



PEOPLE MANAGERS' GUIDE

SUPPORTING STAFF WITH WORK OR LIFE CHALLENGES

CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE

PEOPLE MANAGERS' GUIDE

Seirbhís Chúnaimh
d'Fhostaithe na Státseirbhíse



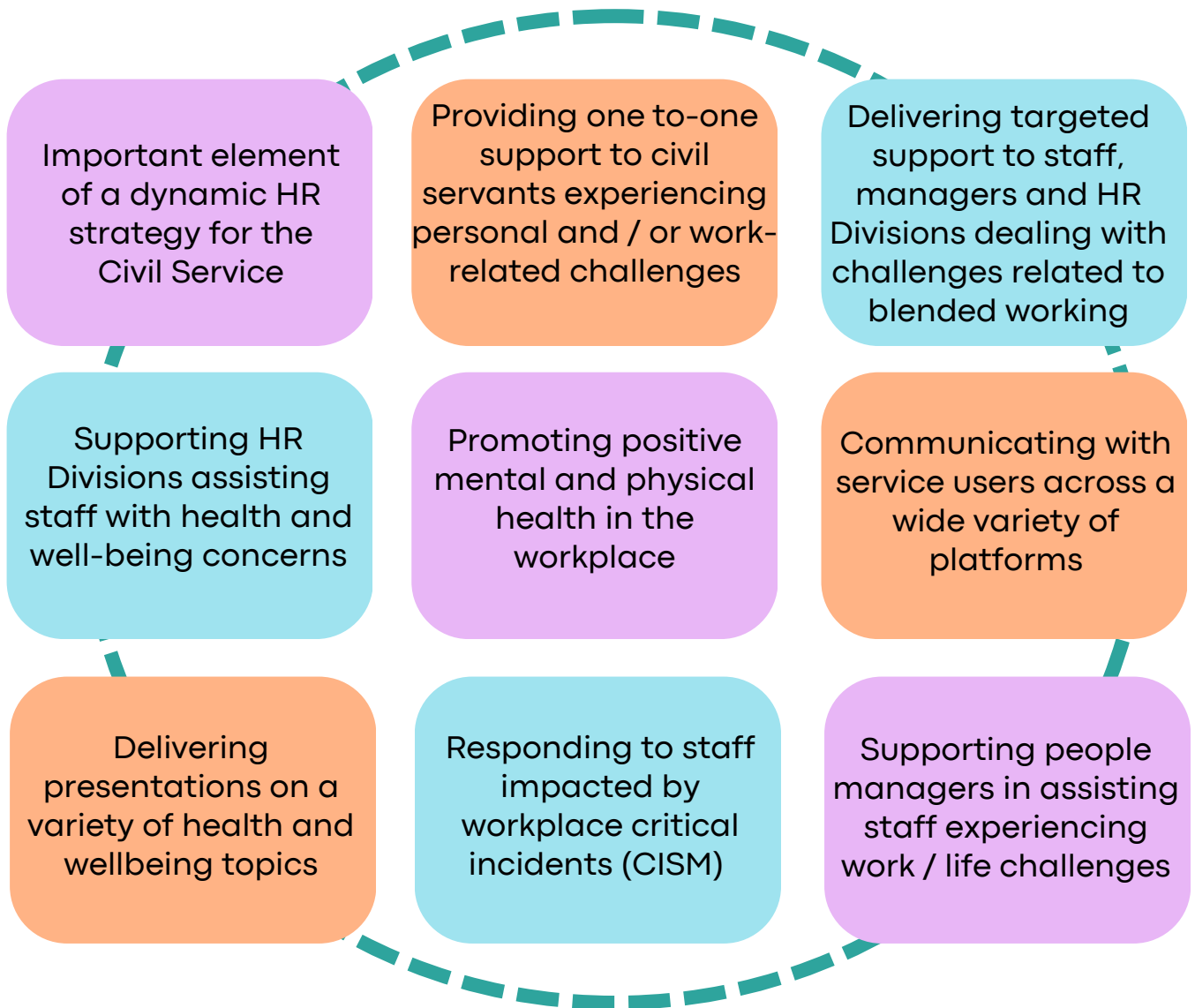
Civil Service Employee
Assistance Service

Civil Service Employee Assistance Service
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OUR VISION

TO OFFER A QUALITY RESOURCE AND SUPPORT SERVICE FOR ALL STAFF WHICH POSITIVELY AFFECTS BOTH INDIVIDUAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING AND ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE



This guide was written and produced by the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS) in 2019 and revised following consultations in 2021. The CSEAS would like to take this opportunity to thank those who generously gave their time and expert views, which helped to inform the content and structure of this document. Contributors:

- Civil Service Human Resources (HR) Policy Unit
- The Office of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for the Civil Service
- People managers from several government departments / offices

ABBREVIATED TITLES USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

| | |
|--------------|---|
| CMO | Office of the Chief Medical Officer |
| CSEAS | Civil Service Employee Assistance Service |
| CSHRD | Civil Service Human Resources Division |
| DLO | Disability Liaison Officer |
| EAO | Employee Assistance Officer |
| GDPR | General Data Protection Regulation |
| HRSS | Human Resources Shared Services |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Remote Working | Working from home / any location that is not the office |
| Blended Working | Combination of working remotely and in office |
| Corporate Athlete | Manager who achieves goals through consistently managing their energy |
| HR Business Partner | Individual who works with HR to help build organisational & people capability, and shape & implement HR strategies |

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Civil Service Employee
Assistance Service

On-duty Employee Assistance Officer available at 0818 008120
Monday to Thursday: 9:00am to 5:15pm* Friday: 9:00am to 5:00pm*
*(except bank / public holidays)

Appointments are available for evenings and weekends by
prior arrangement if required


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CSEAS General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Statement is available on the CSEAS website

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INTRODUCTION

The Civil Service Management Board recognises that:



People are the most important drivers of success in the Civil Service. It is incumbent on us to put the right tools and supports in place so that civil servants are empowered to excel individually

People Strategy for the Irish Civil Service (2017-2020)



One of the pillars of this Strategy is to *Build, Support and Value* managers as people developers to enable ***“... civil servants to perform to the highest level and fulfil their potential”***

The Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS) contributes to this goal by supporting managers, both in their personal capacity and in their professional role as people managers.

Action 6 of the People Strategy commits to providing additional support for people managers and HR Divisions to assist in responding to staff who are facing challenging life events.

This guide, first launched in 2019, forms a significant component of the response to this important commitment. The intention of this guide is to inform and support managers so that they have the confidence and capability to respond to staff where challenging issues impact in the workplace.

This updated version of the guide addresses the new challenges for managers in managing teams working remotely or in a blended working environment, i.e. a combination of working from home and in the office. These changes have come about as a result of COVID-19 which has been a challenge for both staff and managers.

The Civil Service as a whole has shown great innovation and agility in how it has adapted to recent changes to the traditional working environment. It has embraced new ways of working, technologies and methods of service delivery. Staff across the Civil Service have shown great perseverance and flexibility in keeping essential services running effectively, and in their continued provision of high quality services to all citizens.

It is intended that this version of the guide will be relevant to the current workplace as well as the workplace of the future, and provide a resource for managers as they continue to support their staff with work and / or life challenges. It will equip people managers with the skills needed to be effective in the modern workplace as it continues to change and evolve.

The guide recognises leadership as a core management function and the document is intended as a resource for people managers of all grades and levels of experience. You might be new to the management role and need a point of reference in how to deal with an issue presenting, or a well-established manager who is dealing with a particular issue for the first time. In either case, you can contact the CSEAS to discuss your concerns in an anonymous way and tease out what approach might work best. If you are an aspiring people manager, you might also find the information contained here is useful as you plan for any future role.

The CSEAS is aware that people managers, can, at times, feel overwhelmed by what is expected of them.

As a manager, you are expected to be available to staff but not responsible for them. The Civil Service operates in an adult-to-adult environment. Taking a collaborative approach, managers can support staff in dealing with any work and / or life challenges they are experiencing

A manager may speak with the individual about what they are observing as an impact on the workplace or, a staff member may bring forward an issue.

Anyone can struggle to meet the demands of their job if overwhelmed by personal or work-related strain – someone who generally performs well but, on occasion, faces a challenge in terms of performance, are not two different people.

At times, a manager may be unsure of if, and how, to address certain matters with their staff members. This document provides guidelines for managers which, if broadly followed, are intended to provide reassurance and confidence that the situation arising is being dealt with appropriately and without overstepping the people manager role.

This guide aims to assist managers in supporting staff with personal and / or work difficulties. The guide:

- outlines typical personal and / or work-related challenges that may arise
- offers guidance to people managers on how to respond to staff who experience these life challenges
- acknowledges and provides some guidance on managing teams remotely or on a blended basis
- signposts to organisational and other supports available to the manager
- provides information on how the CSEAS can support both management and staff
- promotes self-care awareness for managers

THE CIVIL SERVICE RENEWAL 2030 is an ambitious 10-year strategy of reform for the Civil Service. The Strategy will be implemented through a series of 3-year action plans. These action plans will detail the precise goals and initiatives that will progress Civil Service strategic priorities. Progress on the commitments within these action plans will be continuously measured, evaluated, and reported on.

The CSEAS is looking forward to engaging with this Strategy.

HOW TO NAVIGATE THIS GUIDE



You may wish to read this guide in its entirety or you can select a topic from the Contents Page for specific information or guidance.

Topics include:

- What you can do as a manager
- Supports available to you
- How the CSEAS can help

Health and well-being presentations available from the CSEAS are listed in Section 4 of this guide.

Details on how to contact and avail of the CSEAS are outlined.

The electronic version contains hyperlinks to relevant circulars, websites and additional information resources. These will be updated periodically.

If you notice that a link is not working, or you would like to suggest topics for inclusion in further publications please contact us at cseas@per.gov.ie

We hope you find this guide helpful and we welcome any feedback to cseas@per.gov.ie

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ROLE OF THE MANAGER IN MANAGING STAFF WITH PERSONAL AND / OR WORK RELATED ISSUES

In today's modern and dynamic Civil Service, the role of the people manager is varied and demanding. A significant aspect of the role involves leading and managing teams to deliver on Civil Service strategic goals and priorities, to bring quality customer service to citizens and to ensure value for money. Managing teams remotely or on a blended basis has added a new dimension to the manager role. It is through the staff that these aims are achieved. People managers are key in supporting staff to deliver on Civil Service goals.



KNOWING YOUR STAFF

As a people manager you get to know your staff over time. Where staff are working remotely either full-time or part-time, check ins with staff online, by phone or in person are essential. You are well placed to identify changes in a staff member's behaviour, attitude, work performance and attendance. Such changes may be indicators of an emerging or ongoing problem / issue.

You may need to address performance, behaviour and / or attendance issues. Staff members contact you, as their people manager, to highlight certain issues impacting on them, e.g. interpersonal issues, stress, bereavement, isolation and workload.

Sometimes communications can be challenging. You may feel unprepared or overwhelmed. You may feel that you don't know what to do or how to handle a given situation. These feelings are not unusual. As well as face-to-face meetings, you will also communicate with staff members online and by phone, which can pose its own challenges. For sources of support to assist you when staff issues arise please refer to the heading 'Where Can the Manager get Help and Support?' in this guide.

COMMON THREAD - COMMUNICATION

This guide contains information on...

HAVING A DIFFICULT WORKPLACE CONVERSATION
COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR KEY CONVERSATIONS
MANAGING A REMOTE TEAM

You are encouraged to read these sections.



Take time to consider whether you need training or support in this area. Be aware of your responsibility to have due regard for the privacy of an individual's personal data. Be clear on what will happen with the information to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988–2018. All personal information is subject to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

MANAGEMENT ISSUES THAT CAN ARISE IN THE COURSE OF ANY WORKING DAY

Dignity at work issues, e.g. interpersonal issues, bullying, harassment / sexual harassment.

Issues arising from remote or blended working, e.g. isolation, communication challenges.

Underperformance.

Issues arising during a staff member's probationary period.

Behavioural issues.

Staff in emotional distress.

Sick leave absences.

Work attributed stress.

A staff member wishing to speak to you about personal issues that may be affecting their well-being or work performance, e.g. family issues, bereavement, personal or family illness, financial difficulties.

A staff member raising an issue out of the blue.

Bereavement and loss, including the death of a colleague.



**REMEMBER
CONFIDENTIALITY
IN
COMMUNICATIONS**



**YOUR ROLE AND
RESPONSE AS A
MANAGER IS
CRUCIAL**



**DO REMEMBER,
EARLY
INTERVENTION IS
KEY**

WHERE CAN THE MANAGER GET HELP AND SUPPORT?



SENIOR MANAGER

Senior managers play an important role in supporting their own people managers and staff. They have a core function in areas such as leading their teams, managing underperformance, attendance, staff development, coaching, mentoring, on-the-job training and addressing interpersonal issues and providing support and advice in relation to remote and blended working.

Where people managers need support in their management role, they should discuss this in the first instance with their senior manager who can direct and guide them. Senior managers can assist in considering options such as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for the people manager's personal and career development and provide guidance on staff matters, training, coaching and signpost to other supports such as HR, OneLearning, CSEAS, DLO and the CMO.

HUMAN RESOURCE (HR) DIVISIONS

HR Divisions have a vital role to play in supporting people managers and staff. They do so by implementing robust HR policies and providing advice and guidance on a range of workplace issues and procedures. People Managers can contact their HR Divisions if they need support in their management role. HR Divisions can provide support and advice in relation to staff working remotely and blended working. HR Business Partners work with teams, managers and key stakeholders to help build organisational and people capability, and shape and implement effective people strategies and activities within an organisation.

They must have an excellent understanding of the organisation, its strategy and people, and a very good understanding of the challenges faced by individuals and the organisation. This is achieved through developing relationships with key people and teams across the organisation. The role also involves providing guidance and support to management, acting as a centre of expertise for HR queries and coaching and providing feedback to staff.

CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE (CSEAS)

The CSEAS, under central management in the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDR), is an important shared service element of the HR structure in the Civil Service. It plays a key part in the ethos of promoting employee wellness and organisational effectiveness.

Provision of a service of this nature arises from a recognition that staff are a valued resource, whose continued wellbeing contributes to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Civil Service.

The CSEAS provides a wide range of free and confidential supports to staff and management designed to assist employees in managing work and life difficulties which, if left unattended, could adversely affect work performance and attendance, and quality of life. Employee Assistance Officers (EAOs) operate on a regional basis.

The CSEAS website, www.cseas.per.gov.ie, is a significant resource in the area of health and well-being. It provides information on a wide range of topics, including health and well-being check in tips, People Managers Guide and Parenting Portal etc.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER (CMO)

The Office of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) which incorporates the Civil Service Occupational Health Department (CSOHD) provides an occupational health service for 42,000 employees. It is the mission of the CMO's Office to deliver an efficient and cost-effective occupational health service as well as policy advice on work and health matters in the civil and public service. The involvement of the CMO's Office in workplace health issues is twofold;

Firstly, where an individual is absent from work for four weeks on certified sick leave with a health issue, a notification is sent by Peoplepoint to HR who then make a decision on referring the individual to the CMO's Office to facilitate their workplace rehabilitation. Secondly, where an individual is at work and there are concerns about a workplace health issue, the individual may be referred to the CMO by their HR Division for occupational medical advice. People managers can seek guidance from their HR Divisions in these situations. Please note that all referrals are via HR / local management and there is no employee self-referral facility.

