



NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVICE MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

NICS CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL MENTAL HEALTH FORUM TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Context

The NICS People Plan launched in June 2024 commits NICS Departments to support and improve the health and wellbeing of staff through a range of interventions and services.

Given the prevalence of mental health issues, both in the workplace and wider society, NICS HR is committed to taking a proactive approach to promoting and supporting colleagues' health and wellbeing.

2. Objectives

It is recognised that a range of services, products and interventions are already offered by NICS HR and by Departments to support the mental health and wellbeing of staff. However, it is also recognised that there is a risk of lack of consistency, duplication of effort, gaps in provision or missed opportunities without a joined up and collaborative approach.

The purpose of this Forum will be to gather information on current provision, consider potential future provision, share learning, identify gaps and to develop further collaborative approaches across the NICS to support the mental health and wellbeing of staff.

Forum members will work together to identify and agree opportunities which will enable the NICS to:

- share and reflect on learning from recent reviews and models of best practice
- generate better synergy by combining expertise and generating innovative solutions
- improve greater collaboration across departments
- agree some quick wins as a system
- explore economies of scale
- effectively measure impact and outcomes and,
- appoint task and finish groups to take forward specific bodies of work.

3. Role of the Forum

Working collaboratively the Forum can deliver value and outcomes that would be potentially more difficult to achieve in isolation. Forum members will:

- represent their respective departments and contribute actively to discussions and decision making.
- ensure that effective communication mechanisms are in place to keep their departments

4. Frequency of Meetings

The Forum will meet every six weeks, to be kept under review. Ad hoc workshops will also be held to advance progress of the Forum and task and finish groups.

5. Membership

The Forum will be chaired by NICS HR's Deputy Secretary, Department of Finance. It will comprise representatives of each NICS department, including PPS, and will also draw membership from recognised trades unions and the HSENI. Membership will be kept under review and the Chair may invite members from other organisations where appropriate.

6. Conflicts of Interest

Members are advised that any interest that presents a conflict must be declared and recorded in the minutes. This will include potential/perceived conflicts of interest. Any action taken to manage any conflicts of interest e.g. the individual leaves the meeting for a particular agenda item, should also be recorded in the minutes.

7. Agreement

These Terms of Reference were agreed by at Forum meeting on 6th February 2025.