

## Staff stress management and wellbeing policy

Board library reference	Document author	Assured by	Review cycle
P050	Staff wellbeing lead	Quality and safety committee	3 years

This document is version controlled. The master copy is on Ourspace.

Once printed, this document could become out of date.

Check Ourspace for the latest version.

## Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Purpose</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 The Case for addressing stress at work	3
<b>3. Scope</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Policy description</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. Definitions</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6. Roles and responsibilities</b>	<b>4</b>
6.1 Role of Employees	4
6.2 Role of Line Manager	5
6.3 The role of HR and Workforce Directorate	5
6.4 Role of Safety Representatives	6
6.5 Role of the Health and Safety Department	6
6.6 Role of Committees/Groups with Responsibilities for Stress Management	7
6.7 Role of the Chief Executive	7
<b>7. Stress Risk Assessment</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8. Training</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9. Monitoring and Review</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>10. Document Lifecycle Control</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>11. References</b>	<b>8</b>

12. Trust Policy links .....8

## 1. Introduction

Work-related stress is a major cause of occupational ill health. This can mean sickness absence, high staff turnover and poor performance in an organisation. Managing stress effectively could help organisations, their employees and their representatives minimise the impact of work-related stress within the NHS.

## 2. Purpose

The Trust is committed to ensuring that stress is managed effectively within the organisation utilising the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards for Work Related Stress. The HSE Management Standards for Work Related Stress identify six key potential stressors at work that, if properly managed proactively, can help to reduce work-related stress. When following the Management Standards for Work Related Stress approach, the Trust will consider all of the areas below when implementing the policy.

### **Demands**

Includes issues like workload, work patterns and the work environment.

### **Control**

How much say the person has in the way they do their work.

### **Support**

Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

### **Relationships**

Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

(Note the Trust also considers a Safe Working Environment within this standard).

### **Role**

Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.

### **Change**

How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

### 2.1 The Case for addressing stress at work

The Trust is committed to meeting its legal obligations in regard to the management of stress. This includes:

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. These regulations require the Trust to assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities.
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 . This act imposes duties on the Trust to take measures to control that risk.

The Trust wishes to ensure that staff are supported and recognises that prolonged periods of stress, including work-related stress, have an adverse effect on employee's health.

The Trust recognises that research has shown work-related stress to have adverse effects for organisational efficiency in terms of:

- Employee commitment to work
- Staff performance
- Staff turnover and intention to leave
- Attendance levels
- Staff recruitment and retention

- Quality of service provision
- Organisational image and reputation
- Potential litigation

### 3. Scope

The Trust is committed to implementing this policy within all settings and teams within the Trust. The commitment to managing stress is part of the mainstream work of the Trust and links into many initiatives and the way in which the organisation conducts itself and communicates at all levels.

### 4. Policy description

The Trust will identify workplace stressors and conduct organisational risk assessments to minimise risks from stress. These organisational assessments will be undertaken every two years. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed as agreed in the stress management work plan.

The Trust will consult with Trade Union Safety Representatives on proposed action relating to the prevention and reduction of workplace stress.

The Trust will provide appropriate training for managers and supervisory staff in good people management practices.

The Trust will provide confidential counselling and where applicable trauma support for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.

In the cases of individual stress, an individual assessment may be made using the [Trust's online risk assessment tool](#) as and when required.

### 5. Definitions

Definitions of terms used within the context of this document.

**Stress** - The Health and Safety Executive define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which always has a negative effect and can be detrimental to health.

### 6. Roles and responsibilities

#### 6.1 Role of Employees

Employees have a duty to take care of their own health and safety at work and should familiarise themselves the Management of Stress Policy, and highlight any problems that they may be experiencing. Without highlighting concerns management will not be able to help manage the issue. Employees should:

- Be aware of the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards for Work Related Stress and how these assist organisations to proactively manage workplace stressors.
- Raise issues of concern with their safety representative, line manager or occupational health. Assessment of individuals stress can be made using the [Trust's online risk assessment tool](#) as and when required..
- Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.

