

Prevention and Management of Stress at Work Policy

CATEGORY:	Policy
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PURPOSE	To comply with the Statutory requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential Reading for: 	All Directors, Senior Managers, Department Heads, HR Team, Specialist Advisors and Trade Union Representatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information for: 	All Staff

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, (the 'Trust'), is committed to maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all staff, where Stress is not seen as a personal weakness, and where employees experiencing Stress or mental health problems can access appropriate support.
- 1.2 The Trust recognises that Stress can have many causes, including pressure within the workplace as well as in the life of individuals outside work. The Trust is committed to supporting staff in achieving a healthy work-life balance, and to supporting staff who have experienced traumatic or distressing events.
- 1.3 The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for identifying causes of unacceptable Stress within the workplace and putting in place actions to reduce such conditions.
- 1.4 The objectives of this policy are to:
 - 1.4.1 Increase general awareness of Stress and the methods available to prevent and combat workplace Stress occurring;
 - 1.4.2 Prevent and combat workplace Stressors occurring by providing procedures for managers and staff to follow; and
 - 1.4.3 Satisfy the requirements of the "Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations," 1999, to assess the risk of Stress-related ill health arising from work activities; and under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, to take measures to control that risk.
- 1.5 This policy, along with the associated Stress Prevention and Management Procedure is based upon the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards approach which defines the characteristics, or culture, of an organisation where the risks from work related Stress are being effectively managed and controlled.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all areas and activities of the Trust and to all individuals employed by the Trust including volunteers, students, locum and agency staff and staff employed on honorary contracts.

3. Framework

- 3.1 This section describes the broad framework for the prevention and management of Stress at work. Detailed procedures and guidance are

provided in the associated Stress Prevention and Management Procedure, which may be amended from time to time by authority of the Director of Delivery, provided that such amendments are compliant with this policy.

3.2 Definitions

Stress	The Trust adopts the Health and Safety Executive's definition of Stress at work, i.e. "Work related Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work. There is a clear distinction between pressure which can be a motivating factor, and Stress, which can occur when this pressure becomes excessive".
Stressors	The common term for excessive pressures or demands.
Risk Assessment	The process used to evaluate the hazard/risk and to determine whether precautions are adequate or if more must be done.
Stress Response	A person's reaction to a Stressor is termed a 'Stress Response'.

3.3 Approach

3.3.1 The Trust will ensure that appropriate information regarding the management of workplace Stress is available to all managers and staff. This will include details of contact points within the Trust where staff can seek advice and assistance both within and outside the Trust.

3.3.2 Training on Stress management will be provided by the Trust.

3.3.3 Workplace Stressors will be identified through organisational processes, such as a Risk Assessment process, or in connection with specific staff members through the absence management process.

3.3.4 Where the possibility of work-related Stress impacting upon staff is identified, for example, major organisational change, an appropriate Risk Assessment for the prevention of and management of work-related Stress must be undertaken. Guidance on undertaking such risk assessments is set out in the associated Prevention and Management of Work Related Stress Procedure.

3.4 Risk Assessments

Stress risk assessments must be undertaken, using the tool at <http://uhbhome/risk-assessment-stress.htm>, in the following scenarios:

- 3.4.1 Departmental – Stress Risk Assessments must be undertaken as part of the Health and Safety risk assessment process.
 - 3.4.2 In the event of major organisational change, led by the appropriate manager, assisted by Health & Safety, Occupational Health and Human Resources staff.
 - 3.4.3 Individual – where a manager believes that an individual may be suffering from Stress.
- 3.5 The Trust will provide support to staff suffering Work Related Stress through the Staff Support service, Staff side and the Chaplaincy team:

Staff Support and Occupational Health: 0121 371 7170, or
[staffsupport@uhb.nhs.uk/](mailto:staffsupport@uhb.nhs.uk)
OccupationalHealth.Enquiries@uhb.nhs.uk

Joint Union Office: extension 51207, or JointUnionOffice@uhb.nhs.uk

Chaplaincy team: extension 14574 or 14570 or by email:
Chaplaincy@uhb.nhs.uk

4. Duties

4.1 Board of Directors

The **Board of Directors** is responsible for providing and maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all employees. This includes the identification and as far as reasonably practicable the removal of excessive or inappropriate Stressors which could lead to employee Stress related ill health.

