



Feedback Report

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

Project Number: SCO-24-00075

Practitioner: [REDACTED]

Report Date: JUL 2024



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Congratulations!

You have achieved **We invest in wellbeing** accreditation.



Key dates

Accreditation date	12 month meeting	24 month meeting	Accreditation expiry
4 JUN 2024	JUN 2025	JUN 2026	4 JUN 2027

Detailed feedback and recommendations inside

Your We invest in wellbeing feedback report

The **We invest in wellbeing** framework is designed for organisations of all sizes and sectors. It is a versatile, non-prescriptive and outcome-based tool. Investors in People doesn't require your organisation to adopt any particular strategy or initiative but seeks to help you develop a culture of health and wellbeing improvement that works for your organisation.

Sitting behind the three indicators of **Leading a culture of wellbeing**, **Supporting a culture of wellbeing** and **Improving a culture of wellbeing** is a four stage Maturity Model. The Maturity Model allows progression through structured levels from Standard to higher levels of accreditation.

Each level, from Developed to High Performing, describes how well the behaviours, practices and processes demonstrated by your organisation can reliably and sustainably produce positive outcomes. So that means we want to know if your people feel supported, who gets involved in activities and what's available to help improve their wellbeing.

The following sections in this report summarise your assessment and rationale for the performance levels achieved. An analysis against each wellbeing indicator has been provided, including assessment survey data, strengths, and potential areas for development. Non-attributable quotes have been included to add colour to the narrative and illustrate perceptions.

An introduction to your organisation

SQA is the national accrediting and awarding body for Scotland. The organisation has had a difficult couple of years with some issues outside its span of control. There is an ongoing, major reform of the organisation.

You have held Investors in Young People accreditation since 2015 and are currently accredited at the higher level of Gold. You held the Healthy Working Lives Gold award for the past 15 years but this is no longer in operation.

You are committed to working with Investors in People as a key mechanism to guide and influence positive, aligned change to deliver your workforce strategy throughout the organisation.

Your wellbeing priorities

Your wellbeing strategy is part of your commitment to colleagues, offering a broad range of help for social, financial, physical, and psychological wellbeing. Your commitment is to support its development and implementation so that all colleagues feel that they have the support they need.

SOCIAL & FINANCIAL



We will...

- contribute to financial security by paying every colleague at least the Scottish Living Wage, and publish a transparent pay policy that clearly sets out our approach to pay, and when specific payments or allowances apply.
- provide and encourage colleagues to take up access to learning and development opportunities, and to apply for permanent and/or promoted roles to enhance their financial security and sense of personal fulfilment
- give all colleagues time and opportunity to give something back to their local communities
- arrange a variety of social activities that are inclusive for all, promote them widely, and ensure that it is easy to join in
- help colleagues to create open, honest, and non-judgemental spaces, so that people are comfortable bringing their whole selves to work
- provide services to support colleagues' physical and mental wellbeing.
- support employee-led groups and communities that provide valuable information and allyship to help colleagues' sense of belonging in the workplace
- be clear on the ethos and goals of the organisation, so that colleagues can feel connected and understand how they can contribute to activities and initiatives that support our ambitions

PHYSICAL



We will...

- provide a programme of activities to support and improve physical wellbeing
- design working environments that enhance the health and wellbeing of all colleagues
- implement hybrid ways of working, which are designed to provide flexibility and improve work-life balance
- guide colleagues in looking after their physical wellbeing, both working from home and in the office, and ensure they can access resources and guidance about creating a physically healthy workplace
- help line managers understand how to nurture a healthy working environment for their teams

PSYCHOLOGICAL



We will...

- work with all leaders to promote a culture of positive mental health and wellbeing and support colleagues to invest in their own wellbeing
- design and deliver programmes on wellbeing to help colleagues understand their own wellbeing and how to positively support it
- implement learning and development opportunities for line managers to help them create a mentally healthy work environment for their teams
- provide wellbeing resources and services for all colleagues
- create platforms for colleagues to share experience, offer feedback and make suggestions for wellbeing support
- design and implement people policies that clearly set out how all colleagues can embody and exemplify our values
- help to create a learning culture by encouraging feedback and recognition at all levels, and nurture taking a growth-mindset approach to our personal and professional practice.