The HSE have produced a document which guides employees in the [management of stress at work](#).

## 6.2 Role of Line Manager

Line managers should:

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Ensure staff have the opportunity to seek and are offered internal debriefing after a serious event.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking. Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Consult with members of their staff and with safety reps as appropriate.
- Ensure that organisational standards in relation to Dignity in the workplace (Bullying and Harassment) are upheld.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress at work, e.g. capacity or demand issues or outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.
- This may include referral to occupational health or assessment of individuals stress using the [risk assessment tool](#). The manager should then liaise with Health and Safety and the HR and Workforce Directorate to interpret the findings and put into place control strategies.
- Co-ordinate and assist in compilation of action plans for implementation, following definition of interventions by staff focus groups.
- Manage implementation of the action plan and specific interventions.

## 6.3 The role of HR and Workforce Directorate

### The HR Team

The HR team can provide a range of specialist employee and management advice and support as follows:

- Give guidance to managers on the staff stress and wellbeing policy.
- Advise managers and individuals on training requirements.
- Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational workplace counsellors where appropriate.
- Provide feedback and information to senior management and the trust board regarding implementation of the Trust's Staff Stress Management and Wellbeing Policy.

### Occupational Health Department

Occupational health is provided by an external provider within the Trust. The occupational health provider's role is to:

- Provide specialist advice on stress.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- Advising the Trust of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.

AWP has an [Employee Assistance Programme](#) provided by the Occupational Health Provider PAM

This provides a range of support, provided independently, seven days a week, day or night 365 days a year.

If staff are experiencing issues either at home or at work, AWP Employee Assistance Programme is on hand to provide them with expert guidance.

Staff can access information at <http://www.pam-assist.com/> from anywhere including at home using an up to date web browser.

### **The Organisational Development Team and Wellbeing services**

The Organisational Development team offer a range of wellbeing services for staff, and the Health and Wellbeing Lead can signpost these. These are recognised as best practice via the Workplace Wellbeing Charter Accreditation These are available via the Trusts Intranet here [Health and Wellbeing resources for managers](#).

## **6.4 Role of Safety Representatives**

The role of safety representatives is:

- Safety representatives must be consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress.
- Safety representatives must be able to consult with members on the issue of stress, including conducting any workplace surveys.
- Safety representatives must be involved in the risk assessment process.
- Safety representatives must be allowed access to collective and anonymous data.
- Safety representatives must be provided with paid time away from normal duties to attend any Trade Union training relating to workplace stress.
- Safety representatives should conduct joint inspections of the workplace to ensure that environmental stressors are properly controlled.
- Safety representatives should be at the forefront and have a pivotal role in the implementation of the Management Standards for Work Related Stress. They should have an input into the steering group and be intimately involved in the practical management of the project at every step.

## **6.5 Role of the Health and Safety Department**

The Health and Safety Department will receive and interpret individual [workplace stress assessment questionnaires](#) and report the findings to appropriate persons in the organisation. This will normally include reporting to the person's line manager (except in the case where the individual is indicating that the manager may be bullying or harassing the individual) and may include reporting to a HR Specialist providing that the individual completing the questionnaire has given permission for the Health and Safety Department to do so. Where permission has been granted the Health and Safety Department will clarify with the HR Team the most appropriate way to ensure that the issues are dealt with effectively. This may include taking issues to the next level of management or instigating an investigation as appropriate (refer to the [Bullying, Harassment and Dignity at Work Policy](#)).

The Health and Safety Department does not act as an advisor in employment issues nor is there any expectation that findings of investigations of bullying are shared with the department.

## 6.6 Role of Committees/Groups with Responsibilities for Stress Management

### Trust Board

The Board has overall responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of all staff, service users, visitors and others within AWP. The Chief Executive is responsible for monitoring and reviewing stress management within the Trust. The Quality and Standards Committee on behalf of the Board will be informed on the management of stress on a regular basis by receiving information from the Strategic Workforce Advisory Group.