4.2 Director of Delivery

4.2.1 The Director of Delivery has delegated authority on behalf of the Board of Directors for overseeing compliance throughout the Trust with this policy.

4.2.2 The Director of Delivery will report any material failures of compliance or other concerns regarding Stress in the workplace to the Board of Directors.

4.3 Director of Human Resources

The Director of Human Resources will ensure that the Human Resources department will:

- 4.3.1 Give guidance to managers on the management of Stress in the workplace;
- 4.3.2 Show commitment to, assist, and support the implementation of the HSE Management Standards throughout the Trust;
- 4.3.3 Provide continuing support to managers and members of staff in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational workplace counsellors (Staff Support) where appropriate;
- 4.3.4 Provide advice to managers on the effect of work on health and make recommendations relating to the employees return to work following a period of sickness absence;
- 4.3.5 Provide signposting to the staff health and wellbeing initiatives available, including Stress management training and mindfulness sessions; and
- 4.3.6 Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated, in line with the Trust's Prevention of Harassment and Bullying Policy, and that staff are treated fairly in line with the Trust's Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy.

4.4 Divisional Directors and Corporate Service Heads

Divisional Directors and Corporate Services Heads shall:

- 4.4.1 Ensure they employ appropriate organisational approaches to identify and manage Stress, as advised by the Health and Wellbeing Steering Group; and
- 4.4.2 Provide advice and referrals to any staff health and wellbeing initiatives available, including staff support services, Stress management training, and mindfulness sessions.

4.5 Head of Occupational Health

4.5.1 The Head of Occupational Health will:

- a) Promote Trust health and wellbeing initiatives to staff and managers; and
- b) Advise the Trust management on developments in guidance and practice related to the prevention and management of Stress.

4.5.2 The Head of Occupational Health will also ensure that the Occupational Health Department provides, where requested:

- a) Specialist advice and awareness training on Stress to staff and managers;
- b) Support for members of staff who have been off sick as a result of the effects of Stress and advise them and their line manager on a planned return to work;
- c) Staff support workplace counselling, including referring staff wherever appropriate to workplace counselling services; and
- d) Stress management training to staff and managers;

4.6 Head of Inclusion, Engagement and Wellbeing/ Health and Wellbeing Steering Group

The Head of Inclusion, Engagement and Wellbeing/Health and Wellbeing Steering Group will:

- 4.6.1 Evaluate and recommend appropriate organisational approaches and methods to promote staff wellbeing and Stress reduction;
- 4.6.2 Provide advice on the staff health and wellbeing initiatives available, including Stress management training and mindfulness sessions;
- 4.6.3 Monitor indicators of staff wellbeing throughout the Trust, and reporting those back to management and employees, using HR data such as staff surveys, sickness absence rates, Stress audits, focus groups and Occupational Health and Staff Support data;
- 4.6.4 Review the information available to staff and managers to support the operation of this policy;
- 4.6.5 Advise the Trust on resources requirements to support this policy; and
- 4.6.6 Receive reports about progress against this policy.

4.7 Health & Safety Team

Members of the Health and Safety Team shall:

- 4.7.1 Inform the Health and Wellbeing Steering Group of any changes and developments in the field of Stress at work; and
- 4.7.2 Provide:

- a) Support for managers in carrying out Stress Risk Assessments; and
- b) Monitoring of Stress Risk Assessment activity in wards and departments as part of the health and safety audit process.

4.8 Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Team

Members of the chaplaincy team are able to provide listening, pastoral and spiritual support for personal, domestic and work related issues. This confidential resource can be used to reflect on any issues at an early stage.

