NHS Shetland

Stress Management Policy

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NHS Shetland Document Development Coversheet*

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Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee	Area Partnership Forum	Staff Governance Committee

Date	Version	Group	Reason	Outcome
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Examples of reasons for presenting to the group	Examples of outcomes following meeting
• Professional input required re: content (PI)	• Significant changes to content required – refer to Executive Lead for guidance (SC)
• Professional opinion on content (PO)	• To amend content & re-submit to group (AC&R)
• General comments/suggestions (C/S)	• For minor revisions (e.g. format/layout) – no need to re-submit to group (MR)
• For information only (FIO)	• Recommend proceeding to next stage (PRO)
• For proofing/formatting (PF)	• For upload to Intranet (INT)
• Final Approval (FA)	• Approved (A) or Not Approved, revisions required (NARR)

Please record details of any changes made to the document in the table below

Date	Record of changes made to document
December 2021	New Document.
04 May 2022	Following HS&W Committee, The Policy has changed from Staff Wellbeing Policy to "Stress Management Policy", which will link into a new, broader Staff Well-being Policy document.

Contents

1.   Introduction

In NHS Shetland, the Board recognises the risks posed from stress and stress related ill-health. The Board also acknowledges the importance of staff as our most important asset, and the role staff wellbeing plays in positively promoting the furtherance of NHS Shetland goals and objectives. This policy has been developed in accordance with relevant legislation, in particular:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

Although an organisation-wide approach has been established, detailed arrangements for controlling stress related issues remain the responsibility of Directors, Heads of Service and Operational Managers. All departmental health and safety control books must consider the potential fort stress related risks arising in the course of the work of the department.

NHS Shetland recognises that stress can be work-related, but can also be linked to factors that occur in a person's home life or a combination of the two. NHS Shetland will support staff, so far as is reasonably practicable, regardless of the origin of the adverse situation.

This policy and its procedures have been developed and agreed with appropriate corporate governance oversight through the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee, the Local Partnership Forum, the Corporate Governance Committee and ultimately, the NHS Shetland Board.

2.   Definition of work-related stress

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) 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 can be detrimental to health.

3.   Principles

Shetland NHS Board is committed to assessing hazards in the workplace, evaluating the associated risks and applying safe systems of work to risks that may lead to staff being exposed to stressful situations. Where this exposure is unavoidable, support mechanisms are available to assist staff to deal with the situation they may find themselves in.

We are committed to eliminating, so far as is reasonably practicable, tasks which incur a significant risk of injury or ill-health. Otherwise, the Board will strive to reduce the level of risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable. To facilitate this we are committed to providing:

- risk assessment

- appropriate stress awareness training and other related topics such as violence & aggression

- appropriate information and instruction

- guidance on site

This policy will be reviewed every three years, and registered holders of the health and safety control books will be notified of amendments.

4. Policy aims

This policy aims to:

- meet the general commitments to the health and safety of staff described in the Risk Management Strategy and Health and Safety Policy

- eliminate stress related issues which could cause ill-health, wherever this is reasonably practicable, and reduce risks to the lowest level reasonably possible

- reduce the risk of unnecessary Stress and promote staff wellbeing by making sure that risk assessments are carried out and that hazards are appropriately evaluated

- make arrangements for putting the policy into practice and make sure we make improvements in controlling stress factors potentially created by work related activities;

- contribute to helping staff who have been subject to a stress reaction; reinforce the responsibilities of general or directorate managers and heads of departments for managing and promoting staff wellbeing within their areas of responsibility

- keep to professional guidance around stress management

- link into wider NHS Shetland, Staff Well-being Policies

5. General strategy

NHS Shetland strategy for the management of stress reflects the potential scale of the problems in this respect. Responsibility for risk assessments and implementing control measures rests with line managers with advisory input from Human Resources, Health & Safety, Occupational Health and Learning & Development, as appropriate.

