



Healthy Workforce Policy

GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS

Effective: July 2026

(Review Date: Six Months from the effective date)

Policy Statement

A Principles-Based Framework for a Healthier Public Service.

The Cook Islands Government is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of its public servants. This Policy provides a framework to help Agencies create workplace cultures in which physical activity is normalised, healthy food choices are accessible, smoke-free environments are maintained, mental wellbeing is taken seriously, and employees are encouraged to know and manage their own health.

The Cook Islands faces a significant and growing challenge with non-communicable diseases — diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and mental health conditions are placing enormous pressure on our families, our health system, and our economy. Public servants are not immune. We share in this challenge.

Our people are our greatest asset. Across the Cook Islands Public Service, we employ many dedicated men and women whose energy, judgement, and commitment drive everything Government does. This Policy is not about telling you how to live your life. It is about Government, as a responsible employer, creating the conditions and the culture that make it easier for our people to thrive — at work and beyond. It is an act of care, not control.

Participation in the activities supported by this Policy is strongly encouraged. Where provisions are stated as requirements, they relate to the employer's obligations as a responsible host and provider of a safe working environment, not to control over employees' personal lives.

We ask you to approach this with an open mind. Small changes, made consistently, can transform lives. We are in this together.

Scope

This Policy applies to all employees across Public Sector Agencies, including Public Service Departments, Island Governments, Crown and Statutory Agencies, Offices of Parliament, Ministerial Support Offices, and State-Owned Enterprises as defined in the Public Service (Identification of Departments) Order 2008.

Contractors and consultants engaged under contracts for services are not covered by this Policy, though Agencies are encouraged to promote a healthy environment for all people who work in or visit their premises.

Background

Non-communicable diseases — including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, chronic respiratory conditions, and certain cancers — are the leading cause of death and disability in the Cook Islands. They develop over years, often shaped by lifestyle factors that are, to a meaningful degree, within our influence. NCDs are largely preventable: modest changes to physical activity, diet, and tobacco use significantly reduce a person's risk.

⚠ Did You Know?

- NCDs account for the majority of premature deaths in the Pacific region, and the Cook Islands mirrors this trend.
- Diabetes and cardiovascular disease are among the top reasons Cook Islanders require hospitalisation and long-term care.
- Sedentary work — sitting at a desk for most of the day — is a significant and often underestimated contributor to metabolic disease.
- Mental health conditions, including stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression, are increasingly prevalent among working-age adults.

- NCDs are largely preventable. Modest changes to physical activity, diet, and tobacco use significantly reduce a person's risk.

The Public Sector is one of the Cook Islands' largest employers. When our people are unwell — physically, mentally, or both — the effects ripple outward: increased sick leave, reduced productivity, pressure on family members who become carers, and ultimately a reduced capacity to serve the public.

The environments in which we work — largely sedentary, sometimes stressful, with ready access to processed food and sugary drinks — can quietly work against our health over time. This Policy seeks to change that environment.

Government's role here is not as a health enforcer, but as an employer with a duty of care to its people. The Public Service Act 2009 requires the Crown to be a good employer, and that includes providing a working environment that supports the health and wellbeing of employees.

This Policy does not regulate what employees do at home; it creates a supportive framework within the workplace — access to physical activity time, healthier food at Government-funded events, smoke-free premises, and encouragement to know one's health numbers.

This Policy is deliberately written as a principles-based framework. It sets a clear set of principles and minimum expectations, provides practical guidance on how to bring them to life, and allows Heads of Agencies flexibility to determine what works best for their employees, recognising that Agencies differ in size, capacity, culture, and physical environment.

Principles

This Policy is built on six principles. These principles guide how Agencies should implement the Policy, and how they should respond when situations arise that are not explicitly covered in the text.

