

Scottish autism

Wellbeing Policy

Director Responsible

Director of Autism Services

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CONSULTATION AND RATIFICATION SCHEDULE

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CROSS REFERENCE TO OTHER POLICIES / STRATEGIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with:	Detail
Policy 1	Physical Intervention Policy
Policy 2	Violence at Work Policy
Policy 3	Dignity at Work Policy
Policy 4	Health and Safety Policy
Policy 5	Lone Working Policy
Policy 6	Accident and Incident Reporting Policy
Policy 7	Child and Adult Protection Policy
Policy 8	Risk Management Policy
Policy 9	Relationships with Service Users Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

Scottish Autism supports and enables people with autism to lead full and enriched lives and to be equal valued citizens in their communities. Our mission is to enable people living with autism in Scotland through the whole life journey.

This policy is designed to help service users and service staff manage their wellbeing and describes a range of proactive approaches staff & service users can apply to help them promote their wellbeing by using a variety of stress management initiatives.

Scottish Autism recognises that many individuals with autism have difficulties with social concepts and communications particularly around social relationships and this can create considerable insecurity, low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence on a daily basis often leading to depression, ill health and behaviours of concern. In turn this can lead to high levels of stress and anxiety and have a profound effect on their social, emotional, physical, environmental, spiritual and mental wellbeing. Some siblings and parents, too, suffer from being in a very stressful environment, unable to socialise because of the difficulties at home, and this can result in family breakdown.

Based on the aforementioned Scottish Autism is building its capacity to support the wellbeing of people. This policy applies to all employees within Scottish Autism.

2. STRESS

Often focus is solely on the person with autism's behaviour of concern and the underpinning factors or root causes of why the behaviour is taking place in the first instance is missed i.e. stress. Additionally service staff's stress impacts upon working practices and more often than not can be linked to the stress of the service user.

Positive stress is called eustress or good stress and can give an extra burst of adrenaline to help you accomplish goals and meet deadlines. Eustress provides mental alertness, motivation, and efficiency and can increase self-esteem. The way a person perceives stress impacts on their health. People who view stressful situations as chances for growth usually avoid stress-related symptoms. In that sense, stress can be beneficial.

Negative stress is called Distress. It occurs when your body cannot return to a relaxed state even in the absence of the stressor. Physical signs of distress include: changes in eating or sleeping patterns, weakness, dizziness, frequent headaches, neck and back pain, and frequent colds and infections. Emotional signs of distress include: persistent hostile or angry feelings, increased frustration with minor annoyances, nervousness, and lack of concentration, anxiety, and depression.

Mental health problems can affect anyone regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity or social group. The most common forms of mental ill health are anxiety, depression, phobic anxiety disorders and obsessive compulsive disorders. For individuals with autism mental health problems are more common than the general population mainly due to the everyday demands put upon them which in turn creates daily stress.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define stress as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them". There are many factors, both inside and outside of the workplace, which can lead to stress.

Scottish Autism recognises and is proactive in its duties under health and safety law to assess and take measures to control risks from work-related stress for its employees by promoting good working practices such as Healthy Working Lives, health & safety awareness, access to occupational health, supervisions and various training opportunities for health and wellbeing awareness. Service users' health and wellbeing is supported through support planning and pupils' personal learning plans (PLP).

In order for Scottish Autism to further address stress in people we have adopted the ATLASS model of wellbeing during 2013, aligned to our ethos, values and mission with an aim of embedding ATLASS philosophy as part of everyday culture.

3. DEFINITION OF WELLBEING

The state of feeling healthy and happy. (source – Cambridge Dictionary)



4. ATLASS

The ATLASS programme was developed by psychologists from the Studio 111 organisation as a “Model of Wellbeing” and a public health approach. ATLASS entails a holistic approach to support that focuses on the wellbeing and happiness of the individuals in our services. The programme recognises the impact of stress on wellbeing, so rather than focusing on ‘challenging behaviour’ as something to be treated on its own, ATLASS-trained practitioners focus on stress-reduction in service environments, positive interactions between staff and those they support, and the importance of health and exercise for wellbeing. The approach is holistic and recognises that stress is transactional, thus reducing stress among parents and practitioners helps provide a positive environment for the individuals that we support, and that positive interactions and relationships benefit everyone. This helps us move on from focusing solely on the individual and adapting ‘their behaviour’ to reflect on our own practice in a way that empowers us all. The ATLASS model examines our spiritual, mental, environmental, social, physical, and emotional wellbeing.

