

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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Amendments Summary:

Please fill the table below:

Amend No	Issued	Page	Subject	Action Date

Review Log:

Include details of when the document was last reviewed:

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	
9	Oct 21	Health and Wellbeing Lead	Health & Wellbeing Group Occ Health Team HR Team H&S Manager	Minor changes

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 (SOP) 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.

Table of Contents

Item	Contents	Page
1	Introduction	5
2	Definition of Stress	5
3	Process	5
4	Responsibilities	6
5	Training	7
6	Equality Impact Assessment	7
7	Success criteria	8
8	Review	8
9	References and links to other documents	8
10	Appendices	
11	Appendix A : Equality Impact Assessment	9

Stress Management 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.
- 1.4 There is an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.
- 1.5 This Policy is supported by the following Standard Operating Procedure [Stress Risk Assessment](#).

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. An individual risk assessment should be undertaken where necessary, for bank workers working on an ad-hoc basis.
- 2.2 The Health and Safety Executive defines 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. The SOP [stress risk assessment](#) 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 Champion Network 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 an action plan.
- Adopt the 1:1 'Wellbeing Conversation', action plan and use of templates with staff to promote open health and wellbeing conversations and preventative actions.
- 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 over the year.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment are 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 (Ulysses)

4.2 Occupational Health and safety of staff

- Provide specialist advice and awareness training on stress and signpost to self-help resources.
- Train and support managers in implementing stress risk assessments and Wellbeing conversations and action plans.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress, advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- Utilise the 'People Partner' meetings with OH and service managers to proactively share concerns and implement support towards healthy workplaces
- Provide initial support to services and individuals as required and refer on for urgent high-risk needs.

- 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.
- Provide, where necessary, 1 to 1 appointments, self-help and team support with employees to support them with stress management and their mental health.

4.3 **People Services (HR)**

- Give guidance to managers on 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 is needed from Learning & development, Health and Safety Team and Occupational Health.

5.2 Training to encourage a preventative approach for managers supporting their staff wellbeing using resources via learning and development, HR initiatives and OH and wellbeing resources.

5.3 Occupational Health and Wellbeing and the Health & Safety team will be available to work with managers and their teams where higher-level risks have been identified and to provide 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 The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Team as a minimum will monitor the following to provide assurance that stress risk is being managed within the Trust to maximise health at work:
- Percentage of mental health related absence.
 - Employee Assistance Programme utilisation quarterly reports (review number and patterns of work-related stress referrals).
 - Percentage of work-related stress referrals to Occupational Health service.
 - Stress Risk assessments:
 - Percentage completed by teams
 - Percentage reviewed
 - Percentage actioned
- 7.2 The People Forum and People Committee will have oversight of the above information reports to assist with monitoring work-related stress patterns and to help inform actions 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 to the People Forum with escalation to the People Committee if necessary

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 the policy's 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](#)
 - [HSE Tackling work-related stress using the Management Standards approach - A step-by-step workbook](#)
 - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/>

Where appropriate, this policy should be used alongside the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service Stress Risk Assessment SOP which can be located on the Occupational Health [SolNet page](#)

The document provides guidance and tools for managers responsible for undertaking stress risk assessments and to aid them and their teams in the development of practical action plans to control the identified risks. It should be used in conjunction with the Trust Stress Management Policy.

Equality Analysis and Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Analysis is a way of considering the potential impact on different groups protected from discrimination by the Equality Act 2010. It is a legal requirement that places a duty on public sector organisations (The Public Sector Equality Duty) to integrate consideration of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into their day-to-day business. The Equality Duty has 3 aims, it requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act of 2010;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not;
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool for examining the main functions and policies of an organisation to see whether they have the potential to affect people differently. Their purpose is to identify and address existing or potential inequalities, resulting from policy and practice development. Ideally, EIAs should cover all the strands of diversity and Inclusion. It will help us better understand its functions and the way decisions are made by:

- **considering the current situation**
- **deciding the aims and intended outcomes of a function or policy**
- **considering what evidence there is to support the decision and identifying any gaps**
- **ensuring it is an informed decision**

You can find further information via the e-learning module [here](#)

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Step 1: Scoping and Identifying the Aims

Service Line / Department	Corporate-Occupational Health & Wellbeing Service	
Title of Change:	Managing Stress at Work Policy	
What are you completing this EIA for? (Please select):	Policy	<i>(If other please specify here)</i>
What are the main aims / objectives of the changes	To give all staff access to guidance 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.	