Care, Not Control	Government acts as a caring employer. The aim is to support employee wellbeing, not to regulate personal lives or create punitive compliance cultures.
Encourage, Don't Mandate	Wherever possible, the goal is to make healthy choices easier and more visible, not to compel behaviour. People respond better to encouragement, positive culture, and peer example than to rules and forms.
Proportionality	What we ask of Agencies and employees should be proportionate to the risk, the benefit, and the capacity available. Small Agencies with limited HR resources are not expected to build elaborate tracking systems.
Privacy and Dignity	Health is personal. No employee should be required to disclose health information to their employer beyond what is necessary to access reasonable accommodations. All health-related data collected under this Policy must be treated with strict confidentiality.
Equity	Healthy choices should be available to everyone, regardless of their role, physical ability, location, or personal circumstances. Reasonable adjustments will always be available for those who need them.
Shared Responsibility	Government as employer creates the environment and the opportunity. Employees are encouraged — though not compelled — to engage. Health outcomes improve when both sides lean in.

Legal and Policy Context

This Policy is supported by, and should be read alongside, the following legislation and policy instruments:

Public Service Act 2009 (PSA)	Establishes the duty of good employer obligations and the values expected of public servants.
Employment Relations Act 2012 (ERA)	Sets minimum employment standards, including working hours, leave entitlements, and fair treatment provisions. Physical activity time within the Policy is to be accommodated within existing working hour arrangements.
Public Health Act 2024	Provides the legislative basis for smoke-free workplaces and public health promotion.
Tobacco Products Control Amendment Act 2024	Establishes the legal framework for smoke-free environments.
Ministry of Health Act 2013	Defines Te Marae Ora's mandate for health promotion across the Cook Islands.
Cook Islands Population Policy 2022–2032 (Te Kaveinga Tupu'anga Iti Tangata)	Frames NCD prevention as a national population health priority.
National Sustainable Development Agenda (NSDA)	Goal 7 commits the Government to reducing NCDs, increasing health investment, and promoting healthier lifestyles.
Cook Islands Physical Activity & Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines 2023	Provides the clinical and evidence base for physical activity recommendations.
Cook Islands Kai Ora Guidelines (Mataara ki te kai ora no te ora'anga Meitaki)	Provides guidance on healthy eating in a Cook Islands context.
CI GOV Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Policy	Addresses physical workplace safety risks — this Policy complements rather than replaces that framework.
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Note: OPSC administers the PSA and is responsible for providing policy guidance to Agencies on all employment matters, including the duty of a good employer. Te Marae Ora holds the mandate for public health promotion. This Policy sits squarely within both mandates.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following terms have the meanings set out below:

Agency means any Public Service Department, instrument, or agent of the Government, including a body corporate or organisation wholly owned or controlled by the Crown.

Direct Report means any person an employee has a direct reporting relationship with, in terms of their job. Tier 2 Managers report directly to Heads of Agencies.

Employee means any person who is an employee of the Public Sector. Does not include independent contractors or consultants engaged under a contract for services, though Agencies are encouraged to extend the spirit of this Policy to all who work in their premises.

Employer means the Public Service Commissioner, Heads of Public Sector Agencies, or their delegated authority.

Government-Funded Events means any event, conference, workshop, training, seminar, or function organised or sponsored by a Government Ministry or Agency where public funds are utilised.

Head of Agency (HOA) means the administrative head of a Public Sector Agency.

Healthy Diet means food options that prioritise fresh, locally-grown ingredients, balanced nutrients, and limited processed items with added sugars or high sodium content. Preference for locally produced ingredients.

Natural Juice means juice made from the extraction or pressing of liquid from fresh fruits and/or vegetables, with no added sugars, preservatives, or artificial ingredients.

Non-communicable Disease (NCD) means chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cancer, and mental health conditions.

Non-Smoking Area means all areas within Government Office compounds and facilities where smoking is strictly prohibited under the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Act 2024.

OPSC means the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, established under the Public Service Act 2009.

