

STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

CPRCCG HR25

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This is the policy of NHS Southend Clinical Commissioning Group (“the CCG”) for ensuring that the CCG has a mechanism in place to identify and manage the adverse risks to staff that can be associated with stress.
- 1.2** Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, employers have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees. Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 ascribes a duty to employers to assess and control risks, which includes those associated with stress. A duty of care to employees also exists under common law.
- 1.3** The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) have indicated that stress is one of the key areas that it expects employers to proactively manage.
- 1.4** NHS bodies, such as the NHS Litigation Authority (NHSLA), which monitors risk management in individual NHS employer organisations, have standards covering the management of work-related stress.
- 1.5** The CCG recognises that the presence of pressures upon staff at all levels and in all types of role may have a negative impact.
- 1.6** Stress poses a risk to physical and mental health and well-being. It is linked to high levels of sickness absence, loss of productivity and high rates of staff turnover. The Office for National Statistics reports that 13.3m work days were lost due to stress across all sectors of the UK economy in 2011.
- 1.7** The organisation aims to encourage a culture where the identification of stress, either by the individual concerned or by their line manager, is not a reflection of failure or incompetence but that it indicates the requirement for a period of support or attention to occupational factors such as role design, capacity, environment or workload. NHS Castle Point & Rochford CCG will provide that support wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so. The organisation recognises that achieving a satisfactory balance between home and working lives accrues benefits to all parties and strives to reviews its policies and everyday modes of working to maximise this balance for staff.
- 1.8** In recent years, extensive research has been carried out on the causes of work-related stress, particularly by the Health & Safety Executive resulting in the development of the Stress Management Standards. These identify various elements of work organization which can contribute to an individual’s stress. The Management Standards cover the following work areas:
- Demands
 - Control
 - Support
 - Relationships
 - Role
 - Change

- 1.9** The HSE have also worked with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) with regard to the ability of managers to manage the stress of those for whom they are responsible and the identification of key competencies for doing so effectively.
- 1.10** Given the health and safety and human resources implications of stress and stress management and to reflect the national approach, this policy has been developed as a joint initiative between the HR and corporate governance teams.
- 1.11** Failure to implement this policy will place the CCG in breach of its duties under the aforementioned legislation.

2.0 PURPOSE

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

- Explain the CCG's statutory duty as an employer to assess the risks associated with stress and take practical steps to avoid and control these;
- Increase staff awareness of stress and their confidence in raising the issue with their line managers;
- Promote the organisation's commitment to tackling stress and stress-related issues in the interests of staff health and wellbeing
- Ensure that the risks associated with stress are assessed in a systematic and on-going way and that safe systems and methods of working are in place to reduce the risk so far as reasonably practicable;
- Ensure that appropriate training is available to staff and managers in all areas that equips them to recognise stress and provides practical advice on stress management;
- Reduce the number of work days lost to stress-related sickness absence

2.2 This policy applies equally to CCG Governing Body members, staff and members of practice staff when they are undertaking CCG business.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 Stress

The Health & Safety Executive define stress as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them." It arises when they worry that they cannot cope.

Work-related stress means the process that arises where work demands of various types and combinations exceed the person's capacity and capability to cope.

3.2 Risk Assessment

This is a systematic examination of what could cause harm and whether sufficient measures have been put in place to mitigate these risks. It is important to remember that individuals have different thresholds for stress and therefore managers need to treat each assessment on the merits of the individual case.

4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 NHS Castle Point & Rochford CCG Governing Body

The Cluster Governing Body is responsible for receiving assurance that the CCG has in place a robust system for meeting its statutory and legislative obligations around stress management.

4.2 Accountable Officer

The Accountable Officer is accountable for ensuring that the CCG complies with its statutory and common law obligations around stress management.

This post holder has Governing Body level responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this policy.

4.3 CCG Chair

As the line manager-equivalent for all Governing Body members, the CCG Chair has an obligation to ensure that this policy is implemented with members of the CCG Governing Body, particularly those who are not also officers of the CCG (i.e., GP, Lay and Practice Manager members and the Secondary Care Consultant member).

4.4 Competent Person

This individual is responsible for providing qualified advice and support to the Head of Corporate Services with regard to stress management from a health and safety perspective. The CCG currently obtains Competent Person support from NHS Property Services Ltd (Essex Team).

4.5 Head of Corporate Services

This post holder is responsible for reviewing and co-ordinating the implementation of this policy from a health & safety perspective and keeping a corporate database of stress risk assessments completed.

4.6 Occupational Health Service

NHS Castle Point & Rochford CCG has commissioned a comprehensive occupational health service from NHS Plus, Southend University Hospital NHS FT for its Governing Body members and staff.

