

Managing Stress at Work Policy

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Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust

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5.1		Extension agreed	Dec 17	Corporate Assurance Manager
6	All	Complete Revision	February 2018	Lyndsey Clapham
			Review including addition of risk assessment toolkit	David Sedman
7	Appendices	Removal of toolkit appendices from policy as agreed at EPG Meeting	November 2018	Lyndsey Clapham
8	All	Full Update	September 2021	Dan Dring

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Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust

Managing Stress at Work Policy

Policy Background	Society at large and employers are becoming increasingly aware of the negative impact that stress and similar mental health conditions are having on individuals, families and employing organisations.
Statement	<p>The Trust places high value on maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all of our staff. In addition to meeting our legal general duty of care for an individual's health and wellbeing.</p> <p>We are committed to taking all reasonably practicable steps to reduce common workplace stressors whilst recognising the invaluable guidance within the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Management Standards for tackling Work Related Stress. We shall be supportive of individuals who suffer from a mental health condition whose onset was caused by personal stressors and may be exacerbated by work</p>
Responsibilities	Organisational responsibilities are a feature of this policy.
Training	<p>We recognise that the provision of adequate training, especially for management is fundamental to the successful implementation of this policy.</p> <p>Support for managers will be provided as part of the on-going Our People Fundamentals workshops and a variety of support services are available to managers and employees as part of the health and wellbeing programme which is promoted in weekly email updates and through health and wellbeing road shows.</p>
Dissemination	The Trust will disseminate this policy to those employees who have a direct responsibility for its implementation. Trust induction, Newsletter and intranet website.
Resource implication	<p>Reductions in related sickness absence is fundamental to the ongoing delivery of quality of patient care by healthy engaged staff</p> <p>Additional benefits of successful implementation of this policy will see cost benefits in reducing associated direct and indirect costs of sickness absence.</p>
Equality & Diversity Statement	This policy aims to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and ensure that no employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, transgender, civil partnership/marital status, appearance, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion/belief or no religion/belief, disability, age, carer, pregnancy or maternity, social status or trade union membership

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Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust

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INTRODUCTION

Lincolnshire Community Health Services is committed to the health and wellbeing of all employees' and places value on both physical and mental health. We acknowledge that stress may have many causes, including both work and non-work related factors.

Work-related stress is a major cause of sickness absence, high staff turnover and poor performance in an organisation. The Trust aims to ensure that stress is managed effectively within the organisation utilising the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards for Work Related Stress.

1. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to provide a systematic approach to the identification, and management of workplace pressures which have the potential to induce or result in work related stress within the Trust. The policy will support staff in ensuring that hazards and risks within the organisation are managed proactively and effectively to ensure compliance with statutory obligations. The policy will also support the Trust in ensuring that staff remain well in work; attendance is improved and the safety of both staff and patients and the quality of service provided are assured.

2. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy falls within scope of the Trust's overarching health and safety policy and its management arrangements for health, safety and wellbeing. It applies universally throughout the Trust and to all employees including temporary and bank staff.

3. DEFINITIONS

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.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in the workplace could cause harm to people. By carrying out suitable and sufficient risk assessments allows the Trust to consider whether or not it has taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities below are an extension to those set out within the Trust's corporate health and safety policy.

Executive lead for health, safety and wellbeing

The executive lead for health, safety and wellbeing is responsible for:

- Providing assurance to the Trust board that this policy is being consistently applied throughout the Trust and where it has been necessary to devise corrective action plans these are being progressed and monitored to provide for sustainable continual improvement

Heads of Service/Deputy Divisional Leads

Heads of Service are responsible for:

- Identifying existing or developing situations which may require risk assessment to determine whether the impact on staff wellbeing has been suitably controlled e.g. during service reorganisation or redesign
- Ensuring that Line Managers are aware of the Trust policy to manage work related stress and have undertaken the necessary risk assessments within their areas of responsibility
- Receiving and monitoring information on sickness absence due to stress, in order to provide assurance to the Trust Board that each Directorate has complied with the Trust Policy
- Supporting staff in line with the requirements of this policy.

Line managers

- Encourage a workplace culture where mental well-being and physical well-being are regarded as equally important.
- Make sure, as far as reasonably practical, that the physical work environments for staff are safe and does not expose them to risks that may give rise to stress at work
- Ensure they are aware of any issues impacting on an employee's health and wellbeing including increased levels of stress at work, through health & wellbeing becoming part of everyday conversations' and documenting these in regular 1:1 meetings.
- Managers must, if one of their staff is experiencing work-related stress or states that they are experiencing stress, carry out an individual stress risk assessment using the individual stress risk assessment form

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 caused through bereavement or separation. This may include referral to occupational health/Health Assured, the Trust's EAP Provider.

