Health and wellbeing
Our strategy
Message from Martin Baggs, Thames Water CEO

There is nothing more important to me than the safety, health and wellbeing of our people.

It’s essential that we take the same zero compromise approach with health and wellbeing that we do with safety. The zero harm aspect of our health and safety vision is about ensuring no-one suffers ill health as a result of the work they do and we have invested in a number of initiatives to help make our vision a daily reality.

These include the annual personal medical assessments for all employees, eye checks and flu vouchers, resilience courses, our employee assistance programme and more.

You can find information in this booklet that details our strategy to improve health and wellbeing.

Additional information and support is available via the portal, the health and safety hub and our occupational health team, where needed.

We all have a part to play when it comes to looking after the health and wellbeing of ourselves and those around us. It’s only by working together that we can achieve our shared vision of zero incidents, zero harm, zero compromise, every day.

Martin Baggs
Chief Executive Officer
Health and wellbeing
Our strategy

Our health and wellbeing strategy sets out the steps we need to take to achieve our vision of zero harm and improve health and wellbeing. To succeed in this we need to create a culture at Thames Water where wellbeing is accepted as part of what we do every day.

The strategy builds on existing arrangements to ensure we meet our legal obligations to protect the health, safety and welfare of our employees. In addition, we will go further by supporting our employees in maintaining their fitness to work and providing opportunities to take more responsibility for improving their own health and wellbeing. This will allow employees to take the benefits beyond work and into their home lives.

There are many benefits to promoting employee health and wellbeing, for example:

- Helping our staff to manage their own health and wellbeing can significantly reduce the risk of them becoming ill, ensuring they continue to perform to the best of their ability
- Employees who are able to improve their health and wellbeing in the workplace will function more effectively in all areas of their lives
- If they are fit and healthy, staff are more likely to be able to carry out their work safely, effectively and on time, even in challenging circumstances
- Our employees are our front-line contact with customers and the way they feel about their wellbeing can influence how customers view us
Health and wellbeing maturity model

We have developed an ongoing health and wellbeing model that enables us to measure our progress against predetermined criteria and set a focused action plan to achieve best practice. From this we are able to publicise progress to date and our plans for further development.

All of our major contractors are expected to measure themselves against the model and declare their own current positions, plus an action plan for improvement. There is a minimum standard we expect them to achieve, including being able to demonstrate their approach to the management of the health risks within the working environment, along with associated physical and psychological risks within the workplace.

Each year the company’s position is reassessed and an action plan developed to improve our rating continuously and to bring into play new activities or changes in legislation and best practice.

We measure against 10 key health performance indicators:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workplace</th>
<th>Worker</th>
<th>Wellbeing</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Health risk assessment</td>
<td>5. Fitness to work</td>
<td>8. Health promotion</td>
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<td>4. Health auditing</td>
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<td>Category</td>
<td>Infancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Performance Indicators (HPIs)</td>
<td>Minimum standards of OH risk management and well being yet to be achieved in a number of areas</td>
<td>Mostly compliant occupational health risk management and well being with plans to achieve minimum standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>Limited awareness of practical health risk management</td>
<td>Meeting minimum standards in most areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Health assessment</td>
<td>Health risks inadequately detailed in risk assessments including COSHH, Meso skeletal hazards</td>
<td>Health risk included in all risk assessments including COSHH and controls implemented for physical health risks e.g. respiratory, vibration, noise, skin etc…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hierarchy of control (collective vs. personal)</td>
<td>Individuals provided with PPE, but suitability not checked</td>
<td>Individuals provided with the correct PPE and adequately trained in use and maintenance and involved in the selection procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Health Surveillance</td>
<td>Limited statutory health surveillance programme in place</td>
<td>Health surveillance introduced but only major issues addressed</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Health Auditing</td>
<td>H&amp;S audits do not include health</td>
<td>Health is included in H&amp;S audits</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No assessment of fitness to work</td>
<td>Developing fitness to work procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fitness to Work</td>
<td>No formal process for assessing fitness to work</td>
<td>Pre-placement assessments for fitness to work are conducted. (This may include ‘with fit for cause’ drug &amp; alcohol testing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Attendance Management policy/ training</td>
<td>No attendance management/sickness absence management policy is in place</td>
<td>Attendance management/sickness absence management policy is in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Management of ill health</td>
<td>Sickness/ill health issues are inadequately managed</td>
<td>Largely reactive or inconsistent approach to management of sickness absence/ill health issues e.g. work-related or long-term only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few if any wellbeing initiatives undertaken</td>
<td>Occasional wellbeing initiatives and campaigns undertaken</td>
<td>Evidence of regular wellbeing activities that integrate occupational and general health improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Health Promotion</td>
<td>No wellbeing activities undertaken, i.e. well-being days, poster campaigns</td>
<td>At least one wellbeing event/campaign delivered per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Health Education &amp; Training</td>
<td>No structured education programme, wellbeing not discussed in key H&amp;S meetings</td>
<td>Basic education programme in place but in its initial stages with events at local level only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Health Communication</td>
<td>Health risks not included in inductions or health and safety communications</td>
<td>Health risks are covered in company and site inductions</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Worker, workplace, wellbeing and wider community

Our strategy will deliver a change in focus from managing ill health to proactively promoting health and wellbeing. To support this we need to deliver a high-quality, efficient health and wellbeing service to meet the changing needs of the business. We are restructuring the occupational health team to ensure we have the necessary skills in-house, creating a team which understands the way our business works.