The strategies for reducing Stress are as follows:

- the multi-disciplinary Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee will review and oversee how this policy is put into practice. The Health and Safety Lead, Human Resources and Occupational Health will advise this Committee on corporate stress management strategies. Wide-ranging risk assessments must be carried out by line managers and heads of department of all stress causing hazards if there may be a significant risk of injury or ill-health. There needs to be a plan for putting any action into place. The plan will aim to reduce the risk of stress related ill-health by:

  o identifying priority risk areas

  o helping staff understand the importance of health and wellbeing strategies such as time management, healthy eating and exercise and the positive effect these can have on stress reduction

  o Prioritising staff groups for training programmes, and refresher training provided as appropriate. Data which is collected should be used to monitor and inform the policy's implementation

6. Stress assessment and risk identification

To assist line managers meet their obligations in relation to the management of stress, a generic risk assessment on stress is available within the Control Book risk management

system. This assessment processes enables potential stressful situations to be risk profiled at departmental level and then target identified risks in priority order.

Where a control book owner identifies outcomes above 'Low Risk', a more specific and detailed assessment must be made to further evaluate the task and consider potential enhanced control measures to eliminate or reduce the risks. The HSE assessment tool for stress will be utilised to enable detailed risk assessments to be produced, which will be used to evaluate existing control measures and determine where gaps may be present in our risk management.

The HSE has designed the Management Standards to help employers and staff to manage the causes of work-related stress. It is based on the familiar 'Five steps to risk assessment' model, requiring management and staff to work together. The Standards refer to six areas of work that can lead to stress if not properly managed.

There are six key 'Management Standards' that represent a set of conditions that reflect high levels of health, well-being, and organisational performance. These management standards provide a practical framework which managers and supervisors can use to minimize the impact of work-related stress.

The HSE Management Standards are as in the table below:

	HSE Management Standard
Demands	Staff are able to cope with the demands of the job
Control	Staff are able to have a say about the way work is done
Support	Staff receive adequate information and support from colleagues and superiors
Relationships	Staff are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying or harassment at work
Roles	Staff understand their role and responsibilities
Change	Staff are involved in and consulted about any organisational changes

These stressors should be considered in all strategic or work activities whether at institutional or departmental level. Bearing in mind the extensive physical and psychological demands there are in health and care settings for all staff.

7.   Responsibilities

The Chief Executive will ensue that suitable risk assessments are carried out under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, so enabling the most appropriate means of reducing the risk of violence & aggression.

The Chief Executive will ensure that adequate resources are made available for the effective and proactive management of work related stress within NHS Shetland.

The Chief Executive will include a review of progress in controlling the risks from stress, and aims for the coming year, in the annual health and safety report for the organisation's Board.

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, chaired by the Director of Human Resources & Support Services, will act on behalf of the Chief Executive in overseeing how the policy is put into practice and meeting the aims set.

The Health and Safety Lead provides the Committee with a source of expertise in risk compliance for stress related issues within NHS Shetland.

The Health and Safety Lead will advise the Committee on strategic developments necessary to reduce stress to meet legislation and best practice.

The Health and Safety Lead is part of the Human Resources and Support Services Directorate, and is responsible for:

- advising managers and staff about their legal obligations and for providing specialist advice and support in relation to the management of stress
- investigating Datix incident reports relating to stress issues

The members of the Executive Management Team, Chief Nurses and all Heads of Departments are responsible for:

- noting the initial risk assessments carried out and any amendments or additions made. putting the recommendations for eliminating or reducing risk into practice as far as is reasonably practicable, following the initial assessment or annual review
- recording details in their departmental health and safety control books of their arrangements for stress management, outlining appropriate responsibilities, channels of communication and monitoring
- making sure that appropriate measurements of fitness criteria are set for new staff and that these are used effectively by Occupational Health Service (OHS) when carrying out pre-employment screening
- taking account of risks created by the design of new facilities, buying of equipment or new work practices and take advice from the Health & Safety Lead
- maintaining monthly statistics on all stress related incidents and the extent of any sickness absence which may be caused as a result

Line managers are responsible for:

