

MANAGEMENT AND REDUCTION OF STRESS POLICY

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Manager

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Patients first • Personal responsibility • Passion for excellence • Pride in our team

Volume 2 Employment & Occ. Health	Section 2 Occ. Health	First Ratified Sep 1999	Next Review Dec 2023	Issue 6	Page 1 of 17
---	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	---------	--------------

History

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Change	Approved by
1	March 2006	Policy rewritten	Safety & Risk Committee
2	July 2007	Policy updated	Safety & Risk Committee
3	October 2010	Policy rewritten to comply with NHSLA standards	Safety & Risk Committee
4	January 2013	Minor updates	Health & Safety Committee
5	October 2014	Minor updates	Health & Safety Committee
6	October 2016	Review & minor updates	Health & Safety Committee

For more information on the status of this document, please contact:	Steve Hill, Non clinical risk and security manager
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See also: Health and Safety

Flexibility in Employment
 Alcohol and Drugs at Work
 Sickness Absence
 Dignity at Work
 Education, Training and Development Strategy
 HR Strategy
 Management of Violence against Staff
 Staff Concerns policy
 Management of Organisational Change Policy
 Internal Communication Strategy
 Disciplinary, Grievance and Equal Opportunities Policies

CONTENTS

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
 - 1.1 Definition of Stress
- 2. PURPOSE**
- 3. DUTIES**
 - 3.1 employees
 - 3.2 Trust board
 - 3.3 Managers
 - 3.4 Line Managers
 - 3.5 HR Business Partners
 - 3.6 Health Safety and Security Advisor
 - 3.7 Occupational Health
- 4. ARCHIVING ARRANGEMENTS**
- 5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**
- 6. IMPLEMENTATION AND TRAINING**
- 7. MONITORING**
 - APPENDIX 1 Individual Stress Risk Assessment Tool
 - APPENDIX 2 Procedures for handling a case of stress
 - APPENDIX 3 Proforma to be used for taking notes during interview for dealing with stress
 - APPENDIX 4..Action Plan Interview (Manager & Employee)
 - APPENDIX 5 Equality Impact Assessment

Volume 2 Employment & Occ. Health	Section 2 Occ. Health	First Ratified Sep 1999	Next Review Dec 2023	Issue 6	Page 3 of 17
---	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	---------	--------------

1 INTRODUCTION

The Trust is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace pressures.

Within Ashford & St Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust, the management of stress is an important part of the whole risk management agenda.

1.1 Definition of Stress

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

For the purpose of this document distinction is made between pressure (the input) and stress (the response or outcome of too much pressure).

2 PURPOSE

This policy sets out the approach undertaken by this Trust in order to reduce stress in the workplace, as part of its strategy for promoting health at work through good practice and to enhance well being amongst its employees.

This policy aims to ensure the Trust complies with its responsibilities under Health and Safety at Work legislation. The tools used within this policy are those that have been designed by the Health and Safety Executive.

This policy aims to educate managers and employees in the development of working practices that reduce the factors that may contribute to significant stress in the workplace.

This policy aims to provide guidance in the management of stress, which in turn can help improve retention and maximise the potential contribution of staff.

3 DUTIES

3.1 EMPLOYEES

If you feel that you may be suffering stress at work you should raise any concerns that you have about work pressures, work life balance and any external pressures that are affecting your health at work, with your line manager. (If you are not comfortable raising this with your manager, you may like to speak to another manager, Occupational Health , HR Business Partner or Trade Union Representative).

The Trust has policies available, that may be able to support you but these can only be accessed if an appropriate person is made aware of the difficulties you

Volume 2 Employment & Occ. Health	Section 2 Occ. Health	First Ratified Sep 1999	Next Review Dec 2023	Issue 6	Page 4 of 17
---	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	---------	--------------

are facing.

Once you have raised the issue you will be asked to complete the individual stress risk assessment ([Appendix 1](#)) so that key risk areas can be identified by the Health Safety and Security Advisor.