- Manage implementation of the action plan following the stress risk assessment and specific interventions

- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational / procedural changes taking place
- Ensure staff are fully trained to carry out their specific job roles to the required standard
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful development plans as an outcome of the annual appraisal process
- Ensure that all employees are aware of the expected behavioural standards in line with the LCHS Way and address incidents where these standards are not met
- Monitoring of workloads and working hours to ensure they are not excessive and encouraging staff to take allocated rest breaks during their working day
- Monitoring individuals annual leave to ensure they take their full holiday entitlement
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety
- Ensure that organisational standards in relation to Dignity in the workplace (Bullying and Harassment) are upheld
- Managers are expected to be consistent in their approach to stress-related absence and to discuss with employees referral to relevant support services when necessary. Employees do however have a responsibility to self-refer. Managers should be flexible where appropriate, especially where reasonable adjustments are required for staff with stress-related health problems or where phased returns to work are necessary following stress-related absence.

Reasonable adjustments would depend on the circumstances but may include:

- temporary reduction in working hours;
- temporary adjustment in working duties; e.g., reduced workload if appropriate;
- additional training or support;
- more flexible working arrangements;
- more regular supervision if appropriate;
- access support from another manager if necessary.

Please refer to the Your Attendance Matters Policy for further information.

Human Resources

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

- Give guidance to managers on the implementation of the Managing Stress at Work policy and with the Stress Risk Assessment process
- Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to the Health Assured service where appropriate
- Monitoring the outcome of the annual appraisal process and supporting the delivery of development plans

- Promoting adequate, timely consultations with employees and representatives in relation to any changes in the workplace or work processes that may provide for the onset of workplace stressors
- Provide feedback and information to senior management and the Trust Board regarding implementation of the Trust's Managing Stress at Work Policy
- Provide summary data as above and on the use of support services to the health and safety committee and JCNC.

Employees

- Stress is not a sign of weakness. Anybody at any time may experience stress for a variety of reasons. Employees should inform their manager if they are experiencing stress or feel they are at risk of stress. Likewise, employees should not hesitate to seek support if they are experiencing stress, or feel they are at risk of stress. Employees should approach their manager for support in the first instance and are strongly encouraged to do so. If, for whatever reason, they feel they cannot approach their manager, they can contact Human Resources, the Health and Wellbeing team, mental health first aider, the Employee Assistance Programme (Health Assured) and/or Occupational Health directly. Employees are strongly encouraged to accept opportunities for support if offered (counselling, for instance; particularly cognitive behaviour therapy CBT).
- Be aware of the Management of stress at work policy. Take care of their own health and safety at work and play their part to help resolve issues both personal and to Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards for work-related stress and how these assist the organisations to proactively manage workplace stressors
- Raise issues of concern with their line manager in order for a stress risk assessment to be undertaken and consideration given to the most appropriate actions for support to alleviate the stress
- Co-operate with their line manager in implementing any actions which have been identified to reduce the risk of work-related stress

Health & Wellbeing Services & Occupational Health

- The organisation offer a range of wellbeing services for staff, and the Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator, local Health & Wellbeing Champion or Staffside Health & Safety Representative can signpost to these. A range of support services for emotional wellbeing is available via the Holistic Health intranet page
- Employees can self-refer to Occupational Health and can access counselling services through Health Assured our EAP provider on 0800 028 0199 or can find further information via the staff intranet. An employee's manager may also make a referral, particularly in circumstances where an individual is likely to be absent due to ill health for 14 days or more.
- Occupational Health can provide specialist advice and guidance in relation to stress and emotional wellbeing.

- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and agree appropriate return to work plans with individuals and managers.
- Signpost employees and managers to the Employee Assistance Provider, Health Assured service for access to counselling or specialist agencies as required.
- Inform the Head of HR, the Health & Safety Committee and JCNC of any specific concerns or trends in relation to stress at work.

Staff side Representatives

Staff Side Representatives will:

- Inform the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Group of areas of concern or trends in relation to stress at work.
- Support their members in line with the requirements of this Policy.
- Ensure that their Members are aware of the availability of Occupational Health and the Employee Assistance Programme.

5. HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

The impact and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the H&S Committee, It will receive and review quarterly reports from occupational health.