The CMO Office website (www.cmo.gov.ie) contains a secure login area for HR professionals and local managers. It is designed to assist HR and management to make the most of the services provided by the CMO's Office. It contains the following sections:

- Case Management; This explains pre-employment medicals, sick leave absence management, critical illness protocol, ill-health retirement, discounting of sick leave and occupational injuries.
- Work & Health Circulars; This lists the main circulars dealing with work and health which can be downloaded.

- CMO Publications & Forms; This lists useful CMO Publications & CMO Case Referral Forms which can be downloaded.

A username and password to access this secure area can be obtained by contacting the CMO's Office on 01 6045341.

DISABILITY LIAISON OFFICERS

The role of the Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) is as follows:

- To act as the point of contact for staff with disabilities, their managers and HR Divisions
- To assist and support staff with disabilities and their people managers by the provision of necessary information, appropriate contacts, guidance, suggestions and advice
- To assist in the implementation of best HR practice in line with equality legislation
- To facilitate increased awareness of disability throughout the organisation

The DLO can support both managers and employees to ensure that reasonable accommodations, where possible, are made available when required. You can get in touch with your HR Division for DLO contact details or for the full list of Civil Service DLOs, visit <https://hr.per.gov.ie>



WORKPLACE MEDIATION

The Civil & Public Service Mediation Service (CPSMS) was established in 2012 with the aim of providing workplace mediation by civil and public servants who are qualified mediators, accredited by the Mediators' Institute Ireland. Mediation is a voluntary confidential process. It allows two or more disputing parties to resolve their conflict / interpersonal issues in a mutually agreeable way with the help of a neutral third party, namely the mediator. Mediation focuses on the interests and needs of the parties, and on solutions, not on determining or assigning blame. What distinguishes mediation from other forms of dispute resolution is that mediation does not impose a solution but rather works with both parties to create their own solution.

GUIDELINES ON THE MEDIATION PROCESS

- If you receive a complaint of interpersonal conflict or an allegation of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment, having consulted the Dignity at Work Policy, you can firstly attempt to resolve the matter locally.
- If this is not possible or the issue is not resolved, you can consult with your manager and HR Division for advice.
- Mediation is a process to help resolve disputes, including those around bullying, harassment or sexual harassment. Mediation can be suggested by you, as manager. You can invite the parties involved in the conflict / allegation to attend mediation. The parties involved may seek mediation themselves. In either situation, mediation is organised through your HR Division.
- The mediator initially meets each party separately to get a sense of the presenting issues, explain the mediation process and answer any questions each party has about the process. This may happen face-to-face, by telephone or online.

- In the event that all parties, including the mediator, are willing to proceed, the mediator then arranges to meet with both / all parties together. A suitable time and venue is arranged. Again this may happen face-to-face, by telephone or online.
- During the mediation meeting, both / all parties have the opportunity to outline the dispute or issues as they see it. The mediator will facilitate respectful dialogue and negotiation between the parties.
- The aim of mediation is for the parties involved to reach an agreement on how to resolve the dispute or issue, and move on from it. The agreements reached by the parties may be incorporated into a Mediated Agreement.

DEPARTMENTAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (L&D) UNITS



Your Department / Office may have its own L&D Unit. In some instances it may be beneficial to you and / or your staff members to avail of in-house formal and informal training courses, e.g. where you have identified a gap in a staff member’s skills which is contributing to underperformance issues or, perhaps you may wish to avail of management training opportunities.

ONELEARNING

OneLearning was established in 2017 and is the Civil Service Learning and Development Centre staffed by civil servants. In partnership with L&D Business Partners, OneLearning continue to provide training centrally that meets the common business objectives and evolving skills needs of the Civil Service. OneLearning enables colleagues, regardless of their organisation or location, to gain access to training and development opportunities.

The new Learning Management System (LMS) was rolled out to the majority of Civil Service Bodies in 2019. In 2020, OneLearning commenced the introduction of on-demand eLearning, which is available on the LMS. In addition to on-demand eLearning and face-to-face delivery of training, OneLearning also offer Virtual Live Instructor led training, facilitating access to courses from anywhere.

OneLearning open enrolment courses enable the establishment of collaborative networks and shared learning across the Civil Service. OneLearning regularly update the Learning Catalogue with new courses, in addition to updating the content of courses to adapt to the changing needs of the Civil Service.

A range of courses are available for managers to equip them with the skills to manage their own work and to support, develop and coach their team members.

HAVING A DIFFICULT WORKPLACE CONVERSATION

Workplace conversations happen all the time and are essential to everyday business. For the most part, they are the normal day-to-day engagements you would expect. With some staff working remotely or on a blended basis, conversations may be held online or by phone, while others may be more suited to a face-to-face meeting. Depending on the issue, give consideration to the most appropriate means of communication. Issues may arise which need be handled in a sensitive manner and could give rise to the need for a difficult workplace conversation, e.g. interpersonal difficulties between staff members, a personal hygiene issue, problems relating to a dependency on alcohol / drugs / gambling. At times, you may need to speak with a staff member about their performance. Please note, dealing with underperformance is outside the scope of this guide and separate guidelines exist as to how to approach these conversations. See the Useful Resources at the end of this section for further detail.

Difficult
Workplace
Conversations

Effective communication in the workplace is essential. There may be times when, as a people manager, you will have difficult conversations.

- You may need to plan a meeting with a member of staff about their work performance, attendance or behaviour
- A staff member may approach you about something out of the blue
- You may want to speak to your own manager about an issue

PREPARING FOR THE CONVERSATION WITH YOUR STAFF MEMBER

- You might like to discuss your proposed approach with your own manager – it can be helpful to tease things out.
- As with any other meeting you attend, you need to be prepared.
- Think about the timing of the meeting with the staff member, taking into consideration the subject you will be discussing.
- Notify the staff member of the meeting in good time and let them know what the meeting is about.
- Should the staff member request that another person accompany them to the meeting, consider whether this is appropriate in the circumstances.

- Whether in person or virtually, ensure that the meeting is held in private.
- Be mindful that the staff member could be worried or upset.
- If the staff member is on probation, be aware of the probation guidelines.
- Be aware of relevant policies and guidelines if addressing issues such as underperformance, sick leave, etc.
- For virtual meetings, ensure that internet connections are sufficient.

HAVING THE CONVERSATION WITH YOUR STAFF MEMBER

- Be clear about what you want to address / discuss at the meeting.
- Have factual information written down or documented.
- Let your staff member know your observations and concerns.
- Recognise the positive aspects of their work performance.
- Be objective: focus on *what* is being said, not on *who* is saying it.
- Make the conversation two-way. Be an active listener and allow for feedback.
- Listen: use non-verbal responses, e.g. nodding and smiling when meeting in person or by video call.
- Let your staff member know that you hear what they are saying by paraphrasing (stating what you have heard in your own words) and summarising.
- Clarify with your staff member that your understanding of what is being said *is* correct.
- Do not diagnose or make assumptions.
- Ask if there is anything they would like to speak about. If the staff member discloses personal or work-related difficulties, inform them that you will provide appropriate support in seeking any help required.
- Be clear on what will happen with the information disclosed to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018. All personal information is subject to GDPR.
- Show empathy.
- If your staff member gets upset, don't panic, just wait and give them time to recover. If in person, provide a tissue.

- Encourage the use of the CSEAS so that your staff member has the opportunity to explore, and get help and support with, any difficulties or personal issues.
- Be clear about what actions may need to be considered and what has been agreed at the meeting. Take note of these decisions.
- Set a date for a review meeting, if appropriate.

Remember, you can consult with the CSEAS for guidance and support in advance of having a difficult conversation with your staff member. This may help you in structuring the conversation and focus on what outcome you wish to achieve.

FOLLOW UP ON THE CONVERSATION WITH YOUR STAFF MEMBER

- Monitor the situation.
- Document, where necessary, the improvements or lack of progress.
- If things do not improve, discuss the next step and / or possible consequences.
- Have a review meeting, where necessary.

Show concern for the staff member's welfare in relation to the issue being discussed, e.g. mental or physical ill-health, addiction, loss or bereavement. In some instances you may need to advise your staff member that it may be appropriate to consider a referral to the CMO, in consultation with your HR Division.

Where it becomes evident that there is an underperformance issue, you may be discussing the implementation of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) with the staff member. See "Useful Resources" for more information.

While the focus here is on the conversation, do remember that any form of communication, i.e. email, text, phone or online conversation, should have a respectful tone.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR KEY CONVERSATIONS

Communication is a necessary and fundamental skill you use in your role as manager. In order to ensure your communication is effective and clear, it is essential that thought is given to planning, purpose and platform. Knowing your staff, clarity on what you want to communicate and why, and how you are going to communicate is key. If communication does not come easily to you, there are training courses available which can be really effective in developing communication skills, leading to improvements with practice. Where appropriate, managers may wish to discuss a suitable communications strategy with trusted sources such as peers, their own manager, HR Division, OneLearning, the CSEAS etc.



When communicating with staff, the approach you take will be influenced by the topic of the communication, the staff member(s) you are addressing and the outcome you wish to achieve. Communication entails a two-way conversation which involves talking, using questions, active listening, reflecting back and summarising. Reflecting back what you have heard lets the other person know that you have heard what they said by repeating it back in your own words. Summarising is where you pull together the main points of the conversation and then you ask the person if they agree with your summary. The CSEAS is a resource you may wish to avail of to help you plan your meeting / conversation to ensure productive and beneficial communication.

In this section we outline some examples of conversations with staff. Each topic of conversation is taken in turn and tips are given as to the approach you might take and with examples included of questions you might ask during this communication.

WORK ISSUE

As a manager, you will need to raise work performance issues with your staff from time to time. Speaking with the relevant person(s) and understanding what issues are adversely impacting their performance is the first step in helping them to get their performance back on track.

TIPS:

- Start with some small talk to try to put the staff member(s) at ease.
 - Outline the purpose of the meeting, e.g. to discuss some work / performance / attendance issues etc.
 - Inform staff member that this is something you need to raise with them.
 - Give clear, tangible, evidence-based examples of the work-related issue(s) of concern: deterioration on quality / output of work, frequent / serious mistakes / problems with attendance, etc.
 - Explore with the staff member the factors contributing to the problem.
 - Ask if there something happening that they want to talk about
 - If appropriate, you might suggest that the staff member contact their Employee Assistance Officer to avail of support.
 - Discuss what other supports, if any, might lead to improvement.
 - Agree a plan of action and suggest a follow-up meeting to review progress in addressing the issues.
-

CONFLICT SITUATION

As a manager, you may have to address conflict arising in the workplace. While this may not be a regular occurrence, it is important to know how to deal with it to help minimise disruption and enable all parties to find a solution and move on.

TIPS:

- Listen without taking sides and show empathy.
- Use reflection skills – e.g.: “so I hear you saying that when X spoke to you in a dismissive way you felt belittled and annoyed, is that right?”
- You have a role in trying to resolve the situation / issue and the next step is speaking with the other party.
- Let the other party know that you are aware there is an issue and you would also like to hear their side. Again, remain neutral.
- Say you will then meet / talk with them together, to help find / help them find a solution / resolution / way forward.
- When meeting with both parties, outline some ground rules, e.g. each having a chance to speak, respect, not interrupting, listening to each other, etc.
- Let both parties again explain how they see the situation / conflict, how they feel and how it has impacted them.
- Listen, acknowledge, reflect, summarise and empathise, e.g. highlight areas where they agree and, if appropriate, potential misunderstandings.
- Ask both parties what needs to happen for things to improve or be resolved? Can they suggest any solutions? Is there anything you, as manager, can do to help?
- If no solutions are forthcoming, you can make suggestions that you think may help to improve the situation.
- Ideally the solution may be identified by both staff members but, if not, try to get agreement to one of your suggestions.
- Agree to meet together again to assess whether the solution(s) agreed and implemented are working, or require more time or revision.
- Talk to your own manager, HR, Designated Person (see Dignity at Work (DAW) Policy), or CSEAS for support if required. Remember, mediation is also available as a conflict resolution tool.

PROBATION

As a manager, you will have several conversations with staff who are on probation as part of the probationary process. It is important for a staff member to be supported as they start to develop competence in a new role. If issues arise it is important to address these early.

TIPS:

- Remember, starting a new job, or being newly promoted and being on probation can be a challenging and anxious time.
- Regular meetings will ensure that you get to know the staff member and get a sense of their personality, learning and working style.
- Ask them how they are keeping and how they are getting on in their new role, be open to hearing what is and isn't working.
- Discuss any challenges the staff member may face if they are working remotely.
- Highlight areas where the staff member is doing well or where there has been an improvement.
- Identify areas that need attention / improvement.
- If the staff member is struggling, ask what they think would help so that supports can be put in place. Also discuss what will happen next, being honest and realistic.
- Agree a date for next meeting.
- Engage in ongoing communication with the staff member.

WELLBEING CONCERN

As a manager, you might be concerned about a staff member for many reasons, e.g. where they have had a bereavement, are involved in a complaint of bullying or harassment, have experienced an incident where a customer was abusive etc. It is important to engage with the staff member to see what support would lead to a positive outcome.

TIPS:

- Listen, show empathy, reflect back what is being said.
- You may need to take some time to consider your response, discuss with your manager, check policies / circulars and to talk to other people concerned, etc.
- Assure the person you will come back to them as soon as possible.
- Consult relevant policies, talk to your own manager, HR, other parties, CSEAS, etc. as required.
- Revert to staff member with information / to give decision / implement policy / propose a course of action, etc.

RESPONDING TO AN “ON-THE-SPOT” CONVERSATION

Situations can arise where you don't have time to prepare.

A staff member could contact you to discuss an issue. You might not have time to prepare for the meeting. You may need to respond immediately.

A staff member may request a meeting where you are unaware of its purpose – issues that emerge might surprise you.

TIPS

- Listen.
- Don't react – respond as much as you can to the query / issue.
- Take time to reflect.
- The staff member may be upset – show empathy and understanding.
- You may need to reflect further and arrange a follow-up meeting / conversation.
- You may need to discuss this with your manager.

**REMEMBER...**

YOUR SUPPORTS AS A PEOPLE MANAGER: SECTION 1
YOUR OWN SELF-CARE: SECTION 2

**RAISING AN ISSUE WITH YOUR OWN
PEOPLE MANAGER**

Just as a staff member may raise a sensitive issue with you, there may be times when you might wish to speak to your own manager about a sensitive situation. Consider the best way to approach the conversation, taking account of whether you are in the office, working from home, timing and availability of your own manager etc.

TIPS

- Request a meeting with your manager.
- Let your manager know that there is something of a sensitive nature you wish to discuss.
- Decide whether you (i) wish to discuss the issue (ii) are seeking guidance or (iii) looking for a solution.
- Be prepared – have relevant information to hand.
- Allow your manager time to reflect and come back to you.