This approach is hoped to promote a shift in thinking by introducing a more integrated approach to supporting people with autism. Additionally, it allows Scottish Autism to endorse a new way of thinking in our policy development, training, support planning, educational planning and every day practice.

A holistic approach of wellbeing allows for a variety of methods to work towards a positive outcome for each individual involved. In order for us to implement the wellbeing model a planned strategic approach is needed including:

- ATLASS awareness training for all staff
- A ‘toolkit’ of knowledge and resources
- A change in policy & procedures and other related documentation and practice
- Monitoring, review, measurements of effectiveness and efficiency

Scottish Autism recognise the importance of promoting wellbeing of service users and service staff. Wellbeing is not another word for physical health; wellbeing includes the presence of positive emotions and moods (contentment and happiness). Stress and anxiety can have a major impact on the emotional wellbeing of individuals with autism, their families, carers and service staff. It is important that staff recognise their own wellbeing needs and how stress can impact upon their health and wellbeing and practice.

Areas of wellbeing include:

- Physical – the physiology of our body systems and risk of disease, especially cancer, heart disease and diabetes.
- Psychological – mental health, emotions, behaviours and beliefs.
- Social – interactions with people. This could be with family, friends or others.
- Economic – disposable income and financial health.
- Environment – area of living or placement.

5. VALUES

- A person-centred approach to support to children, young people and adults living with autism

- Upholding the right of service users to have input to their services
- The promotion of positive and inclusive lifestyles, enabling people living with autism to make a positive contribution to their local community
- Investment in staff support and learning
- A commitment to stakeholder involvement
- Promoting mutuality of support and respect through the highest standards of integrity
- To be an open and accountable organisation

Scottish Autism believes that people with autism and service staff have the same legal and ethical rights as any other human beings, including the right to be free from danger, harm and neglect.

We also seek to share our knowledge and expertise with parents, carers and other professionals in order to support the development of skills and strategies needed to provide the best care and support for people with autism

6. RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

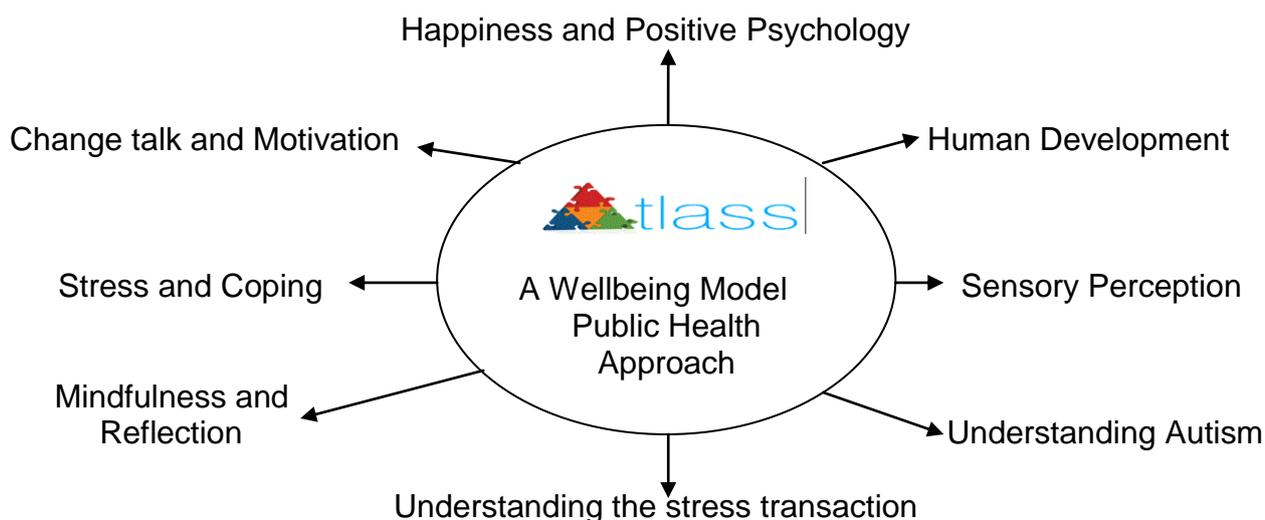
Risk Management is embedded in management practice at all levels of the organisation. The risk policy encourages appropriate positive risk taking and risk assessment where required. Risk assessment is a key process and should be used as an aid in identifying the hazards and factors that lead to or contribute to service users wellbeing being compromised. A planned strategy of mitigation with preventative measures to reduce the risk probability and impact in areas of concern will have a positive outcome for service users and safe working environment for staff.