Arrangements

This policy outlines those management arrangements which have been made to identify, assess and subsequently eliminate, or reduce, Work Related stressors: this will be achieved through:

- Using absence data and Incident reports to identify potential stressors in particular services / areas
- Developing local action plans to address the issues identified
- Flagging issues for discussion and action from the Health and Wellbeing team
- Ensuring that staff who would benefit from access to appropriate support i.e. Occupational Health/Counselling Services are provided with the necessary information

6. STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Managers should consider completion of risk assessments under the following circumstances and in line with the organisation's Your Attendance Matters Policy;

- Prior to, and during the planning stages of any organisational change
- Upon recognition of related symptoms shown by individuals or groups of workers
- Upon recognition of high levels of related sickness absence
- Upon request from a member of staff or their representative

The risk assessment process will reflect the HSE's five steps approach being recorded on the Trust's specific stress risk assessment and action plan forms which can be

sourced from the policies in the Patient-safety section under Health & Safety located on the Trust's staff intranet site.

Recorded risk assessments and action plans will be retained locally for a minimum period of five years.

7. PROCEDURES

Stress Risk Assessment

If a member of staff is identified as experiencing stress then a stress risk assessment should be carried out by his/her manager. The stress risk assessment process identifies hazards (in this case, the identified stressors) and the associated controls (if any) to manage the hazards and from this assesses and evaluates the risks to health and safety. Wherever possible hazards (identified stressors) should be prevented from occurring or, if they cannot be avoided, managed and controlled so that the risks are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have identified six potential stressors at work, which if not managed properly can lead to work-related stress, these are: Demands; Control; Support; Relationships; Role and Change; for further information see section below. Therefore, when carrying out a stress risk assessment, the Manager should explore each of these issues with the member of staff experiencing stress to identify which, if any, are the possible causes of work-related stress. The manager should also consider and explore any other relevant factors which could potentially cause stress such as lone working, risk of violence and aggression, shift work and also personal factors such as chronic illness or injury, taking care of an elderly/sick family member and changes in marital status.

The manager carrying out the stress risk assessment should have received sufficient, information, instruction and training to be able to carry out the stress risk assessment. They may wish to consider taking the half hour eLearning course on stress available on ESR.

The manager should carry out the stress risk assessment in consultation with the member of staff experiencing the stress, as they will have valuable information to contribute and this process will reassure them that action is being taken. It will also ensure that any control measures to be implemented are discussed, accepted and integrated into existing working practices.

When carrying out the stress risk assessment, Managers should use the stress toolkit in and stress risk assessment form available on the Staff Intranet under your holistic health page. The outcome should be subject to regular review and a record kept

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE'S STRESS MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

The Health & Safety Executive's Stress Management Standards identify six key potential stressors at work that, if properly managed proactively, can help to reduce work-related stress. These are:

- Demands: Includes issues such as 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.
- **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.

Each of the above should be considered together with any other relevant factors when carrying out the stress risk assessment. 10.

STRESS AUDITS

In addition to carrying out Staff Surveys, and in accordance with the Health and Safety Executive's Stress Management Standards, the Trust may also carry out stress audits on groups of staff or staff in particular workplaces to identify whether the staff involved are experiencing work-related stress.

This will involve identifying the groups/workplaces to take part and issuing the Health and Safety Executive's 'Indicator Tool' (stress questionnaire) to the staff for them to complete confidentially. It consists of 35 questions about the six key potential stressors identified by the HSE as causing work-related stress. Once completed, the questionnaire is returned and the responses are analysed using the HSE's (Stress) 'Analysis Tool'. The results of this will indicate whether the staff taking part are at risk of work-related stress and which of the potential stressors are the possible causes and which therefore require further work to reduce their impact.

The results of the stress audit will be shared with the staff involved via Stress Focus Groups and it is these Groups, working in partnership with managers and staff that identify possible measures that could be introduced to improve the situation and thereby reduce the impact of the potential stressors.

The completion of all of the agreed identified further actions is monitored and the staff involved are kept informed at each stage.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Awareness, understanding and skills for management and individuals will be raised using different means of communication which will include but not be limited to:

- Inclusion with Trust mandatory and induction training
- Inclusion within Workshops for Leaders, specifically Your Attendance Matters
- Associated Health & Wellbeing promotional material
- Personal health and wellbeing is supported by information which is freely available and can be sourced from the staff intranet site, 'Your Wellbeing Matters'.

Process for enabling managers and staff to access information on the management of work-related stress

- All Managers are required to attend Attendance Management Workshops. This includes raising awareness of the policy for the management of work related stress and how to access information via the Intranet
- Further guidance from the Health and Safety Executive can be accessed via <http://www.hse.gov>

Staff can obtain advice and support about their wellbeing from their manager, Occupational Health, a trade union representative, Human Resources, or the Health & Safety Advisor

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

All health and safety related policies have undergone a detailed equality analysis screening process which includes validation by the Trust's equality and diversity lead to assure compliance with the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.

