NHSBT

Health and Safety

Manager's Code of Practice (CoP) for Long Working Hours and Stress Reduction

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Contents

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Cross-Referenced in Primary Document: MPD370

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1.0   Introduction

It is widely recognised that imbalance between work and home life can cause pressures not just on the individuals concerned, but work colleagues, family and friends. These can, if not adequately addressed in the early stages, manifest as work-related stress that can affect individual's health, which can result in an increase in sickness absence and impact on performance delivery.

As an organisation, NHSBT leads from the top, therefore management commitment to addressing long hours and stress through adherence to the principles set out in this CoP, is essential if the ethos is to percolate throughout the organisation. The desired end result will be a systematic change in staff attitudes and behaviours in this area and thus help instigate a positive change in the safety culture of NHSBT.

The objective of the CoP is to provide a common framework for Managers to use to manage work activities and to minimise the potential for long hours and the possibility of stress.

2.0   Policy

NHSBT is committed to the health, safety and welfare of its staff, donors and all those who work with or have contact with NHSBT.   Within this context, it is the policy of NHSBT to ensure that Managers effectively balance their work within NHSBT with their family and home commitments. NHSBT recognises that it is in the long-term interests of both employees and NHSBT to address this, which will also enable NHSBT to meet its desire to value, trust and encourage its staff. It also complements NHSBT's commitment to improving working lives (IWL).

Please see POL39 Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent

and more specifically, in relation to this CoP: MPD370 Work Related Stress

3.0   Application of this Code of Practice

This CoP relates to all managers and other senior members of staff who have, or are expected to, exercise discretion over the number of hours they work above those specified in their contract, how and where they work. It is intended to be used by Managers so that there is consistency in the way these issues are addressed throughout NHSBT.

4.0   Status of this Code of Practice

This CoP establishes the framework to enable individuals and their managers to agree objectives and workloads and how they are to be carried out to minimise the potential for stress. This is achieved by providing:

- Support to the former when having conversations with their managers

- Guidance to the latter when setting objectives and workloads

- Details of what are considered acceptable and unacceptable practices, which can then be applied by individuals.

The CoP is not a prescriptive or exhaustive list that is intended to govern everyone's working day. Individuals react differently to pressures, which can be affected by their personality traits, experience, motivation, support mechanisms and other non-work related factors e.g. home-life. It is, therefore, difficult to define fully 'work-related stress.' It is also recognised from the outset that to cope with work demands over the short term there may be fluctuations in the application of this CoP, however over the longer term its requirements must be met.

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5.0 Definitions and Glossary

CoP	Code of practice
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
Must	this criterion has to be met
Should	where reasonably practicable this criterion is to be met
Work-related Stress	the adverse reaction people can have to excessive pressures or demands placed on them at work

6.0 Other Relevant Documents

Internal NHSBT Documents

MPD370	Work Related Stress
DAT660	Work Related Stress Risk Assessment Manual
FRM872	Work Related Stress Risk Assessment
INF171	Work Related Stress
MPD367	Safe Use of Mobile Phones

External Publications

Tackling Work-related Stress: A Manager's Guide to Improving and Maintaining Employee Health and Well Being – HS(G) 218

Work-related Stress – A Short Guide – INDG 281

Tackling Work-Related Stress – A Guide for Employees – INDG 341

Working Together to Reduce Stress at Work – A Guide for Employees

The Working Time Regulations, 1998

7.0 Guiding Principles of the Code of Practice

7.1 NHSBT Standards

- Managers should have regular 1:1s with managers and staff, these will be proactive in ensuring that any issues relating to stress and long hours are an integral part of this process and addressed in a responsible way and timely manner. 1:1s now form part of Personal Development Plans (PDP) and Personal Development Reviews (PDR).

- Managers should communicate any concerns they have with work activities to their Manager at the earliest opportunity.

