

7.02 Staff Welfare v4

The policy describes NICS' responsibility towards your welfare and the part the Welfare Advisory Service and Welfare Officers play in promoting this service.

This Section covers:

- The role of the Welfare Advisory Service (WAS) – Section 2 Welfare Advisory Service
- Advice offered to a variety of parties:
 - Staff – Section 2.5 Advice to Staff
 - Management – Section 2.9 Advice to Management
 - New Entrants – Section 2.11 Advice to New Entrants
 - Early Leavers – Section 2.13 Advice to Early Leavers
 - Those Approaching Retirement – Section 2.14 Advice to Those Approaching Retirement
- If you are living away from home, WAS holds an accommodation register – Section 2.18 Accommodation Register
- Links to Occupational Health – Section 2.17 Health
- The role of the various Welfare Officers - Section 2.21 The Chief Welfare Officer and Section 2.22 Departmental Welfare Officers

The following terms within this policy are defined in the glossary:

Working conditions, compassionate transfers, special leave, advances of salary, new entrants, early leavers

You may also be interested in the following policies:

3.01 Sickness Absence, 7.04 NICS Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Eye-care Scheme, 7.05 Alcohol, Drugs and Substance-Abuse, 7.06 Smoking, 7.07 Domestic Violence and Abuse

This policy is version 4

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This homepage is only a guide to the policy, not the policy itself. In the event of any discrepancy between the content of this homepage and the associated policy, the wording of the policy shall apply.

7.02 STAFF WELFARE

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7.02 STAFF WELFARE

1 General

1.1 Staff welfare is an essential part of the work of the Civil Service, augmenting and supplementing other aspects of personnel and line management. It is an integral part of the responsibility of all supervisors and managers in the Service.

1.2 However, as the exercise of this responsibility frequently requires detailed, indeed specialist, knowledge an advisory service has been established to assist line management and Establishment/Personnel Branches.

2 Welfare Advisory Service

2.1 The Welfare Advisory Service (WAS) is available for you or management to consult with a view to solving personal or group welfare problems. Welfare staff can also sometimes identify at an early stage those problems which, in a large organisation, can be overlooked until they have developed to a serious level. The existence of a specialised service also allows the development of the expert knowledge and personal skills needed to carry out welfare work.

2.2 In dealing with personal problems, the aim of the WAS is to help you find your own solutions to your problems and confidential consultation is a vital aspect of this work. However, in exceptional cases which have legal or other serious considerations (such as breaches of important Departmental rules) where disclosure of information may be required, a Welfare Officer must aim to persuade you to make the necessary disclosure yourself. This is a rare problem and it is fully accepted by management and Welfare Officers alike that the confidence of staff in the discretion of the WAS is essential if it is to fulfil its role.

2.3 The WAS does not seek to assume the role of management - the WAS advises while management decides. However, the WAS should be given full opportunity to express its view whenever management is considering matters in which there are welfare considerations. As its recommendations are framed in the knowledge of management as well as of staff, it is expected that they will not be lightly set aside.

2.4 Similarly, the existence of the WAS does not diminish the responsibility of management for your well being. Welfare problems must not be left to be discovered by the Welfare Officer, rather his/her expertise and advice should be sought by line management at the earliest possible stage.

Advice to Staff

2.5 You are advised on personal problems arising, for example, from work or domestic circumstances, through correspondence or personal interview as requested or appropriate. The objective is to assist you to find your own solutions to your problems. The WAS is available to you if you are retired as well as to you if you are still in employment.

2.6 Some of you may benefit from the assistance of specialist organisations such as the Civil Service Benevolent Fund. In these circumstances the WAS can advise on the most appropriate body and assist you in making contact.

2.7 In cases where assistance as well as advice is appropriate, care must be taken that action is with your agreement and that assistance does not become interference, however well intentioned. Direct assistance may be appropriate, for example, for the next of kin upon the death of an officer and for some retired officers.

2.8 You may seek help from the Welfare Officer by a personal visit, telephone or letter and you are free to do this directly without first approaching either your supervisor or Establishment/Personnel Branch.

Advice to Management

2.9 Management is advised on the welfare implications of group problems, for example accommodation, working conditions, travelling difficulties and high incidence of sick leave.

2.10 Management is advised on welfare considerations when you request action by your Establishment/Personnel Officer, for example compassionate transfers, special leave and advances of salary. The WAS does not become involved in purely career considerations.

Advice to New Entrants

2.11 If you are a new entrant, you are seen by the WAS soon after joining to make sure that you have been fully informed about the services and facilities available to you.

2.12 Particular attention may need to be paid to you if you are entering employment for the first time or after a long break and to you if you will be living away from home.

Advice to Early Leavers

2.13 The WAS requests an interview with those leaving the Civil Service before normal retiring age as it may be able to offer helpful advice in some cases.

Advice to Those Approaching Retirement

2.14 The WAS offers its services, at an early stage, to you if you are approaching retirement. Courses are also provided for you, but as you are unlikely to meet fully every need they are not considered a substitute for individual advice.

Additional Functions of the Welfare Advisory Service

2.15 Though the primary function of the WAS is to provide advice, the experience and skills of Welfare Officers render them particularly suitable for the execution of other duties in a broader welfare arena. They may therefore be assigned specific additional functions after consultation with Departmental or Central Trade Union Side. It has been agreed with the Trade Union Side of the Central Whitley Council that the WAS will be responsible for the functions set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.22.

First Aid

2.16 The WAS arranges, in consultation with Trade Union Side, the programme of agreed first aid training. It liaises with Management and Trade Union Side to ensure that each building has an adequate complement of trained first aiders and is satisfactorily provided with first aid equipment, rest rooms, and so on.

Health

2.17 The WAS liaises and co-operates with the Occupational Health Service in an effort to improve the general health of staff. These duties are wide ranging and include, for example, arranging medical screening as agreed with Trade Union Side and seeking professional advice where it is thought working conditions may have an adverse effect on health. The WAS also arranges blood donor services.

Accommodation Register

2.18 The WAS maintains a register of accommodation in the Belfast area which is suitable for you if you are living away from home.

Training

2.19 The WAS liaises with Training Branches and usually takes responsibility for the welfare content of courses.

Consultation

2.20 The WAS liaises with and is available for consultation by Trade Union Side on all matters affecting the welfare of staff.

The Chief Welfare Officer

2.21 The Chief Welfare Officer liaises with other Departments and is available to advise and assist Departments on welfare matters. The postholder is responsible for central training of Welfare Officers, close liaison with Civil Service charities and for the dissemination of information to Departments. He/she should encourage Welfare Officers to develop special skills in relation to drugs, alcoholism, marriage guidance and other specialised problems.

Departmental Welfare Officers

2.22 Departmental Welfare Officers are normally Staff Officer or Executive Officer Grade I rank. There should be a Welfare Officer/Assistant Welfare Officer to approximately 1,750 to 2,000 staff. In smaller Departments a part-time appointment may be agreed, subject to the general principle that a Welfare Officer should not carry Establishment/Personnel responsibilities.