



**Joint Policy for Cumbria Partnership Foundation Trust &
North Cumbria University Hospital NHS Trust**

Managing Stress at Work

Reference	POL/WOR/006
Version	1.0
Date Ratified	20 September 2018
Next Review Date	October 2021
Accountable Director	Executive Director of workforce & OD
Policy Author	Pauline Speight - Head of Occupational Health and Health and Wellbeing Sophie Nixon - HR Advisor

Please note that the Intranet / internet Policy web page version of this document is the only version that is maintained.

Any printed copies or copies held on any other web page should therefore be viewed as “uncontrolled” and as such, may not necessarily contain the latest updates and amendments.

Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust | North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust

Data Protection Legislation

The Trust(s) are committed fully to compliance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018. The GDPR and DPA legislation aims to balance the requirements of organisations to collect, store and manage various types of personal data in order to provide their services, with the privacy rights of the individual about whom the data is held.

The GDPR and DPA legislation covers both manual and computerised records in any format, where the record contains details that can identify, directly or indirectly data on a natural person or persons. The DPA sets out principles which must be followed by those who process data; it gives rights to those whose data is being processed.

Policy On A Page

SUMMARY & AIM

This policy describes the process for managing the risks associated with workplace stress and other psychological difficulties that staff may experience at work. It provides guidance and a proactive management framework to prevent and manage stress and outlines the support services that are available to staff with the aim to reduce staff absence.

KEY REQUIREMENTS

1. Changes in the four following areas indicate staff may be suffering from stress
 - Physical e.g.; headaches, palpitations or changes in appetite
 - Emotional e.g.; anxiety, tearful or reduced confidence.
 - Behaviour e.g.; increased sickness/absence or agitated
 - Cognitive e.g.; poor concentration, "taking everything to heart or self-put downs.
2. Initially approach the member of staff directly and in private and sensitively enquire about their difficulties.
3. Offer informal support and show that you are concerned about their wellbeing.
4. A manager can complete a stress risk assessment when aware of a staff member experiencing stress at work.
5. Following the assessment the manager must complete an action plan of support with the member of staff considering the variety of support mechanisms available, eg:
 - Referral to external confidential counselling service.
 - If concerned with on-going fitness for work referral to Occupational Health
 - Referral to the staff Psychologist
 - Staff to contact their GP
 - Mediation service if the issue relates to conflict with colleagues.
6. Review the action plan at the agreed intervals through a series of support meetings.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The policy applies to all staff employed by North Cumbria University Hospitals Trust and Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

TRAINING:

Training for Managers is the use of this Policy will be included in both Trusts' People Management Programme.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	5
2.	PURPOSE	5
3.	MANAGER GUIDANCE	5
3.1	Indicators of Stress	5
3.2	Completing a Stress Risk Assessment	6
3.3	Instructions for Managers	7
4.	EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME – VALIDUM	7
4.	TRAINING AND SUPPORT	8
5.	PROCESS FOR MONITORING COMPLIANCE	8
6.	REFERENCES:	8
7.	ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION:	9
8.	DUTIES (ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES):	9
8.1	Chief Executive / Trust Board Responsibilities:	9
8.2	Executive Director Responsibilities:	9
8.3	Managers Responsibilities:	9
8.4	Staff Responsibilities:	10
8.5	Approving Committee Responsibilities:	11
9.	ABBREVIATIONS / DEFINITION OF TERMS USED	11
	DOCUMENT CONTROL	12

1. INTRODUCTION

The Trust recognises the health and wellbeing of staff as a key priority. The Trust is committed to building a supportive and fully inclusive work environment where everyone can flourish and succeed. We take a proactive, preventative approach to health and wellbeing through our Health and Wellbeing Strategy which will provide managers and staff with access to a range of activities and interventions to help them improve and maintain wellbeing. Staff may at times experience levels of stress. This policy supports staff and managers who find themselves affected by stress and provides appropriate advice, guidance and support should it become an issue at work. By promoting physical and mental wellbeing and through the appropriate management of the impacts of excessive stress, the Trust aims to increase levels of staff engagement, patient safety, reduce levels of sickness, staff turnover and incidents, and achieve greater organisational success through the efforts of better motivated and healthier staff.