- identifying any risks within their department and, as appropriate, working with the Health and Safety Lead to identify measures to reduce risk
- making sure that Datix incident reports are completed for all injuries or near miss adverse events and keep up-to-date details of all incidents which occur in their area of responsibility
- making sure that local risk assessments are carried out, updated as necessary, reviewed every year and details kept. Following the results of either this assessment or a NHS Shetland wide stress audit, complete and implement a 'Stress Action Plan' (See Appendix B)
- being fully aware of the issues highlighted within current risk assessments carried out for their areas; putting into practice, as far as reasonably practicable, with the resources available, any control measures identified through risk assessments or required under this policy

- recording details of action plans for reducing risk and passing information through appropriate reporting lines to make sure risk control measures are prioritised and resourced, where reasonably practicable

- taking account of the risks created by the design of new facilities or work practices, and taking advice when necessary

- to make sure that all staff receive the relevant education before starting their jobs and that they are updated regularly

- maintaining local records of staff who receive training, both at induction and for update sessions

- recommending referral to the Occupational Health Service when appropriate, and taking advice on changing tasks or a phased return to work when necessary

- making sure that new members of staff in their ward or department have been passed by the OHS as fit for the job;

- ensuring that all staff are trained to undertake the demands of their role and are able to contribute to decisions about how the job is done

- consulting and involve staff at the earliest appropriate stage in decisions that affect them

- ensuring that there are regular opportunities for staff to discuss their work and obtain feedback on their performance. Such as regular one to one meetings with their line manager, annual appraisals, clinical supervision sessions and or team meetings

- monitor working hours and holidays to ensure that staff are not over working and are taking appropriate breaks

- identifying or respond to issues of concerns promptly and seek constructive solutions. If necessary seek advice from more Senior Management, Human Resources, Health & Safety and Occupational Health

- ensuring staff are provided with meaningful training and development opportunities;

- ensuring that once they are aware that a member of staff is or may be at risk, they must investigate the problem and find out what they can do to resolve it

- adopting the Health and Safety Executive Guidelines in identifying and risk assessing work place stressors

All staff are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care for their own safety and that of colleagues and patients

- making full and proper use of equipment provided

- following safe systems of work shown in the risk assessments

- following the precautions and procedures set up for avoiding or reducing the risk from stress and following the risk assessments and safe system of work

- attending or undertaking training courses provided by the Staff Development Department at induction and further updates, following safe working practices for stress and asking for extra training if they feel that they need it

- assessing the task before carrying out any activity to make sure enough precautions are taken

- reporting to their Head of Department any risks which they think have not been handled effectively

- ensuring that Datix incident reports are promptly reported and completed by following the procedure for all incidents; and reporting any problems or shortcomings in the risk assessment or safe system to their line manager

The Occupational Health Department is responsible for carrying out pre-employment screening and making sure that new staff are fit for the duties involved in their post.

They will discuss with the appropriate manager any risk relating to driving, which they consider to be significant.

All staff can consult the service, confidentially, on any aspect of health and safety while at work.

8.   Training

The best way of reducing the risk from stress is by putting measures in place which reduce:

- the likelihood of being harmed through excessive pressure

- reducing the risk factors in tasks that remain

Shetland NHS Board will provide training which teaches the principles of:

- risk assessment and dynamic risk assessment

- general stress awareness e-learning modules within Turas

It also:

- emphasises the practical application of these principles

- gives guidance in recognised strategies to reduce feelings of stress

- provides training based on risk assessment outcomes

All staff will receive initial induction training before working for NHS Shetland. The length of the training at induction will vary according to the tasks in which staff are involved.

All staff will also receive annual refresher training as dictated by the risk assessment process.

Line managers will identify further training needs and appropriate training will be provided as required, which can be e-learning, face to face or a combination of these training methods dependent upon the training need.

9.   Monitoring and reviewing

Outcome and indicators which may be used to evaluate this policy include:

- Is the policy effectively and widely communicated?

- Are staff aware of the policy and its implications?

- Is the policy addressed in local and organisational induction programmes?

This policy will be reviewed three years from its effective date by the Health & Safety Lead with corporate governance through the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee, reporting to Shetland NHS Board.

