

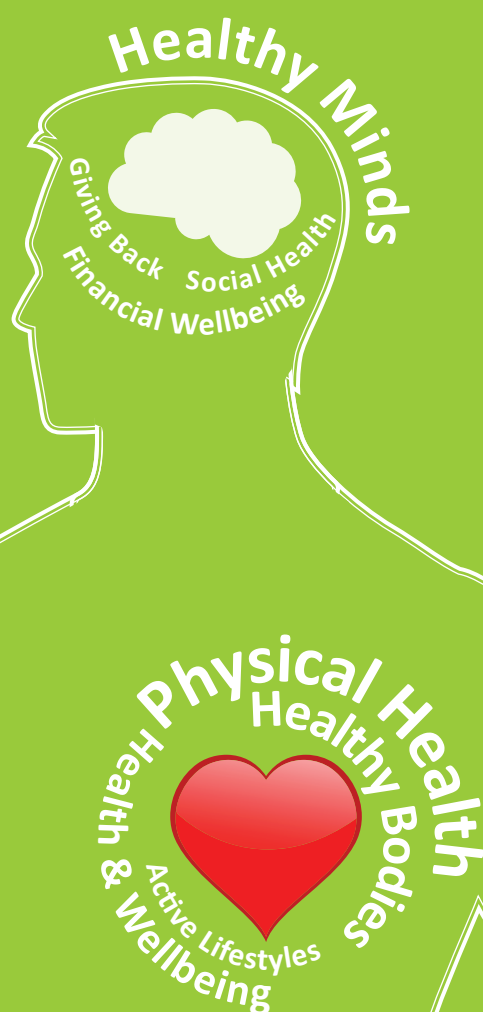
Education Authority **Health & Wellbeing** Strategy



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For further information please refer to the Health and Wellbeing three year Action Plan



Chief Executive's Foreword



I am delighted to announce the Education Authority's (EA) first Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-22. This is dedicated to all our people ranging from those in the school setting to the thousands who support the EA Mission.

While our ten year Strategic Plan sets out the high level priorities and goals for EA, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy demonstrates our commitment to the overall health of our people to enable the achievement of those goals.

Evidence supports our belief that an effective workplace wellbeing strategy can deliver mutual benefits to our people, to our families, to the business and to the wider society.

I believe now more than ever the importance of articulating EA's stance on Health and Wellbeing.

While we have done lots of good things in recent times it has never been under a formal strategy. This strategy aims to improve awareness and provide opportunities for staff to take action and invest in their own mental and physical health. By investing in a happy, healthy, dedicated and skilled workforce, we best deliver our corporate goals to the benefit of our learners and stakeholders.

Over the next three years, we aim to create a fully inclusive Health and Wellbeing culture that supports School Leaders, managers and staff when they need it most, promotes staff engagement and lives the EA values. We believe this important work will help ensure EA is viewed by its people as a great place to work and by those in the local community as an employer of choice.

Sara Long
Chief Executive

MISSION

"To inspire, support and challenge all our children and young people to be the best that they can be"

Mission, Values & Vision

Health and Wellbeing Vision

“A healthy Education Authority where, together, we work, develop and support each other within a culture of health and wellbeing”

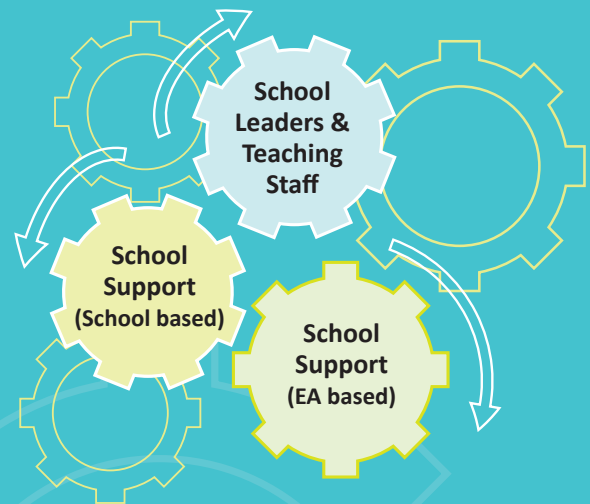


Openness Respect Reflection Responsibility Excellence Equality

Our People

The Education Authority is the funding authority for 1145 schools and is the employing authority for around 40,000 employees including School Leaders, Teaching Staff and non-teaching staff, and those employees within EA Directorates who develop, manage and deliver services in support of schools.