Assessment methodology

This was your first We Invest in Wellbeing assessment, and followed an advisory workshop held with the Wellbeing Steering Group in late 2023.

The online wellbeing survey was made available to all colleagues between 27 MAR and 12 APR.

On Mon 13 and Tue 14 MAY I spoke to 19 people, confidentially, one to one, for around thirty minutes each. Conversations were on Teams after it became apparent that most people would be working remotely. The CEO was unavailable, so I spoke with a senior manager to complete the assessment in early June.

The 20 people were drawn from a variety of roles, locations, length of service, and seniority, to make up a representative cross-section.

A big thank you...

Planning for this assessment was carried out with Rosemary Mooney, and I am grateful for all her organisation, and making available such a broad selection of supporting documentation. I'm also really grateful to Caitlyn Johnston for helping me to access data and documents.

What you can be proud of...

- You have a clear wellbeing strategy with stated commitments to support social, financial, physical, and psychological wellbeing
- Plans, and initiatives are understood, and colleagues confirm that they are listened to and encouraged to take part in developing wellbeing policy
- Line managers are widely respected by the people they manage
- Colleagues talk positively about their line manager, and performance and wellbeing conversations they have with them
- High levels of autonomy and control are beneficial to emotional and social wellbeing

What you could work on...

- It would be a good idea to review workloads, and find ways to balance demands. This may need to be an ongoing process as workloads develop
- Ensure that all managers complete the mandatory line manager fundamentals training
- Hybrid and flexible working arrangements are not available to all colleagues, and it would be a good idea to understand if this is having any impact on their wellbeing
- It would be a good idea to develop a policy around Teams meetings, specifically back to back meetings, and possibly look at periods of time which are meeting free
- It might be a good idea to review the level of social activity encouraged by the organisation and establish if it is appropriate
- If possible, include wellbeing measures in the employee engagement survey

What's next?

Gaining accreditation is a brilliant achievement, and a definite reason for celebration. But it's not the end of the journey. Your accreditation will last for three years, and we'll help you create an action plan for what changes your organisation's going to make over that time. We'll check in with you regularly to find out how it's going and measure the effect your changes are having.

When you've had a chance to read this report, we'll explain your results in our **feedback meeting** with the Wellbeing Steering Group on Tue 20 AUG.

Together, we'll discuss any queries arising from this report and consider potential areas for development to support action planning for continuous improvement.

Meanwhile, if you have any questions, please let me know as I would be delighted to chat to talk further about wellbeing at SQA.

To keep your accreditation, you need to:

- continue to meet (or exceed) the requirements of your award.
- engage with us 12 and 24 months down the line. We won't be assessing you again, but it'll give us the chance to chat through progress against your action plan.
- be reassessed no more than three years from the date of accreditation.

Don't forget to celebrate!

Let your people know how you did. Acknowledge their hard work and include them in the journey you're on.

Assessment result

Your performance level by theme

This table shows the levels attained for the 9 themes within the framework.

Indicator	Theme	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
LEADING a culture of wellbeing	Shaping	✓	✓		
	Owning	✓	✓		
	Living	✓			
SUPPORTING a culture of wellbeing	Connecting	✓			
	Aligning	✓			
	Engaging	✓	✓		
IMPROVING a culture of wellbeing	Measuring	✓			
	Enhancing	✓			
	Sustaining	✓			

Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
Health and wellbeing plans and practices are in place, communicated and understood	People and leaders are actively engaged in health and wellbeing activities	Positive outcomes are actively driven; people and leaders take ownership for health and wellbeing	Health and wellbeing practices are fully embedded and are producing consistent positive results; people and leaders are accountable and continuously looking to improve.
You need to meet all 3 indicators and themes at a developed level to gain accreditation	You need to meet all 3 indicators and themes at developed and established levels for SILVER accreditation	You need to meet all 3 indicators and themes at developed, established and advanced levels for GOLD accreditation	You need to meet all 3 indicators and themes at developed, established, advanced and high performing levels for PLATINUM accreditation

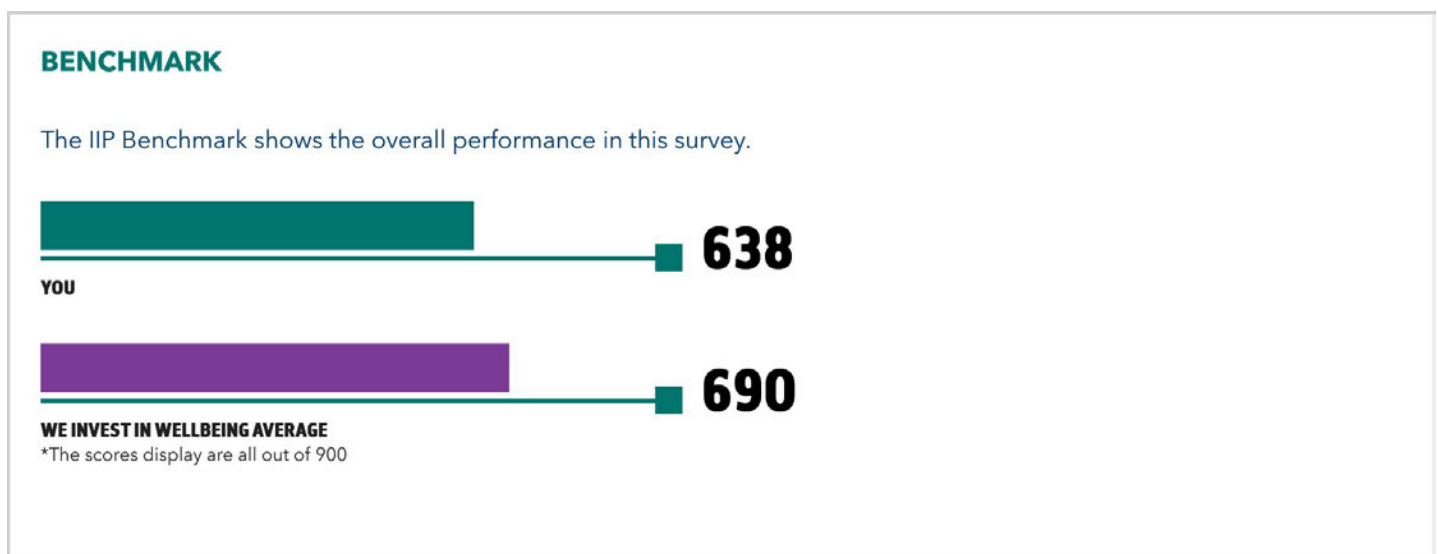
Survey headline points

Your overall survey score

The online survey uses a seven point Likert scale ranging from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree, with Neither agree nor disagree as a central point. Each indicator is therefore scored out of a maximum of seven points.

This is then calculated as a percentage for each of the nine indicators, and combined to provide a benchmark score out of 900.

The SQA benchmark score of 638 is slightly lower than the IIP average of 690.



Who took the survey?

A total of 1,000 colleagues were invited to complete the survey, and 407 (41%) responded. For an organisation of your size an 11% response rate is considered valid.