Physical Activity means any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure, including movement during leisure time, transport, work, or domestic activities (WHO definition).

TMO means Te Marae Ora Ministry of Health.

Wellness Champion means an employee designated by the Head of Agency to coordinate health and wellness activities and serve as the point of contact for implementation of this Policy within their Agency.

The Seven Healthy Workforce Commitments

The following seven areas represent the core commitments of this Policy. For each, we set out the principle, what we are asking, and how Agencies might practically deliver it. Agencies have flexibility in implementation — what matters is that the intent is genuinely pursued.

Commitment 1: Moving More

Why it matters: Most public servants spend the majority of their working day sitting. Prolonged physical inactivity is directly linked to increased risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and poor mental health. Even modest, regular movement makes a measurable difference.

What this Policy asks:

- Agencies are expected to create an organisational culture in which taking time to move during the working day is normal, accepted, and actively supported by leadership.
- All employees are strongly encouraged to accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each workday. This does not need to happen all at once — three ten-minute walks, for example, counts.
- Heads of Agencies (HOAs) should facilitate a dedicated period within the working day for physical activity. The most practical options are an extended lunch break (e.g., 12:00–1:30 pm with 30 minutes for activity) or a designated late-afternoon session (e.g., 3:30–4:00 pm). HOAs have discretion to determine what works best for their Agency.
- Once a month, teams are encouraged to hold a one-hour group physical activity session as a team-building exercise.
- Physical activity during work hours counts towards the standard working day, provided it falls within arrangements agreed by the HOA. Government is not asking employees to extend their working hours to accommodate this — it is asking us to use our existing time more wisely.

Practical ideas Agencies can consider:

- Walking routes around the Office compound or nearby public spaces.
- Shared access to exercise equipment or open space.

- Standing desks or walking pads for desk-based roles.
- Five-minute movement breaks every hour for staff who are unable to participate in a group session.
- Partnering with existing community fitness programmes (e.g., Johnson's, Strong Mums, Cardio Combat, 'Akauka and CC Tamure).
- Stair use, cycling, and walking to meetings as everyday practices.

Important clarifications:

- Employees with medical conditions or physical limitations are not required to participate in activities that are inappropriate for their health. A simple notification to the Wellness Champion or Direct Report is sufficient — no detailed medical disclosure is required.
- This Policy does not penalise employees who are unable to participate. It would be wholly inconsistent with the Policy's purpose to take disciplinary action against someone for not exercising.
- The ERA working week obligations are unaffected by this Policy. Physical activity time is to be accommodated within existing arrangements, not in addition to them.
- The 30-minute physical activity period cannot be accumulated, transferred, or carried over. Physical activity that takes place outside of agreed working arrangements does not attract Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) or count as overtime. Employees are encouraged to make use of the dedicated time during working hours — not to exercise after hours in lieu of that time.

Commitment 2: Eating Better

 *Why it matters: Diet is one of the most significant modifiable risk factors for NCDs. The Cook Islands food environment has shifted significantly towards processed, high-sugar, high-sodium foods. This Policy does not police what employees eat, but it does set expectations for what the Government serves when it is the host.*

What this Policy asks:

- Agencies are encouraged to promote healthy eating awareness among staff through education, not prohibition. This means sharing information, not confiscating lunches.
- Agencies are encouraged to create workplace environments that make healthier choices easier — for example, ensuring water is readily available, promoting the *Kai Ora* Guidelines, and celebrating local food culture through shared meals. The goal is to normalise healthy choices, not to police personal decisions.
- Managers are encouraged to model healthy eating habits and to create team cultures where healthy choices are visible and valued — sharing nutritious *kai* at team meetings, for example, or acknowledging colleagues who bring local produce to share.
- For Government-funded events, conferences, workshops, and office functions, meals and beverages must prioritise whole, nutritious foods. This is a requirement — not because Government wants to control what individuals eat, but because it is acting as host and using public funds. See Commitment 7 for the full catering standards that apply to Government-funded events.
- Beverage choices at Government-funded events should include water, coconut water (Nu), and natural juice as primary options. Sugary carbonated drinks should not be provided as standard catering options. Alcohol-free events are strongly encouraged; where alcohol is provided, it should be limited and not the focus.
- Within Government Offices, staff are encouraged to reduce consumption of sugary beverages and ultra-processed foods. Agencies may choose to discourage these through cultural norm-setting rather than enforcement.
- Local produce is strongly encouraged. Supporting our local farmers and minimising imported processed food is good for our health and our economy.