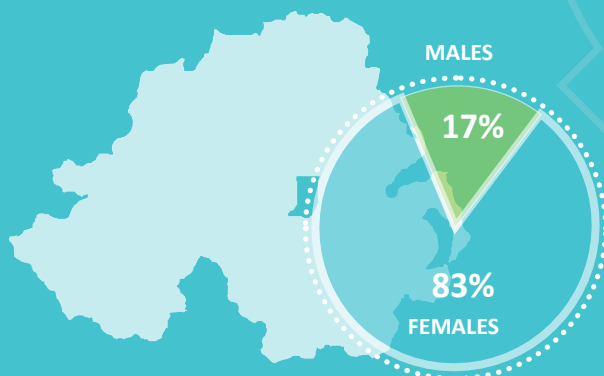
School support staff, both school based and non-school based, are located across five directorates:



Our Workforce

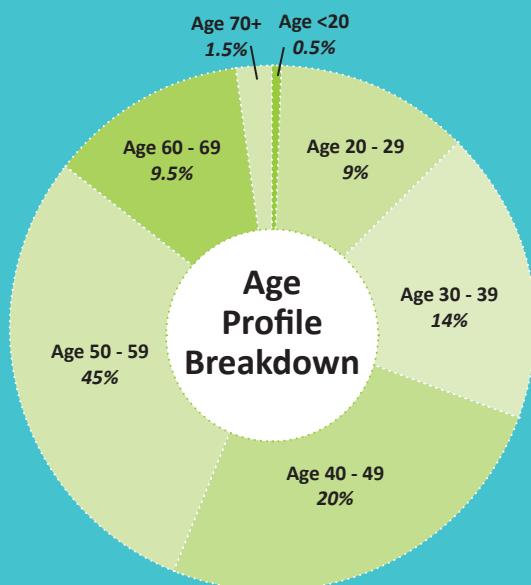
The current demographic profile of our workforce is as follows:

- Gender: 83% female.
- Age: Over 15000 employees are aged 50+ in contrast to approx. 250 employees under the age of 20.



EA employs considerably more females than males 26489 to 5255.

[This excludes (non-peripatetic) teaching staff who are currently exempt from fair employment monitoring – 2017 report]



7% of males employed in EA are employed in senior grades compared with just 3% of the female workforce.
[January 2019]

The Strategic Context

What Wellbeing means to us

- The health and welfare of the whole person. More than physical health; wellbeing is also about our mental, social, psychological and emotional health.
- It's at the heart of a motivated and productive workforce. Research illustrates that good health improves an individual's quality of life and can play a pivotal role in increasing employees' levels of motivation and engagement. Higher engagement levels drive increases in productivity and improve levels of service delivery.
- Employee value focused at the centre of a healthy organisational and school culture which is integrated with long-term strategic objectives.

In other words **Happy Healthy Here**

Health and attendance at work

Reducing the level of sickness absence is crucial throughout EA services and schools and has been identified as a priority. Some schools and services have highlighted unsustainable levels of absence in functional areas. EA has identified the potential to improve education and service provision by reducing sickness absence and improving the health and wellbeing of staff in schools and services, while at the same time ensuring the effective use of resources.

Board of Governors, School Leaders and line managers will be supported to manage their people effectively. This links directly to the Great People Manager programme which will support School Leaders and managers. This programme lies within the Organisational Development and Learning (OD&L) Strategy.

Support for staff experiencing illness is crucial and an important part of being an effective manager of people. In addition, where unsustainable attendance levels exist, Board of Governors, School Leaders and line managers will be supported to provide fair, proactive and consistent application of the Attendance Management policy. The EA Business Plan ensures a focus on reducing unsustainable absence levels and will enable targeted support and interventions in services with high levels of absenteeism.