Step 2: Assessing the Impact

Please use the drop-down feature to detail any positive or negative impacts of this document /policy on patients in the drop-down box below. If there is no impact, please select "not applicable":

Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)	Not applicable	Action to address negative impact: (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Sex	√			
Gender reassignment	√			
Disability	√			
Age	√			
Sexual Orientation	√			
Pregnancy and maternity	√			
Marriage and civil partnership	√			
Religion or belief	√			
Race	√			

If you answer yes to any of the following, you MUST complete the evidence column explaining what information you have considered which has led you to reach this decision.

Assessment Questions	Yes / No	Please document evidence / any mitigations
In consideration of your document development, did you consult with others, for example, external organisations, service users, carers or other voluntary sector groups?)	Please select	No
Have you taken into consideration any regulations, professional standards?	Please select	Professional Standards- add in

Step 3: Review, Risk and Action Plans

How would you rate the overall level of impact / risk to the organisation if no action taken?	Low	Medium	High
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What action needs to be taken to reduce or eliminate the negative impact?	None		
Who will be responsible for monitoring and regular review of the document / policy?	Hilary Todd/ Mo Middleton		

Step 4: Authorisation and sign off

I am satisfied that all available evidence has been accurately assessed for any potential impact on patients and groups with protected characteristics in the scope of this project / change / policy / procedure / practice / activity. Mitigation, where appropriate has been identified and dealt with accordingly.

Equality Assessor:	Mo Middleton	Date:	02/12/21
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Additional guidance

Protected characteristic		Who to Consider	Example issues to consider	Further guidance
1.	Disability	A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day today activities. Includes mobility, sight, speech and language, mental health, HIV, multiple sclerosis, cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility • Communication formats (visual & auditory) • Reasonable adjustments. • Vulnerable to harassment and hate crime. 	Further guidance can be sought from: Solent Disability Resource Group
2.	Sex	A man or woman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring responsibilities • Domestic Violence • Equal pay • Under (over) representation 	Further guidance can be sought from: Solent HR Team
3	Race	Refers to an individual or group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Language • Cultural traditions • Customs • Harassment and hate crime • "Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers", are protected from discrimination under the 'Race' protected characteristic 	Further guidance can be sought from: BAME Resource Group
4	Age	Refers to a person belonging to a particular age range of ages (eg, 18-30 year olds) Equality Act legislation defines age as 18 years and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumptions based on the age range • Capabilities & experience • Access to services technology skills/knowledge 	Further guidance can be sought from: Solent HR Team
5	Gender Reassignment	" The expression of gender characteristics that are not stereotypically associated with ones sex at birth" World Professional Association Transgender Health 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tran's people should be accommodated according to their presentation, the way they dress, the name or pronouns that they currently use. 	Further guidance can be sought from: Solent LGBT+ Resource Group
6	Sexual Orientation	Whether a person's attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or both sexes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifestyle • Family • Partners • Vulnerable to harassment and hate crime 	Further guidance can be sought from: Solent LGBT+ Resource Group
7	Religion and/or belief	Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs, including lack of belief (e.g Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. (Excludes political beliefs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrespect and lack of awareness • Religious significance dates/events • Space for worship or reflection 	Further guidance can be sought from: Solent Multi-Faith Resource Group Solent Chaplain
8	Marriage	Marriage has the same effect in relation to same sex couples as it has in relation to opposite sex couples under English law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pensions • Childcare • Flexible working • Adoption leave 	Further guidance can be sought from: Solent HR Team
9	Pregnancy and Maternity	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment rights during pregnancy and post pregnancy • Treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding • Childcare responsibilities • Flexibility 	Further guidance can be sought from: Solent HR team