This will reduce our dependence on external specialist support to only those areas where it is absolutely essential. We are also introducing new systems and processes to improve how we monitor our progress.

We are developing the knowledge and skills of our workforce to ensure we can support each other in keeping healthy and well.

This means making sure:
- All employees are aware of where to go for help and guidance
- Managers know how to recognise issues in their teams
- Information and systems are available to help people take care of themselves and each other

In developing our health and wellbeing strategy we investigated best practice from across industries. Adopting a recognised ‘worker, workplace, wellbeing’ framework has helped us to define and focus our priorities.

Worker

We understand that employees may experience ill health that could affect their ability to work. Where an employee has an existing health condition or they experience ill health, we will provide support to help them manage their condition and remain in work, or return to work early while supporting their ongoing recovery. We will achieve this through:
- Early referral to occupational health
- Early intervention as appropriate, from specialist services such as physiotherapy and counselling
- Training and support for managers to improve their skills in managing cases of employee ill health effectively
- Providing tailored advice to managers to support individual employees in returning to effective working
Workplace
We will prevent employees from becoming ill as a result of the work they do by:

- Providing appropriate health surveillance programmes for employees exposed to specific workplace hazards such as noise, vibration and chemical hazards
- Carrying out periodic ‘fitness for task’ medical assessments for those with specified job roles (i.e. safety-critical workers) to ensure employees are fit to undertake the tasks involved
- Providing training for employees on managing the moving and handling risks associated with their role
- Providing training for employees on managing the health risks associated with using display screen equipment (DSE)
- Delivering training for managers to help them and their teams develop greater resilience to deal with the demands of the job, as well as providing support and tools for managers to recognise and act on the early signs of stress-related ill health
- Raising awareness of the importance of managing stress levels and reporting any symptoms of ill health early

Wellbeing
We will encourage all employees to take responsibility for improving their own health and wellbeing. The benefits to the employees extend beyond work and into their home and family lives as well. We will provide a range of activities and information in the workplace to promote healthy lifestyles and encourage employees to make and sustain positive behaviour changes. For example:

- Promoting good workplace practices that encourage individuals to look after themselves and others when working with hazardous substances or processes, such as noise, vibration, manual handling and DSE
- Health promotion campaigns (in line with Government initiatives) promoting positive behaviours to tackle common health concerns within society, like obesity, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer

Wider community
We believe we should be encouraging wellbeing not only in our own employees but those in the wider community that we come into contact with. We will strive to deliver initiatives that benefit families and friends, other organisations’ employees and other interested parties. For example:

- Working with other likeminded organisations to promote health and wellbeing across a broad base, through initiatives such as Water Wellbeing Week and London Wellbeing Week
- Supporting Health and Safety Executive initiatives that aim to improve the occupational health of small to medium-sized enterprises within the Thames Water area
- Engaging in industry and national forums that work at improving workplace conditions and worker wellbeing, positively inputting to initiatives and programmes
- Making wellbeing information available for wider consumption via our Health and Safety Hub
What we’re doing to improve health and wellbeing

Water Wellbeing Week

Water Wellbeing Week is a health promotion event, led by Thames Water and supported by the entire water industry, with the aim of making a positive impact on the lives of thousands of employees and contractors.

A dedicated team at Thames Water steer the communications, developing literature and multiple activities to get everyone engaged. In line with our zero compromise approach, we share everything developed across the industry via our health and safety hub, a website created for Thames Water and our supply chain partners to share best practice and promote shared learning. The first Water Wellbeing Week ran in 2013 and continued in 2014. It is now a permanent fixture on the Thames Water and Water UK calendars.

Throughout the week, a series of events are held which are both engaging and informative. The Executive team lead the way in a healthy lifestyle event and competition.

Drugs and alcohol policy

A revised policy on drugs and alcohol has been published and, to support this, an information booklet has been created to inform employees of the facts about drugs and alcohol.

We want to ensure that employees who may have dependency issues get the right help and support to overcome their addiction.

Sickness absence reduction

We are working with a specialist wellness consultant on early engagement to reduce sickness absence across the business. This includes a short, innovative session which identifies the health conditions which are avoidable by simply looking at lifestyle and eating and drinking habits.