7. PRACTICE INTERVENTIONS

Scottish Autism supports the philosophy of Positive Behaviour Support and the organisation seeks to promote a culture that encourages preventative and proactive approaches to supporting individuals with autism whilst reducing the use of any restrictive practices

Individual support and personal learning plans should consider the possible function of behaviours of concern by outlining personalised approaches that are known to be effective for the individual. The aim should be to avoid any use of physical intervention by adopting a low arousal approach and the wellbeing model as a primary intervention.

ATLASS Low Arousal Framework



The low arousal framework is used to identify and understand the underpinning causes of stress potentially causing a negative impact upon a person's wellbeing. Collectively the various elements of the framework will be used to inform a stress reduction plan including:

- What are the main causes of stress in the individual's life?
- How can stress be reduced using a personalised approach
- Teaching strategies to reduce stress
- Monitoring & review

Where a restrictive intervention is deemed necessary this should only be after all other methods of intervention have been unsuccessful and should be used as a very last resort. Where a foreseeable risk has identified the need for any restrictive intervention, this must be planned and be part of a risk assessment with clear documentation stating why the restrictive intervention is needed in the first instance. However, in a crisis situation, staff have a responsibility to ensure duty of care and act in the best interests of the individual.

Therefore action, in line with legislation and good practice principles, will be taken immediately to protect the individual, others and where appropriate, the environment.

Following unplanned restrictive intervention, Risk Assessments will require to be reviewed. A plan to reduce the use of physical intervention must also be developed. The systems and procedures for the use of and reporting of physical intervention are detailed in the Physical Intervention Policy.

8. STATEMENT OF INTENT

Directors and managers recognise that stress can have a negative impact on people's wellbeing, and that it can take many forms and thus needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level. Directors and managers will take steps to promote service user and employee wellbeing as far as reasonably practicable.

This wellbeing policy expands upon Scottish Autism's Health and Safety policy, setting out how Scottish Autism will promote the wellbeing of service users and employees.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE WELLBEING POLICY

Directors & Managers will:

- Promote a culture of wellbeing
- Promote effective communication around wellbeing and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting service user and employees.

Employees will:

- Proactively promote a safe and supportive culture within the organisation, adhering to the procedures and standards of this policy, being accountable for their own learning and development and taking reasonable steps to promote their own wellbeing.

Human Resources will:

- Collate performance management information which will enable the organisation to measure its performance in relation to stress management of employee wellbeing, such as:
- Sickness absence data
- Staff turnover, exit interviews
- Number of self referrals to the employee counselling service
- Number of referrals to the Occupational Health provider
- Numbers of grievance and harassment cases.

Practitioners & Managers will:

- Promote & Monitor the health & wellbeing of service users and pupils and self/colleagues
- Collaborate with families and multi-disciplinary agencies where required
- Record and review

10. ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE WELLBEING POLICY

These include the following:

- Communicating the wellbeing policy and measures taken by Scottish Autism to manage wellbeing and stress reduction.
- Agreed knowledge, skills and behaviours for staff, through competency framework Training and Development procedures to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and competencies
- Promote through Scottish Autism's internal communication system "Source".
- The contents of the policy will be covered during induction training sessions for employees
- Scottish Autism will consult with its employees on the wellbeing policy seeking their views on its effectiveness including stress management arrangements through staff surveys and other appropriate questionnaires and assess and refine where required.

11. SERVICE USER SUPPORT

Service users' wellbeing will be supported by their service staff in line with their service agreement, support plan and/ or PLP.

12. EMPLOYEE SUPPORT

Scottish Autism staff will be supported to promote their own wellbeing through wellbeing initiatives, health & safety initiatives, training, supervision, appraisal and counselling service.

13. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Scottish Autism will ensure the appropriate staff training is available to implement this policy. All employees will be accountable for their own learning and development as required by their role. A record will be maintained in staff personal files.

14. COMPLAINTS

Any complaints about the application of this policy should be addressed through Scottish Autism's complaint procedures.

15. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be monitored on an annual basis and reviewed in line with the organisation's 3 year policy review cycle.