Practical ideas Agencies can consider:

- Keeping a water dispenser or cooler easily accessible in common areas.
- Sharing recipes from the *Kai Ora* Guidelines in team communications.
- Celebrating local food cultures through shared meals using traditional Cook Islands ingredients.
- Establishing a simple expectation in the Office culture that catered meetings offer at least one healthy option.

Commitment 3: Smoke-Free Workplaces

 *Why it matters: Tobacco use is one of the leading preventable causes of NCD mortality. The Tobacco Products Control Amendment Act 2024 already provides a legal basis for smoke-free workplaces. This commitment reinforces legal compliance and makes the intent clear.*

What this Policy asks:

- Smoking and vaping are strictly prohibited within all Government Office buildings, compounds, and facilities. This is a legal requirement under the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Act 2024.
- Clear no-smoking signage must be displayed at entry points to all Government buildings. Te Marae Ora can supply compliant signage on request.
- Where practicable, Agencies may designate a clearly demarcated outdoor area away from main building entrances where employees may smoke. This area must not be near entryways, windows, or places where non-smokers would be affected by second-hand smoke.
- Agencies are encouraged to actively support employees who wish to quit smoking by directing them to Te Marae Ora's cessation services.

Commitment 4: Caring for Mental Wellbeing

 *Why it matters: Mental health is not separate from physical health — it is central to it. Workplace stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression are common and are often underreported because of stigma. A workplace that does not take mental wellbeing seriously cannot genuinely be called a healthy workplace.*

What this Policy asks:

- Heads of Agencies must create a culture in which it is safe to speak about stress, workload pressures, and mental health without fear of stigma or negative consequences.
- HOAs should actively promote flexible working arrangements where operationally feasible, recognising that work-life balance is a significant determinant of mental health.
- Agencies are expected to take action promptly and confidentially when employees raise mental health concerns or when Managers observe signs of distress.
- Employees are encouraged to access mental wellbeing support services, including counselling through Te Marae Ora's Mental Health Division.
- HOAs must ensure that reasonable time is provided for employees to attend mental health appointments, consistent with the provisions in Commitment 5 on health check-ups.

Practical ideas Agencies can consider:

- Scheduling regular one-to-one check-ins between Managers and staff that include a genuine "how are you doing?" question.
- Setting reasonable limits on after-hours work communications.
- Providing access to a quiet space within the Office where employees can take time out.
- Making mental health awareness resources visible and normalised, not tucked away in an intranet folder.

- Celebrating kindness, teamwork, and acts of care within teams.

Commitment 5: Knowing Your Health Numbers

 *Why it matters: Many NCDs develop silently. People can have dangerously high blood pressure or blood sugar for years without knowing it. A regular check-up is often the difference between early intervention and a health crisis. It costs very little. It can save your life.*

What this Policy asks:

- All employees, including Heads of Agencies, are strongly encouraged to have an annual NCD check-up covering blood pressure, blood glucose (fasting), lipid profile, BMI, and age and gender-appropriate screening (such as cervical smears, mammography, and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) checks where indicated).
- HOAs must accommodate employees who need time during the working day to attend health appointments at Te Marae Ora clinics or a hospital. This is about being a good employer, not an optional courtesy.
- Employees should coordinate with their Direct Report in advance to arrange appointment times that minimise disruption to services. Flexible work arrangements should be used sensibly.
- Health check results are personal. Employees are not required to share their results with their employer. The purpose of this provision is to encourage employees to attend, not to enable the employer to monitor individual health data.
- Te Marae Ora will work with Agencies to facilitate group NCD screening days at larger Agencies where this is practicable.