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- By offering support and guidance, exploring options for addressing the situation.
- By acting as a sounding board to discuss how:
 - you might communicate with your staff member about a certain issue
 - best to navigate difficult workplace conversations

MANAGING A REMOTE TEAM

Many employees are now remote working, either on a full-time or blended basis, i.e. a mix of working from home and in the office. For managers, this environment presents challenges as well as opportunities. People managers at every level must continue to effectively lead, proactively engage with, and appropriately manage the performance and development of each staff member within their team(s).

STAYING CONNECTED

Good communication within a team is always important and even more so when managing a team remotely. Regular and effective communication is vital to inform staff of changes, keep projects on track, meet deadlines and maintain good working relationships. Communicating with staff on a regular basis will help keep the team engaged and motivated, and this will positively impact both individual performance and commitment to the organisation. Giving staff timelines for when work needs to be completed and allowing them to complete it on their own schedule can be a good approach. This can help shift the focus from time logged on to producing quality output. Staying connected means taking steps to create a virtual working environment that everyone can belong to and really feel part of. Try and lead by example by staying connected with the staff you manage.

TIPS:

- Ask staff to collaborate on projects, scheduling time in a shared diary is useful.
- Suggest staff 'buddy-up' and chat with at least one or two colleagues per week on a rotating basis.
- Arrange a virtual coffee morning and make it a real social occasion!
- Set team meetings in advance and check in with everyone at the start and when wrapping up.
- Share updates from other meetings attended and ask staff to do the same.
- Try to use a project management tool that will enable staff to see what colleagues are working on.
- Have regular one-to-one check in chats with each staff member.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

The health and wellbeing of staff is paramount. People managers are well positioned to gain a broad awareness of issues that may be impacting staff, e.g. feelings of isolation and loneliness, struggling to balance workload and caring responsibilities, inability to switch off and enjoy down time, difficulty maintaining work-life balance, etc. Setting some time aside to engage with staff one-to-one and check in on how they are doing will greatly support their health and wellbeing and ensure any issues arising are dealt with in a sensitive and timely matter. Consider what type of contact may work best for you and your staff member and how frequent this contact might be. Try to be flexible in your approach and see what suits, taking into account different personalities and communication styles. The following questions may help you with these conversations.

TIPS:

- How are you?
 - How do you find your working arrangement?
 - Are there any issues?
 - Is there anything I can do?
 - What would help?
 - When will we catch up again?
-

CONCERN FOR A STAFF MEMBER

If you, your staff member, or both of you are working remotely, there will be less opportunity to observe the situation and the individual as you might if you were both in the same working environment. When you are checking in with your staff you might find that some members of the team are really struggling working from home, working long hours, experiencing anxiety, feeling under stress and so on. If, in the course of your conversation with your team member, you become concerned that they are not coping very well, these questions might help you approach the situation.

TIPS:

- You sound a little upset / like you are struggling a bit, is that the case?
- Do you want to tell me what is going on for you?
- Have you spoken to anyone?
- What supports do you have?
- Are you in contact with your GP?
- Would you consider talking to an Employee Assistance Officer?
- What can I do?
- What would help?
- Can I contact you again in a few days to see how you are doing?

If a staff member is not contactable for a period of time, and you are concerned for their health and wellbeing, you may need to take action, e.g. try all means of contact, check if any colleague(s) has heard from them, consult with HR, get in touch with next of kin etc.

NEW TEAM MEMBER

Where a new staff member joins your team, you may be trying to get to know the staff member in a remote working environment. The staff member's first introduction to the Department / Unit may be via virtual induction, onboarding etc. and some or all of the probation process may be carried out remotely. This may mean that you are managing someone, and conducting their probation, without having met them in person and this can present certain challenges, particularly around building rapport and communicating effectively.

TIPS:

- Try to arrange a video call with the staff member on their first day to welcome them to the unit.
- Chat about your background, career history, interests etc. and invite the individual to do the same.
- Talk through their new role and where you see them fitting into the team.
- Arrange a meeting with the team as soon as possible and introduce the individual to colleagues.
- Ask a colleague to buddy up with the individual to provide peer support.
- Agree a schedule of check ins. This should be more frequent in the initial weeks/ months.
- Realise that building a good working relationship takes time and patience.

As a manager, you will have several conversations with staff who are on probation at the three, six and nine month intervals set by the process, and also in between. DPENDR's 'Guidelines on the Management of Probation in the Civil Service', dated February 2019, provides very clear instructions on the probation process. See section on "Communication Skills for Key Conversations" in this guide for further information in this regard.

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- You can contact the CSEAS to discuss any concerns you might have about managing a remote team, including adjusting to change, encouraging employee engagement and supporting staff health and wellbeing.
- You can consult with the CSEAS for guidance where there is a concern for the health and wellbeing of remote working staff.

SELF-CARE FOR YOU, AS A MANAGER

In your busy life as a manager you may not get enough time to focus on your own self-care. Often ignored but essential, self-care is any action or behaviour that helps you avoid triggering health and wellbeing problems. It is recognised that there are many demands and challenges in your role as a people manager. Therefore, it is important that a guide such as this offers advice and guidance on how you can look after your own health and wellbeing.



Self-care is beneficial in improving your mental and physical health, resulting in improved self-esteem, overall wellbeing and less stress. It is an essential part of a healthy, happy life in which we become more in tune with our minds and bodies. Paying attention to your own self-care helps you to achieve a healthier work / life balance. Benefits can be seen both at work and at home. You may have a tendency to look after the needs of others before you look after your own needs. Having some “down time” helps provide balance in an increasingly demanding world. When we constantly feel stressed or overwhelmed we can become ill, either mentally, physically, or both. Ignoring our self-care needs can have a negative impact on us. It can exacerbate existing conditions, not to mention the emotional consequences.

Building and maintaining your resilience, using your own personal resources, helps you in all areas of your life including your role as people manager. Your own Department may have Health & Wellbeing initiatives that offer health promoting activities for staff or are arranged as part of the Healthy Ireland campaign.

Following the introduction of the 'Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Right to Disconnect' in April 2021, all employees have the 'right to disconnect' from work and have a better work / life balance. This Code applies to all of us. The following three rights enshrined in the Code include:

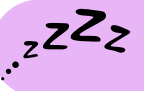








THE RIGHT OF AN EMPLOYEE TO NOT HAVE TO ROUTINELY PERFORM WORK OUTSIDE THEIR NORMAL WORKING HOURS

THE RIGHT NOT TO BE PENALISED FOR REFUSING TO ATTEND TO WORK MATTERS OUTSIDE OF NORMAL WORKING HOURS

THE DUTY TO RESPECT ANOTHER PERSON'S RIGHT TO DISCONNECT (E.G. BY NOT ROUTINELY EMAILING / CALLING OUTSIDE NORMAL WORKING HOURS)

This Code acknowledges the importance of switching off after our work day. As managers, it is important to set a positive example and encourage our staff to switch off at the end of the working day by doing so ourselves. However, if on occasion, you are working outside of normal hours, please be aware of your colleagues 'right to disconnect'. If you are sending emails you should in the first instance use the 'delay delivery' function, meaning that emails will not be sent until staff are expected back on duty. However, if this is not available, please indicate that you are not expecting an immediate response and instead provide a reasonable timeframe for the response (if one is required).

WHAT DO I DO FOR SELF-CARE?

| | | | |
|--|---|---|------------------------------------|
|  Get plenty of sleep |  Walk or cycle |  Cook | <i>MAKE YOUR OWN LIST!</i> |
|  Talk to friends & family |  Read |  Tidy | |
|  Enjoy the outdoors |  Write or draw |  Garden | |

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

- Learn to recognise the signs of needing some “down time”. Self-care is different for everyone. For some, it’s listening to music, taking a warm bath, meeting friends for a coffee – whatever you enjoy.
- Stress can occur when pressures exceed our ability to cope. When there is a lot going on (e.g. work pressures, childcare, worries about family members, illness, isolation), we can feel the impact of stress. Learn to recognise when you are feeling stressed and look into options to ease the impact of stress.
- If you are working from home, full-time or part-time, it is important to establish boundaries between work and home life. Take breaks – organise virtual tea breaks with colleagues / friends, incorporate screen breaks, go for a walk, listen to music, talk to someone
- Taking breaks and moving regularly throughout your working day is important regardless of whether you are working in the office or remotely. Breaks help to renew your energy and make you more effective.
- At the beginning and end of your working day, develop a ritual that will mark the transition between work and your home life e.g. turn off / on music, take out / put away your laptop, go outside for a short time or, where possible, have a separate space for work
- Ensure that you are taking your annual leave, particularly taking the opportunity to take a block of time together. It is important that you encourage your staff to avail of their leave and model good behaviour in this regard.
- Manage your time – it is an essential part of effective stress management (time management is a skill that can be developed and improved. Your Learning & Development Unit may have a time management course available).
- Identify a physical activity you enjoy, for example, cycling, running, going for a walk, gardening or dancing. Make sure to include your preferred activity in your day / week.
- Consider mindfulness or meditation
- Get a good night’s sleep
- Ensure that you are eating a well-balanced diet
- Recognise that your job may be stressful. Managing the organisation’s business needs as well as staff issues can be challenging at times.
- If you are worried about work, talk to someone for support e.g. your manager, HR or the CSEAS
- Build your resilience – refer to the following pages. Read CSEAS leaflet “Building Personal Resilience”

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING RESILIENCE

“Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress.”

American Psychological Association

Building resilience does not prevent difficult or stressful events occurring. It helps us to respond to life events and recover quicker from the impact they can have on us. Resilience is not a trait that people either have or have not. It can be developed over time by anyone because it involves learning how to behave, think and act differently. As a people manager you will face many challenging situations. Managing a modern workplace environment requires a multitude of skills. Building your own personal resilience will help you meet these challenges and effectively enhance your leadership style.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|
|  |  <p>Accept that change is part of life</p> |  <p>See challenges as opportunities - don't see things as insurmountable</p> |  <p>Find positivity in life</p> |  <p>Nurture a positive view of yourself</p> |
|  <p>Develop good relationships</p> |  <p>Maintain a hopeful outlook</p> |  <p>Ask for help</p> |  <p>Look after yourself</p> |  <p>Keep things in perspective</p> |

! When facing challenging life events, think of previous occasions when you overcame other life challenges. Strengthen resilience by building on your successes

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to, and clearly noticing whatever is happening in our lives at a particular moment. It involves removing our attention from thoughts of what has happened in the past or what might happen in the future and instead, focusing on what is going on right now in the 'here and now'. When you are mindful, you observe your thoughts and feelings without judging them, good or bad. Mindfulness won't eliminate life's pressures but it can help us to respond to them in a calmer way. This benefits our health and wellbeing. You can do this as you go about your daily life. For example, you could notice what your senses are bringing you:



HOW YOU ARE BREATHING, STANDING, SITTING OR LYING DOWN

HOW THE GROUND FEELS UNDER YOUR FEET

WHAT YOU ARE SEEING AND HEARING

As you do this your mind will probably keep drifting out of the present so you need to keep bringing it back. It is bringing your mind back to the present that is the practice of mindfulness.

Mindfulness is a powerful technique in stress management. It is based on the concept of living in the moment and attending not to the past or future, but only to the here and now

Don't be harsh on yourself and don't criticise your mind for drifting away – just bring it back kindly and gently to the present.

SOME BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS EXERCISES:

- Enhanced attention and productivity
- More level-headedness and resilience to stress
- Less tension, anger, fatigue, anxiety and depression
- Increased self-awareness / emotion regulation
- Improved insight and innovation
- Better relationships
- More vitality, compassion & "joie de vivre"

Becoming more mindful of your own emotional responses and actions can help alter them. Adopting a mindful approach may lead you to intentionally choose more hopeful, optimistic and resilient ways of dealing with workplace stress and resistance to change. Mindfulness is about accepting what is happening now. Mindfulness can be learned through formal and informal practice and training.

THE CORPORATE ATHLETE

Closely related to self-care and resilience, is the concept of the Corporate Athlete. It's about achieving your goals and responding to what is expected of you in your role as manager through the consistent management of your energy levels over the span of your career. The Corporate Athlete theory was developed by Dr. Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz³ who worked with elite sport performers to help them achieve unprecedented performance levels and become the best in the world. Loehr & Schwartz took their methodology and applied it to the business world. Their research showed that the demands most managers face in their everyday working environments are far more challenging than any professional athlete has to face in their careers. The following comparison is illustrative of this:



A PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE

- Generally spends 90% of their time training in order to perform 10% of the time.
- Has Olympic quality nutrition, sleep, exercise, psychological support, rest and renewal.
- Typically enjoys an 'off-season' of 4 to 5 months a year (depending on the sport).
- Has an average career span of 5 to 10 years and if they handle their finances well they are often set up for life.



A MANAGER

- Spends at least 90% of their time performing and if they are lucky gets to spend 10% of their time training and developing.
- May work long hours in stressful circumstances and with poor self-care.
- Has an 'off season' that amounts to a few weeks holiday a year which might be spent still checking emails and answering voicemails.
- Can probably expect to work 40 years or more.

It therefore became apparent that for managers to meet the demands of their working environments and sustain high performance they must train in the systematic, multilevel way that athletes do. To perform well, energy is required and this is something that can be expended selectively and easily renewed. As a manager, being aware of this and the need to restore your energy to meet the demands of your job, can help you to better cope with and recover from various stresses, strains and challenges in the workplace.

The Corporate Athlete Model addresses the body, emotions, mind and spirit through a tool called the **PERFORMANCE PYRAMID**.

At its foundation is physical wellbeing, so prioritising routine exercise into your life is essential. The next level focuses on emotional health, therefore techniques that help you manage your emotions, such as understanding your own body language and reframing your negative emotions are important here. Next level is mental acuity, meditation / visualisation are powerful tools, as is incorporating recovery time into high stress times in work. At the top of the performance pyramid lies spiritual purpose, which can be achieved by acknowledging and connecting with your deeper values/beliefs and practicing reflection. Each level profoundly influences the others, and all must be addressed together to avoid compromising performance.

In your role as manager, it is worth considering each of these elements and their interplay, with a view to identifying and making any changes necessary in order to enable you to consistently perform at a high level. The best long-term performers tap into positive energy at all levels of the performance pyramid.

In concluding, when people feel strong and resilient – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually – they perform better, with more passion, for longer.

They win, their families win and their employers win.



HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

With your own self-care:

- As a support for you if you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed
- To explore ways of including self-care in your personal and working life
- Provide you with an opportunity to talk over situations confidentially and consider options for moving forward

When you are supporting a staff member:

- EAOs can act as a confidential sounding board
- Offer advice and guidance on how to conduct a conversation where sensitive issues are to be discussed
- Provide information on the support offered by the CSEAS, where there is a concern for your staff member's health and well-being
- Direction to other resources

Remember, you can avail of the confidential support of the CSEAS either as an individual staff member or in your role as a people manager.

WORK OR LIFE CHALLENGES THAT MAY IMPACT ON THE WORKPLACE

While the main purpose of this guide is to assist managers in supporting staff who experience any of these work or life challenges, it is recognised that managers can also be impacted by any of the issues listed below.