### Reporting Arrangements

The Strategic Workforce Group works collaboratively with the Health and Safety Management Group.

The Strategic Workforce Group reports to the Extended Executive Committee and shared information with the Quality and Standards Committee which is a Board subcommittee. Staff side consultation is facilitated at these meetings and more widely through the Trust Strategic Consultative Group

## 6.7 Role of the Chief Executive

While ultimate responsibility is vested in the Trust Board, executive responsibility is delegated to the Chief Executive for managing health and safety, including compliance with relevant legislation and Trust policies.

## 7. Stress Risk Assessment

The Trust will undertake Trust wide stress audits using the staff survey to identify the level of stress within the organisation and identify organisational 'hot-spots'.

In the cases of individuals who request or who are deemed to need an assessment conducted, the online [stress risk assessment tool](#) available on the Trust's Intranet will be used.

One of the Strategic Workforce Advisory Groups tasks is to select the work groups to be involved in the any risk assessments based on indicators. It may be that the Trust surveys the whole organisation or just some sub-sets of it depending on the indicators and whether the survey is testing for improvements in the management of stress.

The Trust will both evaluate the risk and take action. The same process is used either for groups of staff and Trust wide assessment or on an individual (although the tools are different). The Trust will therefore:

- Consult with employees to discuss problems
- Work in partnership with employees and their representatives to take action
- Ensure issues affecting individuals are addressed
- Feedback results to employees
- Record the findings

The Trust will evaluate the risk by using the Trusts organisational risk matrix and analyse this in conjunction with the other risks, both clinical and non-clinical highlighted within the organisation.

The action plans need to be agreed with employees, senior management and employee representatives. The final plans will be shared with employees.

## 8. Training

The Trust's overarching policy for training is the [Learning and Development Policy](#) and this should be read in conjunction with this policy. Training will be provided to ensure compliance with this policy.

## 9. Monitoring and Review

The Trust will ensure that the action plans created following risk assessment are being adhered to, and that actions are being completed.

The Strategic Workforce Advisory Group will devise and monitor key performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of the management of stress. Overall monitoring will be provided by follow up surveys after a period of time.

Other methods of implementation of this policy will include:

- Monitoring of the Staff Survey results each year
- Feedback from Staff Experience Groups
- Monitoring staff views and trends via Staff Survey and Stress Assessments
- Ongoing monitoring of sickness levels
- Feedback from Occupational Health twice a year
- Individual stress risk assessments (as required)

## 10. Document Lifecycle Control

This policy document forms part of a formal Trust record, and is to be managed in accordance with the Trust's records management policies and retention and disposal schedules. Users must familiarise themselves with the national standards defined by the Department of Health in the "Records Management: NHS Code of Practice".

The Board Policy Document Library on OurSpace is the only recognised repository for master versions of policy documents. Copies of this document must therefore not be stored elsewhere on the system, e.g. in workgroups.

The OurSpace document library system shall provide records management functionality to allow for the retrieval of previous versions of policy documents for audit purposes.

## 11. References

- [Health & Safety Executive \(HSE\) stress standards](#)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Working Together to Reduce Stress at work – a Guide for Employees 2008.

## 12. Trust Policy links

- [Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [Risk Assessment Policy](#)
- [Managing Attendance and Absence Policy](#)

- [Bullying, harassment and dignity at work policy](#)

<b>Version History</b>				
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision description</b>	<b>Editor</b>	<b>Status</b>
1.0	28 May 2008	Approved by Board	PAD	Approved
2.0	02 November 2010	Approved by the Quality and Healthcare Governance Committee	PAD	Approved
3.0	11 May 2016	Six Month Extension agreed by Quality and Standards committee	Director of Corporate affairs / company Secretary	Approved
4.00	21/04/2017	Administrative changes Approved by Director of Nursing and Quality	Health and Wellbeing Lead	Approved