The occupational health service has the following responsibilities with regard to stress management:

- Undertake pre-employment health assessments in order that prospective employees are suitable for their proposed role and that any reasonable adjustments necessitated by a medical condition (which may include stress) are met in order to enable them to take up their employment safely;

- Where appropriate, liaise with the Head of Corporate Services,, HR Business Partner and Competent Person regarding incidents of stress that require further investigation;
- Assess staff, following a period of sickness absence, for their ability to return to work safely.

4.7 All Managers

All managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the stress management policy is effectively implemented in all areas within their control;
- Conducting stress risk assessments in conjunction with their staff as applicable to their areas of responsibility and ensuring that occupational health referrals are made where required.
- Ensuring that an action plan is developed following the stress risk assessment and that the management actions are identified and implemented. While it is not expected that line managers be experts on stress, it is expected that they should be able to do enough to generate action towards limiting the harm to the employee when it is directly drawn to their attention.

4.8 All Staff

All staff have a responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work etc., Act 1974 to take reasonable steps to ensure that their actions do not endanger their own health, safety and welfare or that of their colleagues, patients or visitors.

In the context of stress management, this means that all staff are responsible for following this policy, co-operating with the stress risk assessment process and for highlighting to their line manager (or to HR if needed) if they feel under stress.

5.0 POLICY PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Stress Management Risk Assessments

5.1.1 A robust system of risk assessment is the cornerstone of the CCG's system for managing stress. All line managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff under their direction have received a stress management risk assessment and that actions arising from those assessments are carried out.

5.1.2 The frequency with which risk assessments need to be reviewed will vary depending on the level of risk identified. However, as a general rule, risk assessments should be reviewed at least annually. Risk assessments should be reviewed whenever there is a significant change in the environment, staffing or working practices. The following occurrences should result in a risk assessment being reviewed:

- New member of staff or Governing Body member joining the CCG;
- Member of staff changing location or base where the staff member flags that this will cause, or has caused, additional stress;
- Notification of a staff member becoming pregnant;
- Any change in workstation, e.g., change of seat, lighting, or desk configuration;
- Following the investigation of an adverse incident;
- Following the return of a staff member from long-term sickness
- At the request of any staff or Governing Body member or occupational health on their behalf

- 5.1.3 The role of the Head of Corporate Services (with input from the Competent Person as required) is to assist and guide managers in conducting risk assessments. However, ownership and responsibility for carrying out assessments and ensuring that remedial actions are completed lies with the line manager for staff and the Chair for Governing Body members.
- 5.1.4 Where the line manager is aware that the individual has a pre-existing medical condition that can be exacerbated by stress (or where that individual has been diagnosed as suffering from stress), advice from the relevant occupational health service should be sought at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 5.1.5 The NHS Castle Point & Rochford CCG stress management risk assessment form can be found in Appendix Two.

5.2. Stress Reduction Strategies

- 5.2.1 Appendix One provides guidance for line managers to enable them to prevent and alleviate workplace stress. They are a set of simple steps which should alleviate the stresses of working in a complex and ever-changing NHS environment.
- 5.2.2 The CCG takes a flexible approach to identifying and implementing stress reduction techniques. The annual staff survey provides an opportunity for staff to highlight their perceptions of stress and for the organisation to consider and consult upon actions to manage stress levels. In recent years, this has included provision of massage sessions and rolling out of flexible working practices.
- 5.2.3 As part of its regular dialogue with Trade Unions through the Pan-Essex CCGs Joint Staff Forum (JSF) and with all staff through staff briefings and in-year surveys, the CCG will consider any reasonable suggestions as to steps that can be taken to manage stress in the workplace.

5.3. Training

- 5.3.1 NHS Castle Point & Rochford CCG will make available regular stress management training – or Personal Resilience training - accessible to all staff. Whilst these workshops will be a regular feature of the CCG's training / organisational development programme, additional sessions will be commissioned at times where particular sources of stress are evident, such as during periods of organisational change.
- 5.3.2 Additional more focused training will be considered for individuals or particular groups of staff to meet any specific needs that may be identified through stress management risk assessments or upon the recommendations of occupational health.

5.4. Counselling available through Occupational Health

- 5.4.1 The occupational health services accessed by the CCG provides confidential counselling to assist individuals in dealing with stress, whatever the cause. Counselling can be accessed either by means of a management referral or directly by staff by contacting the relevant occupational health service. All counselling is confidential.

5.5. Reporting work-related stress

5.5.1 NHS Castle Point & Rochford CCG recognises that stress poses a risk to health & safety. In line with this, staff are able and encouraged to report incidents of stress through the same mechanisms as other health & safety incidents such as manual handling and security issues. Reporting is by currently by means of a hard copy incident reporting form, as set out in the Adverse Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy.