Role Models

Whilst the strategy is staff centric in focus we believe that by supporting the overall health and wellbeing needs of our people, we better ensure they are present and equipped to be role models for our learners.

With high levels of Mental Health and Musculoskeletal related absence recorded throughout EA we recognise the need to ensure a holistic approach to attendance management and employee wellbeing. With this in mind EA is delighted to present the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2019-22. The Health and Wellbeing strategy will encompass 5 themes with clearly defined deliverables.



Our Strategic Framework

Organisational Enablers and Health Interventions

By identifying and utilising **key enablers** within the EA community we can best equip ourselves to deliver the essential leadership, structural and cultural foundations to improve the lives of our people. Without the commitment of senior management, Board of Governors, School Leaders, line managers and the wider organisation the strategy will lack the necessary support and integration to positively affect change.

Leadership and Management

We recognise the importance of leaders leading by example and promoting staff health and wellbeing. Leaders should role model a culture where staff health and wellbeing is valued. The commitment of EA senior leadership will enable key Strategy support including access to resources to drive important initiatives and interventions forward.

We also recognise how important good people management is and the correlation to the higher job satisfaction, productivity and attendance levels of our people. These are crucial elements of a high performance culture.

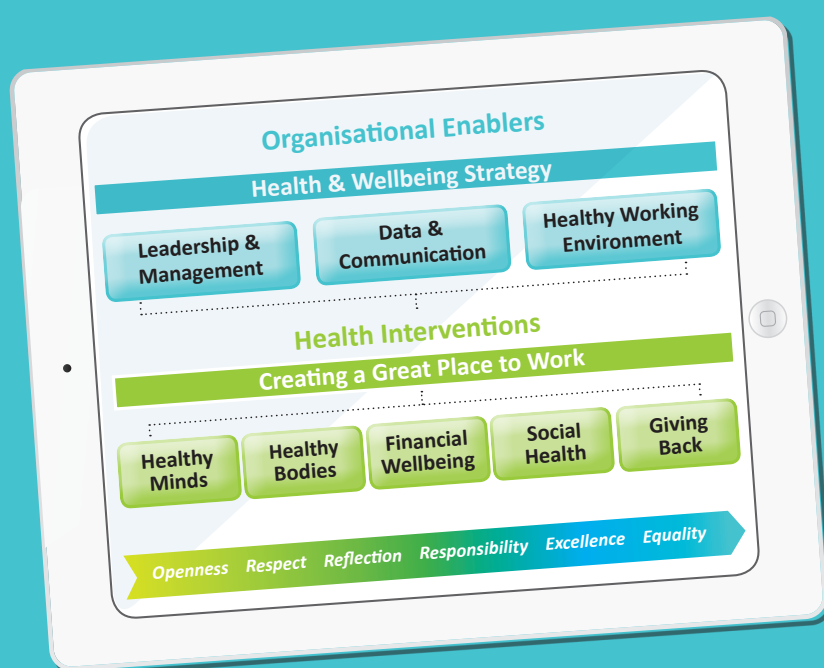
Data and Communication

By improving data collection and enhancing the use of using existing information we can make more evidence based decisions to improve staff health and wellbeing. A communications plan, aligned to the Strategy, will ensure all our people based in schools and across EA services are included in ongoing communications and targeted campaigns.

Healthy Working Environment

Ensuring our people work in conditions that enable them to stay safe and keep healthy is a fundamental enabler for empowering self-care. An environment which provides the infrastructure and facilities to promote active lifestyles is crucial. Break out, quiet spaces and food preparation facilities can improve the overall working experience. Facilities and equipment which comply with health and safety regulations ensure our people are safe at work.

With leadership commitment, information, communication and a positive working environment for all, we can support a staff Health and Wellbeing culture further with effective interventions to enhance staff mental and physical health.



Creating a Great Place to Work

We are committed to creating a great workplace where people have a sense of pride and belonging. Furthermore it is the intention to continuously improve how we do things to enhance the overall employee experience as we recognise this will have the added benefits of improving service delivery and educational outcomes for children and young people in our schools linked to our overall EA Mission Statement.

