

# **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025**



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# Introduction

**Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) plays a vital role in Scotland's transport network, operating across a large geographical area, with regional airports located at Barra, Benbecula, Campbeltown, Dundee, Inverness, Islay, Kirkwall, Stornoway, Sumburgh, Tiree and Wick John O'Groats.**

Through our staff the airports provide crucial connectivity and ensure lifeline and essential air services operate for some of Scotland's more remote communities.

Our people are geographically and culturally diverse. Through this strategy and underpinning action plans our goal is to support the health and wellbeing of our people to ensure we deliver and maintain continuity of service provision to our customer and communities.

Our aim is to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of HIAL staff and to encourage healthy lifestyles. It covers physical, mental and social health and wellbeing of staff and recognises the important role our values play in contributing to overall wellbeing at work.

The HIAL Strategy sets our people priorities and is supported by our commitment to the Investors in People (IIP) framework and achieving the highest possible standards in people management. Our Health, Safety and Wellbeing strategy will support our commitment to work with our teams to promote a positive work culture and continue to encourage constructive relationships through supportive employee policies and practices.



A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "A. Sillars".

**Andrea Sillars**  
Director of Human Resources

## **The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) define wellbeing as:**

Creating an Environment to promote a state of contentment which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation (CIPD 2016).

### **Our Health, Safety and Wellbeing activity will focus around two key aspects:**

#### **Promoting a healthy environment and workforce**

We provide a comprehensive suite of policies to support managers and colleagues on a range of health, safety and wellbeing topics designed to improve working life.

We undertake health assessments and screening where this is required for specific roles and work closely with our Occupational Health provider and other specialist medical advisors.

We deliver an annual programme of health promotion activities encouraging colleagues to take personal responsibility for their own health.

We provide specific health and safety training to meet our legal obligations as well as a range of information and other management tools aimed at supporting individuals and managers to improve performance.

#### **Creating a safe place to work and preventing work related injuries and ill health**

Our approach goes beyond compliance and takes account of the importance of managing human factors that contribute to a safe workplace.

We provide a Safety Management System and encourage our colleagues to report accidents and near misses. We investigate and analyse incidents to drive improvement in our safety culture.

We are committed to completing stress audits and creating appropriate action plans that help identify and address occupational stressors.

We understand that issues outwith the workplace can affect performance and we provide an Employee Assistance Programme that can provide support for staff and their wider family members.

# Our Values

Our values underpin everything we do and how we do it. They define who we are, our expectations of each other and ourselves, how we interact with each other and how we interact with our customers, communities, and other stakeholders.



Our values are designed to create a sense of belonging and support wellbeing by encouraging an environment of trust and openness, where people respect and support each other and where innovation and personal development are encouraged.

## Covid Recovery

We know how crucial our airports are for essential connections for our remote communities and how they contribute to the social and economic prosperity of the areas we serve. This was brought into sharp focus with the arrival of the Covid pandemic in early 2020.

Covid has had, and continues to have, a considerable impact on HIAL and the wider aviation industry. Recovery will take time. Our focus over the next five years will be to rebuild our services and operations. Our aim is to build back stronger and balance that recovery with our environmental commitments.

Sustaining the wellbeing of our people was a top priority during the pandemic. As a Company we enhanced our communications and the provision of information to ensure all our staff received the information they needed to remain connected to the workplace whilst working at home, in bubbles with restricted contact with other team members or whilst on furlough.

We introduced regular check-in points for all managers to receive up to date information on Company practice and protocols through out the pandemic and made it a priority for all our managers to check-in regularly with all their people.

We encouraged flexible working practices and provided extra support for individuals including an additional 5 days paid leave for carers as well as continuation of sick pay for those shielding and unable to work from home.

We recognised the additional stresses and strains placed on individuals during the pandemic and provided resources on our on-line learning platform and through our Employee Assistance Programme.

In 2021 we included specific questions in our annual staff survey on health and wellbeing. In response to staff feedback we introduced a Home and Hybrid Working Policy that allows employees in non-operational roles to work more flexibly spending some time at home and some time in the office balancing the needs of the business with personal circumstances.

We also improved the physical environment of our head office building and created improved rest room facilities for staff and taking professional advice on the layout of the building. In the short term this included the requirement for social distancing as a result of COVID.

# Strategy Aims and Objectives

This strategy sets out our plan to support the achievement of the people priorities in the HIAL strategy and focuses on our goal to create and maintain a positive working environment.

Our approach is to set out a framework that supports employees through their employment journey from pre-employment to retirement and recognises the challenges and issues that can be faced by both the individual employee and the Company to make this a positive, safe and healthy experience.

This strategy is aligned to the key stages in the employee journey, promoting:

- Health and wellbeing for all
- Fitness for role
- Legislative compliance
- Good attendance

and is underpinned by a suite of policies on specific topics to ensure employees and managers have the tools and information to make informed choices and decisions.