2. PURPOSE

This policy is designed to promote the wellbeing of staff through proactive and supportive management of excessive work related stress.

- The Trust is committed to addressing work related factors which might contribute to excessive stress or undue pressure at work.
- The Trust encourages staff to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and to make healthy changes to their lifestyles.
- The Trust expects all members of staff to treat each other with dignity, courtesy and respect.
- It is the responsibility of individual members of staff to inform the Trust of any physical or mental health conditions which may affect them at work, in order for the Trust to support and be able to work with them on appropriate solutions.

3. MANAGER GUIDANCE

3.1 Indicators of Stress

Changes in behaviour or work performance can often be signs that a member of staff may be suffering from stress. If a member of staff is displaying some of the changes in behaviour referenced below, then a Stress Risk Assessment must be conducted. Staff are required to contribute to the Stress Risk Assessment process to identify and eradicate or reduce potential stressors within the workplace. Where a manager feels that there may be underlying stress issues, they should contact their HR Advisor to seek further advice. Stress indicators can include:

- High levels of sickness absence;
- High staff turnover;
- Increase in incident levels;
- Increase in the number of grievances, disputes or complaints;
- Reduction in performance levels.

Common indicators of stress (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, December 2017)	
<p>Work performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • declining/inconsistent performance • uncharacteristic errors • loss of control over work • loss of motivation/commitment • indecision • lapses in memory • increased time at work • lack of holiday planning/usage 	<p>Regression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crying • arguments • undue sensitivity • irritability/moodiness • over-reaction to problems • personality clashes • sulking • immature behaviour
<p>Withdrawal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arriving late to work • leaving early • extended lunches • absenteeism • resigned attitude • reduced social contact • elusiveness/evasiveness 	<p>Aggressive behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • malicious gossip • criticism of others • vandalism • shouting • bullying or harassment • poor employee relations • temper outbursts
<p>Other behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • out-of-character behaviour • difficulty relaxing • increased consumption of alcohol • increased smoking • lack of interest in appearance/hygiene • accidents or incidents at home or work • reckless driving • unnecessary risk-taking 	<p>Physical signs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nervous stumbling speech • sweating • tiredness/lethargy • upset stomach/flatulence • tension headaches • hand tremor • rapid weight gain or loss • constantly feeling cold

3.2 Completing a Stress Risk Assessment

Line Managers are responsible for completing Stress Risk Assessments with employees who might be suffering from excess pressure. These preventative measures will have a greater impact the earlier they are implemented. The Trust uses the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Stress Indicator Tool to complete stress risk assessments. The Tool explores 6 areas of work that can have a negative impact on employee health if not properly managed:

- **Demands** – includes workload, work patterns and the work environment;
- **Control** – how much say a person has in the way they do their work;
- **Support** – from the organisation, line management and colleagues;
- **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;
- **Relationships** – promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

3.3 Instructions for Managers

Step 1 – Arrange for your employee to complete the HSE Indicator Tool (Available in the Managing Stress at Work toolkit).

Step 2 – Use the Analysis Tool to evaluate your employee's response to the questionnaire (Available in the Managing Stress at Work toolkit).

Step 3 – Meet with your employee to discuss the results of the analysis. Then agree an Action Plan to address identified hot spots and priority areas (Available in the Managing Stress at Work toolkit).

Step 4 – Implement agreed actions and arrange regular meetings with your employee to review progress.

Step 5 – Make adjustments to the Action Plan as required in order to address the gaps between current performance and the 'states to be achieved' as identified by the Analysis Tool.

Advice on accessing and/or using the tools and devising action plans may be obtained from the Human Resources Advisors.

4. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME – VALIDUM

The EAP is a welfare initiative for staff and managers. It is a 24/7 telephone helpline number which will signpost you to services that include counselling, information and support.

Employee

The EAP can help with a wide range of life events or circumstances such as:

- Stress and Emotional support
- Legal issues
- Financial problems
- Debt counselling
- Health and Wellbeing
- Younger care guidance
- Elder care guidance

Counselling over the telephone is designed to help the employee clarify for themselves what the issues are and how to either resolve them or cope with them. The service is confidential and operates a strict code of ethics.