All employees have a responsibility to contribute to a supportive work environment by:

- a. Being respectful and considerate of others
- b. Listening to the problems or concerns of others and providing practical support as appropriate.
- c. Being positively appreciative of people and their efforts
- d. Being ready to offer help if you can see a colleague is really pushed.
- e. Respecting confidentiality.
- f. Participating in goal setting and positive management of workload.
- g. Avoiding overloading staff with extra work or responsibility.

3.2 TRUST BOARD

To ensure appropriate systems and processes are in place to safeguard and promote the health, safety and welfare of all who work at the Trust.

To provide access to a confidential counselling service for staff affected by stress caused either by work or external factors.

To prioritise the allocation of resources to enable managers to implement the Trust's agreed stress management policy.

To provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices. This should be monitored/assessed within the annual appraisal.

To regularly review organisational absence statistics.

3.3 MANAGERS

Following training the manager must conduct and implement recommendations of risk assessments within their jurisdiction.

Each manager must ensure that when a member of staff is off sick with work-related stress they are referred to Occupational Health and the HR Business Partner for that area is made aware. The manager must also ensure that the member of staff should be given an individual risk assessment and advised to undertake the above procedure.

When a manager is made aware of stress by an individual they should follow the procedure as detailed in Appendix 2

If you do not undertake the above the senior manager for that area will be informed by the HR Business Partner so that this can be investigated fully.

The employee should be given details of the Employee Assistance Number 0800 282193

Volume 2 Employment & Occ. Health	Section 2 Occ. Health	First Ratified Sep 1999	Next Review Dec 2023	Issue 6	Page 5 of 17
---	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	---------	--------------

3.4 LINE MANAGERS

Line managers have a role to play in identifying potential causes of stress at work. You may identify that an individual could be suffering from stress or a condition caused by stress in three ways:

- a. The individual raises a work related stress issue with you
- b. You raise concerns that an individual may be showing signs of stress at work
- c. The employee is off sick with a potential stress related condition.

The following five points can be used by managers as guidelines to ensure best practice when considering stress/pressure within the team:

- a. Communicate – with individual regarding workload, standards, variations and expectations and your role in support.
- b. Ensure reasonableness – don't place undue and unreasonable pressure on people in the hope that it will be alright in the end!
- c. Assess and Monitor Individuals – Arrange regular and time protected one-to-ones. Document content of the meeting and ensure copy is sent to HR Business Partner for that area.
- d. Support – Provide training and direction and ensure that this is place at the beginning and throughout the period of intensified workload or new responsibilities.
- e. Action – If things are not working out then take appropriate action to alter, amend the work responsibilities or if there appears to be no reasonable alternative then consider capability and the Trust's Capability Policy and Procedure.

3.5 HUMAN RESOURCE BUSINESS PARTNERS

HR Business Partners role is to provide support to managers and employees and take appropriate action to

- a. Offer help and guidance to managers on the stress policy.
- b. Monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- c. Advise managers and individuals on training requirements.
- d. Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to Occupational Health and the employee assistance programme.
- e. Ensure that staff are aware of this policy through induction training, and actions they must take if they believe they are suffering from stress in the workplace.
- f. Inform senior managers when employees are not dealt with appropriately by line and/or departmental managers with regards to stress.

3.6 HEALTH SAFETY AND SECURITY ADVISOR

The Health Safety and Security Advisor role is to provide guidance and support to managers and employees by

- a. To provide training with Occupational Health in the training of managers in

Volume 2 Employment & Occ. Health	Section 2 Occ. Health	First Ratified Sep 1999	Next Review Dec 2023	Issue 6	Page 6 of 17
---	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	---------	--------------

- implementing stress risk assessments.
- b. To support managers in problems that may occur with the risk assessment process.
- c. Advise on environmental factors that may contribute to stress within the workplace and advise on potential solutions.
- d. Input data from individual stress risk assessment ([APPENDIX 1](#)) onto HSE database and forward any red/amber flags to the HR Business Partner.
- e. Complete Risk Assessment audit which will identify whether Stress Risk Assessment audit for each area has been undertaken.