## The strategy is underpinned by several important principles about work\*

### In modern society, work provides the material wherewithal for life and wellbeing

- Physical and mental health are important elements of wellbeing.
- Health and fitness underpin capacity for work.
- There is a strong evidence base showing that work is generally good for physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Work can be beneficial for health and fitness.
- Healthy employees have been shown to take less sickness absence and have greater engagement with their work.
- Work can be therapeutic.

### Conversely

- Work can carry risks for physical and mental health.
- Sickness and disability can impact on capacity for work.
- Worklessness is associated with poorer physical and mental health and wellbeing.

### Good Jobs and Good Workplaces promote health and wellbeing and

- Provide a safe environment.
- Fair pay.
- Job security.
- Personal fulfilment and development.
- Job satisfaction.
- Good communication.

\*Waddell G and Burton AK (2006) Is work good for your health and wellbeing? Department of Work and Pensions, UK.

# Our Health, Safety and Wellbeing Principles

Our health, safety and wellbeing approach will adhere to the following principles, which align to HIAL's values.

## Open and transparent

We provide our employees with a range of health, safety and wellbeing policies providing them with the most comprehensive information about our organisation and our approach to managing situations where they may require additional support for their health or specific wellbeing challenges they may be facing.

## Two way

Wellbeing is everyone's responsibility.

The wellbeing of individuals requires a partnership between the Company and the individual employee.

All employees and managers must commit to undertaking appropriate training and follow Company policy and guidance on Health, Safety and Wellbeing matters.

## Delivered in Partnership

We operate in a regulated environment designed to protect our colleagues and our passengers.

All employees should be physically and mentally capable of performing the roles they have been assigned to do and meet standards set by our Regulator the Civil Aviation Authority. This includes at the point of recruitment when joining the Company and at regular intervals thereafter for some roles.

We work closely with a range of partners, including our occupational health provider. Any decisions relating to an employee's health will be informed by appropriate professional advice from Occupational Health or other specialists as well as local G.P.s. We also work with our Employee Assistance Programme provider and our trade union colleagues.

## Proactive and responsible

The workplace provides an ideal backdrop to promote healthy living and empower individuals to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

We provide an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) that enables employees and their families to proactively seek support on a range of health and wellbeing related matters. This service is independent of HIAL and operates on a completely confidential basis.

We provide internal wellbeing support through our Wellbeing Champions. Wellbeing Champions provide general mental health and wellbeing support to colleagues and signpost to other appropriate organisations and resources where a need is identified.



# Our Context

The Scottish Government has established a Fair Work framework in which all public bodies should operate.

Fair Work is work that offers effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment, and respect. Fair Work generates benefits for everyone.

## Fair work provides employees with:

- A voice recognising that dialogue can help to resolve conflict and address unjust, unfair or unequal treatment. It can also identify opportunity and reinforce consensus.
- Fair and equal access to work and to career progression to improve life chances and create opportunities for social mobility.
- Security and stability of employment allowing individuals to better plan their day-to-day lives and their future.
- Fulfilling work that can create a more rewarding work experience. It also contributes to a sense of purpose and self-worth and can support confidence and self-belief.
- Respect at work that enhances workers' health, safety and wellbeing. Dignified treatment can protect workers from workplace related illness and injury and create an environment free from bullying and harassment.



# Our Partners

**Ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our colleagues can only be achieved in partnership.**

## The role of Line Managers

Successful attendance management is dependent on close and effective working relationships between the Human Resource team and line managers creating a culture that where problems arise, they are quickly identified, and solutions considered in line with individual employee needs.

Managers are responsible for:

- Promoting employee health and wellbeing
- Undertaking risk assessments and implementing control measures to prevent any harmful effects of work
- Recognising work stress and offering support to help manage workloads
- Implementing return to work policies and monitoring employee absence.

## The role of Audit and Compliance

Within the Company there is a strong partnership between the Human Resource team and the Compliance and Assurance team ensuring legislative compliance under the Health and Safety at Work Act and other relevant legislation and Codes of Practice.

Compliance and Assurance ensure we:

- Have effective systems in place, and they are adhered to consistently through our integrated safety management system.
- Develop health and safety learning which supports people to work safely and develops a workforce with the right skills, knowledge, experience and attitudes.
- Measure and manage our safety performance with an emphasis on monitoring, preventative actions and behaviours, whilst sharing best practice.

## The role of Occupational Health

Occupational health specialists support the Company to ensure that staff are fit to undertake the role they are employed to do both physically and emotionally and are also used to assist in managing both short and long-term absence situations.

Occupational health activities include:

- Ensuring compliance with health and safety and legislation and regulations and in so doing help to maintain a healthy workforce.
- Pre-employment health assessments.
- Preventing and removing health risks arising in the workplace and advising on ergonomic issues and workplace design.
- Providing screening and surveillance services in the initial stages of ill health and developing solutions to keep staff with health issues at work.
- Providing independent and professional advice where employees are unable to work due to long-term or short-term intermittent health problems.
- Lifestyle, health promotion and wellbeing services that promote staff retention.





