstrate Service value led behaviours to contribute to a supportive workplace culture.
- Raise concerns about anything impacting on a healthy mind through the appropriate channels.
- Cooperate with and engage in all training that supports a healthy mind.
- Complete the Health Passports to ensure mental health issues are supported.
- Familiarise themselves with all support mechanisms available and Access support if required.
- Discuss any health concerns with their GP in the first instance.

5. Definitions

Mental Health has been defined as: a state of wellbeing in which the individual recognises their own abilities and is able to cope with normal daily stresses in life (World Health Organisation, 2005).

Stress is defined as: The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed upon them. Pressure can motivate us to do our job well. When this pressure is excessive and/or prolonged, it can have a negative impact on individuals and the organisation.

The source of these pressures may be in work or outside work. The cumulative nature of these pressures means it is important that we eliminate and/or reduce psychosocial risks in work, e.g. work patterns, culture and environment, etc., for which we have a duty of care, and at the same time support employees, where we can, to cope with pressures outside work, e.g. bereavement, moving home, financial pressures, etc.

6. Legislation and Guidance

- Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- HSE Management Standards
- ISO 45003 (2021)

7. Mental Health Continuum.

Your mental health can vary from Thriving, Surviving, Struggling and in Crisis, and runs along this continuum. It's important to note where you are on this continuum and to use it to gauge what steps to take to improve it. One area we will look at is Stress. The known causes of stress can be categorised in different ways. The Health & Safety Executive (HSE), categorise them as Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role and Change. These risks are generic to any organisation, regardless of sector or size.

In the service, due to the nature of the work we do, our operational staff may attend or be involved in potentially traumatic incidents on a daily basis (emotionally demanding work), and therefore at greater risk of developing Traumatic Incident Stress (TIS) and trauma-related ill health. By operational staff we mean emergency call handlers and others in ACC, those out on the road, in the air, and community first responders. Essentially, the vast majority of our workforce in The Service.

Staff in a range of other departments may experience these events as secondary sources of trauma e.g., those investigating incidents, dealing with complaints, supporting a colleague, which also puts them at greater risk. This secondary source of trauma is also known as vicarious trauma.

Ineffective support or lack of support provision at the time of trauma may also cause moral injury within the workforce, where continued exposure to traumatic stress events causes them emotional and mental harm if not processed or dealt with effectively at the time. The Service has a Trauma Risk Assessment (TRiM Assessment) Programme in place to minimise this risk.

8. Traumatic Incident Stress

There is a risk to employee health because of exposure to potentially traumatic incidents at work which may result in development of trauma symptoms and, if prolonged, trauma related ill health.
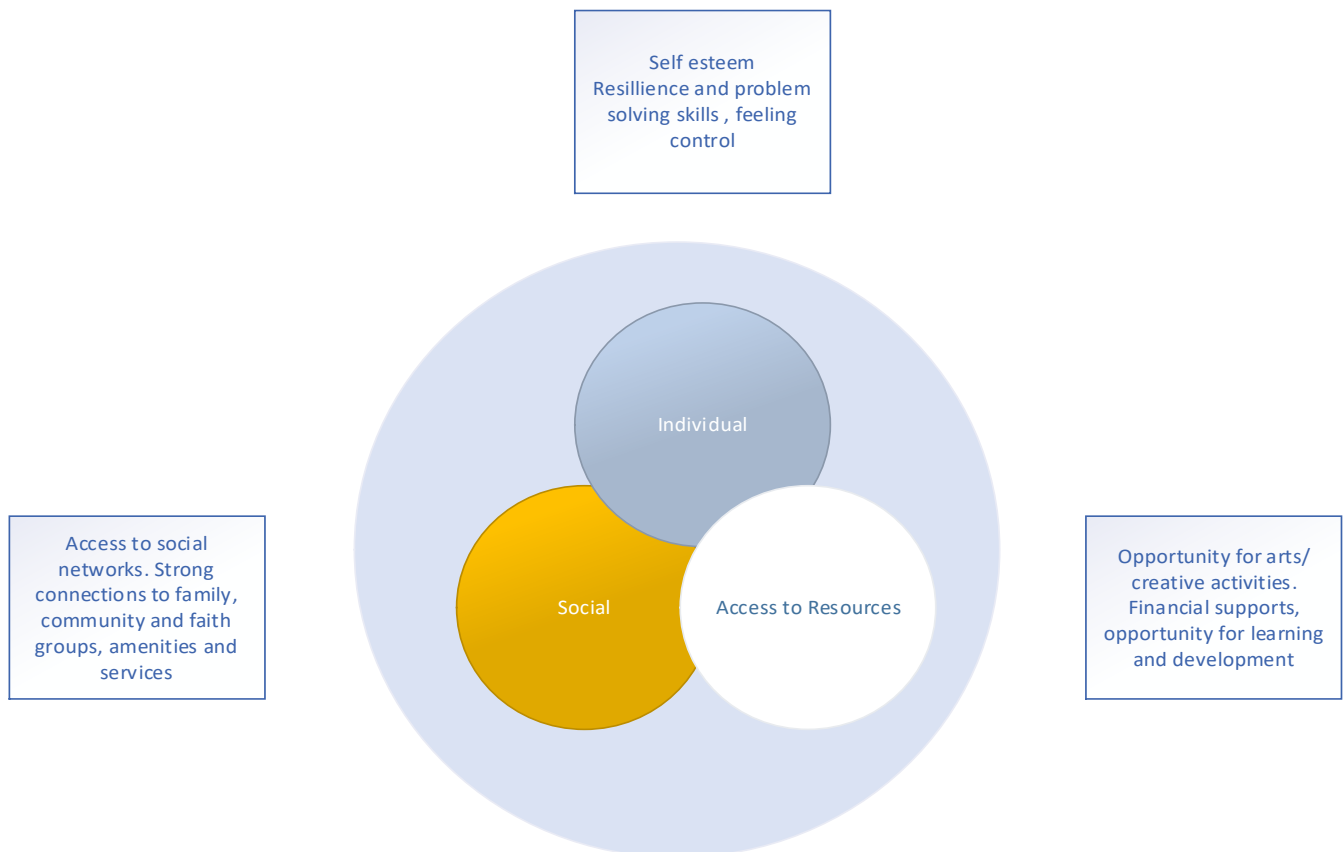
The service has a Duty of Care under the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974), as well as a specific requirement under the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations (1999) to identify any risks to health and manage these risks as far as reasonably practicable.