With this strategy we aim to demonstrate commitment to:

- **Valuing our people**
- **Enhancing communications and engagement**
- **Promoting the good things we do in schools and our services**
- **Adding value with new or enhanced wellbeing arrangements**
- **Promoting an attendance culture to make the best use of public money**
- **Retaining and developing our talent**
- **Delivering bespoke support when its needed**
- **Continuous improvement and creativity**

We recognise a number of factors support the outcome of creating a “great place to work”. The focus of this Strategy is to link health and wellbeing support for our people to other work being delivered by EA as part of this overall outcome. This Strategy will link across all areas of EA and has particularly strong links with that of the Equality, Organisational Development & Learning teams (OD&L) and work undertaken to support schools in our Education and Children and Young People Services Directorates.

Linkage with other important work

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy and OD&L Strategies will operate in parallel and will complement each other. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy themes overlap the 3 main areas of the OD&L Strategy as depicted. Both will be drivers for successful positive cultural change within EA.

The Equality Team will partner with the Health and Wellbeing team to support and deliver this Strategy by promoting equality and diversity at work, in particular outcomes linked to supporting Disability and promoting Healthy Minds.



Our Strategy Intervention Themes



Healthy Minds

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices.

We recognise that staff can experience mental ill health during their working lives and that, with the right support at the right time, they can recover. We appreciate this is a significant issue for School Leaders, managers, teachers and support staff.

In line with our existing commitments under the Mental Health Charter, EA are striving to increase awareness of mental health and wellbeing at work, to help prevent problems from arising, and to support staff if and when issues arise.

In 2018/19 we trained over 60 of our people as Mental Health First Aiders, to better equip our workforce to identify and help people who are experiencing mental health problems. Our new Health & Wellbeing Strategy will build on this work by giving our staff the knowledge, skills and confidence, to understand and look after their own mental health as well as the mental health of those around them.

Having a **“Healthy Mind”** allows people to:

- Realise their full potential
- Cope with the stresses of life
- Work productively
- Make meaningful contributions to their communities

www.MentalHealth.gov

NI teacher statistics highlight that Mental Health related sickness absence equated to 37.1% of all absence (18/19).

This Strategy therefore includes a specific focus around mental health, in particular promoting a ‘healthy mind’. The rollout of the strategy will include events and initiatives to raise awareness and build capability levels throughout EA schools and services and will seek to address the causes of stress.

“Mental Health is the leading reason for absence in Northern Ireland, accounting for almost one out of every three days lost (31.9% of all days).”
Mental Health Foundation



Healthy Bodies

We recognise the interrelated links between good mental and physical health. This strategy will ensure both aspects are afforded significant attention. While physical health consists of many components, we have summarised the key areas for attention as follows:

- Physical activity - exercise, heart health, flexibility and endurance
- Nutrition, hydration and diet - nutrient and fluid intake, healthy digestion, energy balance and healthy hearts
- Promoting self-care - proactive health checks, addressing minor ailments or injuries and seeking emergency care as necessary
- Rest and sleep - periodic rest and relaxation, along with high quality sleep
- Alcohol and drugs - the abstinence or reduced consumption of these substances

“If we could give every individual the right amount of nourishment and exercise, not too little and not too much, we would have found the safest way to health.” Hippocrates

“Eating a healthy, balanced diet is an important part of maintaining good health, and can help you feel your best.” HSCNI



Financial Wellbeing

The “overall financial health of an individual” is sometimes used interchangeably with financial wellbeing.

Good financial health is about having financial security and having the financial freedom to make choices, now and in the future. In the same way that some people choose to engage a personal trainer to help them develop a health and fitness plan; financial planning or access to experts can help define your budget and financial parameters, get you on track and keep you financially accountable.

EA is a large complex organisation which provides a high volume of job opportunities and enables various flexible working patterns e.g. full time, part time, job share, condensed hours etc.... Whilst this enables our people to support their finances and work life balance we believe based on Industry wide statistics that we can do more to support our employee’s financial awareness.