The response rate by Directorate was:

- Qualifications development, 120 responses (30% of total)
- Business systems, 53 responses (13%)
- Operations, 52 responses (13%)
- Business development, 45 responses (11%)
- People, 44 responses (11%)
- Policy, analysis & standards, 32 responses (8%)
- Communications, 26 responses (6%)
- Finance and corporate services, 17 responses (4%)
- Accreditation, 9 responses (2%)
- Corporate office, 9 responses (2%)

SAMPLE & RESPONSE RATE

Sample	Minimum Number of Responses	Total Responses	Response Rate
1000	110	407/1000	41%

OVERALL RESPONSE RATE

41%

BY TEAM

QUALIFICATIONS DEVELOPMENT	30% of total responses (120 Responses)
BUSINESS SYSTEMS	13% of total responses (53 Responses)
OPERATIONS	13% of total responses (52 Responses)
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	11% of total responses (45 Responses)
PEOPLE	11% of total responses (44 Responses)
POLICY, ANALYSIS & STANDARDS	8% of total responses (32 Responses)
COMMUNICATIONS	6% of total responses (26 Responses)
FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES	4% of total responses (17 Responses)
ACCREDITATION	2% of total responses (9 Responses)
CORPORATE OFFICE	2% of total responses (9 Responses)

Your survey results by indicator

Indicator summary

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	AVERAGE SCORE	DIFFERENCE FROM IIP AVERAGE
Indicator 1 Leading a culture of wellbeing	17.1%	28.6%	18.9%	12.7%	9%	9.4%	4.4%	4.9	-0.6
Indicator 2 Supporting a culture of wellbeing	20.7%	32.3%	18%	13.6%	6.7%	5.6%	3.1%	5.2	-0.3
Indicator 3 Improving a culture of wellbeing	14.7%	28.4%	18.6%	18.1%	8.8%	7.2%	4.1%	4.8	-0.3

Each indicator, scored out of 7, is below the average for all organisations that have taken the wellbeing survey. However, all three show about two thirds of respondents agreeing with the statements. This is a good base to build on, and will be investigated in more detail elsewhere in the report.

One of the most striking aspects of the survey is the contrasting reactions of respondents to statements that include the word Organisation, and statements which don't.

Overall, statements including the word Organisation, scored 4.7, and statements which don't scored 5.8.

An illustration is the two statements below which scored 4.9 and 6 respectively:

My organisation meets my health and wellbeing needs	13.3%	33.7%	17.2%	13.5%	9.3%	9.3%	3.7%
My line manager is effective at supporting my health and wellbeing	51.1%	27.8%	8.4%	4.7%	2%	2.9%	3.2%

Rather than being a survey quirk, I feel that this is symptomatic of how people have high levels of trust for managers within their directorate, but have a less easy relationship with the organisation as a whole.

Your teams

How each team scored each indicator

LEADING A CULTURE OF WELLBEING		SUPPORTING A CULTURE OF WELLBEING		IMPROVING A CULTURE OF WELLBEING	
YOU	4.9	YOU	5.2	YOU	4.8
IIP AVERAGE	5.5	IIP AVERAGE	5.5	IIP AVERAGE	5.1
Corporate Office		Corporate Office		Corporate Office	
6.2		6.3		6.2	
People		People		People	
5.6		5.7		5.3	
Business Systems		Business Systems		Business Systems	
5.3		5.4		5.1	
Accreditation		Accreditation		Business Development	
5		5.3		4.9	
Finance & Corporate Services		Finance & Corporate Services		Accreditation	
4.9		5.2		4.9	
Business Development		Policy, Analysis & Standards		Policy, Analysis & Standards	
4.9		5.1		4.8	
Operations		Business Development		Operations	
4.8		5.1		4.8	
Policy, Analysis & Standards		Operations		Communications	
4.8		5		4.7	
Communications		Qualifications Development		Finance & Corporate Services	
4.5		5		4.7	
Qualifications Development		Communications		Qualifications Development	
4.4		4.9		4.5	

