## MANAGING STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

### Policy Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Policy:</th>
<th>Managing Stress in the Workplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Purpose of Policy: | This policy describes the Trust’s approach to dealing positively with stress. It sets out the arrangements to:  
- remove or reduce the causes of stress where these are identified as being rooted within the organisation  
- improve the ability of managers and individual employees to recognise stressors (‘triggers’ known to create stressful situations) and respond appropriately  
- support and assist employees who are dealing with the impact of stress |
<p>| Directorate responsible for Policy | Directorate of Human Resources &amp; Organisational Development |
| Name &amp; Title of Author: | Health and Wellbeing Group |
| Does this meet criteria of a Policy? | Yes |
| Staff side consultation? | Yes |
| Equality Screened by: | Ray King – Head of Health &amp; Safety |
| Date Policy submitted to Policy Scrutiny Committee: | 16 September 2013 |
| Policy Approved/Rejected/Amended | Approved |
| Communication Plan required? | Yes |
| Training Plan required? | Yes |
| Implementation Plan required? | Yes |
| Any other comments: | |
| Date presented to SMT | |
| Director Responsible | Kieran Donaghy, Director of Human Resources &amp; Organisational Development |
| SMT Approved/Rejected/Amended | |
| SMT Comments | |
| Date received by Employee Engagement &amp; Relations for database/Intranet/Internet | |
| Date for further review | 2 year default |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>POLICY DOCUMENT – VERSION CONTROL SHEET</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title: Reducing Stress in the Workplace Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version: 2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference number/document name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supersedes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supersedes: 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Originator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Author: Ray King &amp; Vivienne Toal &amp; Rosemary Daly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title: Head of Health &amp; Safety and Head of Employee Engagement &amp; Relations and Senior Health Promotion Officer, Workplaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy Scrutiny Committee &amp; SMT approval</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred for approval by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Referral: June 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Scrutiny Committee Approval 17 June 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circulation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulated By: Lesley Dowey, Project Support Manager, HR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issued To: As per circulation List (details below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Date: June 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility of: Ray King &amp; Vivienne Toal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title: Head of Health &amp; Safety and Head of Employee Engagement &amp; Relations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Circulation:**
- Directors
- Assistant Directors
- Heads of Service for onward distribution to line managers
- Global email
- E-brief / Up2date
- Intranet/Internet
MANAGING STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Policy

Author
Ray King, Head of Health & Safety
Vivienne Toal, Head of Employee Engagement & Relations
Rosemary Daly, Senior Health Promotion Officer

Directorate responsible
Human Resources & Organisational Development

Date
June 2013

Review date
June 2015
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0 Introduction to Policy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Purpose and aims</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Policy statement</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Scope of Policy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 Responsibilities</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0 Monitoring</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0 Sources of Advice, Support Services and Further Information</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0 Legislative Compliance</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0 Equality and Human Rights</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0 Alternative Formats</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.0 Records Management</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Management of Stress related risk – flowchart
- Appendix 2 – Stress Audit Methodology
1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Southern Health & Social Care Trust acknowledges that its success in delivering quality health care depends fundamentally on its staff and through this policy recognises the benefits of taking measures to reduce stress at work.

‘Stress’ is defined as:
“*The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them*” (HSE 2001)

Individuals generally accept reasonable pressures, which are, in the main, considered as positive and motivational. These pressures can provide the key to a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. It is only when there is excessive pressure, that stress may become harmful. It can then affect performance and may undermine the health of the staff member.

Often the feeling of ‘not coping’ is seen as a weakness which is not acknowledged, with the result that people ‘soldier on’. Alternatively stress can sometimes be worn as a ‘badge of office’ – that suffering from excessive stress is almost a ‘status symbol’ and part of the territory of particular jobs. Both viewpoints are unhealthy.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) research would indicate that staff may be turning up for work but failing to do anything productive this is a phenomenon referred to as ‘presenteeism’. Dr Miller said employees are struggling into work to demonstrate their commitment suggesting presenteeism can be a sign of anxiety.

According to HSE there are six key areas of work design that, if not properly managed are associated with poor health and well-being,
lower productivity, presenteeism increased sickness absence and can be the primary sources of stress at work and are:

**Demands:** includes issues like 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 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 Trust and whether the Trust ensures that they do not have conflicting roles

**Change:** how organisational change is managed and communicated in the Trust.

As an employer the Trust has a duty to ensure that risks associated from work activity are properly managed to avoid or reduce excessive work related stress.