WORKPLACE INTERPERSONAL DIFFICULTIES
DIGNITY AT WORK
DISABILITY
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY
WORKPLACE CRITICAL INCIDENTS
CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT
STRESS
PARENTING
RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN
BEREAVEMENT AND LOSS
WHEN A WORK COLLEAGUE DIES
SUICIDE
ALCOHOL / DRUGS MISUSE
GAMBLING, GAMING AND INTERNET MISUSE
HEALTH ISSUES
MENTAL HEALTH
FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES
PERSONAL HYGIENE ISSUES
LIFE STAGES

WORKPLACE INTERPERSONAL DIFFICULTIES

It is not unusual for interpersonal difficulties or conflict to arise in the workplace from time to time. This can happen wherever staff are working. It is an inevitable part of human relationships. It can at times allow for a healthy exchange of ideas or creativity. However, it can also be unhealthy and may negatively impact the productivity and morale of everyone in the workplace.

Conflict can be obvious. It can also be subtle and not easy to identify. It can emerge as something brewing under the surface or in full-blown arguments. As a manager, it is important to be able to identify and understand the varying levels of conflicts and how these levels are manifested in different ways. In the event you receive a complaint of interpersonal difficulties amongst your staff members or perhaps you begin to notice that things are “not right” amongst staff members – don’t ignore it. The best approach may be to encourage your staff members to speak with each other about the issue and see if it can be resolved between them where appropriate. It is important in your role as a people manager to take steps to try to identify and resolve issues as soon as possible.

If the issue arises between you and your staff member, listen to what’s being expressed and look at ways to deal with the matter / move forward.

Not addressing conflict can have a negative impact on staff in the workplace. Unaddressed tensions can lead to hostility, disruption, further arguments, lack of communication and possibly result in sick leave absences. This in turn can create a toxic workplace / team culture.



What is Conflict? Conflict can be defined as a state of disharmony among people brought about by a clash of interests, values, actions and / or personalities. Many factors contribute to conflict situations such as individual needs, desires and expectations, differences in personalities, self-perceptions, self-esteem and opinions.

See Section 1: Having a Difficult Workplace Conversation and Communication Skills for Key Conversations

WHAT YOU, AS MANAGER, CAN SAY AND DO WHEN INTERPERSONAL DIFFICULTIES / CONFLICTS ARISE:

- Early intervention is key to addressing workplace Interpersonal difficulties / conflict.
- It may be helpful and also a support to you, in your role as people manager, to seek advice from your own manager / HR or the CSEAS, in advance of addressing this issue.
- You will need to meet all the parties involved. This may necessitate meeting staff individually or collectively, depending what's most appropriate.
- Gather information – invite each party to give their account of the issue/conflict. Show empathy, but remain impartial.
- Establish the key issues – take notes.
- Let the parties involved know that you have a role in trying to resolve the issue / conflict.
- Seek solutions on how to resolve the issues – ask the parties involved for ideas or suggestions. You also may have a solution.
- Negotiate a solution – aim to get an agreed solution, which is acceptable to all parties.
- Remember, mediation is also available as a conflict resolution option
- Clarify the decisions / actions agreed with all parties and take note of same.
- Set a date for a review meeting to check in on how the solution is being implemented and to see if the situation has improved.
- Following the review meeting, check in periodically with all parties on how things are progressing.

EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF INTERPERSONAL DIFFICULTIES OR CONFLICT

- Change in atmosphere
- Whispered conversations
- Lack of co-operation
- Arguments
- Formation of cliques
- A staff member isolating themselves
- Non-verbal behaviour: e.g. staff ignoring each other, being dismissive through facial gestures, adopting an aggressive or argumentative body stance



DIGNITY AT WORK

The Civil Service is committed to promoting the dignity and respect of all staff. Creating a positive working environment is the responsibility of all staff and managers in the workplace whether this is in the office, working remotely or a blended version.

Situations may arise whereby staff may feel that their dignity has been negatively impacted. The best approach may be to encourage your staff members to speak with each other about the issue and see if it can be resolved between them where appropriate. It is important in your role as a people manager to take steps to try to identify and resolve issues as soon as possible. If the issue arises between you and your staff member, listen to what is being expressed and look at ways to deal with the matter/move forward.

The Dignity at Work Policy 2015 (DAW) is the Civil Service anti-bullying, anti-harassment and anti-sexual harassment policy. A key aim of the Policy is to provide awareness of the steps staff may take if they believe that they have been bullied, harassed or sexually harassed, and the procedures that all parties involved should follow. The intention of the Policy is to encourage the use of informal resolution methods and the use of mediation as often and as early as possible during disputes. There is a Designated Person in each Department whose role is to oversee complaints which have been referred to HR, as outlined in the Dignity at Work Policy.

WHAT YOU, AS MANAGER, CAN DO

- Be familiar with the Dignity at Work Policy (DAW). It clearly outlines the steps to take when a dispute between staff arises.
- Be aware that a member of staff may contact you in situations where (i) they feel they are being bullied, harassed or sexually harassed (ii) they have been accused of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment or (iii) they are witnessing bullying, harassment or sexual harassment.
- Meet or talk with the staff member(s) involved. Listen and try to resolve the issue. If necessary, seek advice from your own manager, HR Division and the CSEAS.
- Familiarise yourself with the process of mediation, the role of the Civil & Public Service Mediation Service (CPSMS) and how it can be accessed



For information on Civil & Public Service Mediation Service (CPSMS) and the Mediation Process, see 'Where can the Manager get Help and Support?' in Section 1 of this guide. Refer also to hr.per.gov.ie

THE CSEAS IS AVAILABLE IN SITUATIONS WHERE...

- A staff member feels they are being subjected to bullying, harassment or sexual harassment.
- A staff member has had an allegation of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment made against them.
- A staff member is asked to be a witness in an alleged bullying, harassment or sexual harassment complaint.

If two or more parties involved in a conflict seek support from the CSEAS, every effort will be made to ensure that different EAOs support each party to the conflict.

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- You may be unsure of what to do. It may be helpful for you to confidentially explore options and plan the conversation with the CSEAS.
- You can talk through your approach to an upcoming meeting.
- If you are concerned about a staff member you can suggest they contact the CSEAS for support.
- Where there are two or more individuals involved in a conflict, the CSEAS can offer separate EAOs to each party. This ensures that each party gets impartial confidential support.
- EAOs are Contact Persons for all Departments / Offices under the DAW Policy. Additionally, some Departments / Offices also have internal contact persons. The contact person is available to explain the various resolution options, the potential supports which are available to individuals, and to explain the role of the various parties involved in the resolution process.
- In addition to the Contact Person role, EAOs also offer the full range of CSEAS supports and can act as a confidential sounding board for the manager.

DISABILITY

A staff member may have a disability when joining the Civil Service or may develop a disability during the course of their career. People managers need to be aware of employer's obligations in supporting a staff member who has a disability.

It is important to note that although a staff member may have disclosed a disability during the recruitment process, this information will not necessarily be passed on to the new employer when a staff member is assigned to a post. It is therefore up to the staff member to make their disability known as appropriate.

Be aware, the same type of disability can affect two individuals in very different ways. Engage with your staff member to see how their disability impacts on them personally in their daily work life. While working remotely may give staff with particular needs greater scope and flexibility, it may also present challenges. Discuss any specific requirements your staff member may have to ensure arrangements made are suitable for the individual.

Please refer to Civil Service Code of Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities for guidance.

According to the **Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2015**, disability is defined as:

- (a) the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body,
- (b) the presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness,
- (c) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body,
- (d) a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction, or
- (e) a condition, illness or disease which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour, and shall be taken to include a disability which exists at present, or which previously existed but no longer exists, or which may exist in the future or which is imputed to a person.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE MANAGER

- Create an atmosphere that allows for disclosure and discussion about disability.
- Be positive about disability – your response to a person with a disability is very important.
- Be open to learning about the disability presented.
- People are not required to disclose their disability.
- Be willing to have conversations... listen.
- Have conversations in private.
- Ask for advice from other experts, or from the person with a disability themselves. You're not expected to know everything about every disability.
- If a staff member discloses a disability to you, be clear on what will happen with the information to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018. All personal information is subject to GDPR.
- Check if the person wants others to know about the disability.
- Encourage contact with the Disability Liaison Officer (DLO).
- Where there are attendant psychosocial or emotional issues, encourage use of the CSEAS.
- Where mental health issues are disclosed, encourage use of the CSEAS.
- Consider whether or not reasonable accommodations are required (refer to par. 4.4 of Circular 05/2018 Arrangements for Paid Sick Leave).
- Where reasonable accommodation has been provided, check in with the staff member periodically to ensure that the measures put in place are working effectively.
- Regularly check in on your staff member's health and wellbeing, particularly if working remotely.
- Check in periodically to make sure working arrangements continue to be suitable.
- Liaise with your manager and HR Division as appropriate.

DISABILITY LIAISON OFFICER (DLO)

All Government Departments and Offices are required to appoint a Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) to assist and support staff with disabilities, and their people managers. The role of the DLO is to:

- Act as the point of contact for staff with disabilities, their managers and HR Divisions.
- Assist and support staff with disabilities, and their managers, by providing necessary information, appropriate contacts, guidance, suggestions and advice.
- Assist in the implementation of best HR practice in line with equality legislation.
- Facilitate increased awareness of disability throughout the organisation, the DLO can support both managers and staff to discuss reasonable accommodation options.

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS REGARDING THE PROVISION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR A STAFF MEMBER WITH A DISABILITY

The Employment Equality Acts oblige employers to consider reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities. An employer must take 'appropriate measures' to meet the needs of a staff member with a disability in the workforce. This means they must make arrangements that will enable a person who has a disability to:

- have equal opportunities when applying for work
- be treated the same as co-workers
- have equal opportunities for promotion
- undertake training

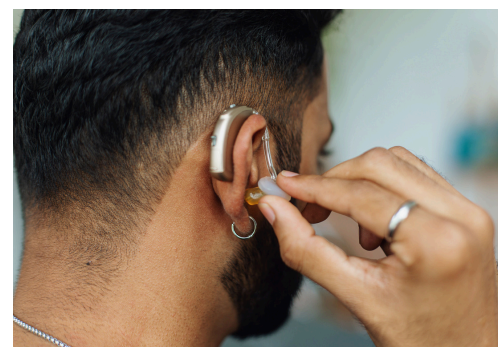
Reasonable accommodation does not mean that an employer has to recruit, promote, retain or provide training to a person who does not have the capacity to do a particular job. However, an employer cannot decide that a person with a disability is incapable of doing a particular job without considering whether there are appropriate measures which they could take to support the person in carrying out the required duties.

As a manager you may have responsibility for a staff member who has a disability. You will be familiar with the role of your staff member. You may be best placed to have a discussion with the individual to ascertain what practical supports and / or reasonable accommodations, if any, are required. You may also need to consult with HR to discuss any reasonable accommodations.

Where an individual attributes poor attendance at work to a medical condition, consideration must be given as to whether that individual may have a disability as defined under Employment Equality legislation. (Refer to par. 4.4 of Circular 05/2018 Arrangements for Paid Sick Leave).

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- EAOs can act as a confidential sounding board.
- If you are concerned about a member of staff you can suggest they contact the CSEAS for support.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Civil Service is strongly committed to equality of opportunity in all its employment practices. Equality of opportunity in the Civil Service means that:

- Throughout their working lives, civil servants can be assured of equality of participation in their Department / Office, as per the Employment Equality Acts 1998– 2015.
- All civil servants have a responsibility to create a working environment in which differences are respected and in which all people – staff, clients and customers – are valued as individuals.
- As an employer, the Civil Service will strive to achieve real equality of opportunity by continually monitoring its employment practices to ensure that they do not contravene equality legislation.
- The Civil Service continues to work hard to ensure it is an ‘Employer of Choice’ through ensuring that the work that civil servants do is varied and meaningful, and that the supports are available to equip people with the necessary skills to respond effectively to the work civil servants do on behalf of society.



Employment Equality Acts 1998– 2015

All civil servants can be confident that their rights under the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 are guaranteed, and that no one will receive less favourable treatment because of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community.

In recent times, a number of public and civil service bodies have partaken in a range of initiatives aimed at advancing diversity and inclusion throughout organisations. These programmes have included supports for adults with intellectual disabilities, graduates with disabilities, collaborations with outside agencies to attract and engage citizens from other communities etc.

While working remotely may give staff with particular needs greater scope and flexibility, it may also present challenges. Discuss any specific requirements your staff member may have to ensure arrangements made are suitable for the individual.

Be aware that not being in the office can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness. This may be especially hard if a staff member's family/relatives are living in another country and in times of illness/bereavement

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE MANAGER

- Create an atmosphere that allows for disclosure and discussion.
- Be positive to difference – your response is very important.
- Be open to learning about diversity.
- Value all your staff equally.
- Respect difference.
- Be aware that people don't always want to disclose their differences.
- Be willing to have conversations... listen.
- Have conversations in private.
- Ask for advice from relevant bodies.
- Be clear on what will happen with the information if someone discloses something about themselves, to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018. All personal information is subject to GDPR.
- Regularly check in on your staff member's health and well-being if working remotely.
- Check in periodically to make sure working arrangements continue to be suitable.
- Liaise with your manager and / or HR Division as appropriate.

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- EAOs can act as a confidential sounding board.
- If you are concerned about a member of staff you can suggest they contact the CSEAS for support.

WORKPLACE CRITICAL INCIDENTS

A workplace critical incident is defined as an event out of the range of normal experience – one which is sudden, unexpected and may have a physical or emotional impact. In some cases it may involve perceived or actual threat to life. Workplace critical incidents are challenging events that have the potential to create significant distress and can overwhelm one's usual coping mechanisms. Familiarise yourself with your own Department / Office's Critical Incident protocols, if available.

Critical incidents in the workplace may include

- Death / serious injury
- Assault
- Personal threat
- Robbery / fire / accident in the workplace
- Fraud



What is Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)?

It is a systematic approach to managing critical incidents. It includes:

- Assessment of the incident
- Identifying type of response or support needed
- How it will be provided
- Follow-up support where required



Employee Assistance Officers are trained in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and are available to provide psychological and emotional support to staff and management in the event of a critical incident occurring in the workplace.

WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, CAN DO WHEN A CRITICAL INCIDENT OCCURS IN THE WORKPLACE

- Remain calm.
- Contact emergency services if needed.
- Communicate with those affected about what is happening, and what you, as a people manager, are going to do.
- Assess what supports are required.
- Nominate another staff member to assist and liaise with you, if required.
- Report the critical incident to relevant personnel in your Department, i.e. your manager, HR Division, Health & Safety Officer / Unit.
- Check if your Department / Office has protocols on managing critical incidents in the workplace.
- You or your nominated staff member may contact the CSEAS for support. Provide information and details about the critical incident in order to co-ordinate an appropriate response in conjunction with the CSEAS.

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- Arrange for an EAO, or team of EAOs to respond to the needs of the staff and management affected by the workplace critical incident.
- Liaise with you, your HR Division, manager or your nominated staff member.
- Determine the appropriate type of response in collaboration with you, your HR Division, manager or your nominated staff member.
- Establish the follow-up action having assessed the critical incident and circumstances involved.
- Provide short term support for the individual and / or group.