Commitment 6: Active Travel

 *Why it matters: The journey to and from work is an opportunity to build physical activity into your day without requiring additional time. Cycling or walking to work delivers real health benefits and reduces traffic congestion and carbon emissions — a win for the individual and the environment.*

What this Policy asks:

- All Agencies are encouraged to support active travel by promoting walking and cycling as commuting options for employees who live within a practical distance.
- Employees who live within approximately 1 km of their workplace are encouraged to walk to work. Those within approximately 3 km are encouraged to consider cycling.
- Agencies may purchase bicycles for employees to use for work-related errands, inter-Office travel, and — at the HOA's discretion — commuting. A simple sign-out system should be used to manage shared bicycle use.
- HOAs and senior Managers are encouraged to lead by example — taking the bus, cycling to a meeting, or walking to a nearby Government Office sets a visible and meaningful tone.
- Agencies may, at their discretion, purchase multi-trip bus tickets for staff to encourage use of public transport.

Commitment 7: Healthy Government Events

 *Why it matters: Government-funded catering sends a signal. When every conference provides platters of fried food and crates of fizzy drinks, Government is normalising these choices with public funds. Simple changes to catering standards make a tangible difference to what hundreds of people consume each year.*

What this Policy requires (these are firm standards for Government-funded events):

- Meals must include balanced portions of whole grains, vegetables, lean proteins, and fresh fruit. Processed, high-sodium, or high-sugar options should not dominate the menu.
- Primary beverage options must be water, coconut water (*Nu*), and natural juice (freshly pressed or extracted, with no added sugars or preservatives). Sugary carbonated drinks should not be provided.
- Local produce must be prioritised where available and affordable.
- Alcohol-free events are the default and are strongly encouraged. Where alcohol is provided (for example, at formal functions), it should be minimal and not the centrepiece of the event (refer to the CIGFPPM Sensitive Expenditure Guide)
- The person responsible for organising the event is responsible for ensuring catering compliance. A simple Healthy Event Checklist (see Annex 01) is provided as a practical tool.
- For Government-funded events, conferences, workshops, and office functions, meals and beverages must prioritise whole, nutritious foods. This is a requirement — not because Government wants to control what individuals eat, but because it is acting as host and using public funds. See Commitment 7 for the full catering standards that apply to Government-funded events.
- Beverage choices at Government-funded events should include water, coconut water (*Nu*), and natural juice as primary options. Sugary carbonated drinks should not be provided as standard catering options. Alcohol-free events are strongly encouraged; where alcohol is provided, it should be limited and not the focus.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Who Does What

Healthy workplaces do not happen because a policy document exists. They happen because people at every level of an organisation take genuine ownership. This section sets out what each role is expected to do.

1.1 Office of the Public Service Commissioner (OPSC)

- Issue and maintain this Policy and provide updated guidance as needed.
- Provide Agencies with standardised templates and practical tools to support implementation — Agencies should not have to design these themselves.
- Monitor overall sector compliance through the annual business reporting process, not through separate compliance investigations.
- Work with Te Marae Ora to ensure that health guidance underpinning this Policy is evidence-based and contextually appropriate for the Cook Islands.
- Review this Policy six months from the effective date and thereafter every two years and update it in response to emerging evidence and Agency feedback.

1.2 Te Marae Ora Ministry of Health (TMO)

- Provide all evaluation metrics and health guidance for this Policy. It is not reasonable to expect Agency HR teams to design health measurement frameworks — that is a clinical and public health function. TMO owns this.
- Develop and distribute standardised NCD check-up protocols and support Agencies in facilitating group screening opportunities.
- Provide mental health services and referral pathways for employees seeking support.
- Supply no-smoking signage and cessation support materials to Agencies.
- Report annually to OPSC on NCD trends in the Cook Islands workforce to inform policy review.