1 Leading a culture of wellbeing

Leading a culture of wellbeing

BASE QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Leading a culture of wellbeing	17.1%	28.6%	18.9%	12.7%	9%	9.4%	4.4%
My organisation is committed to creating an environment that supports people's health and wellbeing	14.3%	36.4%	18.2%	9.8%	9.8%	7.1%	4.4%
I am aware of the health and wellbeing goals for my organisation	9.8%	27.5%	23.8%	14.5%	8.4%	13%	2.9%
The leaders of my organisation champion health and wellbeing	7.6%	24.8%	25.1%	12.5%	10.3%	11.8%	7.9%
I have a say in how health and wellbeing is supported in my organisation	3.9%	18.4%	17.9%	24.8%	13.5%	15.2%	6.1%
My organisation meets my health and wellbeing needs	13.3%	33.7%	17.2%	13.5%	9.3%	9.3%	3.7%
My line manager is effective at supporting my health and wellbeing	51.1%	27.8%	8.4%	4.7%	2%	2.9%	3.2%
My organisation is a supportive and safe place to work	19.4%	31.4%	21.6%	9.1%	9.8%	6.1%	2.5%

Wellbeing is at the forefront of the collective mind

The organisation has a good relationship with staff wellbeing

Wellbeing is one of the things they're getting right

There's lots of good stuff but then things undermine them. They want to provide the environment but things get in the way

They do a lot in terms of initiatives, guidance, and support networks, but it feels like we're ticking boxes and the fundamentals that drive wellbeing are important to get right too

It's well-intentioned but doesn't always address the key causes like workload, but it's improved over the last 12 months - workload is calmer now

They're doing a pretty decent job on wellbeing

The wellbeing aim is a happy and productive workforce

I don't see it as tick box - I see it as genuine interest in staff

They recognise the importance of wellbeing and its importance in retaining loyal staff

People choose what bits of corporate policy they like and don't do the other bits

We rely on our people

There's a focus on employee wellbeing and lots of mental health first aiders

We've come through a very difficult dispute

Industrial action messaging was negative and tried to portray union members in a negative light

The hybrid working guidance contained a strong reminder of our contractual base. It was a bit of finger wagging and created a feeling that we're not being trusted now

There's a lot of uncertainty around the reform - are our jobs secure? They don't discuss it much and when you ask it's skimmed over

It was terrible how they dealt with the industrial action - saying there was no money and then there was. Communication was awful

The tone of emails gets people's backs up

It's not what they're saying - it's the tone

They don't think about how someone will react to a message - it increases anxiety

Language in communications to staff wasn't the best - it put union staff members against others. We felt we were being blamed

The Union's not great on communication, but SQA weren't 100% upfront either. There was game playing and they should be keeping everyone's mental health in mind

We've come through a very difficult dispute

Sometimes the political nature of the job is the problem - maybe they could be more direct with cabinet secretaries

Good communication would be helpful

If you've got time to read the comms about wellbeing, you're doing well

There's a lot of stuff directing you to resources, but because there's so much I haven't really engaged with it

Individually people care and the organisation has lots of policies but things they do like putting out policies without consulting the Union don't show this

The EMT have been frank about the budget cut, but they should explain why decisions are made

It is impossible to ignore the climate in which this assessment took place. The pay dispute had been recently resolved, and the reform of the organisation is still pending, leading to uncertainty

about the future. This means that people are not always confident about the organisation, and this affects how they feel about its approach to everything, including wellbeing.

However, people have a high level of confidence in line managers. This contradiction was summed up in two quotations:

The organisation talk's the talk on wellbeing, but does it walk the walk? My line manager really does walk the walk

The organisation should look at the level of care and support that colleagues give each other, and copy that at their level, and live by their own values

It is apparent from talking to staff that clearly defined and visible wellbeing goals have been identified and shared with everyone. They are available on the intranet and widely discussed. However, there is a feeling from some colleagues that this is lip service, and that leaders are not fully embracing the implementation of these wellbeing plans.

A symptom of this, talked about by colleagues, was the tactics of division that were used in the pay dispute. For some, this had an emotional impact and negative wellbeing effect. The conclusion is that wellbeing is not always the primary driver at the heart of every action that the EMT take.

This makes people question whether or not the EMT are actually committed to wellbeing. However, it is apparent that the EMT is committed to wellbeing, even if the execution sometimes falls short.