5.5.2 It is however recognised that wherever possible, the most appropriate first step for individuals in highlighting their feelings of stress is by speaking to their line manager. If an individual does not feel able to do this for any reason, they should consult the HR department. This can be done alongside logging a formal incident report if the staff member wishes to do so.

6.0 MONITORING COMPLIANCE

6.1 This policy will be monitored by the Quality Finance and Performance Committee, taking into consideration expert health & safety, human resources and occupational health advice where necessary.

6.2 The senior manager who has overall responsibility for monitoring this policy is the Chief Operating Officer.

7.0 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION

7.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with other CCG policies, with particular reference to:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Risk Assessment Policy
- Risk Management Strategy
- Adverse Incident Reporting & Investigation Policy
- Manual Handling Policy
- Display Screen Equipment Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Managing Organisational Change Policy

8.0 REFERENCES

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: Approved Code of Practice, L21, HSC, HSE Publications, 2000

HSE - Stress Management Standards <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/index.htm>

CIPD – Line management behaviour and stress at work

<http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/health/stress/Instrswrk.htm?IsSrchRes=1>

9.0 LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

Name	Title	Comments received Y/N	Comments incorporated Y/N

10.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 NHS Castle Point & Rochford CCG is committed to carrying out a systematic review of all its existing and proposed policies to determine whether there are any equality implications.

10.2 This policy has been assessed using the CCG's Equality Impact Assessment framework which identified the following impact/s upon equality and diversity issues:

Age	Marital Status	Disability	Gender & Pregnancy	Race	Sexuality	Religion	Human Rights	Total Points	Impact
0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	MED

Rationale for Scoring

Stress can have an impact on both mental and physical health. Effective implementation of this policy will have a positive impact as it will reduce the incidence and severity of health problems associated with stress.

Points

3 – This area has a high relevance to equalities

2 – This area has a medium relevance to equalities

1 – This area has a low relevance to equalities

0 – This area has no relevance to equalities

Scoring

13-18 points – high impact

7-12 points – medium impact

0-6 points – low or no impact

11.0 VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date Issued	Date of next review	Author Name and Title	Comment
0.1			Andrew Stride, Head of Corporate Services	
0.2	May 2014	May 2016	Former South Essex Cluster PCT Policy adapted by South end CCG.	Reference to Head of Human Resources removed under item 4.
0.3	July 2019	July 2021	Charlotte Dillaway, Director of Strategy & Planning	

Appendix One – Physical and Psychological Effects of Stress on the Body and Stress at Work

This document is based on material from the Department of Health, Health & Safety Executive and Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Cardiovascular

- Blood pressure – increases at times of stress leading to chronic high blood pressure;
- Heart rate – increased / irregular heartbeat, palpitations;
- Blood flow – increased to muscles, general decrease to digestive system and peripheral circulation (e.g., to skin)

Digestion

- Upset stomach, cramps, heartburn, irregular bowel movements, constipation, diarrhoea;
- Weight gain or loss

Tiredness

- Sleep disturbance, constant feeling of tiredness, feeling washed out, general muscular aches and pains

Skin problems

- Hives, eczema, psoriasis, tics, itching

Reproductive / psychosexual problems

- Erectile difficulties, low libido

Hormonal

- Disturbance of cortisol levels, decrease in growth hormone in chronic cases

Immune system

- Immunosuppression leading to more cold and infections

Effects involving activities

- Manual handling – musculoskeletal injuries are more likely to occur
Display screen equipment – work related upper limb disorders and eye strain are more likely to occur

Emotional effects

- Nervousness, anxiety, butterflies
- Depression, moodiness
- Irritability, frustration
- Memory problems
- Lack of concentration, feelings of loss of control
- Phobias
- Over-reaction to events

Information for those experiencing stress (and for their managers)

Stress can arise out of work or home situations or a combination of both. Whilst experiencing some amount of pressure is not necessarily harmful and small amounts can at times be beneficial, prolonged and high levels of pressure can lead to stress. This in turn can lead to physical and mental ill health.

Many situations can lead to stress at work, such as:

- Relationships with colleagues
- An unsupportive or inaccessible line manager
- Lack of consultation and communication
- Too much or too little work
- Unachievable deadlines
- Work that is too difficult or not sufficiently challenging/stimulating
- Lack of control over the way that work is done
- Feeling undervalued by one's manager and/or the organization
- Job insecurity and the threat of redundancy
- Being involved in an adverse incident or being the subject of a complaint or claim

Source – the BBC website www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions/mental_health (accessed 4/12/2012)

Factors that have been identified as particular risk factors for stress in the NHS include:

- Erosion of autonomy / lack of control over one's work
- Work / life balance
- Rigidity of hierarchy
- Doing tasks below grade
- Lack of the right tools / broken tools to do the job
- Increase in patient expectations
- Increase in administrative duties
- Organisational confusion / "right" and "wrong" channels
- Isolation from other team members
- Colleagues not understanding each other's roles and competencies
- Lack of management support

Appendix Two – Stress Management Risk Assessment - Confidential

Staff or Governing Body Member's Name	
Staff or Governing Body Member's Title	
Line Manager / Assessor's Name	
Line Manager / Assessor's Title	
Date of Risk Assessment	
Next Review Due (see final page for guidance)	

Scoring System

Within each section, if there are 0 or 1 “no” or “partly” responses, then the risk associated with that section is LOW, if there are 2 or 3 “no” or “partly” responses then the risk is medium and if there are 4 or more “no” or “partly” responses then the risk is high.