10. Dissemination and communication

The policy is made available via the Intranet to ensure ease of access for all staff. Paper copies of the policy can also be made available in some departments where it is more practical to be held in that format. Risk assessments are contained in departmental control books and staff must sign as reading and understanding the risk assessment contained therein.

11. Other strategies

NHS Shetland's ultimate goal is to significantly reduce potential causes of work-related stress. However, should an employee be experiencing problems of this kind, NHS Shetland provides a range of information and support such as access to a national NHS helpline and peer group listening service, which are confidential (whether caused by work or external factors).

Any bullying and harassment or violence and aggression concerns are covered within NHS Shetland's corporate policy documents on these issues.

NHS Shetland Occupational Health Service has also produced a document entitled "Guidance for Managers and Supervisors in managing work related stress". This document along with others, supports and links into the Staff Wellbeing Policy to offer further guidance on the subject.

12. Manager's Competency Tool

Line managers play a vital role in the identification and management of stress within the organisation. They are likely to see the problems causing the stress first-hand, will be in the best position to notice changes in staff behaviour that may indicate a stress-related problem and will often be the first point of contact when individuals feel stressed or overwhelmed.

It is essential that line managers are equipped with the correct skills and behaviours to be able to manage these situations. The HSE, in association with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and Investors in People, has designed a tool to allow managers to assess whether they feel they have the effective skills and behaviours identified within the Tool, as effective for preventing and reducing stress at work; its aim is to help managers reflect on their behaviour and management style.

This Line Manager Competency Indicator Tool can be found in Section 3 of the Health & Safety Control Book (Section 3. V1) or follow the link below: https://scottish.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/NHSShetHealthSafety/EoTPpd-pJUxGqOxUPMafB7MB-H5j8mrbfyAxHo83_HrsVw?e=8S3XfB.

The Competency Indicator Tool is provided for the use of all managers who wish to utilise this resource as an informal way of assessing their management style and identifying potential training needs, where they exist. However, the completion of this type of evaluation tool must be done within the spirit it is intended and the questions answered totally honestly to be an effective gauge of competency.

The aim of such a competency tool is not to undermine the capability of a manager, but a way of identifying potential training needs that will positively enhance an individual's managerial skills.

Appendix A

Legislative and Professional Guidance Documents

The Health & Safety at Work etc Act (1974)

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

NHS Healthy Working Lives strategy

Other policies that support this Staff Wellbeing Policy are:

Occupational Health - Guidance for Managers and Supervisors in managing work related stress

Work Life Balance Policy

Once for Scotland Bullying and Harassment Policy

No Smoking Policy

Drug & Alcohol Policy

Healthy Eating Policy

Management of Violence and Aggression Policy

Appendix B – Stress Action Plan

NHS Shetland - Stress Action Plan	
Department:	Aim: To improve potential stressors of: Individual / Team / Section / Department* *(*delete as appropriate)*

1. List potential stressors in your area.		Who could be affected?	2. Action taken to reduce the risks.	Staff consulted? Yes (✓) No	
A					
B					
C					
D					
E					
F					
3. What extra resources are required?			4. Actions taken to obtain extra resources.		
A					
B					
C					
D					
E					
F					

Name:		Signature:		Date:	
Position/Role:				1st review date:	
Review date:	Review date:	Review date:		Review date:	Review date:

Examples of stressor categories that can be used as a starting point for consideration:

DEMANDS - Excessive demands/work overload (too much to do, too little time or too little to do and boredom). Lone working. Poor working environment.

CONTROL - No control over work activities. No participation in decision-making. Lack of autonomy within role to plan or solve problems.

SUPPORT – Poor support provided by organisation, line manager & colleagues. Lack of adequate training. Mismatch between person and job. Lack of constructive advice.

RELATIONSHIPS - Poor relationships with work colleagues or members of the public including Bullying & Harassment / Violence & Aggression.

ROLE – Role conflict or ambiguity.

CHANGE - Poor management of change. Job security or uncertainty about what is happening within NHS Shetland. (Introducing new technology, restructuring, downsizing or outsourcing).