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Frontline staff or any staff member dealing with the public may face challenging situations when engaging with customers. There may be times when a member of the public / customer can become abusive or threatening. Some Departments / Offices have developed guidelines for staff and management for use in such incidents. Check to see if your own Department / Office has protocols on dealing with and / or reporting such incidents.

In your role as manager, a member of staff may request assistance or look for support:

- when dealing with an abusive customer – this could take the form of a physical threat / assault or abusive conversation

If a customer talks of self-harm or suicide You may need to:

- step in and take over from a staff member
- advise your staff on how to deal with such situations
- support a staff member following an incident

**WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, AND YOUR STAFF CAN DO WHEN A CUSTOMER IS BEING ABUSIVE**

- Try to remain calm
- Allow the customer to speak
- Listen and empathise
- Let the customer know that you understand the issue
- Let the customer know what you can do
- Take note of any threats
- Let the customer know that what they are saying is offensive or threatening to you
- Let the person know that unless they stop the behaviour that you may have to end the interaction

WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, AND / OR YOUR STAFF CAN DO WHERE A CUSTOMER MENTIONS SELF-HARM OR SUICIDE

- Try to remain calm.
- Take the self-harm or suicide intention seriously.
- Talk to the person and listen to them.
- Explain that you feel they need some help and ask can you have someone call a family member or GP.
- If you are concerned about your own, a member of staff or a client's safety/life you may need to call or ask another member of staff to call the emergency services.
- Consider having relevant emergency numbers to hand, e.g. An Garda Síochána, Samaritans etc.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STAFF MEMBER AFTER THESE TYPES OF INCIDENTS

- Ask the member of staff how they are feeling.
- Ask what happened.
- Make sure someone remains with / keeps in touch with the staff member if they are upset.
- It may be appropriate / necessary for the staff member to go home if they are in the office. Make sure they get home safely – a taxi may be required, depending on the situation.
- If the staff member is at home, they may need to take a short break to regroup before continuing with their work.
- Follow up with the staff member to see that they are okay.
- You can let your staff member know that the CSEAS can be of support and give them contact details.

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- Provide support and information for a manager dealing with any of the incidents as above.
- Provide support to the staff member(s) affected by such incidents.

DEALING WITH STRESS

Stress is a part of life. However stress, in itself, is quite hard to define - it means different things to different people and affects individuals in many and various ways. Consequently individuals respond differently to the same events. Stress is the reaction of our body and mind to life's challenges.

Stress can impact in the workplace. Staff can bring personal stress to work, or attribute their stress to work events.

Positive stress can be experienced as an exciting or challenging situation in which some people thrive. It can motivate and have positive outcomes.

Challenging workplace demands may trigger a stress response e.g. meeting tight deadlines, learning a new skill or a job brief, long commuting times, power struggles, interpersonal difficulties, not taking regular breaks / annual leave etc



Stress cannot be totally eliminated from our lives. However, mismanaged stress or ongoing stress over a period of time can lead to physical and / or psychological illnesses if it is not addressed. We can learn ways of understanding how stress affects us individually and find new ways of managing it effectively to combat long term damage or burnout. The signs and symptoms of stress can be physical, behavioural, emotional and / or psychological.

Just as your staff may feel stressed, so might you. It is important to recognise your own stress triggers. If you are feeling stressed, it can impact on those around you. It is very important that you monitor your own stress levels and seek appropriate support. None of us are immune to feeling it, but we can build our resilience and manage our stress.

WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, CAN DO TO SUPPORT STAFF

- Listen when a staff member approaches you to talk about stress.
- Recognise / acknowledge when a staff member shows signs of stress.
- Where the stress is attributed to work:
 - Assess the situation with the person
 - See if there are possible work adjustments
 - Check if training / upskilling might assist
 - Create a positive working environment
 - Ensure that staff are aware of their individual responsibilities in creating a positive working environment. A disrespectful working environment can be extremely stressful.
 - Address any conflict that arises in the workplace as early as possible
- Where personal stress is impacting at work
 - Show empathy when staff are experiencing personal difficulties, e.g. after a bereavement, going through a relationship breakdown, etc.
- Encourage staff to seek help as early as possible and suggest that they engage with the CSEAS

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- You can consult with the CSEAS for advice where there are concerns about a member of staff suffering from stress.
- If you are concerned about a member of staff suggest that they contact the CSEAS for support.
- The CSEAS can speak with a staff member to (i) identify what is causing the stress (ii) discuss the effect it is having (iii) explore ways to effectively manage the stress.



Stress cannot be avoided, but it can be managed
Stress is a fact of life - it need not be a WAY of life!

PARENTING

The life of a working parent is fast paced and rewarding, but can also be challenging. Depending on what age and stage children are at, parents will experience, and need to be responsive to different family demands. These might include a newborn baby, a child starting school, a teenager going through a difficult time, etc. While parents often successfully deal with these challenges with minimal disruption to other aspects of their life, there may be times when work is impacted. It is understandable that when difficulties arise for working parents, their attention is prioritized to home. Signs that a staff member may have a parenting issue include an uncharacteristic lack of concentration, inability to complete tasks, missed deadlines, absenteeism etc.

Family issues are usually time bound and will resolve themselves in the short term, especially if the staff member feels supported by their workplace in an appropriate manner. Managers are often tasked with balancing the needs of individual staff members and the unit as a whole and this can prove difficult at times. The key to success is good communication so that any issues can be highlighted as early as possible. Support can then be offered to help the staff member manage their parenting and work duties as much as possible until the issue resolves. Examples of what a manager can do include offering flexibility around working hours, reorganisation of tasks assigned, granting leave requests and signposting to useful resources.

While managers cannot solve a parenting issue for a staff member, they can look at the situation as a whole. Often it is the case that if the organisation can support an individual in the short to medium term, it will benefit in the long term from increased employee motivation, engagement and loyalty. It will also greatly enhance the health and wellbeing of working parents and while this is very important, it is frequently overlooked as there are so many competing demands on their time and energy. The CSEAS Working Parent Information Series is aimed at supporting parents / guardians in a range of areas that can enhance overall wellbeing. Managers can highlight this resource to staff when checking in with them and refer to it when supporting a staff member through specific parenting stages.

Remote working may also prove particularly challenging for working parents, as juggling work and caring responsibilities can become overwhelming. The boundaries may be more difficult to draw, and work / life balance may suffer if parents are not able to clearly define their spaces. Good communication with your staff member will help you to understand their specific needs in this regard and will foster a collaborative response to best support them with the presenting issue. The first step is identifying these issues and from there, it may be possible to implement supports to help address the situation.

WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, CAN DO TO SUPPORT STAFF

- Encourage open communication with staff about parenting pressures.
- Talk through the issues identified and ask the staff member what might help.
- Be aware of confidentiality and that this may be a sensitive issue for the individual.
- Where possible, offer flexibility around working duties / hours / deadlines.
- Help staff who are experiencing parenting issues to structure and prioritise work.
- Keep in regular contact with staff during maternity leave and let them know of any changes in the workplace.
- Offer a meeting with you or a team member prior to returning from maternity leave.
- Discuss breastfeeding needs of nursing mothers and ensure appropriate on-site facilities.
- Consider leave requests during school holidays in line with business needs.
- When business planning, take account of requests for work-sharing / parental leave etc.
- Review how any accommodations or arrangements are working out, considering both the individual and the organisation.
- Role model good work / life balance, particularly if you are also a parent.
- Encourage the staff member to avail of the CSEAS for support when needed.

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- Contact the CSEAS confidentially for guidance and support in managing the situation.
- When you identify that there is a parenting concern for a staff member, encourage them to contact the CSEAS for help and support.

RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN

The breakdown of a marriage or relationship is a difficult and traumatic process and one that may impact on staff and the workplace in the short, medium or long-term depending on the staff member's situation. This life challenge can cause complete upheaval for a staff member and affect many areas of their personal life from physical, emotional and mental well-being, to finances, parenting, loss of wider family and social supports etc. Where domestic abuse was a factor in the relationship breakdown, this can bring even more difficulties and issues may arise around securing safe accommodation and child protection concerns. Should you have a concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of abuse or neglect, you should consult with HR or the CSEAS for guidance.



Family difficulties can be complex and managers may not know how to respond appropriately to staff experiencing such situations. However, a sensitive and non-judgemental manager can play a pivotal role in directing the staff member to seek support and help early. Significant changes and adjustments to working arrangements may be required at short notice in order to support staff members. Once these needs have been identified, the role of the manager is to offer flexibility and practical support to the staff member during this difficult period. While supporting the individual, you may also need to manage the consequential impact on colleagues and friends in the workplace.

WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, CAN DO TO SUPPORT STAFF

- Listen with empathy to your staff member if an individual approaches you and wishes to discuss the matter.
- If you observe any signs of stress or worrying behaviour, speak to the staff member in private and as soon as is practicable.
- Create an environment that is sensitive to the emotions involved and encourages open discussion.
- Ask how the person is feeling and how they can be helped.
- Be mindful that the staff member could have very serious worries in relation to their safety and that of their children.
- Respect confidentiality insofar as possible.
- Suggest that the staff member seek support from the CSEAS.
- Contact the CSEAS if you wish to discuss how you can support the staff member.
- Consider if work adjustments/flexibility for new childcare arrangements, attendance at appointments such as mediation, court appearances etc. is required.
- Regularly check in on the well-being of the staff member until issues are resolved.
- Be available to support the wider team who may also have concerns for their colleague.
- Remember your duty of care to colleagues who may know the family personally, are aware of distressing details or otherwise be impacted by what is going on

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- Contact the CSEAS confidentially for guidance and support in managing the situation.
- Provide advice on how to sensitively support the staff member through this difficult period of their life.
- Offer advice and support to the staff member with their specific issues.
- Signpost the staff member to appropriate services that can assist with family law, finances or further therapeutic help

BEREAVEMENT AND LOSS

Bereavement can be experienced in the workplace in a number of ways; staff can be bereaved by the death of a family member, a close friend, or a work colleague. Sudden death can occur in tragic circumstances e.g. suicide, road traffic accident or murder.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we usually deal with the loss of a loved one. Many of the normal religious, cultural and family traditions could not be observed, and these restrictions were not easy for those who were bereaved during this time.

In these circumstances, we found new ways to express our sympathy, e.g. live streaming of the funeral can enable those who can't be present to participate in the ceremony, those who wish can send their condolences on rip.ie, you may decide to plant flowers / a tree in memory of the deceased etc. A supportive workplace can help a bereaved staff member upon their return to work and also assist those affected by a workplace death.



Bereavement and loss are an intrinsic part of life. We all experience them during our lifetime. It may be bereavement as a result of a natural, accidental or sudden death, suicide, murder, miscarriage or neo-natal death.

There are other forms of loss outside bereavement, such as the breakdown of a marriage or relationship; suffering with a degenerative illness; being badly injured as a result of an accident with long term consequences; emigration etc.

WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, CAN DO TO SUPPORT STAFF

- Sympathise with the bereaved staff member.
- Attendance at funeral ceremonies may be appropriate.
- Acknowledge the return of the bereaved staff member to the workplace.
- Allow the bereaved person to talk about their bereavement if they want to. Repetition of details of events around the death and funeral are common and perfectly normal.
- Some people prefer not to talk. Acknowledge this but assure your staff member that you are there to support them.
- Allow the bereaved person time to adjust.
- There may need to be some flexibility around work duties e.g. dealing with the public, telephone duty, etc.
- How long an individual grieves can vary depending on the relationship to the deceased and the personal needs of the individual.
- Check if your own Department / Office has a policy on bereavement.

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- Contact the CSEAS if you wish to discuss how you can support your staff.
- Inform staff about the CSEAS and the contact details of the relevant EAO so that they can choose to avail of one-to-one support.
- Avail of CSEAS one-to-one support yourself if you need to.
- Where a death in the workplace is sudden or in extremely tragic circumstances, e.g. suicide or road traffic accident, the CSEAS can support you in responding to this critical incident. For further information see section on Workplace Critical Incidents in this guide.

WHEN A WORK COLLEAGUE DIES

Death in service occurs where a serving staff member dies while still being employed in the Civil Service. This death can be due to natural causes, illness, an accident or injury at work, suicide or murder. The nature of death can have different impacts both on you and on your staff. As a manager you will need to be proactive in providing support.

Normal reactions can include:

- Shock
- Sense of disbelief
- Anger
- Fear
- Guilt
- Heightened emotions
- Echoes of personal bereavements
- Strong sense of missing the person
- Reaction to the empty desk
- Worry about the assignment of a new staff member

WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, CAN DO WHEN A STAFF MEMBER DIES IN SERVICE

- It is important that people managers take a proactive approach when a staff member dies.
- Check if your own Department / Office has a policy on bereavement.
- Seek guidance from your manager, HR and / or CSEAS.
- Inform HR Division and HR Shared Services (PeoplePoint).
- Ensure that colleagues are made aware of the death. The news may trickle from one to another depending on how the news first breaks.
- It may be appropriate to gather colleagues together in so far as possible, and perhaps virtually, to inform them.
- You may want to have your manager present.
- Colleagues may wish to take some time as a group to talk about what has happened, share their loss and support each other.
- In the aftermath, check in with staff members to see how they are coping
- Be aware that the death may impact on some staff more than others depending on their relationship with the deceased, their own personal circumstances and the nature of the death.

-
- It may be appropriate to have an Employee Assistance Officer to provide support to staff. Discuss this with the CSEAS.
 - Where appropriate, attendance of some staff at funeral ceremonies might be facilitated. Virtual attendance at live-streamed funerals may also need be facilitated, depending on circumstances / availability.
 - Remember too, that you may also be affected by the death – look after yourself and seek support.
 - Remember that a gap is left when a colleague dies. A sensitive approach is best when a new staff member is appointed or an existing staff member is reassigned.
 - Make contact with the family of the deceased as appropriate.
 - Bear in mind that family members of the deceased staff member may contact you as manager. You may need to refer them to your HR Division or HR Shared Services (PeoplePoint), or liaise with your HR Division on their behalf.
 - You may need to facilitate the family of the deceased in collecting personal belongings from the physical workplace if this is possible.

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- Contact the CSEAS if you wish to discuss how you can support your staff.
- Consider arranging for an EAO to be available as a support.
- Staff may wish to avail of one-to-one support from the CSEAS.
- Avail of CSEAS one-to-one support yourself, if required.
- The CSEAS can provide practical support to the family of the bereaved person. As a manager you can make this information available to the family.
- The CSEAS can deliver appropriate presentations on bereavement, perhaps virtually.
- Where a death in the workplace is sudden or in extremely tragic circumstances e.g. suicide or road traffic accident, the CSEAS can support you in responding to this critical incident. For further information see section on Workplace Critical Incidents in this guide.