DEMANDS – does the person feel that :	Yes	No	Partly	Notes
1) They are able to cope with the demands of their job?				
2) They have adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work?				
3) Their skills and abilities are matched to the job demands?				
4) Their job is designed to be within their capabilities?				
5) Employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed?				
SECTION RISK RATING – DEMANDS	HIGH / MEDIUM / LOW (delete as appropriate)			
CONTROL – does the person feel that:				
6) They are able to have a say about the way they do their work?				
7) They have control over the pace of their work?				
8) They use their skills and initiative to do their work?				
9) They are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work?				
10) The organization encourages employees to develop their skills?				
11) They have a say over when breaks can be taken?				
12) They are consulted over their work patterns?				
SECTION RISK RATING – CONTROL	HIGH / MEDIUM / LOW (delete as appropriate)			
SUPPORT – does the person feel that:				
13) They receive adequate information and support from their colleagues?				
14) They receive support from their manager?				
15) They know what support is available if they feel stressed and how to access it?				
16) They know how to access the required resources to do the job?				
17) They receive regular and constructive feedback about their performance?				
SECTION RISK RATING – SUPPORT	HIGH / MEDIUM / LOW (delete as appropriate)			
RELATIONSHIPS – does the person feel that :				
18) They are not subject to behaviours such as bullying at work?				

19) The organization promotes positive behaviour(s) at work to avoid conflict and promote fairness?				
20) They feel that the organization has policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour?				
21) They are able and encouraged to report unacceptable behaviour?				
SECTION RISK RATING – RELATIONSHIPS	HIGH / MEDIUM / LOW (delete as appropriate)			
ROLE – does the person feel that :				
22) They understand their role and responsibilities?				
23) The different requirements placed upon them are compatible and manageable?				
24) The requirements placed upon them are clear?				
25) They feel free to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities?				
SECTION RISK RATING – ROLE	HIGH / MEDIUM / LOW (delete as appropriate)			
CHANGE – does the person feel that:				
26) The organization engages them frequently when undergoing an organizational change?				
27) The organization provides timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes?				
28) The organization ensures adequate consultation on changes and provides opportunities to influence proposals?				
29) They are aware of the probably impact of any changes to their jobs and are given training to support any changes in role?				
30) They can freely express their concerns or worries?				
SECTION RISK RATING – CHANGE	HIGH / MEDIUM / LOW (delete as appropriate)			
GENERAL – does the person feel that :				
31) Systems are in place locally to respond to their individual concerns about any of the above areas?				

Overall Risk Rating

The overall risk rating is determined by the **highest** section rating. For example, if the rating for “Demands” is high, then the overall risk rating is high, even if the ratings for the other sections are medium or low.

OVERALL RISK RATING IS LOW / MEDIUM / HIGH (delete as appropriate)

Action Plan Arising from Risk Assessment

What needs to be done?	Who will do it?	By when?	What could stop this being achieved?
e.g., organise regular 121s with manager	Staff member and line manager	Immediately	Diary constraints
Management referral to Occupational Health	Manager	During first discussion	Staff member does not attend
Issue information about counselling service	Manager	During first discussion	Staff member does not attend
Discuss referral to GP	Staff member	During first discussion	Staff member does not instigate
Review work load and tasks and ensure correct distribution of work load within a team	Manager and staff member together	Within the week	Service constraints, staffing levels
Review job description to ensure that correct duties and level of responsibility are being undertaken	Manager and staff member together	Within two weeks	n/a
Review skills and competence to assess need for additional training or support.	Manager and staff member together	Within two weeks	n/a
Review working hours' arrangements – would a flexible working agreement be supportive? Is it possible to reduce hours for a temporary period etc	Manager and staff member together	Within two weeks	n/a
Other actions identified for the individual.			

Repeat Risk Assessments

Low Overall Risk – reassess annually

Medium Overall Risk – reassess in 6 months

High Overall Risk – reassess in 1 month.

Assessor should send a copy of this assessment to the following:

- Line manager**
- Individual being assessed**
- HR Department (Essex CSU)**
- Head of Corporate Services**