The service has a Trauma Risk Management Programme

████████████████████████████████

Trauma is 'anything that is deeply distressing or disturbing' and may be caused by exposure to an event or combination of events that leads us to feel, for example, frightened, under threat, humiliated, unsafe, abandoned, unsupported. Early signs of trauma include hyper arousal, poor sleep, difficulty concentrating, dissociation, revisiting images of the event.

TRiM Assessors are available within the Service, spread geographically across the Regions. These assessors are able to conduct assessments within 10 days of a traumatic incident and are able to provide input, follow up and onward referral for the staff member. This is designed to allow staff to process the traumatic events with the necessary support and to minimise the risk of the staff member becoming ill as a result and associated consequences of this, e.g., absence from work.

9.Protecting, promoting and supporting mental health

Self esteem Resillience and problem solving skills , feeling control

Individual

Access to social networks. Strong connections to family, community and faith groups, amenities and services

Social

Access to Resources

Opportunity for arts/ creative activities. Financial supports, opportunity for learning and development

[Understanding the law - Reasonable adjustments for mental health - Acas](#)

[Understanding the law - Supporting mental health at work - Acas](#)

10. Implementation

The policy and managers and employee guidance will be implemented and communicated to managers and staff within the Service via the Chief Executive Bulletin. Emails will also be sent to senior managers asking them to bring the existence of the policy to their staff.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if there are any relevant changes to legislation or best practice. The policy review schedule overseen by the Policy Review Group will be updated to capture the review date.

Appendix A

Sources of Support for Staff

Urgent Help

Optima – Employee Assistance Programme (Counselling Service) – ▮▮▮▮▮▮

TASC Ambulance Staff Crisis Phoneline

Call: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ (Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year)

Immediate and ongoing suicide and mental health care for UK ambulance staff

Not in Crisis but need support

▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ (open Mon- Fri 9-5 , and voice mail at other times)

Wellbeing Hub: includes on line CBT, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Samaritans

Helpline – 116 123, available 24/7, 365 days.

Text: 07725 909090

Visit: www.samaritans.org

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Breathing Space

Breathing Space is a free confidential phoneline service for any individual who is experiencing low mood and depression or is unusually worried and in need of someone to talk to. Lines are open from 6pm - 2am Monday to Thursday and 6pm - 6am Friday to Monday morning.

Call: 0800 838587

Visit: https://breathingspace.scot/

Sapper Support

Sapper Support is a 24/7 helpline staffed by veterans and 999 personnel for both military and emergency services staff. They give emotional and physical support to sufferers of PTSD and other associated mental health issues.

Call: 0800 040 7873 / 0800 040 7783

Text: 0786 001 8733

NHS24

NHS24 can make referrals to crisis support and other mental health professionals outwith normal GP practice working hours.

Call:111

Shout

Shout is the UK's first 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help.

Shout is powered by a team of volunteers, who are at the heart of the service. We take people from crisis to calm every single day.

