

Managing stress at work Policy

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Purpose of Agreement	This policy defines work related stress and identifies the Trust's approach to risk assessment and the proactive management and reduction of stress within the workplace in line with Solent's Great Place to Work Strategy.
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Amend No	Issued	Page	Subject	Action Date

Review Log:

Version Number	Review Date	Lead Name	Ratification Process	Notes
1	01/10/07	C.Morant/ LBicknel	PSG, JCC, Trust Board	Initial policy
2	23/10/07	C.Morant/ LBicknell	PSG, JCC, Trust Board	Re-write of policy
3	13/10/09	C.Morant/LBicknell	PSG, JCC, Trust Board	Update EAP
4	30/12/10	C.Morant/ LBicknell	PSG,JCC, Trust Board	Re-write of policy
5	Aug 13	Michaela Tarrant	Provisional review undertaken. Extension granted for six months as agreed by the Policy and NHSLA Group	Minor Changes only
6	Feb 14	Michaela Tarrant	Policy and NHSLA Group	Minor changes
7	Jan 18	Michaela Tarrant	Health & Wellbeing Group Occ Health Team HR Team H&S Manager	The previous Wellbeing & Risk Assessment SOP has been re-written to create this Policy and is supported by a new SOP containing related guidance and tools. The Policy is based on the HSE Policy and guidance on Stress at work.
8	March 21	Michaela Tarrant	Chair's action approved extension request to January 2022, to allow sufficient time to review	Policy remains current and fit

SUMMARY OF POLICY

This Policy is intended to take a proactive approach to supporting the wellbeing of employees in line with Solent's Great Place to Work Strategy.

It is supported by a Standard Operating Procedure that contains related guidance and a range of support tools for managers and staff to use.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define stress as:

“the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”

The Policy outlines the Trust's position with regards to early identification of stress at work and the actions required to help reduce and manage work related stress. The following is covered within the Policy:

- Defining work related stress
- The benefits of identifying and managing work related stress at an early stage
- The specific responsibilities of different staff and management groups
- The legislative requirement covered by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 that identifies the legal duty of employers to protect employees from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and taking action to control the identified risks.

Identifying the reasons for people's stress can be complex and it is not always possible to identify a specific cause. The effects of stress are often the result of an accumulation of things triggered by work and personal circumstances. This Policy is therefore aimed at identifying work related stress triggers and how these can be managed to support people's wellbeing at work.

The support tools and guidance provided in the Stress Risk Assessment SOP are based on the HSE Management Standards and uses the 6 work related stress risk factors:

- Demands made on employees
- Level of control employees have over their work
- The support employees receive from managers and colleagues
- The clarity of an employee's role within the organisation
- The nature of relationships at work
- The way that change is managed

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Managing stress at work Policy

1. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

- 1.1 Solent NHS Trust is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. The importance of engaging with people is essential to supporting people's wellbeing and this Policy aims to support the delivery of Solent's Great Place to Work Strategy.
- 1.2 Stress is not always related to work, but when work is identified as a significant trigger a quick and appropriate response is important to minimise the impact it may have on an individual/team.
- 1.3 Preventing work-related stress has advantages for both the employee and employer and this Policy demonstrates the requirements in law and its commitment to managing stress in the workplace to:
- Improve the quality of people's working life
 - Supporting people through changes at work
 - Improve attendance work
- 1.3 There is an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.
- 1.4 This Policy is supported by a Standing Operating Procedure.

2. SCOPE & DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 This policy applies to permanent and fixed term contract employees (including apprentices) who hold a contract of employment or engagement with the Trust, and secondees, Non-Executive Directors and Associate Hospital Managers working within Solent NHS Trust, in line with Solent NHS Trust's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy.
- Bank and locum staff working in a service on a regular basis should be included in the service level risk assessment. For bank workers working on an adhoc basis individual risk assessment should be undertaken as necessary.
- 2.2 The Health and Safety Executive define stress as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them".

3. PROCESS/REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 This section identifies the process and requirements for identifying workplace stressors and conducting risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. The following are essential components:
- 3.2 Managers are required to undertake a stress risk assessment and develop a management action plan with their team to reduce stress risk when this is identified. The risk assessment

and management plans should be regularly reviewed. An SOP is available for managers to refer to and this includes a range of tools and guidance on maintaining a healthy work environment and the wellbeing of staff.

3.3 The Trust will:

- Consult with the Trade Union Safety Representatives on high risk incidents via the Health & Safety Committee.
- Provide guidance/training for managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.
- Provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
- Utilise the Health and Wellbeing Group to assist with monitoring trends and taking proactive steps to support health and wellbeing programmes within the workplace.
- Where necessary provide support to managers in undertaking stress risk assessments and to implement stress management plans.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Managers

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments within their service/s
- Create an action plan to mitigate risk and have systems in place to monitor progress against action plan
- Where indicated undertake individual risk assessments.
- 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.
- Monitor workloads to ensure workload management mechanisms are in place.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that working hours are managed.
- Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement and where possible spread over the year.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress at work or outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.
- Record significant risk using the Risk Management System.