Another area of concern is workload, although this varies between directorates. Some colleagues mentioned the adverse impact of excessive workload demands on wellbeing. They question how leaders are supporting colleagues' wellbeing if they are imposing, or tolerating, unsuitable workloads, and the stress that can accompany this.

One impact of excessive workload can be burnout. A Harvard Business Review article from OCT 2022 examines the causes and effects of burnout and what can be done:

Burnout stems from a mismatch between a worker's nature and their job – a problem that is almost always systemic and endemic to the workplace rather than reflecting a problem with individual employees. UC Berkeley's Christina Maslach has identified six specific areas where such cleavages produce burnout:

- *Unsustainable workload*
- *Perceived lack of control*
- *Insufficient rewards for effort*
- *Lack of a supportive community*
- *Lack of fairness*
- *Mismatched values and skills*

<https://hbr.org/2022/10/talking-about-burnout-is-still-taboo-at-work?cid=other-eml-onp-mip-mck&hlkid=7a08d23f3ef24ab59153baf885049b68&hctky=13105446&hdpid=a2e22474-22a0-4f93-883e-3b64d1c91d4f>

It would be a good idea to review workloads in the affected directorates, and find ways to balance demands. This may need to be an ongoing process as workloads change.

The benefits of the health and wellbeing strategy, plans, and initiatives are understood, and colleagues confirm that they are listened to and encouraged to take part in developing wellbeing policy.

The active and successful Wellbeing Steering Group is a good example of this. It was clear from the time I spent with this group that there is a strong impetus from members to improve wellbeing within the organisation.

Whilst communication around the pay dispute was widely criticised, there is praise from many colleagues for the way that wellbeing issues are communicated. Some colleagues feel that there may be too much information.

There is good communication of wellbeing resources including the EAP and staff information programmes, with extensive use of intranet wallpaper messages, and Yammer wellbeing posts.

However, it is less clear that managers in all areas encourage supportive behaviours to positively address individual and team wellbeing needs.

Overall, leaders have clear intentions on wellbeing, but until some of the wider organisational factors are resolved, management's risk averse approach means that wellbeing plans cannot fully flourish.

Meanwhile, the clearly defined and communicated core values of Progressive, Enabling, and Trusted are used to create a largely positive culture and sense of shared purpose. This sense of shared purpose is particularly strong at directorate level. However, a question remains around trust at the organisational level, which must be addressed as part of the reform.

2 Supporting a culture of wellbeing

Supporting a culture of wellbeing

BASE QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Supporting a culture of wellbeing	20.7%	32.3%	18%	13.6%	6.7%	5.6%	3.1%
Health and wellbeing is important to people in my organisation	19.7%	35.1%	17.7%	15.7%	5.4%	4.2%	2.2%
I have regular opportunities to talk to my line manager about my health and wellbeing	36.4%	33.4%	11.1%	8.4%	4.4%	2.9%	3.4%
My line manager considers my health and wellbeing when we are setting my objectives	33.4%	27.5%	13%	15.5%	3.7%	4.2%	2.7%
I feel my contribution to the organisation is valued and appreciated	13.3%	30.7%	21.4%	9.3%	8.8%	10.3%	6.1%
I am encouraged to make use of the organisation's health and wellbeing activities	13.5%	32.9%	17.4%	19.7%	7.6%	7.1%	1.7%
I have the information and support I need in my organisation to look after my health and wellbeing	14%	33.7%	22.4%	15.5%	6.6%	4.7%	3.2%
I know how to respond if a colleague approaches me with a health and wellbeing issue	14.7%	32.7%	23.3%	11.3%	10.1%	5.7%	2.2%

Coming into work is a big family

Things have improved - wellbeing is a regular part of the conversation

Line managers are very supportive

Line managers are undervalued and need more support

I feel supported by my line manager

I feel well supported

My manager is great at making sure I don't build up too much TOIL

SQA's a supportive organisation - you can always reach out to your line manager

My line manager is brilliant on wellbeing and looks out for the team and knows that we are all people who have a life going on outside work

My manager asks - How are you doing? What would make the difference to help you thrive?