9. RELATED TRUST DOCUMENTS

Corporate Health & Safety Policy
Risk assessment Policy
H&S Self-assessment Policy
Your Dignity Matters – Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Policy
Your Attendance Matters (including ill health and absence)
Health and Safety Policy
Lone Worker Policy
Your Performance Matters Policy

10. KEY REFERENCE MATERIAL

Health and Safety at Work Act
Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations
Management Standards for managing work related stress
Managing the causes of work-related stress (HSE)
Working together to reduce stress at work (HSE)

11. MONITORING

Minimum requirement to be monitored	Process monitoring e.g. audit	Responsible individuals/group /committee	Frequency of monitoring /audit	Responsible individuals/group /committee (multidisciplinary) for review of results	Responsible individual/group committee for development of action plan	Responsible individuals/ group/committee for monitoring of action plan
Policy Implementation 1. Consultation 2. Training 3. Staff appraisal 4. Work strands	Self Assessment	HR Advisors / Business Partners	6 monthly	HWF	BUHRA's	HWF
Risk Assessment	Audit	HR Advisors / Business Partners	6 monthly	HWF	BUHRA's	HWF

12. Equality and Health Inequality Impact Assessment Tool

This tool has been developed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Leads for use in the NHS Provider organisations in Lincolnshire. The tool is designed to ensure due regard is demonstrated to the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and potential health inequalities are also identified and addressed (as outlined in the Health and Social Care Act). Please complete all sections below. Instructions are in *italics*. Email for all correspondence: email to lhnt.edifirst@nhs.net

A. Service or Workforce Activity Details	
1. Description of activity	Managing Stress at Work Policy
2. Type of change	Adjust existing
3. Form completed by	<i>Dan Dring – Deputy Director of Innovation</i>
4. Date decision discussed & agreed	<i>8th October 2021</i>
5. Who is this likely to affect?	Service users - Yes Staff - Yes Wider Community - Yes If you have ticked one or more of the above, please detail in section B1, in what manner you believe they will be affected.
B. Equality Impact Assessment	
<p>Complete the following to show equality impact assessment considerations of the decision making to ensure equity of access and to eliminate harm or discrimination for any of the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Further, please consider other population groups which are at risk of health inequality and can include, but not be limited to, people who are; living in poverty / deprivation, geographically isolated (e.g. rural), carers, armed forces, migrants, homeless, asylum seekers/refugees, surviving abuse, in stigmatised occupations (e.g. sex workers), use substances etc.</p> <p>Please ensure you consider the connections (intersectionality) between the protected characteristics and population groups at risk of health inequality (e.g. it is recognised that older men from a BAME background, with one or more comorbidities and living in deprivation are more at risk of a poorer outcome if they contract CV-19).</p>	
1. How does this activity / decision impact on protected or vulnerable groups? (e. g. their ability to access services / employment and understand any changes?) Please ensure you capture expected positive and negative impacts.	This policy does not have different impacts for protected characteristics
2. What data has been/ do you need to consider as part of this assessment? What is this showing/ telling you?	Datix incidents and workforce data such as absence data.
C. Risks and Mitigations	
1. What actions can be taken to reduce / mitigate any negative impacts? (If none, please state.)	The sharing and advertising of the policy will ensure everyone is aware of the risks and expected outcomes.

2. What data / information do you have to monitor the impact of the decision?	Datix incidents and workforce data such as absence data.
D. Decision/Accountable Persons	
1. Endorsement to proceed?	Yes
2. Any further actions required?	No
3. Name & job title accountable decision makers	Ceri Lennon – Director of People and Innovation
4. Date of decision	11/10/21
5. Date for review	October 2022

Purpose of the Equality and Health Inequality Assessment tool

- The NHS in Lincolnshire has a legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to demonstrate due regard in all decision making, for example, when making changes to services or workforce practices, to ensure access to services and workforce opportunities are equitable and to avoid harm and eliminate discrimination for each of the protected characteristics and other groups at risk of inequality.
- Within the guidance toolkit there are also some examples of decisions this tool has been used on in other organisations and the impacts they have identified.

Checklist

- Is the purpose of the policy change/decision clearly set out?
- Have those affected by the policy/decision been involved?
- Have potential positive and negative impacts been identified?
- Are there plans to alleviate any negative impact?
- Are there plans to monitor the actual impact of the proposal?