# Our Partners

## The role of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The EAP provides support to help employees deal with personal problems that might impact on their work performance, health and wellbeing. The issues discussed are often workplace issues but do not have to be and can include other issues such as relationship difficulties or bereavement. Employees and their family members can access a helpline 24/7 to get immediate emotional and practical support and advice from a qualified expert.

In addition EAP services include:

- **Counselling services:** Qualified counsellors who provide short-term goal-oriented counselling, allowing employees to better manage their personal and work-life commitments.
- **Critical Incident Management:** A trauma counselling and support service following critical incidents to help normalise the often overwhelming psychological, physiological and emotional responses to minor, moderate and severe critical incidents.

## The role of Trade Unions

HIAL works in partnership and recognises three trade unions; Prospect, PCS and Unite. HIAL works closely with the trade unions to support employees in relation to working conditions, working hours, working practices, health and safety issues, absence, and the working environment.

Trade union representatives are appointed to represent the interests and concerns of their colleagues on specific matters that will affect the health, safety and welfare of employees.

# Our Strategic Priorities

**Our people lie at the heart of HIAL and are responsible for ensuring we operate a safe, welcoming airport network to the very highest professional standards.**

Our goal is to create a positive working environment focused on the wellbeing of our people and effective work-life balance, promoting and raising awareness of the professional support available.

To ensure that HIAL remains an employer of choice and attracts a wide range of people from across our society, we continue to review our employment practices and packages to ensure that they match the aspirations of our future workforce. Specifically, we will work with our teams to promote a positive work culture and continue to encourage constructive relationships through supportive employee policies and practices.

## Our strategy will focus on:

### Promoting a healthy workforce

- Critical to success are leaders who clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and accept ownership and full accountability for health, safety and wellbeing matters.
- Confident leadership of health, safety and wellbeing will confirm to employees and others who engage with us that this is a top priority and is a vital component in enriching a positive health and safety culture.
- Well trained people at every level of the Company will ensure that everyone understands the health and safety responsibilities placed upon them and acts consistently within the health, safety and wellbeing management systems in place.
- HIAL will continue to invest in health and safety training for our employees and where appropriate, will seek more efficient and cost effective methods of delivery.

### Ensuring physical fitness and mental wellbeing for employment

- Success will include reductions in sickness absence levels as well as reductions in accidents and workplace injuries. Key to this will be continual improvement by enhanced health and safety reporting by all employees and managers.
- HIAL recognises that the nature of the work undertaken can lead to a higher prevalence of musculoskeletal injuries and stress and is committed to rigorous risk assessment of activities and the protection of staff through the elimination of risk. Where this cannot be achieved HIAL will strive to ensure that other measures such as the provision of protective equipment, training and new technology are always considered.

- We will work to increase awareness and understanding of the benefits of the Employee Assistance Programme, Occupational Health and any wellbeing initiatives which form part of our strategy.
- We recognise that from time to time staff may be exposed to traumatic events which are outside their normal work experience. Where this occurs HIAL will ensure that the necessary support is in place and made available to our colleagues.

### Providing colleagues with support to achieve a positive work-life balance

- Successful outcomes will include an increased awareness and recognition of employees commitments out with work and acknowledgement and support for individuals in the workplace through flexible work policies and practices.
- We will celebrate the diversity of our people and champion wellbeing inclusion. This will include creating opportunities to people with shared interests to connect and build healthy, collaborative, nurturing and supportive relationships across the organisation.

### Developing a culture that improves productivity through happy, healthy and motivated employees

- Success is linked to wider people goals and objectives and removing barriers to enable employees to flourish at work. This requires a holistic approach with a focus on effective communication and engagement. HIAL is committed to the promotion of wellbeing opportunities to encourage staff to make healthier lifestyle choices and to develop personal resilience.

The strategy will be underpinned by a Health, Safety and Wellbeing plan that identifies specific initiatives and targeted interventions designed to achieve our goal.

# Monitoring and Evaluation

**Monitoring and evaluating our Health, Safety and Wellbeing strategy will help improve the effectiveness of our policies and practices and allow us to tailor the interventions and support provided.**

There are several ways of evaluating the success of the health, safety and wellbeing strategy. These will include:

## Quantitative Data

The number of staff absences due to ill health

Employee accident/incident data

Employee turnover

Employee Grievance cases

Flexible working requests

Ill-health retirements

## Qualitative Assessment

Results of the annual staff survey

Feedback and engagement from staff through the staff intranet

We will continue to benchmark ourselves against other organisations that work with the Investors in People framework and standard and strive for increasing recognition by the scheme.

Completion of the Fair Work Employer Support Tool