1.3 Heads of Agencies (HOAs)

- Champion this Policy visibly and authentically. Healthy workplace culture starts at the top. HOAs who take this seriously — who join the walk, who drink water at meetings, who ask their people how they are doing — will achieve far more than any reporting template ever could.
- Appoint a Wellness Champion within their Agency to coordinate activities, field questions, and act as the friendly face of this Policy.
- Determine the practical implementation arrangements most suitable for their Agency, within the minimum expectations set out in this Policy.
- Ensure that employees are aware of this Policy and understand it in plain language.
- Act promptly and appropriately on any concerns raised relating to employee wellbeing.
- Submit a brief annual wellness summary to OPSC as part of their existing business reporting obligations — this should not require significant additional administrative effort.

1.4 Wellness Champions

Each Agency should have at least one Wellness Champion. This does not need to be a dedicated role — it can be part of an existing portfolio. The Wellness Champion:

- Coordinates physical activity sessions and promotes participation.
- Acts as a point of contact for employees with questions or concerns about the Policy.
- Liaises with Te Marae Ora to access health promotion materials, screening days, and support services.
- Collects the minimum information needed for Agency reporting — this should not be burdensome.
- Celebrates team participation and milestones.

1.5 Managers and Direct Reports

- Model healthy behaviours and support their teams in participating.
- Accommodate employee time for physical activity and health appointments as agreed within the Agency's arrangements.
- Notice when team members appear to be struggling with workload, stress, or health — and respond with care, not judgment.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding any health information employees share with them.

1.6 Employees

- Take an active interest in your own health — not because this Policy requires it, but because your health matters, to you and to the people who depend on you.
- Participate in physical activity programmes and health initiatives where you are able.
- Treat colleagues' health decisions with respect. Healthy workplace culture is built on encouragement, not judgment.
- Raise concerns about workload, stress, or workplace pressures with your Manager or Wellness Champion. Speaking up is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

2. Keeping It Simple: A Light Touch Approach to Monitoring

The proposed monitoring and data collection framework will take into account the capacity available in many Agencies. The purpose of monitoring is to understand whether the Policy is making a positive difference — not to generate administrative paperwork. We want to know: are people moving more? Are they feeling supported? Are healthy options being served at events? Are NCDs declining in our workforce over time?

The answers do not require elaborate reporting systems.

2.1 What Agencies Are Expected to Track

Metric	How Collected
Participation in physical activity initiatives	Wellness Champion keeps a simple tally — monthly, not daily. A headcount, not a named list (Annex 01).
Catering compliance at Government-funded events	Event organiser completes the one-page Healthy Event Checklist (Annex 02) after each event.
Smoke-free incidents	Logged only when an incident occurs — no routine reporting required when there are no incidents (Annex 03).
Employee attendance at NCD check-ups	Employees self-report attendance (anonymously if preferred) to the Wellness Champion at the annual point (Annex 04). HOAs make time available; they do not chase individuals.
Employee feedback on wellness initiatives	A brief annual survey of no more than ten questions, designed by TMO and distributed by OPSC.

2.2 Annual Reporting

Each Agency's Wellness Champion will complete a brief Annual Wellness Summary (Annex 05 — template provided by OPSC) covering the following:

- Which Commitments were actively implemented during the year.
- Approximate participation rates in physical activity initiatives.
- Any notable achievements or challenges.
- A brief qualitative assessment of whether the workplace culture has shifted.

This summary is submitted to the HOA and then to OPSC as part of the standard annual business reporting cycle. It should take no more than one to two hours to complete.