4.9 Managers

All managers are responsible for:

- 4.9.1 Ensuring good communication between management and staff, particularly during organisational and procedural changes;
- 4.9.2 Ensuring that they are aware of workplace Stressors (through for example, appraisals or Risk Assessments) that may be impacting on their staff, generally or individually;
- 4.9.3 Ensuring staff have received appropriate training to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively and efficiently;
- 4.9.4 Monitoring the workloads, working hours, and annual leave within their staff to ensure that staff are not overloaded, overworking, and are making use of annual leave for breaks throughout the year;
- 4.9.5 Ensuring that bullying and harassment is not tolerated, in line with the associated Prevention of Harassment and Bullying Policy;
- 4.9.6 Providing support to any member of staff who is being subjected to abusive or aggressive behaviour from a member of the public;
- 4.9.7 Offering additional support to staff who are experiencing Stress outside work, e.g. bereavement or separation;
- 4.9.8 Undertaking return to work interviews following sickness absence to establish if any Stress-related problems are responsible for the absence;

- 4.9.9 Encouraging open discussion of 'sources of pressure' at team meetings;
- 4.9.10 Completing a departmental Stress risk assessment at least annually;
- 4.9.11 Coordinating and assisting in the compilation of action plans for implementation;
- 4.9.12 Managing the implementation of action plans and specific interventions;
- 4.9.13 Referring where necessary all staff experiencing Stress-related symptoms for further help, advice and support to occupational workplace counsellors (Staff Support), or their own GP; and
- 4.9.14 Completing a staff Stress Risk Assessment on all staff members identified to be experiencing Stress and the development of agreed action plans.

4.10 **Staff**

Staff have a duty to take care of their own health and safety at work and create and maintain a healthy and safe working environment. Staff must:

- 4.10.1 Minimise excessive pressure and demands on themselves and others by behaving responsibly and acting reasonably;
- 4.10.2 Raise any problems that they may be experiencing with their line manager or with Occupational Health;
- 4.10.3 Recognise and manage external issues that may impact on Stress and take steps to minimise the impact;
- 4.10.4 Identify any training and development needs;
- 4.10.5 Participate in appraisal: this is an opportunity to raise any concerns regarding work;
- 4.10.6 Consider referrals to support services, such as Occupational Health and counselling, when recommended;
- 4.10.7 Participate in a staff Stress Risk Assessment when recommended; and

4.10.8 Recognise the early signs of emotional distress and work related Stress in colleagues, offer support and encourage discussion with their manager and/or Occupational Health.

5. Implementation and Monitoring

5.1 Implementation

This policy will be available on the Trust's Intranet Site. The policy will also be disseminated through the management structure within the Trust.

5.2 Monitoring

Appendix A provides full details on how the policy will be monitored by the Trust.

6. References

Health and Safety Executive (2007) HSG218: Managing the causes of work related Stress, a step by step approach using the Management Standards.

Health and Safety Executive Stress micro site:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/index.htm>

The Management Standards are available from the internet via the HSE website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/Stress/index.htm> together with several tools to enable organisations to address Stress issues without substantial external assistance.

7. Associated Policy and Procedural Documentation

Health and Safety Policy

Prevention and Management of Work Related Stress Procedure

Prevention of Harassment and Bullying Policy

Appendix A

Monitoring Matrix

MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION	MONITORING LEAD	REPORTED TO PERSON/GROUP	MONITORING PROCESS	MONITORING FREQUENCY
How staff can access information on work related Stress management				
Provision of Information	Health and Wellbeing Steering Group	Health, Safety and Environment Committee	Review at Health and Wellbeing Steering Group meeting of information available and means of access	Six monthly
How workplace Stressors are identified				
Identification of Workplace Stressors	Senior Health and Safety Adviser	Health and Wellbeing Steering Group	As part of Health and Safety audits	Monthly
Completion of Return to Work Interviews and Risk Assessments	Senior Health and Safety Adviser	Health and Wellbeing Steering Group	Completed for all staff members identified or suspected to be experiencing Stress	Monthly
How organisation carries out risk assessments for prevention and management of Stress				
Completion of Risk Assessments	Senior Health and Safety Adviser	Health and Wellbeing Steering Group	As part of Health and Safety audits	Monthly
Statistical information re Staff Support for Stress	Occupational Health	Health and Wellbeing Steering Group	Review, bench mark and report	Six monthly
Monitoring of all of the above				
Monitoring of implementation of policy	Health and Wellbeing Steering Group	Health, Safety and Environment Committee	Through monitoring set out above	Annually
	Director of Corporate Affairs	Board of Directors	Reporting of any material failures of compliance or other concerns regarding Stress in the workplace to the Board of Directors	Annually