SUPPORTING A STAFF MEMBER IN SUICIDAL DISTRESS

In your role as a manager you might find yourself in a situation where one of your staff members is in suicidal distress and in need of immediate support and help. It can be challenging dealing with a staff member presenting in this way. However, with the right information, support and guidance, this situation can be managed in a sensitive and effective way

WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, CAN DO WHEN A STAFF MEMBER TALKS ABOUT SUICIDE

- Remain calm and don't panic.
- Take the mention of suicide seriously.
- Ask your staff member to tell you what's happening for them.
- Ask the question "Have things got so bad that you are considering taking your life?" By asking this question you are not reinforcing the idea of suicide in your staff member's head; they may have been considering suicide as an option to resolve their current problems.
- Assess the situation taking into account the risk factors and warning signs (see next page).
- Consider your intervention, taking account of the particular situation.
- You may need to contact emergency services and / or next of kin.
- You may need to consult with your manager, HR Division and / or CSEAS to decide how best to proceed.



● Suicide is not limited to any one particular group and can potentially affect any one of us. Many people who are suicidal want to end their pain and suffering rather than their life. If you are concerned that you are at risk of suicide, or that someone else is, it is important to talk about what is going on with someone you trust.

Although it is not possible to predict suicide, there may be some indication that a person is considering taking their life. The tables on the next page highlight risk factors and warning signs. These lists are not exhaustive

If you and / or your staff member are working remotely, it may be more challenging to observe the situation and individual as if you were both in the same working environment. It can be harder to identify an issue when not in the office, e.g. potential signs such as a marked change in the person's demeanour, unusual or erratic behaviours, lack of engagement with colleagues, etc. For this reason, it will be more important than ever to regularly check in on the health and wellbeing of each staff member via whatever means available i.e. phone, video conferencing etc. and to actively listen to any difficulties or distress expressed.

RISK FACTORS

- Previous suicide attempt or other act of self-harm
- Expressing suicidal ideas / thoughts
- Uncharacteristic language
- Recent hospitalisation for suicidal ideation
- Recent and major life changing events
- Untreated mental health issues
- Impulsive or risk-taking behaviour
- History of substance abuse



WARNING SIGNS

- Recent unusual behaviour or mood change
- Loss of interest in one's self appearance
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Distracted and less communicative
- Emotionally withdrawn or distant
- Emotional outbursts – tearful / angry
- Deterioration in work performance
- Friends / colleagues raising concerns
- Giving away personal possessions
- Sudden improved mood after a period of low mood

CONFIDENTIALITY AND SUICIDE

Be aware that confidentiality can sometimes be sought by the staff member who is in suicidal distress, about their suicidal intention. Where appropriate, let the staff member know that confidentiality is not guaranteed as it may be necessary to disclose their suicidal intention to a third party to ensure their safety. A judgement call will be required in this regard. Getting help for your staff member should, in so far as is practicable, be negotiated and agreed. When faced with this situation be mindful that you, as people manager, may need additional support. When consulting with third parties, be mindful of the dignity of your staff member who is in suicidal distress.

SUPPORTS

- **Your manager** – talk to your manager to explain the situation.
- **Your HR Division.**
- Next of kin contact details may be required from HR as they may need to be made aware of the situation.
- Contact with the **CMO** may be required – discuss with your HR Division.
- **CSEAS** can be contacted for support and guidance at any stage in managing this situation.
- **An Garda Síochána / Emergency Services** – where necessary.
- **GP**, when appropriate, encourage contact with the GP.
- **SafeTALK** training (suicide awareness) provided by HSE.

Supporting a staff member who is in suicidal distress can be particularly challenging. It is important to look after yourself when this situation arises.

The CSEAS is there to support you in managing your own self-care, during and after you have assisted the staff member concerned. It is strongly recommended that you:

- Speak with your own manager and / or the CSEAS after the event
- Keep a structure and routine to your working day.
- Maintain your usual work / life balance.
- Use your own support network

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- Provide advice on how to sensitively manage a situation when a staff member presents in suicidal distress
- Offer support to assist both you and the staff member concerned.
- Discuss referral options to the CSEAS where there is a risk to life e.g. suicidal intent.
- Remember you can contact the CSEAS and speak with the on-duty EAO during normal office hours – please see our website for opening hours

USEFUL RESOURCES

[Suicide – Information for those affected by suicide](#)

[Suicide – Information for those in suicidal distress](#)

[Responding to a Staff Member in Suicidal Distress](#)

[Suicidal Distress – Resources for HR Divisions/Line Managers](#)

[Health & Well-being Check In Tips](#)

Refer to the section on Workplace Critical Incidents in this guide

**REMEMBER...**

YOUR SUPPORTS AS A PEOPLE MANAGER: SECTION 1
YOUR OWN SELF-CARE: SECTION 2

ALCOHOL / DRUGS MISUSE

The misuse of alcohol and / or drugs, in general, causes problems for both the dependent person and others, including work colleagues. Dealing with alcohol and / or drugs misuse problems in the workplace can be a difficult and frustrating experience. People managers have responsibility for overseeing job performance, while balancing a duty of care in compliance with the relevant policies.

This task isn't easy and is challenging for managers but it is important to take the first step, which is identifying any patterns of inappropriate behaviour and any deterioration in work performance and / or attendance. If you and / or your staff member are working remotely, it may be more challenging to observe the situation and individual than if you were both in the same working environment. It can be harder to identify an issue when not in the office, e.g. it will not be possible to detect a smell of alcohol or to know if individual is absent while on duty etc. For this reason, it will be more important than ever to regularly check in on the health and wellbeing of each staff member via whatever means available i.e. phone, video conferencing etc. and to actively listen for any indications that there may be an alcohol/drugs misuse issue.

**PLEASE NOTE...**

Alcohol / drug dependency is regarded as a disability within the meaning of the Employment Equality Acts 1998 - 2015. The Civil Service Alcohol & Drugs Misuse Policy (Circular 08/2009) allows for reasonable accommodation to be provided in such cases.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ALCOHOL / DRUG MISUSE IN THE WORKPLACE?

The following checklist, which is not exhaustive, highlights signs of alcohol and drug misuse. It is equally applicable to situations where other potentially addictive behaviours become apparent and problematic, e.g. gambling and, misuse of the internet. (For further information on these process addictions, please see the section Gambling Problems, Gaming Addiction and Internet Misuse in this guide).

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ALCOHOL / DRUG MISUSE

- Deteriorating work performance.
- Above average recourse to sick leave, certified and self-certified; particularly absences after breaks, e.g. weekends, annual leave and social events.
- Regular pattern of late attendance.
- Misuse of the flexi-clock.
- Frequent long lunches.
- Increased number of excused absences during the period of duty.
- Constant use of medication, lozenges, antacids and mouth fresheners.
- Smell of alcohol.
- Signs of persistent drinking, visible tremors, hangover, bloodshot eyes, persistent odour of alcohol from breath.
- Signs of drugs misuse, e.g. glassy eyes, mood swings.
- Sudden outbursts and arguments with other staff members.
- Pattern of borrowing money from colleagues.
- Increasing complaints from other staff members or other persons, i.e. customers.
- Various minor accidents, infringements or violations of drink-driving laws.
- Deteriorating personal appearance: unkempt, poor personal hygiene etc.

ENABLING BEHAVIOUR

Be aware that enabling behaviour can occur in the workplace. Enabling is different from helping and supporting in that it allows the enabled person to continue their addictive behaviour.

Examples of enabling – colleagues covering up by doing the staff member's job for them, turning a blind eye. Denial and / or minimisation of alcohol / drugs misuse problems in the workplace only exacerbates the problem and denies the staff member the opportunity to effectively deal with and seek appropriate help for their alcohol and/or drugs dependency.

Enabling behaviour prevents the staff member from experiencing the full impact and consequences of their behaviour.

WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, CAN DO WHEN DEALING WITH ALCOHOL / DRUG MISUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

- For guidance, read the Civil Service Alcohol & Drugs Misuse Policy.
- Discuss the situation with your manager / HR.
- You may wish to seek guidance from the CSEAS.
- Monitor the observable i.e. work performance, attendance, behaviour.
- Document your observations including dates, witnesses, etc. Do not diagnose.
- Take an early opportunity to speak with the staff member in the context of what you have observed – be specific and factual. Provide your staff member with a written report of your meeting.
- Show understanding and concern.
- Be objective, consistent, firm and calm.
- Secure a commitment from the staff member to improve work performance and / or attendance – set a review date to speak again to discuss progress or lack of progress.
- Ensure a follow-up review conversation takes place.
- Suggest to the staff member to contact the CSEAS for help and support, where assessment and treatment options can be discussed. (The fees covering external professional alcohol/drugs treatment programmes are borne by the staff member).
- Where it is acknowledged that alcohol and / or drugs misuse is a factor, inform the staff member that help and support towards recovery is encouraged and facilitated under the Civil Service Alcohol & Drugs Misuse Policy. Provide the staff member with a copy of the Policy.
- It is important to note that, should a staff member not improve their attendance, performance or behaviour, and refuse to seek help under the Civil Service Alcohol & Drugs Misuse Policy, they will be subject to normal disciplinary procedures under the Civil Service Disciplinary Code.
- Remember your responsibility to have due regard to the privacy of an individual's personal data. Be clear on what will happen with the information if someone discloses something about themselves to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018. All personal information is subject to GDPR

SUPPORTING A STAFF MEMBER IN RECOVERY FROM ALCOHOL / DRUG MISUSE

In the event that a staff member agrees to avail of professional help for their alcohol / drugs dependency, your role as people manager is vital in supporting their recovery. Upon their return to work, your focus needs to remain on the staff member's job performance, attendance and compliance with work rules regarding alcohol and drugs use. When you become aware of your staff member's alcohol / drugs problem, you need to know how best to support the staff member in their recovery. The CSEAS can provide you with information and guidance in this regard to support both you and your staff member.

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- Contact the CSEAS for guidance and support in managing the situation and for options on how to progress.
- Suggest to the staff member to contact the CSEAS for help and support, where possible options for treatment can be discussed

GAMBLING PROBLEMS, GAMING ADDICTION AND INTERNET MISUSE

An individual can be addicted to a substance such as alcohol or drugs or have an addiction to something which is not a substance but rather a process or behaviour. Process or behavioural addictions include gambling, gaming and internet misuse.

If you and / or your staff are working remotely, it may be more challenging for you, in your role as people manager to observe the situation first-hand, should you suspect or have evidence that a staff member has a gambling / gaming problem or is in breach of the organisation's Internet Content Access Policy. It can be harder to identify an issue when not in the office, e.g. it will not be possible to know if someone is borrowing money / phones to gamble, or tired during the day from late night gaming. For this reason, it will be more important than ever to regularly check in on the health and wellbeing of each staff member via whatever means available i.e. phone, video conferencing etc., and to actively listen for any indications that there might be a gambling, gaming or internet misuse issue.

GAMBLING

Gambling can progress from a fun, harmless diversion to an unhealthy obsession with serious consequences. Gambling addiction can happen to anyone. An individual may bet on sports, scratch cards, roulette, poker, slot machines, in a casino, at the racecourse or have an online gambling problem. Gambling issues can put a strain on relationships, interfere with work and can lead to major financial problems. If you are managing a team in which a staff member has a gambling problem it can have an impact in the workplace in several ways.

IMPACT

Sleeplessness, caused by activities or worry about finances, leading to tiredness at work

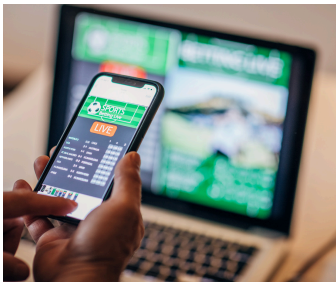
Absenteeism from work




Moodiness, irritability, depression

Borrowing money / phones from colleagues

May include a higher risk of fraud or theft occurring in the workplace

4 PHASES OF GAMBLING



-  Recreational
-  Problematic
-  Compulsive
-  Pathological

When gambling becomes problematic, compulsive or pathological it can impact negatively on others, including family members, friends and work colleagues. Because of its hidden nature, gambling can be very difficult to spot in the workplace.

GAMING ADDICTION

A gaming addiction is a behavioural addiction, similar in nature to a gambling addiction, but relates to gaming activities. Specifically, a gaming addiction can be defined as an excessive or compulsive use of computer games or video games to an extent that the behaviour adversely affects a person's everyday life



IMPACT

- Preoccupation / obsession with online games
- Withdrawal symptoms when not gaming
- A build-up of tolerance: more time needs to be spent playing games
- Failure in trying to stop or curb gaming
- Loss of interest in other life activities & hobbies
- Lying to others about the true extent of gaming
- Playing games online to relieve anxiety or guilt – escape or avoidance
- Negative impact on relationships

WHEN MANAGING A STAFF MEMBER WITH A GAMBLING / GAMING PROBLEM, YOU MAY NOTICE THE FOLLOWING WARNING SIGNS:

- Declining productivity: problem gamblers or gamers may spend late nights at casinos or gambling online at home. This can cause regular fatigue at work.
 - Misuse of the flexi-clock.
 - On-the-job absenteeism i.e. long absences away from the desk while clocked in.
 - Frequent late attendance and/or leaving work early.
 - Frequent long lunches.
 - Frequent sick leave absences.
 - Internet or telephone misuse: problem gamblers might use phones or the internet excessively in work to apply for loans or place bets etc.
 - Pattern of a staff member borrowing from or owing money to colleagues.
 - Pattern of taking leave days in isolation (which may coincide with horse racing festivals or other gambling events).
 - Pattern of a staff member appearing preoccupied or distracted – problem gamblers often daydream about previous bets or the anticipation of the next betting opportunity.
 - Debts – financial problems.
-

INTERNET MISUSE

It is generally agreed that people who misuse, or are addicted to the Internet have trouble fulfilling personal and professional obligations because of their online activities. Their use of the Internet can cause a strain on relationships with family, friends and work colleagues. It can also impact on their ability to perform well at work. People who are addicted to the Internet often experience negative emotions or withdrawal symptoms when their Internet access is restricted. People can become preoccupied with thoughts about their online activity or anticipation of their next online session. Internet Addiction may also be called Computer Addiction, Problematic Internet Use, Internet Dependence, or Pathological Internet Use.

**TYPES OF
INTERNET
ADDICTION**

- Internet compulsions including compulsive online gambling or shopping
- Cyber relationships which take over from normal personal relationships
- Constant web surfing
- Compulsive online gaming
- Cyber sexual and internet pornography

INTERNET MISUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

Internet misuse in the workplace is the overuse or inappropriate use of the internet while at work, in contravention of the Department's / Office's regulations on Internet use.

Misuse of the Internet in the workplace can occur where a member of staff is:

- Accessing inappropriate websites
- Receiving or sending excessive personal emails / accessing other social media accounts
- Spending an excessive amount of the working day online for personal reasons

**WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, CAN DO WHEN DEALING WITH
GAMBLING, GAMING IN THE WORKPLACE**

- Where you notice a change in a staff member's pattern of behaviour, which might suggest a gambling / gaming problem, consider how you are going to address this with the staff member concerned.
- Keep a record of your staff member's work performance, attendance and / or behaviour that is causing concern. Having the facts to hand will help you remain objective when addressing the problem directly with the staff member.
- Before addressing the problem of gambling / gaming directly with the staff member, you may need to discuss the matter with your people manager, HR or the CSEAS on how to manage the problem effectively and sensitively.