2.3 OPSC's Role in Evaluation

OPSC will compile the annual summaries from all Agencies and produce a sector-wide Healthy Workforce Annual Report. This Report will identify trends, share good practice, highlight challenges, and make recommendations for the following year.

OPSC will work with TMO to track relevant NCD health data over time to assess whether the Policy is contributing to population-level improvements. This is a long-term endeavour — meaningful NCD trends take years to show up in data.

2.4 Privacy, Confidentiality and Data Protection

No identifiable health data will be collected or held by Agencies under this Policy. Participation in physical activity is tracked by group, not by individual. Health check-up attendance is self-reported. Employee survey responses are anonymous.

Employees who are uncomfortable with any aspect of data collection may raise this with their Wellness Champion or directly with OPSC. Their concerns will be taken seriously.

Exceptions, Accommodations, and Other Provisions

3. Reasonable Accommodations

This Policy recognises that every person is different. Some employees have medical conditions that limit their ability to participate in physical activity. Some have dietary restrictions. Some are managing mental health conditions. Some work in environments where these commitments are more difficult to implement.

In all such cases, employees should speak to their Direct Report or Wellness Champion to discuss reasonable alternatives. No employee will be disadvantaged for exercising this right, and no detailed medical information needs to be disclosed beyond what is necessary to agree on an appropriate alternative.

Island Government employees and those working in remote or Pa Enua settings should work with their Executive Officer to identify locally appropriate ways to give effect to the spirit of this Policy, recognising the significant practical differences in their contexts.

4. Breaches and Non-Compliance

This Policy takes a supportive, not punitive, approach to non-compliance. Where an employee is not engaging with wellness initiatives, the first response should always be a conversation — to understand why, and to offer support.

Disciplinary action is not appropriate for employees who simply do not wish to participate in voluntary health activities. It is appropriate, however, where an employee actively undermines the Policy — for example, by repeatedly smoking in a non-smoking area in breach of the Tobacco Products Control Act, or by hosting a Government-funded event that deliberately ignores the catering standards set out here despite clear awareness of them.

Where non-compliance is systemic at an Agency level — where an Agency is making no genuine effort to implement any of the Commitments — OPSC will work with the HOA to understand the barriers and develop a support plan.

5. Policy Review

This Policy will be formally reviewed every two years from its effective date. OPSC, in partnership with TMO, will lead the review process. The review will draw on the sector-wide annual reports, employee survey data, and any relevant updates to NCD evidence or Government policy priorities.

Notwithstanding the above, OPSC will conduct an initial implementation review six months after the effective date of this Policy. The purpose of this early review is to assess whether Agencies have been able to establish the foundational arrangements required by the Policy, identify any significant barriers to implementation, and make targeted adjustments where needed. The six-month review will be proportionate — a light-touch stocktake, not a formal audit.

Agencies and employees are encouraged to provide feedback at any time through the OPSC. This Policy can only improve if those who live with it every day tell us what is working and what is not.

Associated Policies and Documents

- Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Policy
- Cook Islands Population Policy 2022–2032 (*Te Kaveinga Tupu'anga Iti Tangata*)
- Cook Islands Physical Activity & Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Everyone (2023)
- Cook Islands Kai Ora — Guidelines for Healthy Eating and Living (*Mataara ki te kai ora no te ora'anga Meitaki*)
- CIGOV Code of Conduct Policy
- OPSC Working from Home Guideline and Checklist 2022

Template Documents

Annex 01 Participation in Physical Activity Initiative July 2026

Annex 02 Health Event Catering Checklist July 2026

Annex 03 Smoke Free Incidents Record July 2026

Annex 04 Attendance at NCD Checks July 2026

Annex 05 Annual Wellness Summary Template July 2026

Other information

For Policy queries, contact the Office of the Public Service Commissioner on T: (+682) 29 421 or email: pscinfo@cookislands.gov.ck

This Policy, associated documents and templates can be found on the Public Service Shared Drive and on the OPSC website www.psc.gov.ck.