2.0 **PURPOSE & AIMS**

This policy describes the Trust’s approach to dealing positively with stress. It sets out the arrangements to:

- remove or reduce the causes of stress where these are identified as being rooted within the organisation

- improve the ability of managers and individual employees to recognise stressors (‘triggers’ known to create stressful situations) and respond appropriately
• improve the ability of employees to recognise individual and team stressors and respond appropriately

• support and assist employees who are experiencing stress

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The Trust is committed to:

• Positively promoting the Health and Wellbeing of all employees, through the Staff Health & Wellbeing Policy

• Raising awareness of the causes of stress and its impact on Health and Wellbeing and performance and addressing an stigma associated with this

• Ensuring a risk assessment process is in place to identify workplace stressors and supported by a range of stress management programmes with a view to eliminate or control the risks from work related stress

• Ensuring support and assistance for staff who are experiencing stress and ensuring this is accessible and well publicised throughout the Trust

4.0 SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all Southern Health & Social Care Trust staff.

Although the focus of this document is stress in the workplace there is still the awareness that individuals are very much affected by events within the home environment that may prove to be stressful for them. It is acknowledged that if stress arises outside the work
environment, it may then impact on wellbeing at work. An individual’s ability to cope with stressors in the workplace may therefore be influenced by the home environment. The link between home and the workplace must therefore not be forgotten.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Trust Board

The role of the Trust Board is to take corporate responsibility for the overall strategic direction of the Trust and for ensuring the organisation is able to deliver on the implementation of this policy.

5.2 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has responsibility for ensuring that there is an appropriate structure for the monitoring and review of arrangements to manage and reduce work related stress.

The Chief Executive has appointed the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development as Lead Director with responsibility for establishing and monitoring the implementation of the Managing Stress in the Workplace Policy.

5.3 Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development

The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development will provide strategic leadership, direction and oversight of this policy and its implementation.

S/he will ensure that:
• Training is provided to managers and staff on identifying and managing stress and in the use of the Managing Stress in the Workplace Toolkit.

• Stress management is integrated as part of good general management practice within the Trust.

• Support, guidance and advice is provided for individuals who are experiencing the impact of stress.

• Arrangements are in place for staff to access counselling services or specialist support as required.

• To ensure analysis of organisational data e.g. sickness and absenteeism data, staff turnover, staff survey via the Health & Wellbeing Group to identify hotspots within the organisation that will require focus group facilitation. Refer to Appendix 2 for Stress Audit arrangements.

• Support is provided to managers and staff in a changing environment.

5.4 Directors

The Chief Executive requires Directors to establish and monitor the implementation of this Policy within their area of responsibility. This will include:

• Promoting openness and discussion on stress issues and the application of the Managing Stress in the Workplace Toolkit.

• Ensuring a supportive management culture that acknowledges the need for all staff to have an appropriate work-life balance.
- Ensuring that organisational change is managed within their Directorates in a way that provides for good communication, support and participation opportunities for staff.

- Leading by example by providing an effective role model for others.

- Ensuring through Appraisal and Development Review process that staff are fully competent to undertake their duties.

- To support focus group activity within their Directorate where this is deemed necessary.

- To work in partnership with Trade Union Representatives to support staff and as a consequence improve the overall performance of the organisation.

5.5 Management responsibilities below Director level

All managers are responsible for the following:

- Adopting a supportive management style

- Being alert to changes in staff behaviour and performance at work

- Adopting a non-judgemental approach to staff who may be experiencing signs and symptoms of stress

- Actively promoting staff health and well-being within their team / service. Staff should be afforded opportunities to attend Health and Wellbeing Training Programmes to develop personal resilience
• Ensuring good communication at all levels within their department / service particularly where there are organisational and/or procedural changes

• Ensuring, through the Appraisal and Development Review processes that staff are fully competent to undertake their duties. This should include regular monitoring and discussion of workloads, working time, work life balance, Work Life Balance Policy and general health and wellbeing

• Promoting openness and discussion on stress issues and the application of the Managing Stress in the Workplace Toolkit.

• Managing stress in accordance with the Management of Risk flowchart contained in Appendix 1, and developing action plans to address the stress issues identified.

• Taking positive action, as is reasonably practicable, to reduce likely causes of stress including participation in focus groups, where these are initiated (See Appendix 2).

• Ensuring that staff are aware of how to access sources of advice and support services themselves (See Section 5.8) and refer staff for assistance to Occupational Health as appropriate.

• Where stress has been identified as a reason for sickness absence the member of staff should be immediately referred to Occupational Health in accordance with the Trust’s Procedures for Managing Sickness Absence.

• Working with the Employee Engagement and Relations Department and Occupational Health Department in ensuring that appropriate return to work programmes, based on risk
assessment, are planned and implemented for those who have been absent from work as a result of stress related issues.

5.6 Employees

All employees:

- Should seek support and discuss problems at the earliest opportunity with:
  - their line manager in the first instance

- Support can be provided by:
  - Trade Union representative
  - Carecall confidential counselling service
  - Occupational Health Department – staff can self refer to this service
  - or – e.g. Employee Engagement & Relations Department, Health & Safety Department, Promoting Wellbeing Department

- Can make use of the Mindful Employer Feeling Stressed: Keeping Well personal workbook (Managing Stress in the Workplace Toolkit - No 2)

- Can ask their line manager to activate the stress risk assessment process as detailed in the Managing Stress in the Workplace Toolkit – No 4

- Must comply with any steps taken by their line manager to reduce or eliminate work related stress including attending training as required.