Managers can mandate hybrid working patterns that aren't required

I'm lucky but there's no consistency - it varies from manager to manager

Over the last six years wellbeing support has been fantastic, but before that I had a manager who was awful

Requests for flexible working can depend on who your line manager is

Trade union membership is very beneficial to wellbeing - if I have a problem I can reach out to them

The workload in our team is stressful in winter - forget lunch

There's an expectation that we can react to everything, but everyone's work is urgent

Workload and getting things dropped on you at the last minute are a problem

We're crying out for staff

We were nervous when hybrid guidance was coming out about encouraging people to go back to the office

I like hybrid because I can go in once a week

Hybrid facilitates wellbeing - no commute means more time for myself

We get messages about taking plenty of screen breaks but we're expected to be at our desks all the time

There's no meeting etiquette. People put meetings into your diary without taking it into consideration

Software is quite clunky and it causes problems

I'm trusted to make back the time and I can focus on my family

We're left to manage our time

I'm able to drop my kids at school then get right back to my work

Much more work life balance since covid

The HR team have been really supportive over my illness

There used to be a good social scene before the pandemic but now we don't see people as much as we used to

Glasgow has a lot going on, but not a lot here

The atmosphere's not the same as it used to be

The performance management system provides managers with opportunities to discuss wellbeing matters with staff. The vast majority of colleagues talk positively about their line manager, and

performance and wellbeing conversations they have with them. Colleagues largely feel supported by managers, and think that the monthly 1:1s and quarterly reviews provide an appropriate frequency.

81% of respondents to the online survey agreed that they have regular opportunities to talk to their line manager about their health and wellbeing, and 74% agree that their line manager considers their health and wellbeing when agreeing objectives.

It is vital that managers understand the effect of workload on stress levels and emotional wellbeing.

However, some colleagues talked about a lack of consistency in line management. Line managers perform a vital function as the link between the employee and the organisation, and it is important that they are able to perform consistently.

The line manager fundamentals programme will ensure that this happens, but not every line manager has been able to complete the training yet. It is important that all line managers are given the best resources available, in order to support people's wellbeing.

There are a number of other less formal ways in which people can support each other. The Wellbeing Steering Group has already been mentioned, and in addition there is the wellbeing hub, and other wellbeing groups, as well as the various mutual support networks that the organisation encourages. Wellbeing corner offers tips and ideas to support emotional, social, and physical health. Trade union membership was also talked about as a support for wellbeing.

Colleagues talked about the extent to which individual managers had supported them through serious illness or bereavement. There is a strong sense that managers have the ability and resources to really support people when they need it. This gives people confidence.

The issues around the pay dispute, although it is now resolved, cloud colleagues' attitude to financial reward and recognition. However, there is no doubt that, at the local level, the management environment enables people to feel appreciated and valued. Colleagues talk about managers showing appreciation for their efforts.

There are many policies in place which support health and wellbeing, and colleagues are aware of these initiatives. Significant amongst them are the flexible and hybrid working arrangements. These forward-looking approaches give most colleagues control over their working life, deciding where, and for many, when, they are able to do their most productive work.

It is important to note that these arrangements are not available to all colleagues, and it would be a good idea to understand if this is having a detrimental impact on their wellbeing.

High levels of autonomy and control at work are beneficial to emotional and social wellbeing. Whilst most colleagues are happy with the level of control they have, some talk about meeting etiquette, particularly when booking Teams meetings. It seems that people will schedule back-to-back Teams meetings without consulting colleagues first.

It would be a good idea to develop a policy around Teams meetings which takes account of this, and possibly looks at periods of time which are meeting free.

People talk about the changing social scene in SQA particularly in Lowden. Social activity has

reduced, and this is at least partly due to the pandemic. The danger is that although colleagues are able to work effectively, there is less social cohesion, and so people enjoy the work environment less, and engagement levels can fall. Lower engagement levels can lead to less discretionary effort and can have a detrimental effect on emotional wellbeing.