“24% of employers in the UK say poor financial wellbeing is a significant cause of employee stress and the same number believe their employees do not have the knowledge/skills to make the right choices to meet their financial needs.” (CIPD 2019)

“1 in 3 public service employees report money worries have affected their performance.” (CIPD 2017)

CIPD top 3 effects of financial worries in 2017 were as follow:

- 19% experienced sleep deprivation
- 10% experienced concentration problems which affected their decision making ability
- 8% lost work time trying to resolve money problems

With this in mind we recognise the need to include support around the financial wellbeing of employees in our strategic thinking.

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” Benjamin Franklin



Social Health

Evidence shows that good relationships – with family, friends and our wider communities are important for our mental wellbeing. Building stronger, wider social connections can help us feel happier and more secure, and give us a greater sense of purpose.

We endeavour to create a working environment, within schools and our services, where people are given every opportunity to feel part of something, have fun and connect with their colleagues.

“When it comes to our wellbeing, other people matter.” (HSCNI)



Giving Back

Research suggests that acts of giving and kindness, small and large, are associated with positive mental wellbeing. Giving to others and co-operating with them can stimulate the reward areas in the brain, creating positive feelings. Helping and working with others can also give us a sense of purpose and feelings of self-worth.

Through the implementation of this strategy we wish to enhance EA's corporate social responsibility activity to support all its people to “Give Back” for the benefit of all in the Education community and beyond.



“Helping and supporting other people, and working with others towards a shared goal, is good for our mental wellbeing.” (HSCNI)

Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle

This is a recognised tool for delivering continuous improvement. The Plan, Do, Study, act (PDSA) cycle tests an idea by trialling a change on a small scale and assessing its impact, building upon the learning from previous cycles in a structured way, before scaling up implementation.



By starting small initially we can:





- reduce risk
- focus at the operational level
- support rapid cycles of improvement
- learn and be better
- makes quick changes
- engaging our people to build enthusiasm about implementation
- support the implementation of large scale strategic plans

Example

In May 2019 we piloted Mindfulness sessions for 50 staff based in Dundonald over a continuous 5 week period. Following positive quantitative / qualitative feedback and allowing for lessons learnt we assessed the sustainability of this type of Healthy Minds intervention and are now better informed with regard to the value of rolling this out further.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy Objectives

The following 5 high level objectives are interconnected as we recognise that good physical health can support good mental health and vice versa.

THEME		OBJECTIVES: To promote, educate and support
	1 Healthy Minds	Healthy Minds within Schools, Youth settings and EA services
	2 Healthy Bodies	Healthier bodies for all within Schools, Youth settings and EA services
	3 Financial Wellbeing	Improved financial planning and overall money management to support the mental health of our people
	4 Social Health	Our people's mental health linked to socialising and connecting with others
	5 Giving Back	Our people's wellbeing from giving back through volunteering and charity initiatives
Underlying Theme A Great Place to Work		Schools, Youth settings and EA services to be a place where people feel valued, want to do a good job and exhibit high levels of commitment to the organisations mission

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy Action Plan details the key deliverables to be achieved during the lifecycle of this strategy. This includes:

- **School focused support** e.g. Principals wellbeing conferences, coaching for principals (pilot initiative) and more
- **School focused initiatives** aimed at supporting whole school emotional health and wellbeing
- Introducing a **centralised internet based Hub solution** for staff in both schools and services. The Hub will hold employee health & wellbeing policy, news and communications, education resources, events (including booking registration), initiatives and enhanced external signposting arrangements
- School Leader/ Manager **capability development / training**
- Developing a Health and Wellbeing **Champions Steering Group and Network**
- Exploring health care options for staff (complementary to NHS)
- Enhancing old and new **external partnerships**
- New Corporate **Volunteering and Charity** programmes
- Developing a **Communication plan** for the lifecycle of the strategy

For a full breakdown including SMART targets please refer to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy Action Plan

“Enabling a Health and Wellbeing culture to help make EA a place people want to work / employer of choice for prospective candidates”

Environments Bodies
Schools Hub Minds
Self-care Education
Signposting Social Giving
Communication Policy
Training Capability Helping
Coaching Data Services
Health & Wellbeing
Openness Respect Reflection
Responsibility Excellence Equality
Lifestyles Leaders Engage
Objectives Events Focus
Plan Healthcare EA
Act Study Volunteering Give
Do Health Initiatives
Wellbeing People
Learning Purpose