Managers

As a manager the service provides you with:

- Guidance when assisting staff with their problems
- Support in tackling difficult management issues
- Help with responding to the early warning signs of stress
- Support in developing skills

There are two main types of Validium EAP referral:

- An informal referral
- A management referral (copy available in the toolkit)

4. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Training for Managers in the use of this Policy will be included in the Trust's People Management Programme.

5. PROCESS FOR MONITORING COMPLIANCE

The process for monitoring compliance with the effectiveness of this policy is as follows:

Aspect being monitored	Monitoring Methodology	Reporting		
		Presented by	Committee	Frequency
Effectiveness in reducing the number of stress related absences year on year	Analysis of the number of stress related absence cases annually in comparison to the previous year	Human Resources Department	Workforce and OD SMT	Annually

Wherever the above monitoring has identified deficiencies, the following must be in place:

- Action plan
- Progress of action plan monitored by the Workforce and OD SMT minutes
- Risks will be considered for inclusion in the appropriate risk registers

6. REFERENCES:

- CIPD (2017) 'Stress in the Workplace' [Online] Available at: <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/stress-factsheet> (Accessed: 10/08/2018)
- HSE (2017) 'Tools and templates' [Online] Available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/downloads.htm>

7. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION:

- Joint Attendance Management policy
- Joint Dignity at Work policy
- Joint Grievance policy

8. DUTIES (ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES):**8.1 Chief Executive / Trust Board Responsibilities:**

The Chief Executive and Trust Board jointly have overall responsibility for the strategic and operational management of the Trust, including ensuring that Trust policies comply with all legal, statutory and good practice requirements.

8.2 Executive Director Responsibilities:

All policies have a designated Executive Director and it is their responsibility to be involved in the development and sign off of the policies, this should ensure that Trust policies meet statutory legislation and guidance where appropriate. They must ensure the policies are kept up to date by the relevant author and approved at the appropriate committee.

8.3 Managers Responsibilities:

There are a number of steps that a line manager can put in place and resources that can be used to alleviate pressures and promote a healthy workplace. These preventative measures will have a greater impact the earlier they are implemented:

- Encourage staff to access health and wellbeing opportunities;
- Empower staff to control their own workload; - Regular one-to-ones and team meetings provide an opportunity for staff to share information which can help gauge responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, which could include proactively planning workloads, or using annual leave to take regular breaks from work for rest and recuperation. If a member of staff believes they could be suffering from a mental health condition, such as depression or anxiety, they should visit their GP as soon as possible perception of their workload and how they are managing peaks in their workload;
- Ensure staff feel adequately trained and supported to do their jobs well; - Annual Staff Appraisals can also help identify where there are development needs;
- Ensure that staff have objectives that utilise their skills and abilities and keep them motivated and engaged;
- Consider any additional support that might be needed for staff during periods of change and uncertainty; - Line Managers may take action to alleviate pressures should they find that a member of staff is suffering from excessive stress, in order to prevent potential sickness absence.
- Encourage staff to use to annual leave to take regular breaks from work;
- Consider flexible working solutions to improve worklife balance; - For example, managers can offer short term solutions, where reasonably

practicable, such as allowing more flexible working arrangements subject to individual circumstances and business needs for a set period of time.

- Signpost staff to internal and external support.

The Trust knows that to achieve its goals it needs motivated, happy and healthy staff. The line manager role is pivotal in identifying and managing excessive pressures at work. Managers have knowledge of their teams and the usual working styles of staff. This knowledge can enable managers to identify uncharacteristic behaviour that could be an early warning sign of a potential issue.

Managers may find it helpful to complete a Stress Risk Assessment if they feel a member of staff is suffering from excessive pressure. Where necessary, this may be supported by a management referral to Occupational Health where further advice is required with regard to the staff member's health and fitness for work. A Stress Risk Assessment and an Occupational Health Referral must be completed in all cases where a member of staff has a period of sickness absence due to work-related stress. Where a Stress Risk Assessment identifies areas of concern, the Manager in conjunction with the member of staff must agree an action plan to address these and set a date by which the actions will be implemented. A further meeting should be arranged after that date to review progress against the action plan and any further support that may be required. A record of the Stress Risk Assessment and Action Plan must be retained by the Manager.

