## MANAGING STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

### Policy Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Policy:</th>
<th>Managing Stress in the Workplace</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose of Policy:</strong></td>
<td>This policy describes the Trust’s approach to dealing positively with stress. It sets out the arrangements to:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- remove or reduce the causes of stress where these are identified as being rooted within the organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Directorate responsible for Policy:</strong></td>
<td>Directorate of Human Resources &amp; Organisational Development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Name &amp; Title of Author:</strong></td>
<td>Ray King – Head of Health &amp; Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vivienne Toal - Head of Employee Engagement &amp; Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rosemary Daly – Senior Health Promotion Officer, Workplaces</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Does this meet criteria of a Policy?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Staff side consultation?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Equality Screened by:</strong></td>
<td>Ray King – Head of Health &amp; Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date Policy submitted to Policy Scrutiny Committee:</strong></td>
<td>14th June 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policy Approved/Rejected/Amended</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Plan required?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Training Plan required?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td><strong>Implementation Plan required?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Any other comments:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date presented to SMT</strong></td>
<td>30th June 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Director Responsible</strong></td>
<td>Kieran Donaghy, Director of Human Resources &amp; Organisational Development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SMT Approved/Rejected/Amended</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SMT Comments</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date returned to Directorate Lead for implementation (Board Secretary)</strong></td>
<td>30th June 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date received by Board Secretary for database/Intranet/Internet</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Date for further review</strong></td>
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<td>Version: 1.0</td>
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<td>Supersedes: all former legacy Stress Management policies</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Originator</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Author: Ray King &amp; Vivienne Toal &amp; Rosemary Daly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title: Head of Health &amp; Safety and Head of Employee Engagement &amp; Relations and Senior Health Promotion Officer, Workplaces</td>
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<td><strong>Policy Scrutiny Committee &amp; SMT approval</strong></td>
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<td>Referred for approval by:</td>
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<td>Date of Referral: 14th June 2010</td>
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<td>Responsibility of: Ray King &amp; Vivienne Toal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title: Head of Health &amp; Safety and Head of Employee Engagement &amp; Relations</td>
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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
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Vivienne Toal, Head of Employee Engagement & Relations
Rosemary Daly, Senior Health Promotion Officer

Directorate responsible
Human Resources & Organisational Development

Date
June 2010

Review date
June 2012
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## 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.

There are six key areas of work design that, if not properly managed are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity, 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 dealing with the impact of stress

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The Trust is committed to:

- Promoting staff health and well-being (refer to Health and Well Being Policy) and discouraging any stigma attached to stress.
- Raising awareness of ill-health associated with stress, its causes and associated factors.
- Ensuring risk assessment and stress management processes are in place to identify workplace stressors with a view to eliminating or controlling the risks from work related stress.
- Addressing aspects of the workplace that have been identified as increasing the risk of stress.
- Providing systems of support and assistance for staff who are dealing with the impact of stress and ensuring that they are 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 things 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 be linked to well being 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 have been off sick or are known to be suffering from the impact of stress.

- Arrangements are in place to refer to counselling services or specialist agencies 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.

- Ensuring that jobs are designed in such a way that makes them challenging, without being overwhelming.

- 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 approve areas within their Directorate for further focus group activity where this is deemed necessary.

• To work in partnership with Trade Union Representations to improve the overall performance of the organisation.

5.5 Management responsibilities below Director level

All managers, in addition to their duties as employees, are responsible for the following:

• Actively promoting mental and physical health and well-being within their team / service. All staff should be afforded opportunities to attend Health and Well Being Training Programmes to develop personal resilience

• Being alert to changes in behaviour and performance at work

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

• 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, and work life balance.

• 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 referring 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 stress related issues.

5.6 Employees

All employees:

- can seek support and discuss problems at the earliest opportunity with:
  - their line manager, if they feel able to
  - Trade Union representative
  - the confidential Care-call counselling service
  - Occupational Health Department – staff can self refer to this service
  - or any other appropriate person – 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 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.
- should accept opportunities for counselling when recommended (Refer to Managing Stress in the Workplace Toolkit – No 5 Care-Call Confidential Support Service).

5.7 Trade Union Side Representatives

Trade Union Side representatives have a responsibility to support and advise their members. They should work in partnership with management to improve the overall performance of the organisation. Responsibilities include:
- encouraging staff to voice their concerns about their work environment in an appropriate way

- tackling work related stress in partnership with management

- feeding back information on potential workplace hazards to management via the Health and Safety Committee

5.8 Occupational Health Department

The Occupational Health Department is responsible for:

- providing guidance to managers on the identification and management of work related stress, including advice on successfully rehabilitating a member of staff returning to work following stress related absence.

- monitoring the well being and progress of individuals presenting with symptoms of work related stress.

6.0 MONITORING

The 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 results of the audit will be reported through to the Health & Safety Committee.

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

Health & Safety Department:
Staff are available to provide support and general guidance on managing stress in the workplace. General guidance on the HSE Management Standards for Work Related Stress can be found on the Health & Safety Executive Website www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards
Telephone: Health & Safety Department 028 4062 2475

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. Staff can refer themselves for support directly to the Occupational Health Service.
Telephone: Armagh Service: 028 3741 2473
Craigan Service: 028 3861 2616
Newry Service: 028 3083 5132

Promoting Wellbeing Team
The Workplace Health Promotion Officer is available to offer staff guidance, information and signposting on the management of stress in the workplace.
Telephone: 028 37520544

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 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 3752 2381
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

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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 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.
Anyone in the team / department can identify significant stress factors and raise these with their manager. Equally, a manager may notice signs and symptoms with a member(s) of staff which may lead them to suspect high levels of work related stress. The process outlined below describes how the manager should manage the issues identified.

1. Manager discusses with the staff member(s) and they jointly agree on steps to be taken:
   - What steps is the manager taking to support the staff member, reduce stressors and improve the health and wellbeing of the staff member.
   - What steps is the staff member taking to alleviate stressors and improve own health and well being.

   (These steps may include; referral to Occupational Health, Care Call or contact Trade Union Side office if not already accessed).

2. Staff member and manager review the situation weekly/suitable intervals

3. Review after one month

4. Further action required

5. Manager and staff member agree further action and review in one month

6. If not resolved Manager then carries out a formal risk assessment using Tool No 4

7. Manager involves other staff/managers in developing solutions

8. Monitor and review action plan until situation is resolved.
APPENDIX 2 Southern Health & Social Care Trust Stress Audit Methodology

1. **Selection of department for audit** as a result of key indicators such as staff survey / feedback, high stress related absence, high turnover or other indictors. 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 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** – feed back sought on impact of key actions on stress within the department.