- Managers should delegate as appropriate, appreciating that it is only the task that is delegated not the accountability. This may require the manager to provide support and training to facilitate completion of this task by the individual who it is delegated to.

- Managers should take their annual leave entitlement, carrying over as little as possible from one year to the next.

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- When on leave Managers should NOT telephone each other (except in an emergency).

- Managers should not telephone each other before 08:30 or after 18:00 Monday to Friday or at weekends (except in an emergency / on-call / or genuine agreed preference). Any such emergencies will be reviewed <u>after the event</u> to check on compliance with this rule.

- Working from home can be an effective means of improving productivity and can be used in conjunction with extended travelling and/or nights away from home. This needs to be balanced with the possible pressure of dealing with home life at work and possible social isolation from colleagues. The provision of IT equipment also has an additional cost that needs to be weighed against the benefits.

- With the increase in NHSBT properties, there may be the possibility to work at alternative NHSBT properties, closer to the individual's home than their NHSBT base and in preference to working from home. Such arrangements should be agreed locally with relevant individuals. If this means a permanent move, the decision must involve a wider group of appropriate contacts and also support functions (e.g. Facilities and IT). If it refers to a temporary work base then hot desk arrangements apply.

- Good communication, formal and informal is important between individuals and their managers to enable assistance and support to be provided when necessary. This can be achieved using a variety of techniques such as 1:1s and regular telephone conversations.

7.2   Working Hours

The work Managers are contracted to carry out for NHSBT should be able to be delivered in the contracted / expected working hours and not require additional 'own time' put in, therefore: -

- Managers should reduce the amount of any discretionary work that they do in their own time – each setting a target for themselves.

- Managers should take a lunch break of at least 30 minutes – utilising this time to eat properly, take a walk, chat with others (not about work!), listen to the radio etc. This is important to not just provide a break and enable 'refocusing / recharging', but is also specified in the Working Time Regulations.

- Managers should strive to spend a day in the office each week.

7.3   Travelling

Due to the geographical spread of NHSBT, it is recognised that travel can be essential for our work. Excessive travelling is not only time consuming, but can be both tiring and depending on the mode of travel (and any delays) stressful, therefore to address this:

- Managers should use telephone conferencing and video conferencing facilities etc. as available and appropriate to reduce, where practicable, the amount of travelling required. In addition Go To Meetings are now widely used within the organisation to enable IT information / data / screens to be viewed widely when individuals are in different locations and is usually combined with telephone conferencing. A license is required to access this. Further information is available from the Service Desk.

- Managers should not normally organise / attend meetings that require them to leave home before 07:00 or return home after 19:30.

- Managers should endeavour, wherever possible, to avoid holding meetings on either Friday afternoons or Monday mornings which impinge on participants weekends as a result of either returning home late on Friday evenings or requiring overnight accommodation on Sundays.

- Every attempt will be made when determining the location of meetings to take account of the travelling times of all participants. If central locations are not available for regular meetings then these meetings

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will be held in different parts of the country to ensure that certain participants do not have to undertake a disproportionate amount of travelling to the meetings. Consideration should also be made of required frequency of these meetings and alternative means for addressing this.

- Managers should strive to spend no more than (on average) one night away from home per week, with two nights per week being the maximum. Managers should strive to spend at least one day in the office per week.

- Where travel is required, consider alternative means to driving e.g. the train or plane, where practicable, to reduce tiredness and stress which can effect the ability to perform such tasks safely. This should be balanced with the current Lease Car Policy on the number of miles needed to qualify.

- Where possible consider sharing a car journey with a colleague, not only is this cost-effective and environmentally friendly, it can also help reduce tiredness and stress.

- Where a high level of driving is required, consideration of support, i.e. advanced driver training should be considered as part of a risk assessment for this activity. Where it is identified, it must be supported within the Department.