8.4 Staff Responsibilities:

Staff are encouraged to investigate health and wellbeing opportunities which the Trust offers in order to look after their physical and mental health. Occasionally situations from within or outside the workplace can lead to an imbalance. The Trust provides supportive interventions which can be accessed independently. External sources of help are also listed in in this policy. Staff should refrain from behaviour that may cause excessive stress to themselves and others and take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, which could include proactively planning workloads, or using annual leave to take regular breaks from work for rest and recuperation. If a member of staff believes they could be suffering from a mental health condition, such as depression or anxiety, they should visit their GP as soon as possible.

Staff must tell their line manager if they feel they may be experiencing excessive pressure, regardless as to whether that pressure has been caused from situations at work or home. If a staff member does not initiate this conversation with their line manager, it can be difficult for the Trust to respond and offer reasonable assistance in alleviating the stress situation. Staff have a responsibility to assist with the identification of excessively stressful situations and to recognise and identify harmful levels of pressure in themselves and in colleagues.

Staff are required to contribute to the stress risk assessment to identify and where possible eradicate or reduce potential stressors within the workplace.

8.5 Approving Committee Responsibilities:

The Chair of the approving committee will ensure the policy approval is documented in the final section of the Checklist for Policy Changes. The committee will agree the approval of the final draft of the policy.

9. ABBREVIATIONS / DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
HR	Human Resources
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
OH	Occupational Health
PMP	People Management Training Programme
SRA	Stress Risk Assessments

For the purpose of this document the following HSE definitions apply:

TERM USED	DEFINITION
Hot Spot Mapping Tool	Takes information from different reports of potential indicators of stress, such as sickness absence, mental Health related sickness, Number of episodes taken, Turnover above 10%, Disciplinary, Conflict, Grievance, Bullying and Harassment Investigation. If a department has 3 of these indicators in a fixed period of time use of the team stress risk assessment will be considered.
Stress	The HSE define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”.
Stressors	Common ‘triggers’ known to create stressful situations.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Equality Impact Assessment Date	11/10/18
Sub-Committee & Approval Date	Joint HR Policy Sub Group 20.9.2018

History of previous published versions of this document:**NCUH Statement of changes made from previous version**

Version	Date	Section & Description of change
2.0 HR 06	28/08/2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format changed in line with Joint Policy Template • Evidence of Implementation removed • Key requirement change – Referral to staff psychologist removed (no access to this support) • Key requirement change – inclusion of access to Employee Assistance Provider • Section 1 removed identifying factors contributing to stress e.g bereavement, relationship breakdown, caring responsibilities and illness in families etc • Health and Safety legislation identifying the employers duties has been removed • Individual responsibility for maintaining health – removed • Risk management approach - removed • Section 2 HSE approach to managing stress at work – removed • Purpose expanded to reflect Staff responsibilities added • Section 3.1 Indicators of stress added • Section 3.2 Amended completing stress risk assessment • Section 3.3 Added instructions for managers • Section 4 Added Validium information

CPFT Statement of changes made from previous version

Version	Date	Section & Description of change
POL/004/ 024	October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format changed in line with Joint Policy Template • Page 4 – introduction amended • Section 4, page 6 – details of validium included

Statement of changes made from previous version

Version	Date	Section & Description of change
1	August 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPFT and NCUH policies combined into the Joint policy template

List of Stakeholders who have reviewed the document

Name	Job Title	Date
CPFT Children and Families Care Group	Governance and Network Management Teams	Via email during September 2018
CPFT Mental Health Care Group	Senior Management Team	Via email during September 2018
CPFT Corporate Care Group	To all Heads of Services	Via email during September 2018
CPFT Community North Care Group	Senior Management Team	Via email during September 2018
CPFT Specialist Care Group	Senior Management Team	Via email during September 2018
NCUH	Senior Management Teams across Care Groups and Corporate functions	Via email during September 2018