4.2 Occupational health and safety staff

- Provide specialist advice and awareness training on stress and sign post to self-help resources.
- Train and support managers in implementing stress risk assessments.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress, advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- Provide initial crisis support to services and individual as required.
- Refer to Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) counsellors or specialist services as required.
- Monitor and report trends relating to stress.
- Inform the employer and the health and safety committee of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.

4.3 **People services (HR)**

- Give guidance to managers on the stress management.
- Help monitor trends relating to stress at work.
- Advise managers and individuals on training requirements and sign post to self-help resources, occupational health and/or EAP counsellors where appropriate.

4.4 **Employees**

- Identify risks relating to self and colleagues and raise issues of concern with your line manager, occupational health, safety representative
- Consider opportunities for EAP counselling when recommended.
- Take responsibility for minimising risk to self and for seeking out self-help resources through Solnet, Occupational Health and online resources to help manage stress and build resilience.

4.5 **Health & Safety Committee**

- The joint Safety Committee will perform a pivotal role in ensuring that this policy is implemented.
- Oversee monitoring of the efficacy of the policy and other measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and safety.
- Responsible for monitoring high risk relating to work stress.

5. **TRAINING**

5.1 Training and support for managers will be made available from a number of sources to meet the needs of managers with different levels of experience and workplace challenges that may indicate a higher level of support from Learning & development, Health and Safety Team and Occupational Health.

5.2 A preventative approach to training will be taken and the Managers Core Essentials Training and Managers Toolkit support good people management practice will form an important part of the training and support package underpinning this policy.

5.3 Occupational Health and the Health & Safety team will be available to work with managers and their teams where higher level risks have been identified and to advice on applying this policy in practice.

6. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MENTAL CAPACITY**

6.1 Solent NHS Trust is committed to treating people fairly and equitably regardless of their age; disability; gender; reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation.

An equality and human rights impact assessment has been carried out for the purpose of this policy and no significant issues have been identified (See Appendix A).

7. **SUCCESS CRITERIA / MONITORING EFFECTIVENESS**

7.1 As a minimum the following will be monitored to provide assurance that stress risk is being managed within the Trust maximises health at work:

- % of mental health related absence

- Employee Assistance Programme utilisation quarterly reports (review number and patterns of work related stress referrals)
- % of work related stress referrals to Occupational health service

7.2 The Health and Wellbeing Sub group and the People & OD Committee will have oversight of the above information reports to assist with monitoring work related stress patterns and to help inform action that may be required by the Trust.

7.3 The Trust Risk Register will be used to capture significant stress risks and will be reported using the escalation and monitoring processes already in place for capturing significant risks.

7.4 Non-compliance of this policy must be reported.

8. REVIEW

8.1 This document may be reviewed at any time at the request of either staff side or management, but will automatically be reviewed 3 years from initial approval and thereafter on a triennial basis unless organisational changes, legislation, guidance or non-compliance prompt an earlier review.'

9. REFERENCES AND LINKS TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

9.1 This section provides the research and evidence that were used to assist with the development of this Policy. It is recommended that this Policy should be read and used in conjunction with other relevant documents detailed below (as applicable).

- Health & Safety at work Act 1974 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>
- HSE Tackling work-related stress using the Management Standards approach - A step-by-step workbook <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wbk01.pdf>
- Management standards for work-related stress <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standardsindex.htm>
- Staff Rostering Policy

Appendix: A

Equality Impact Assessment

<u>Step 1 – Scoping; identify the policies aims</u>	Answer		
1. What are the main aims and objectives of the document?	To give all staff comprehensive guidance on relevant legislation, organisational rules and good practice so staff can deal effectively when identifying workplace stress. This policy outlines procedures and guidelines for the systematic management of work related stress.		
2. Who will be affected by it?	All NHS Trust staff		
3. What are the existing performance indicators/measures for this? What are the outcomes you want to achieve?	Local targets Legal requirements Outcomes		
4. What information do you already have on the equality impact of this document?			
5. Are there demographic changes or trends locally to be considered?	No Mental health absence rates		
6. What other information do you need?	Non identified		
<u>Step 2 - Assessing the Impact; consider the data and research</u>	Yes	No	Answer (Evidence)
1. Could the document unlawfully discriminate against any group?		✓	
2. Can any group benefit or be excluded?		✓	
3. Can any group be denied fair & equal access to or treatment as a result of this document?		✓	
4. Can this actively promote good relations with and between different groups?	✓		
5. Have you carried out any consultation internally/externally with relevant individual groups?	✓		Please see routes of consultation and ratification process
6. Have you used a variety of different methods of consultation/involvement	✓		Consultation within organisation. Please see above.

<u>Mental Capacity Act implications</u>			
7. Will this document require a decision to be made by or about a service user? (Refer to the Mental Capacity Act document for further information)		✓	
<u>External considerations</u>			
8. What external factors have been considered in the development of this policy?		✓	
9. Are there any external implications in relation to this policy?		✓	
10. Which external groups may be affected positively or adversely as a consequence of this policy being implemented?		✓	

If there is no negative impact – end the Impact Assessment here.