Personal medical assessments

Our employees are provided with the opportunity to attend a personalised medical assessment with Healthy Performance, an independent medical provider. These sessions allow employees to design the assessments to ensure they are targeting areas of concern to them. The results highlight the high-risk areas not only for employees but for the business, allowing us to focus future interventions appropriately.

Employee access to physiotherapy

A new provider for fast access to physiotherapy treatments has been introduced. This is a one-stop shop for employees to contact the provider which arranges treatment or appropriate self-help exercise programmes for injuries that may affect their working life. The focus of the programme is early intervention allowing employees either to stay in work during treatment or to return to work a lot sooner than would traditionally have been envisaged.
Stress management

Good stress management means intervening before stress becomes an illness and leads to employee absence. We have introduced a stress and resilience management programme which is run by a company of clinical psychologists. This ensures that managers not only understand the triggers of stress themselves, but are able to identify it and intervene appropriately within their teams.

Building personal resilience

To build on the stress management training for managers, a programme has been developed by Thames Water in partnership with ESRA (Employment Support Retraining Agency) to ensure employees understand how the body responds to pressure and how individuals can help themselves by following simple personal plans.

NEBOSH training for managers

We continue to roll out a NEBOSH qualification in health and safety, enabling managers to control the risks within their workplace better, and to reduce or eradicate employee exposure to hazards, such as noise, dust, and vibration. Using their new-found knowledge to improve workplace conditions, managers employ correct safe systems of work and ensure compliance with standards, procedures and processes.

Fitness for work assessments/condition monitoring

All employees who may have to work in safety-critical roles or have the potential to be exposed to health hazards receive regular medicals or health surveilence, such as skin, hearing and lung capacity monitoring.

Occupational health team

Thames Water employs a team of professional health nurses and an occupational hygienist to ensure that we support our employees with expert health and medical guidance and support. The team ensures that advice given is relevant to work, being knowledgeable about our activities and the conditions our employees work under.

Executive incident reviews

Any work-related illness is subject to an Executive review to ensure we capture the cause and learning, so that we can improve the way we work and to put in place controls to avoid similar incidents occurring elsewhere.
Improving health and wellbeing

What you can do:

• Take some time to think about your role, your health and wellbeing and how you might make improvements that will benefit you
• Think about your colleagues and how you might help them in the changes they are making
• Read the guidance and support that is available to you on the portal
• Take up the opportunities to learn more about health and wellbeing
• Get involved in local activities – or, better still, arrange something for yourself and your colleagues
• Act if you think or feel something isn’t right

Tell us what you are doing to make a change by emailing healthsafetyandenvironment@thameswater.co.uk

How we will know we have been successful:

• Our vision for zero harm will be evident in the actions of all of our employees
• Our employees will know how to improve their own health and wellbeing and will actively seek ways to do this
• Our managers will display positive behaviours that promote a healthy work environment
• Our managers will have the skills and the confidence to actively manage ill health and absence
• We will reduce our sickness absence rates

We will have a resilient workforce able to cope with the demands of a constantly changing environment, and

• Wellbeing will be part of what we do every day
• We will offer lifestyle screening activities to detect early signs of ill health, such as blood pressure and cholesterol checks, as well as providing general health improvement advice
• We will ensure information on health and wellbeing activities is available and accessible to all employees
• We will support selected national health awareness campaigns such as Movember, breast cancer awareness and Men’s Health Week
Employee Assistance Programme

All Thames Water employees can access our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). This independent service provides free confidential advice and support.

It can help you prepare for and cope with life’s events and challenges. It will support you if you feel like you just don’t know where to turn, or who to go to for the right information. It can advise you on lots of things including:

- Consumer rights and legal information – benefits, housing problems, tax credits, disability, neighbour disputes
- Debt management and budgeting – creditors, financial health check
- Emotional support – poor work/life balance, illness, crisis, anxiety, loss, self-confidence, workplace pressure
- Family relationships – communication, marriage, civil partnerships
- Health and wellbeing – problems sleeping, fitness, weight management, alcohol, nutrition
- Work and career issues – change, team dynamics, work overload, conflict
- Housing – buying and selling, tenancy, neighbour disputes

Life can be a rollercoaster and many of the issues above are an inevitable part of life, but it often helps us to manage them positively if we have prompt access to the right information and support.

The team is made up of experts in helping you to identify, plan and manage life events, helping you to stay in control, happy, healthy and fully focused on life and work.

It is okay to ask for help and this confidential and independent service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Workplace Wellness expert advisors are there to help – whenever you need them you can access the service either online or over the phone.

The online EAP service has:

A large library of user-friendly factsheets, self-help programmes, podcasts and links on such subjects as:

- Money management and debt, relationships, change, work/life balance, stress and pressure
- Health and wellbeing, including nutrition, sleep, smoking, alcohol, weight, physical activity.