3.7 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

The Occupational Health Department role is to provide specialist advice to employees, managers and the Trust Board in health issues associated with stress by

- a. Providing training in conjunction with the Health and Safety Adviser in the training of managers in implementing stress risk assessments.
- b. To provide lifestyle assessment clinics. These individual assessments may highlight areas of concerns and potential risk factors which can then be addressed.
- c. Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them, their manager and the HR Business Partner on a planned return to work.
- d. Encourage employees with stress to complete individual stress risk assessment if they have not already done so.
- e. Refer to the Employee Assistance Programme as appropriate.
- f. Monitor Occupational Health referrals for number of stress cases within Trust.

4. **ARCHIVING ARRANGEMENTS**

Responsibility for archiving trust-wide policies lies with the Quality Department where all paper copies will be stored, and electronic folders have been set up to hold master copies.

Requests for retrieval of documents can be made to the Quality Dept.

5. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The Trust has a statutory duty to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and a copy is attached to this policy.

6. **IMPLEMENTATION AND TRAINING**

This policy and associated procedures will be available to all staff via the Intranet. Hard copies of this document should be kept locally for easy reference.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are aware of this policy and are kept informed of any changes or additions.

Volume 2 Employment & Occ. Health	Section 2 Occ. Health	First Ratified Sep 1999	Next Review Dec 2023	Issue 6	Page 7 of 17
---	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	---------	--------------

The contents of this policy will be included in mandatory training and induction.

7. MONITORING

The policy will be monitored by reference to sickness absence reported to occupational health and regular audits and any non compliance addressed with the line manager. The monitoring will be carried out quarterly by the Divisional Associate Director or Head of Department with the HR Business Partner.

Volume 2 Employment & Occ. Health	Section 2 Occ. Health	First Ratified Sep 1999	Next Review Dec 2023	Issue 6	Page 8 of 17
---	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	---------	--------------

Appendix 1 – Individual Stress Risk Assessment Tool

This individual stress risk assessment tool is intended to be used to determine an individual's risk of stress in relation to their work-environment.

This stress risk assessment tool forms part of the 'management and reduction of stress policy'.

Please complete the following questions and then send the questionnaire to your line manager / H.R. advisor and a copy to the Health Safety and Security adviser.

If you are identified as 'at risk' you will be contacted by the HR Business Partner for your directorate and invited to discuss any issues.

If the stress is having an impact on your health you can be referred to Occupational Health for specialist health advice. If you are feeling that you are suffering from stress and need urgent advice please contact the Occupational Health Department on 01932 722404 as soon as possible rather than wait for the result of your analysis tool.

Please note that all your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Date:.....

Name:.....

Place of Work:.....

Home Address:

.....

.....Telephone

Number:.....

	Question	Answer (please tick the answer that applies)				
		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I am clear what is expected of me at work					
2	I can decide when to take a break					
3	Different groups at work demand things from me that are hard to combine					
4	I know how to go about getting my job done					
5	I am subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind works or behaviour					
6	I have unachievable deadlines					
7	If work gets difficult, my colleagues will help me					
8	I am given supportive feedback on the work I do					
9	I have to work very intensively					
10	I have a say in my own work speed					
11	I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are					

		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
12	I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do					
13	I am clear about my goals and objectives for my department					
14	There is friction or anger between colleagues					
15	I have a choice in deciding how I do my work					
16	I am unable to take sufficient breaks					
17	I understand how my work fits into the overall aim of the organisation					
18	I am pressured to work long hours					
19	I have a choice in deciding what I do at work					
20	I have to work very fast					
21	I am subject to bullying at work					
22	I have unrealistic time pressures					
23	I can rely on my line manager to help me out with a work problem					

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
24	I get help and support I need from colleagues					
25	I have some say over the way I work					
26	I have sufficient opportunities to question managers about change at work					
27	I receive the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues					
28	Staff are always consulted about change at work					
29	I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work					
30	My working time can be flexible					
31	My colleagues are willing to listen to my work-related problems					
32	When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will work out in practice					
33	I am supported through emotionally demanding work					
34	Relationships at work are strained					
35	My line manager encourages me at work					

Thank you for completing this questionnaire, if you have any concerns or queries please discuss them with your Manager, HR Business Partner or Occupational Health Department.