Shout exists in the US as 'Crisis Text Line', but this is the first time the tried and tested technology has come to the UK.
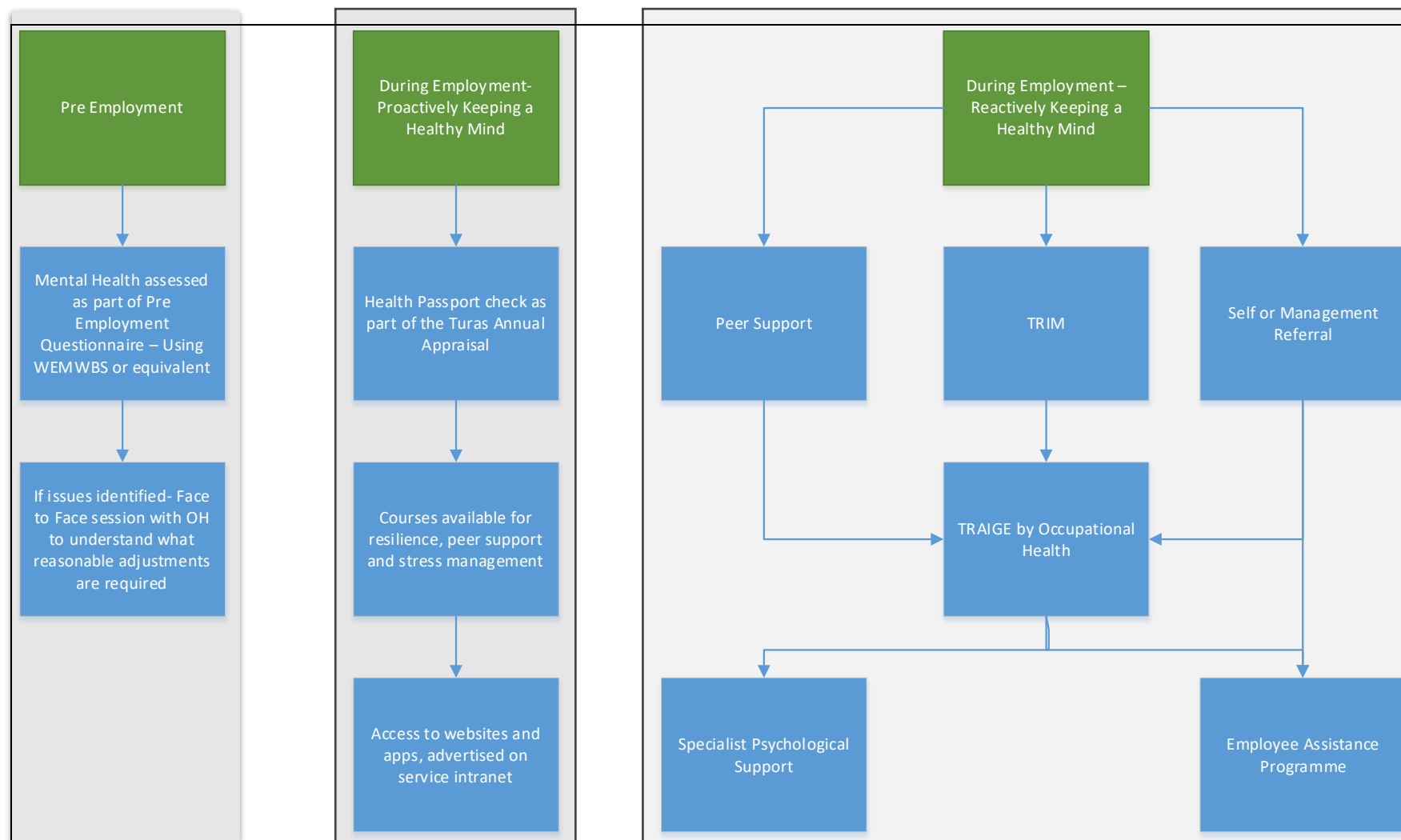
Text Shout to 85258

Help is at Hand

Help is at Hand is a leaflet to help you if someone you know may have known died by suicide.
Download the leaflet

Appendix B – Looking after your mental wellbeing before and during employment.

Pre Employment

Mental Health assessed as part of Pre Employment Questionnaire – Using WEMWBS or equivalent

If issues identified- Face to Face session with OH to understand what reasonable adjustments are required

During Employment- Proactively Keeping a Healthy Mind

Health Passport check as part of the Turas Annual Appraisal

Courses available for resilience, peer support and stress management

Access to websites and apps, advertised on service intranet

During Employment – Reactively Keeping a Healthy Mind

Peer Support

TRIM

Self or Management Referral

TRAIGE by Occupational Health

Specialist Psychological Support

Employee Assistance Programme

Appendix C – Wellbeing Status Assessment

This form can be used at any time and is not exclusively for Mental Health issues

1. **How are you?**
2. **Are you aware of the staff support initiatives available to you?**
3. **Is there anything you feel could be put in place to enhance your wellbeing at work?**
4. **Do you feel anything could have been done at work to prevent your absence? (Note: Be aware the staff member may not want to discuss this if the issue is personal)**
5. **What three things can you put in place to prioritise your wellbeing?**   1.
6. **Is there anything else you would like to discuss today?**
7. **Are you interested in buddying up with a Peer Supporter?**

Appendix D – Adequate Systems for Raising Concerns