- Addressing the issue with the staff member must be handled in a private and sensitive way. Refer to the section on Having a Difficult Workplace Conversation of this guide.
- If it becomes apparent that the staff member has a problem, you can suggest they avail of the CSEAS for help and support. The CSEAS will explore options with the individual in seeking the appropriate help.
- Follow-up conversations will be necessary to ensure the expected improvements are in place and if they are not, there must be a discussion about what action needs to be taken next

WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, CAN DO WHEN DEALING WITH INTERNET MISUSE / ADDICTION IN THE WORKPLACE

- You may wish to seek support and guidance from your own manager, HR or the CSEAS on how you intend to address this issue directly with the staff member concerned
- Where you suspect, or have evidence, that a staff member may be in breach of the organisation's Internet Content Access Policy, ensure you are familiar with this Policy before you address the problematic behaviour directly with the staff member concerned
- Addressing the issue with the staff member must be handled in a private and sensitive way. See section Having a Difficult Workplace Conversation in this guide.
- Depending on the nature of the internet abuse, the involvement of An Garda Síochána may be required (e.g. accessing child pornography). Consult with your people manager and HR Division.
- Suggest to the staff member that they avail of the CSEAS for support

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- You can consult with the CSEAS for guidance and support on how to effectively manage the problem of gambling, gaming and internet misuse when it arises in the workplace.
- The CSEAS can talk through your concerns, in your role as people manager, regarding the management of these issues where they arise in the workplace.
- You can encourage your staff member to seek help and support from the CSEAS if they have problems with gambling, gaming or internet misuse which is negatively impacting their work and/or personal life

HEALTH ISSUES

As manager you will have responsibility for managing staff who experience health issues, therefore you need to be familiar, and comply with the Sick Leave Policy and Regulations. Physical or mental health issues can result in either short or long term sick leave absences from the workplace. No-one knows when their health is going to be affected. Sick leave absences can impact not only on the individual, but also on the workplace / team.

If you and / or your staff member are working remotely, it may be more challenging to observe the situation and individual as it would if you were both in the same working environment. It can be harder to identify an issue when not in the office, e.g. potential signs such as erratic or uncharacteristic behaviour, symptoms of physical pain, etc. For this reason, it will be more important than ever to regularly check in on the health and wellbeing of each staff member via whatever means available i.e. phone, video conferencing etc. and to actively listen for any indications that there might be a health issue.

DEALING WITH SICK LEAVE ABSENCES

When a staff member is absent on sick leave, the manager has a role in supporting them as well as managing the business needs of the section during these absences.

This support will include regular contact with the staff member while they are on sick leave as per paragraph 3.4 of Circular 05/2018 Arrangements for Paid Sick Leave in the Civil Service.

- Be aware of your responsibility to raise a case on HRSS (PeoplePoint) when you are made aware that a staff member is absent due to sick leave
- Be aware of the procedures for Extended Sick Leave under the Critical Illness Protocol, par. 3.10 of Circular 05/2018

Chronic **physical illness** is an enduring health problem that won't go away, e.g.:

- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Arthritis

Mental health issues can include::

- Depression / post-natal depression
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Psychosis
- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar disorder
- Panic attacks

Life events can impact on our mental health, e.g. bereavement, financial difficulties, physical ill-health and any major life change.

THE ROLE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER (CMO)

- For Departments / Offices within HR Shared Services (PeoplePoint), the CMO referral will most likely be initiated by PeoplePoint, who will request the relevant HR Division to complete the CMO Case Referral Form. It is important that this contains relevant background workplace information and is completed in full. Once a referral is received by the CMO, an in-person appointment or phone consultation will be arranged.
- Long term absences must be referred to the CMO after a maximum of 4 weeks; this is non-discretionary. Absences attributed to work-related issues should be referred after 2 weeks. Absences following special leave (e.g. maternity leave) should be referred straight away.
- Repeated short term absences should only be referred to the CMO where the staff member has had a sick leave review conversation and they are attributing their repeated absences to an ongoing chronic medical condition. The CMO needs to be provided with details of this sick leave review discussion on the CMO case referral form.
- Local HR may also initiate CMO referrals
- See Circular 05/2018 Arrangements for Paid Sick Leave in the Civil Service

A STAFF MEMBER WHO APPEARS ILL ON DUTY

- A staff member who appears to require medical attention while on duty should not be allowed to remain in the workplace. Similarly, a staff member who is working remotely and appears unwell, should not be allowed to remain on duty. (refer to par. 3.5 of Circular 05/2018 for direction).
- Where a staff member is working on-site and has to be sent home due to ill-health, arrangements may include either you accompanying, or arranging for somebody to accompany the staff member home. In some situations a taxi may be more appropriate. Where medical attention is urgently required, contact with emergency services, the staff member's GP or next of kin may be appropriate.
- Remember to consult with your manager and / or HR Division for support where these situations arise.

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- If a staff member lives alone, consider whether or not you need to notify their next of kin.
 - Where a staff member is sent home due to a health issue, or is remote working and instructed not to remain on duty, the people manager should contact their HR Division to discuss a possible referral to the CMO, if appropriate.
 - Consider the possibility that unusual behaviour could be caused by ongoing illness, or be the side-effects of medication which may not have been disclosed to you. If the staff member is working remotely, you may become aware of this by phone, video call etc. rather than observing it directly in the office. This needs to be discussed with the staff member in a sensitive manner. Please see the section on Having a Difficult Workplace Conversation in this guide.
 - In the event of a staff member becoming ill and who does not agree to leave the workplace or discontinue remote working, the people manager can consult with their own manager, HR Division, and / or the CSEAS for guidance on how to proceed. The need to contact other parties may arise, e.g. the staff member's next of kin, GP or other sources of support.

A STAFF MEMBER RETURNING AFTER SICK LEAVE ABSENCE

- Referral of the staff member to the CMO by HR may be required in advance of the staff member returning to work to establish fitness to return to work.
- Managers are required to conduct a return to work conversation, in line with paragraph 2.3 of Circular O5/2018.
- Where a staff member is returning to work on a phased basis, the impact on business needs and other staff members should be dealt with in a sensitive way.
- A staff member may be diagnosed with an illness which allows them to continue to attend work. It is important that you, as manager, have a discussion with the staff member as to how this can be accommodated.
- Guidelines for managers regarding the provision of reasonable accommodation(s) for a staff member with a disability are available in the section on Disability in this guide.

PREGNANCY-RELATED ILLNESS

- Staff members undergoing pregnancy-related illness have entitlements to longer sick leave limits and may also have access to other protections under the Pregnancy Sick Leave Policy.
- As a manager you need to be aware that there is a difference in this type of sick leave and be able to refer the staff member to HR to ensure the staff member is fully informed and protected in this regard.
- It is also important that you record this type of sick leave correctly on People Point so that pay is protected and the staff member's sick leave record is in order.
- The main role of the people manager is to support the staff member through their pregnancy. It may be possible to avoid sick leave by making accommodations to allow them to continue to work.

**HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP**

- You can consult / seek information from the CSEAS on any sensitive issues.
- The CSEAS can offer you support and advice in dealing with staff health issues which arise in the workplace.
- Remember, you can suggest to a staff member to make contact with the CSEAS for individual support

MENTAL HEALTH

Maintaining and fostering positive mental health in the workplace brings benefits to all concerned. At some stage in their career, staff may be affected by challenges to their mental wellbeing. The extent to which staff are affected may differ greatly. It might occur following a change in personal circumstances or it could be triggered by another health issue.

Engaging with staff experiencing mental health issues needs to be done in a sensitive manner. As a people manager, you are not expected to be an expert in the area of mental health, however, you may observe behaviours that alert you to difficulties that a member of your team may be experiencing.

People managers are well placed to identify changes in a staff member's behaviour which may be indicative of an emerging problem. If you notice any behaviour that causes concern, it should be addressed as soon as possible. Early intervention is preferable to ensure that the appropriate supports are offered to assist the staff member. You may need to have a conversation with the staff member about what you have observed. See the section "Having a Difficult Workplace Conversation" in this guide.

Where you and / or your staff member are working remotely, it can be more challenging to observe the situation and the individual staff member. It may be more difficult to identify a presenting issue that would be apparent in the office, e.g. signs that a staff member is withdrawing or isolating from colleagues, presenting with persistent low mood etc. For this reason, it is more important than ever to regularly check in on the health and wellbeing of each staff member via phone, video call etc., and to actively listen for any indications that there may be a mental health issue.

Mental health issues can be defined as the experience of distressing psychological symptoms to the extent that normal functioning is impaired and some form of help is usually needed for recovery. Examples of such symptoms include anxiety, depressed mood, obsessional thinking, delusions and hallucinations.



Where staff are absent due to mental ill-health, the previous section of this guide, "Health Issues", provides guidance on:

- dealing with sick leave absences
- the role of the Office of the CMO
- a staff member who appears ill in the workplace and
- a staff member returning to the workplace after a sick leave absence

WHAT YOU CAN DO WHEN YOU HAVE CONCERNS

- Monitor the situation
- Remember, people can be sensitive about disclosing their mental health issues.
- Consult with your immediate manager, HR Division, CMO or CSEAS for guidance in advance of speaking to the staff member about your concerns for their health.
- Engage with the staff member as soon as is practicable.
- Create an environment that facilitates disclosure.
- Speak to the staff member about what you have noticed or observed.
- Remember that people may not realise or accept that their behaviour is a cause for concern.
- Provide reassurance and offer practical information where available.
- Listen without making judgements. Do not try to diagnose.
- Ask how the person is feeling.
- Ask how they can be helped.
- Avoid confrontation even if the individual becomes agitated or aggressive
- Ask the staff member if they would like contact to be made with anyone on their behalf.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Be mindful of the language you use around mental wellbeing.
- Consider suggesting the availability of the Disability Liaison Officer DLO where appropriate.
- Ask the staff member if they would like to avail of the CSEAS.
- If appropriate, you may need to suggest to the staff member that they seek medical assistance; see the next section for guidance on supporting a person that you feel requires medical attention.

WHEN YOU THINK A STAFF MEMBER REQUIRES MEDICAL ATTENTION

Where a staff member becomes mentally unwell while on duty, you can refer to Circular O5/2018 Arrangements for Paid Sick Leave in the Civil Service for direction. It may also be necessary to seek advice and support from your own manager, HR Division, the CMO and/ or the CSEAS.

Paragraph 3.5 of Circular O5/2018 refers:

“No civil servant who appears to require medical attention should be allowed to remain on duty in the workplace. Where a civil servant’s wellbeing becomes a concern, their Line Manager should make appropriate arrangements for that civil servant to either return home or receive appropriate medical attention. HR Units should provide support for Line Managers in such circumstances where required.”

When suggesting to a staff member that they should seek medical advice consider the following, depending on the circumstances:

- Consult with your manager and / or HR.
- Advise the staff member of your concerns regarding their current state of health.
- If required, ask the staff member for permission to contact a family member / next of kin.
- Encourage the staff member to make contact with the CSEAS.
- In the event that a staff member becomes ill and does not agree to leave the workplace or discontinue remote working, you can consult with your manager, HR Division, the CMO and / or the CSEAS for guidance on the appropriate action. The need to contact other parties may arise, e.g. the staff member’s next of kin, GP or other sources of support.
- In consultation with HR, a referral of the staff member to the CMO may be necessary in advance of their return to establish fitness to resume work.

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

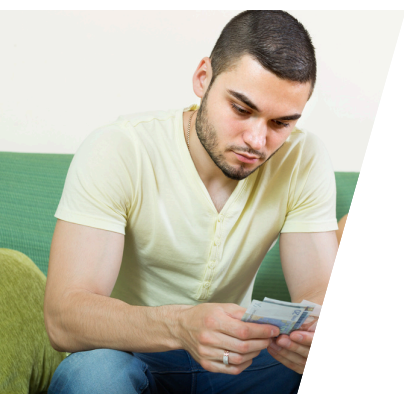
- Contact the CSEAS for guidance and support.
- On the staff member’s return to work, you could suggest they contact the CSEAS for on-going support

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

Financial difficulties can arise for any staff member as a result of various life events, e.g. long term sick leave, salary recoupment, a reduction in income, unemployment in the household, personal indebtedness etc.

These issues can lead to worry and stress for an individual and the impact may become evident at work. If the impact of financial worries is having an effect on a staff member at work, or if they disclose financial difficulties, the manager may need to talk, in a sensitive manner, to that staff member.

For more information please see the section on Having a Difficult Workplace Conversation in this guide.



Financial problems can impact a staff member's ability to perform effectively due to:

- Low mood or depression
- Pattern of sleepless nights causing excessive fatigue
- Lack of focus at work due to excessive worry or increased stress
- Sense of hopelessness with possibility of this leading to suicidal ideation

WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, CAN DO

- Listen with empathy to your staff member if they approach you and wish to discuss the matter.
- Explore what practical support may be of help to your staff member, if appropriate.
- Ensure confidentiality in so far as practicable. Suggest that the individual contacts the CSEAS who will be able to provide information on financial support e.g. Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), the Public Service Friendly Society (PSFS), Citizens Information, etc.
- Consult with your people manager or your HR Division if you have concerns.

PERSONAL HYGIENE ISSUES

Poor personal hygiene can cause discomfort and an unpleasant working environment for colleagues. The most common presentation of a personal hygiene issue is body odour. Addressing this issue with a member of staff is not easy.

A people manager who is in this situation can use the guidelines below to address the issue with a member of staff. It must be handled sensitively and effectively in order to minimise embarrassment.

A WORD OF CAUTION

What can appear as a personal hygiene problem may be attributable to other causes, e.g. some medical conditions such as:

- trimethylaminuria (fish odour syndrome)
- hyperhidrosis disorder (excessive sweating)
- palmoplantar hyperhidrosis (excessive sweating of the palms or soles of feet)
- halitosis (bad breath)

Be aware that some synthetic materials, particularly those used in footwear can have an unpleasant odour. Where personal hygiene issues arise, they should be addressed in a sensitive manner.

WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, CAN DO

- It may be helpful to discuss the situation confidentially with your manager and/or HR Division.
- Given the sensitivity of this issue it may be helpful to contact the CSEAS for support in advance of speaking to your staff member.
- Consideration could be given to have a manager of the same gender talk to the staff member concerned.
- Any discussion should be held in private and free from interruption. For more information please see section on Having a Difficult Workplace Conversation in this guide.
- In speaking to the staff member, try to reassure them of the positive aspects of their work performance. Indicate to the staff member that you are aware it is a sensitive issue to raise but as manager you have to address it.

-
- Tell the staff member what has been observed by you or others. Be prepared that you may be asked who brought it to your attention. You will need to address this in advance with the person who raised it.
 - Outline the issue clearly. Be aware that medical conditions or medications can result in body odour. Ask your staff member if they are aware of the issue. A medical condition may be disclosed by the staff member.
 - Allow time for the staff member to respond. If they become angry or upset, try to diffuse this by explaining that you are raising the issue out of concern.
 - Do not get into an argument. Help the staff member to explore possible reasons. Explore solutions in a sensitive manner.
 - If no reason is apparent, it may be appropriate to encourage a visit to the GP.
 - In concluding the discussion, say that you will have another meeting in a few weeks' time to see how things are progressing. Indicate that you are available for a follow-up discussion at a mutually suitable time.
 - Consider the timing of this conversation, it may be more appropriate to have this discussion with the staff member at the end of a working day to allow them time to process the information privately as there may be emotional and practical implications arising from the situation.