Please note once the data has been processed all 'at risk' questionnaires will be sent to the appropriate HR Business Partner. The data will also be used to establish the overall level of 'stress' within the organisation.

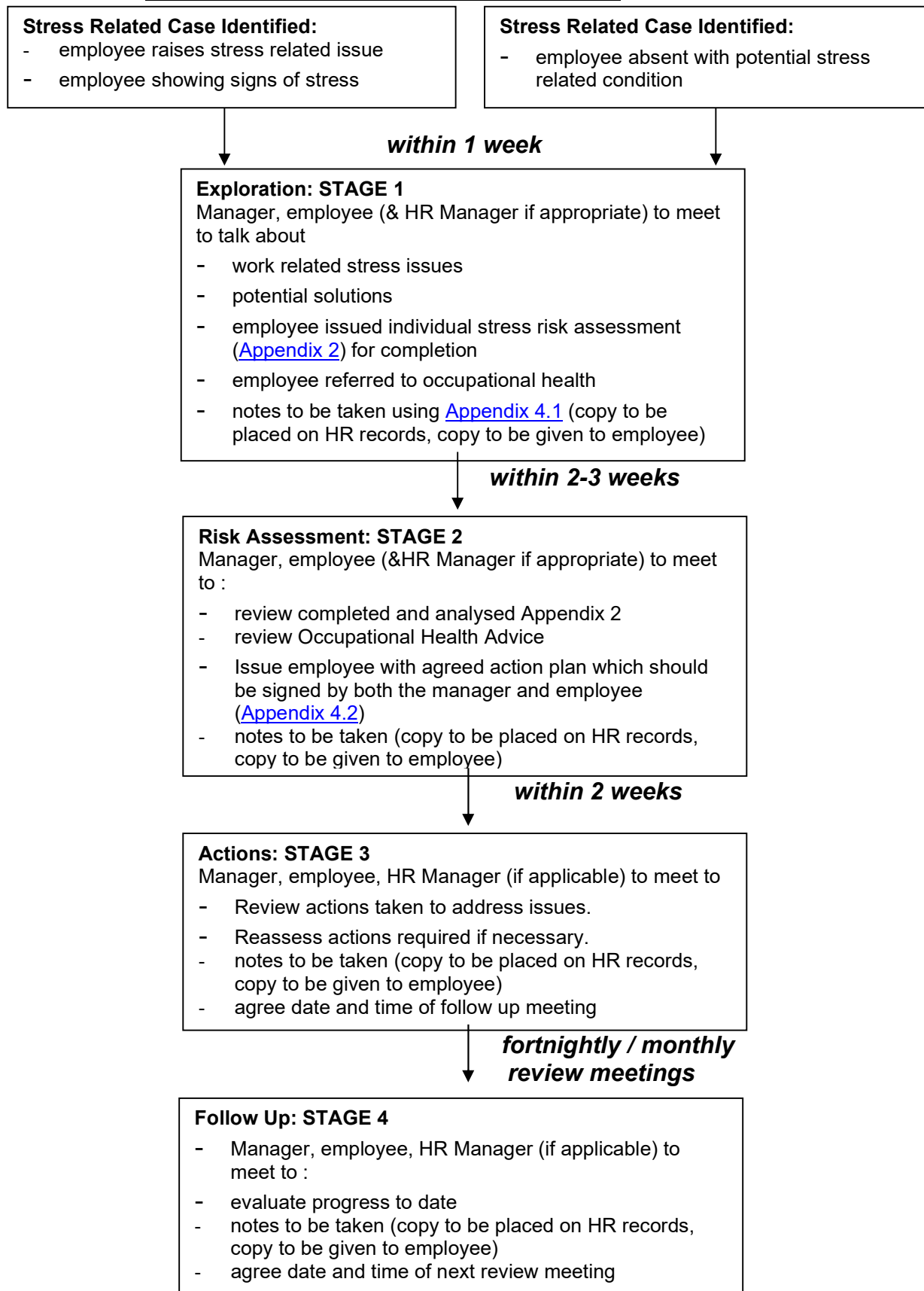
Useful Contact Numbers:

Employee Assistance Programme: This a 24/7 free confidential helpline number who are able to offer expert advice, access to counselling and support. They are also able to provide legal, financial, consumer and personal advice. They can be contacted on 0800 282193 or at www.ppcworldwide.com

Occupational Health: 01932 722404
Human Resources: 01932 722634
Health and Safety Adviser: 01932 722227

Volume 2 Employment & Occ. Health	Section 2 Occ. Health	First Ratified Sep 1999	Next Review Dec 2023	Issue 6	Page 11 of 17
---	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	---------	---------------

APPENDIX 2 - Procedures for Handling a Case of Stress



APPENDIX 3 – Proforma to be used for taking notes during interview for dealing with stress

Employees Name:.....

Job Title:.....

Managers Name:.....

Date of Meeting:.....

Person’s Present:.....

.....

Notes of Meeting	<p style="text-align: right;">(please continue overleaf if required)</p>
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Managers Signature:.....

Date:.....

I agree that the above note are an accurate reflection of the meeting and that I have received a copy of the above note.

Employees Signature:.....

Date:.....

Date sent to HR:.....

Date received by HR:.....

APPENDIX 4 ACTION PLAN INTERVIEW (MANAGER AND EMPLOYEE)

Jointly agree action that can be taken, so far as is reasonably practicable, to minimise the risks to your health and safety. Set realistic time-scales and review dates for all action points

EXAMPLES OF OCCUPATIONAL DE-STRESSORS

- Temporary change of work activities
- Prioritise and streamline work activities.
- Improve physical environment
- Consider career development
- Participation in decision making
- Reappraisal of role
- Feedback on performance
- Management and peer support
- Team building
- Increased regularity of supervision meetings
- Reduced risk of violence/abuse
- Clearly defined, achievable objectives
- Analyse training needs

Action Agreed	Who By	To Start From	Review Date

APPENDIX 5

Equality Impact Assessment Summary

Name: Colin Matthew Health Safety and Security Advisor

Policy/Service: Management of Reduction and Stress Policy

Background

- Description of the aims of the policy
- Context in which the policy operates
- Who was involved in the Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been developed to comply with the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations to ensure that all risks to staff (including stress) are assessed.

Methodology

- A brief account of how the likely effects of the policy was assessed (to include race and ethnic origin, disability, gender, culture, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age)
- The data sources and any other information used
- The consultation that was carried out (who, why and how?)

The policy is based on guidance provided by the Health and Safety Executive and is not likely to have any Equality or Diversity implications.

Key Findings

- Describe the results of the assessment
- Identify if there is adverse or a potentially adverse impacts for any equalities groups

The policy is based on current legislation and there are no potential impacts for any equality groups.

<p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a summary of the overall conclusions
<p>The policy provides fair, consistent guidance on managing health and safety in the workplace.</p>
<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State recommended changes to the proposed policy as a result of the impact assessment • Where it has not been possible to amend the policy, provide the detail of any actions that have been identified • Describe the plans for reviewing the assessment
<p>No changes recommended.</p>

Guidance on Equalities Groups

<p>Race and Ethnic origin (includes gypsies and travellers) (consider communication, access to information on services and employment, and ease of access to services and employment)</p>	<p>Religion or belief (include dress, individual care needs, family relationships, dietary requirements and spiritual needs for consideration)</p>
<p>Disability (consider communication issues, access to employment and services, whether individual care needs are being met and whether the policy promotes the involvement of disabled people)</p>	<p>Sexual orientation including lesbian, gay and bisexual people (consider whether the policy/service promotes a culture of openness and takes account of individual needs)</p>

<p>Gender (consider care needs and employment issues, identify and remove or justify terms which are gender specific)</p>	<p>Age (consider any barriers to accessing services or employment, identify and remove or justify terms which could be ageist, for example, using titles of senior or junior)</p>
<p>Culture (consider dietary requirements, family relationships and individual care needs)</p>	<p>Social class (consider ability to access services and information, for example, is information provided in plain English?)</p>