5.7 Trade Union Side Representatives
Trade Union Side representatives are there to support staff and advise their members. They should work in partnership with the Trust in the management of stress to improve the overall performance of the organisation. Responsibilities include:

- encouraging staff to voice any concerns about their work environment with their line manager in an appropriate way
- addressing work related stress in partnership with management
- raise issues of concern regarding the health and wellbeing of staff through the appropriate partnership forum

5.8 Occupational Health Department

The Occupational Health Department is responsible for:

- Providing guidance to managers on the identification and management of stress, including advice on successfully rehabilitating a member of staff returning to work following stress related absence.
- Assessing and supporting those staff presented to the service with symptoms of stress.

6.0 MONITORING

The Staff Health and Well Being Group will ensure that the policy is implemented by monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress. This will be achieved by a sample audit annually, including areas which have been subjected to focus group sessions.
The stress management competency indicators will be used to assist the audit process. [www.hse.gov.uk/stress/mcit.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/mcit.pdf)

### 7.0 SOURCES OF ADVICE, SUPPORT SERVICES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

**Confidential Counselling Service:**
Trust staff have access to an independent and confidential counselling service, Care Call, which can be contacted directly by staff.

**Telephone:** 0808 800 0002

**Human Resources Department:**
Staff are available for individual consultation if staff wish to discuss any issues relating to stress in the workplace.

**Telephone:** Employee Engagement & Relations on 028 37412598

**Occupational Health Department:**
The Occupational Health Service provides a focus on advice and practical assistance for managers and staff in the management of stress in the workplace.

**Telephone:** 028 3741 2473

**Promoting Wellbeing Team**
The Workplace Health Promotion Officer is available to offer guidance, information and signposting on the management of stress.

**Telephone:** 028 37412521

**Trade Union Side**
Trade Union side are available to offer support, advice and assistance for staff in dealing with stress in the workplace. For information on how to contact your union for this support please contact the Trade Union Side Office on the following number.

**Telephone:** 028 30835166
Chaplaincy Support:
Staff can avail of support from the main denominational groupings by phoning the switchboard numbers below in each of these locality areas:

**Telephone:**
- Armagh - St.Luke’s Hospital: 028 38334444
- Craigavon – Craigavon Area Hospital: 028 3833 4444
- Dungannon – South Tyrone Hospital: 028 8772 2821
- Lurgan – Lurgan Hospital: 028 3832 3262
- Newry – Daisy Hill Hospital: 028 3083 5000

### 8.0 LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE /RELATED POLICIES

The Trust has a legal duty under the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations to assess the risk of stress-related ill-health arising from work activities; and under the Health & Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 to take measures to control such risks. Other related policies include the Staff Health and Wellbeing Policy, Work Life Balance Policy.

### 9.0 EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

This policy has been screened for equality implications as required by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Equality Commission guidance states that the purpose of screening is to identify those policies which are likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to these.

Using the Equality Commission's screening criteria, no significant equality implications have been identified. The policy will therefore not be subject to an equality impact assessment.

Similarly, this policy has been considered under the terms of the Human Rights Act 1998, and was deemed compatible with the European Convention Rights contained in the Act.
10.0 ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

This document can be made available on request in alternative formats, e.g. plain English, Braille, disc, audiocassette and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

11.0 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The supply of information under the Freedom of Information does not give the recipient or organisation that receives it the automatic right to re-use it in any way that would infringe copyright. This includes, for example, making multiple copies, publishing and issuing copies to the public. Permission to re-use the information must be obtained in advance from the Trust.
APPENDIX 1  MANAGEMENT OF STRESS FLOWCHART

**Identify**
Manager notices signs and symptoms of stress with a member of staff and / or Staff member raises stress related concern to manager.

**Familiarise**
Staff and managers should familiarise themselves with this policy and the supporting Toolkits.

**Discuss**
Manager and staff member should meet to discuss issues and concerns in an informal setting.

**Monitor / Review**
Manager to monitor and review with staff member at suitable intervals.

- **NO** – continually monitor through supervision / 1 to 1 meetings
- **YES**
  - Is further action required?

**Formal Action**
Manager to carry out a Formal Risk Assessment using Toolkit No: 4*

*Copy to be sent to:
Employee Engagement & Relations Department
There is an agreement that an audit by departments / teams will be done, through key indicators such as Staff Survey / feedback, high stress related absence, high turnover or indicators. A flowchart is detailed below:

1. **Selection of department for audit** - Audit to be discussed and agreed with Director.

2. **Launch meeting** – Meet with manager and staff and explain purpose and process to be followed including confidentiality and ensure that staff understand and are committed to the process.

3. **Audit** – Audit forms distributed and completed.

4. **Analysis** – Analysis of Audit forms is undertaken and key areas for improvement are identified.

5. **Focus Group** – Focus Group Events are run with selected team members to consider initial analysis and ideas for improvement.

6. **Action Planning** – Session is run with the members of the Department to feed back on audit and agree key actions for improvement.

7. **Implementation of agreed actions** – Department implement the agreed key actions for improvement with corporate support as required.

8. **Feedback** – feedback sought on impact of key actions on stress within the department.