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

- In advance of speaking with your staff member you may wish to consult with the CSEAS for support and guidance.
- Following your discussion with the staff member, if appropriate, remind them of the availability of the CSEAS.

LIFE STAGES

During the course of our careers, life events and life stages can impact on working choices as indicated in the panel below. The Civil Service offers a range of work/life balance options to assist those making lifestyle choices. This time can be exciting for some and challenging for others. It may involve significant change and adjustment for the individual. It can also affect the workplace and work colleagues. Planning and preparation will be needed.



As manager, you will be considering any work/life balance applications and managing any resulting change in the workplace. Sensitivities can arise. It can be quite an emotional time for the individual making the working life choice.

While supporting the individual, you will also be managing the consequential impact on the workplace. This may include a reduction in staff resources, additional responsibilities to be assigned to remaining staff, workforce planning considerations and the overall impact within the office. While it may not be possible to fully grant a request from a staff member with regard to a certain type of leave/work-sharing pattern etc., it is worth considering whether any flexibility can be allowed or accommodation made.

Often it is the case that when the organisation can support an individual in the short to medium term, the rewards in the long term include increased employee motivation, engagement and loyalty.

Life stages include...



Caring for children



Eldercare



Care for others



Career break



Promotion



Resignation



Retirement

Sensitive and practical issues arise that may need to be considered and addressed by the manager

WHAT YOU, AS A MANAGER, CAN DO

- Listen when a staff member is considering a change in their working life.
- You may have to make a decision, possibly in consultation with your manager and HR Division, on the staff member's request, e.g. work-sharing request.
- For business reasons, it may not always be possible to approve requests.
- Informing staff of unfavourable decisions is not always easy, see section Having a Difficult Workplace Conversation in this guide.
- In situations where the staff member may be absent or leaving the workplace, be sensitive in how you manage the subsequent vacant position.
- While we all know we can be replaced, even if it is a temporary measure, it can be a sensitive issue for the individual and needs to be well managed.
- As a manager, you may be hoping for an overlap between the staff member moving on and their replacement. Again, this needs to be sensitively managed.

PRACTICAL SUPPORTS FOR STAFF MEMBERS


- HR Shared Services (PeoplePoint) for information on relevant circulars, forms and documents.
- Remind the staff member of adequate notice requirements (set out in the relevant circulars).
- HR Division.
- For those planning to retire, remind them that there are pre-retirement courses available which they may be able to attend. Further information is available from HR Divisions.
- Remember the CSEAS is available to provide support to staff who feel they need to talk over proposed work / life changes

HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP


- The manager can consult with the CSEAS for advice where they are concerned about a staff member.
- The manager can suggest and encourage the staff member to seek support from the CSEAS if appropriate

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE

The Healthy Ireland vision for healthy workplaces is that:



Workplace policies and practices in Ireland support everyone to enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential and wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of the organisation.



Employers are expected to play a role in promoting healthy workplace policies to encourage the physical, mental and social wellbeing of their employees. People managers have a key role to play in this positive approach to both the physical and mental health of employees.

People managers can:

- Create a culture of positivity through their own workplace behaviour.
- Familiarise themselves with relevant Civil Service policies and guidelines such as the Dignity at Work, Managing Sick Leave, the Civil Service Alcohol and Drugs Misuse Policy.
- Be aware of and direct staff members to the individual Department's Health and Wellbeing Framework / Strategy.
- Update staff members on the launch of the Civil Service Health & Wellbeing Framework.
- Stay abreast of workplace health initiatives.
- Encourage staff members to engage in all health and wellbeing opportunities that are offered in the workplace.
- Conduct health and wellbeing check ins with their staff

CIVIL SERVICE HEALTH AND WELLBEING FRAMEWORK

The first Civil Service Health and Wellbeing Framework was co-designed by CSHRD, the CSEAS and 12 Civil Service Departments and Offices. The Framework is a guidance document which will support and enable HR Managers with the design, implementation and evaluation of health and wellbeing programmes.

The Framework uses both WHO and OECD research, which outlines the importance of a Healthy Civil Service Workplace in safeguarding employee health and wellbeing. It is based on five interrelated dimensions of employee health and wellbeing, and nineteen underlying themes of these dimensions.

Dimensions:

1. Physical and Social Working Environment
2. Work / Life Balance
3. Leadership and Good Managerial Practices
4. Personal Growth
5. Health Resources in the Workplace

It includes examples of workplace initiatives and activities that Departments and Offices may wish to consider putting in place, in support of employee health and wellbeing. It signposts to existing centralised health and wellbeing supports available through CSEAS and OneLearning.



CSEAS SUPPORTING HEALTHY WORKPLACES

The CSEAS has a role in providing proactive initiatives to help staff and management maintain overall good health and well-being in the workplace. Some of these initiatives include:

**CSEAS WEBSITE WWW.CSEAS.PER.GOV.IE**

The CSEAS website is a key communication platform which provides comprehensive information and support on a wide range of health and well-being topics. As well as being an important reference point for staff, it highlights CSEAS publications, events and news.

The CSEAS has recently developed its website to include dedicated pages on the following topics – bereavement, parenting, carers and financial resources. The website is regularly updated with articles and videos on various topics.

**CSEAS COMMUNICATIONS VIA HR DIVISIONS**

The CSEAS regularly circulates information, via HR Divisions, highlighting relevant health and well-being topics e.g. World Mental Health Day, Suicide Prevention Day etc.

CSEAS Leaflet Series The CSEAS has published a comprehensive suite of information leaflets on workplace issues. Some of these leaflets are referred to in this guide and all are available on the CSEAS website www.cseas.per.gov.ie

**CSEAS LEAFLET SERIES**

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DELIVERY OF PRESENTATIONS BY THE CSEAS



At the invitation of HR Divisions and/or local management, the CSEAS can deliver presentations in person or via virtual platforms. These may be delivered live and/or available as a recording and can also be tailored to suit the audience.

Presentations are available on a variety of topics:

- Introduction to the CSEAS
- Building Personal Resilience
- Conflict Resolution Skills for People Managers
- Stress Awareness and Stress Management
- Good Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace
- Effective Communication
- Harmony at Work
- Self-Care for HR Staff
- Coping with Bereavement & Loss
- Mindfulness
- Work / Life Balance
- CSEAS as a Support for People Managers

CSEAS STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Attendance at Civil Service Union Conferences

Each year the CSEAS prioritises attendance at the Annual Delegate Conferences of Civil Service Unions. This initiative provides an opportunity for CSEAS team members to meet with staff across all grades and showcase the variety of support and information available from the CSEAS.

On-the-Ground Linkages

Employee Assistance Officers seek to network, both in person and via virtual platforms, across the Civil Service to promote the CSEAS and encourage Service usage.

CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE

The CSEAS is the Employee Assistance Programme for the Civil Service. Under central management within the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, it is an important shared service element of the HR structure in the Civil Service. It plays a key part in an ethos of promoting employee wellness and organisational effectiveness.

Provision of a service of this nature arises from a recognition that staff are a valued resource, whose continued wellbeing contributes to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Civil Service.

The CSEAS provides a wide range of confidential supports to staff and management designed to assist employees to manage work and / or life difficulties, which, if left unattended, could adversely affect work performance and / or attendance and quality of life.

STAFFING

The CSEAS is staffed by a team of Employee Assistance Officers (EAOs), CSEAS Manager and an Admin Support Officer. The CSEAS HQ is in Dublin and there are 5 regional offices. For individual EAO contact details please click on Meet Our Team on the homepage of the CSEAS website www.cseas.per.gov.ie



HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP THE MANAGER

Managers can avail of personal support from the CSEAS when they themselves are facing their own work or life challenges. The CSEAS can offer:

- the opportunity for managers to discuss staff welfare issues, without the manager identifying the staff member concerned
- guidance and help in exploring options to address the situation
- consultation in preparation for difficult workplace conversations

HOW A STAFF MEMBER CAN ENGAGE WITH THE CSEAS

Self Referral

A staff member can self-refer to the CSEAS by contacting the Service directly. There is no feedback to management in such instances, unless agreed / requested by the staff member. CSEAS clients can request a letter of attendance for all CSEAS appointments.

Suggested Referral

A staff member may disclose to their HR Division or people manager that they are experiencing personal or work-related challenges. In the course of discussions, it may be suggested to the individual that contact with the CSEAS may be helpful.

Work colleagues, trade union representatives and others who have a concern about a staff member may suggest the CSEAS as a source of support.

At appointments with the CMO, it may be suggested that contact with the CSEAS may be helpful.

If a staff member contacts the CSEAS as a result of any of these suggestions, this is considered a self-referral. There will be no feedback to a third party unless the staff member gives their consent. The CSEAS cannot confirm attendance to the party who suggested that the staff member avail of the CSEAS. The CSEAS can provide letters of attendance directly to the staff member if requested.

Management Referral

The CSEAS accepts management referrals from HR Divisions or people managers in the following situations only:

- Where there is a threat to life i.e. suicidal intent
- Where the referral has been recommended by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO)
- Where HR or a manager has concerns for a staff member's mental health and wellbeing and has received verbal consent from the staff member for the CSEAS to make contact

The CSEAS Management Referral Form for use in these situations only is available on the CSEAS website www.cseas.per.gov.ie

Confirmation of Engagement Following Management Referrals

Where a staff member is referred to the CSEAS by HR Divisions or people manager in any of the three situations mentioned above, confirmation of attendance / engagement will be made available to the referring party. Further feedback from the CSEAS, if any, will be provided with the advance consent of the staff member. If an individual chooses to avail or not avail of the CSEAS, this will be relayed to the referring party.



CSEAS CONFIDENTIALITY

Information and personal data disclosed by individuals to the CSEAS, including disclosure of a disability, will not be shared with the individual's HR Division / people manager or any other third party outside of the CSEAS, without the prior knowledge and consent of the individual (exceptions are listed next). This is in keeping with normal professional standards. Self-disclosure, as appropriate, will be encouraged in the individual's best interests. For example, if an individual tells his or her employer about a previously undisclosed disability, "reasonable accommodations" may need to be considered. This may assist in alleviating any difficulties due to the staff member's disability.

EXCEPTIONS TO CONFIDENTIALITY

- Life-threatening situations to the individual, other parties or the public
- Where there is a statutory responsibility to report
- Where required by a court or legal process to do so
- Where non-disclosure of information could compromise the CSEAS
- Where the CSEAS becomes aware of a breach in criminal law, disclosure may be necessary

CSEAS RECORDS

The office of the CSEAS:

- Holds records of engagements with CSEAS clients in compliance with Data Protection Regulations. See the CSEAS GDPR Statement on the CSEAS website www.cseas.per.gov.ie
- Recognises the need to treat all client data in an appropriate and lawful manner
- Is committed to complying fully with the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2018 and EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR)

USEFUL RESOURCES

[Adoptive Leave](#)

[Anger Management](#)

[Bereavement – Coping with Grief and Loss](#)

[Blended Working Policy](#)

[Building Personal Resilience](#)

[Carers Benefit](#)

[Conflict Resolution Skills for Managers](#)

[Circular 08/2009 – Alcohol and Drugs Misuse Policy](#)

[Circular 01/2017 – Bereavement Leave in the Civil Service](#)

[Circular 05/2018 – Arrangements for Paid Sick Leave](#)

[Circular 18/2004 – Career Progression for People with a Disability in the Irish Civil Service](#)

[Circular 42/2001 – Gender Equality Policy for the Civil Service](#)

[Circular 24/2002 – Diversity in the Civil Service – A Policy on Equality of Opportunity](#)

[Code of Practice for the Employment of People with a Disability in the Irish Civil Service](#)

[Critical Incident in the Workplace – Self-care Information](#)

[CSEAS as a Resource for Managers](#)

[Death in Service](#)

[Department of Social Protection](#)

[Domestic Violence Leave](#)

[Domestic Violence Support](#)

[Dignity at Work Policy](#)

[Disability Guidelines](#)

[Disability Liaison Officers](#)

[Effective Communication](#)

[Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015](#)

[Equality Act 2004](#)

[Disability Act 2005](#)

[Health and Safety Authority](#)
[Financial Matters CSEAS support page](#)
[Force Majeure Leave](#)
[Good Mental Health in the Workplace](#)
[Guidelines on the Management of Probation in the Civil Service](#)
[Grievance Procedure](#)
[Health and Wellbeing Check In Tips](#)
[Helping the Bereaved at Work](#)
[HR Shared Services website \[www.NSSO.gov.ie\]\(http://www.NSSO.gov.ie\)](#)
[Information on Mediation in the Civil Service](#)
[Information Guide on Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace](#)
[Management of Underperformance Policy](#)
[Managing Your Money: Budgeting Information and Assistance](#)
[Marriage Leave on Separation or Breakdown](#)
[Maternity Leave](#)
[National Disability Authority](#)
[OneLearning Pre-Retirement Course](#)
[Parental Leave](#)
[Parenting Support CSEAS page](#)
[Personal Action Plan](#)
[Personal Affairs Checklist](#)
[Personal Hygiene](#)
[Planning for Retirement; How the CSEAS Can Help](#)
[Pre-Retirement Courses; check with HR Divisions](#)
[Pregnancy-related Sick Leave](#)
[Public Jobs \(PAS\)](#)
[Probation](#)
[Reducing Stress in Your Life](#)
[Responding to Difficult Phonecalls and Self-care](#)
[Response to a Critical Incident in the Workplace](#)
[Responding to a Staff Member in Suicidal Distress](#)

[Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005](#)

[Special and Other Leave](#)

[Stress Awareness](#)

[Substance Misuse and Addiction](#)

[Suicidal Distress – Resources for HR Divisions / Line Managers](#)

[Suicide – Information for Those in Suicidal Distress](#)

[Suicide – Information for Those Affected by Suicide](#)

[The Civil Service Disciplinary Code](#)

[The Civil Service Pensions Information Centre](#)

[Understanding Stress](#)

[Working from Home / Blended Working](#)

[Working Parent Information Series](#)

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Alcoholic Anonymous Ireland

Al-Anon Alateen Ireland – support for families and friends of problem drinkers

An Garda Siochana

Barnardos

CANA Revenue Credit Union

Citizens Information

Competition and Consumer Protection Commission

Family Mediation Service and Legal Aid Board

Gamblers Anonymous

HSE

Insolvency Service of Ireland

Irish Hospice Foundation

MABS – Money Advice and Budgeting Service

Mental Health Ireland

Narcotics Anonymous Ireland

Parentline

ParentsPlus

Pieta House 1800 247 247

Public Service Credit Union

Public Service Friendly Society

Rainbows

Samaritans Freecall 116 123, available 24/7

Tusla – Child and Family Agency

Your Mental Health

CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE **PEOPLE MANAGERS' GUIDE**