It would be a good idea to review the level of social activity encouraged by the organisation and establish if it is appropriate.

3 Improving a culture of wellbeing

Improving a culture of wellbeing							
BASE QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Improving a culture of wellbeing	14.7%	28.4%	18.6%	18.1%	8.8%	7.2%	4.1%
Health and wellbeing considerations are part of day-to-day practices in my organisation	4.9%	21.4%	22.1%	19.9%	13.5%	13%	5.2%
My organisation uses measures to shape future health and wellbeing plans	4.2%	17.2%	15%	39.6%	9.6%	9.3%	5.2%
My organisation actively seeks feedback from people about how to improve health and wellbeing	6.9%	22.6%	22.9%	17.9%	11.5%	11.8%	6.4%
My organisation offers learning and development activities that focus on health and wellbeing	11.5%	31.9%	20.6%	19.2%	7.4%	5.7%	3.7%
I feel able to balance my work and personal life	25.8%	38.3%	15.2%	7.4%	7.1%	3.2%	2.9%
My organisation values and promotes the benefits of health and wellbeing	11.5%	31.7%	22.1%	16%	9.1%	5.9%	3.7%
The people in my team genuinely care about my health and wellbeing	38.3%	35.9%	12%	7.1%	3.2%	1.5%	2%

SQA is a good organisation to work for

There's a purpose to our work - education is a good thing

SQA are actively doing things to improve wellbeing and that's a positive thing

SQA is a breath of fresh air as an employer

We're now given permission to block out time for CPD

Covid and the pandemic shone a light on things and people now share their lived experience

There's a culture of people wanting to join networks and be an ally

There's a culture of being risk averse and it affects our ability to improve how we do things

Being overzealous in negative risk leads to unnecessarily complex systems

There are staff surveys and this and that but I don't have the time to look at it

We've been waiting to see about the reform and as far as we can see it'll be the same systems

Waiting for reform is an excuse for a lot at the moment

You've got to hope that someone higher up knows what's going on, but communication on reform has been minimal to say the least

There's some frustration about not knowing the future but that's out of the organisation's hands

EMT should try and be as nice and pleasant as they can. Work can be challenging but our relationships don't need to be

I'll go to Ask EMT in person and they do listen to feedback

I'd question why IT systems haven't been replaced already

When I met the Wellbeing Steering Group in late 2023, there was concern that SQA might not meet the standard for this indicator. It was clear from my conversations with staff that things have moved on and all three themes are met at Developed.

The survey results show that there is work to do to move beyond the Developed level, with only 36% agreeing that the organisation uses data to shape health and wellbeing plans.

It is clear that baseline data around the impact of wellbeing policies on performance is being developed. This means that leaders understand and can demonstrate the link between wellbeing and performance, and this is important to managers. It would be good to include wellbeing measures in the employee engagement survey, if this is possible.

Wellbeing policies and working practices are regularly reviewed and updated.

There is a focus on equality of opportunity, with EqIA measures in place which are tracked and reported in the Workforce Equality Monitoring Report.

Within SQA, the Make a Change (MAC) Group looks at ways to improve wellbeing, introducing improvements like the wellbeing room.

However, whilst there have been a number of developments specifically aimed at improving a culture of wellbeing, there is a sense of stagnation in the wider organisation, which has an effect on colleagues' emotional health.

Some people feel that the organisation has been on hold for some years, becoming risk averse, and being treated as a political football, with a low level of investment, whilst it negotiated the challenges thrown up by the pandemic. This lack of investment is particularly talked about in the context of IT.

There is an effect on people's morale of working with outdated systems and with an uncertain future, and this can have an impact on emotional wellbeing. The next We Invest in Wellbeing assessment will be in three years when the reform will have been completed, and we can work together between now and then to make progress to a higher level of accreditation.



Want to get in touch?

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