- When driving, it is strongly recommended that you never use a mobile phone to make or receive calls whilst driving. Even with a hands free kit installed this can remove concentration from your primary concern, the road. In addition, it can be difficult for the other individual to hold an effective conversation due to the background noise generated by the car. Instead change your voicemail message and stop and pick up messages / make calls at regular intervals. Stops should be included every 2 hours for your own well being as well, as sitting in a car for a prolonged period of time can cause postural problems. Use of mobile phones without a hand free kit is now against the law. For more information refer to MPD367 Safe Use of Mobile Phones.

7.4   Meetings

Meetings are a key part of NHSBT working, whilst these are important for the effective functioning of the organisation, they can be time consuming and sometime participants see them as failing to 'achieve' an impact, therefore, to ensure maximum benefit:

- Meetings must be structured e.g. agenda with defined aims and objectives and a review mechanism at the end to identify *good points* and *learning points* for future reference. Meetings should run to time and stick to the agenda. The agenda and any relevant paper should be made available one week prior to the meeting. All attendees should know what the meeting is about and why it is necessary.

- Minutes should be produced, so that those that did not attend the meeting but need to know about it, can read these instead. They also provide an accurate audit trail of the outcomes from the meeting. Minutes of meetings should be written up and circulated within two weeks of the meeting.

- Time restrictions for the meeting should be stipulated to help 'focus' the meeting e.g. meeting to last no more than 2 hours.

- To ensure good dialogue, participants should be kept to the minimum required to meet the objectives and all be actively involved.

- Only hold meetings when this is necessary. If the same result can be achieved using alternative methods of communication e.g. phone call or face to face discussion, these should be considered in preference to meetings.

- Locations and timings of meetings must consider NHSBT Standards, Work Hours and Travelling already specified.

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7.5 Communication

Inappropriate communication can lead to additional workload for the recipient. Always remember to be clear and concise in any communication. Think about which form of communication is most appropriate for the situation e.g. meeting, telephone, memorandum, email etc. Good communication should be easily understood by the recipient and make it clear what, if any, action is required. Two-way communication should be encouraged for dealing with direct line reports.

In a computer driven society, e-mail has become part of daily activities, particularly as a means of communication and can be a major drain of both time and resources. Therefore, use email appropriately and it is suggested that the following be used as a guide:

- Only copy emails to those who need to know.
- When receiving a multi-copy email, usually reply only to the sender.
- Only highlight emails as important when it is actually urgent / truly requires it.
- If you are going to be unable to access your e-mail account from a few days to a few weeks, then use the 'Out of Office' assistant to advise senders of e-mail when to expect a response.
- If you are going away for a prolonged period of time, such as annual leave, consider in addition to 'Out of Office' the automated reply that can be set up on outlook and is sent each time an e-mail is received.

7.6 Workload

- Managers should only commit to actions if confident that they should be able to deliver on them without compromising other, previously agreed, tasks.

- Managers should endeavour to give each other as much advance notice of tasks as possible, explaining clearly what is required and when the task needs to be completed.

- If a proposed additional task compromises previously agreed tasks, then Managers should seek clarification on prioritisation.

- Managers should divert their phone or switch it onto voicemail and put their 'Out of Office' assistant on to minimise interruptions, if work pressures require them to focus on a specific activity to be completed to a deadline.

- Managers should, if away from the office for a prolonged period of time, redirect post or ask someone to open it on their behalf. This not only ensures that post does not build up, but that it is also checked and responded to in a timely manner.

- Managers should raise issues regarding excessive workload directly with their Manager as early as possible so that appropriate action can be agreed and taken to support the individual and address the issues.

8.0 Measurement against this Code of Practice

Due to the types of issues that are being addressed it can be difficult to monitor compliance with this CoP directly, therefore some measurements will be indirect, on the assumption that these indicate compliance. The following lists ways to identify whether staff are following this CoP:

NHSBT Standards
Through 1:1 meetings / records, annual leave cards, whereabouts and phone call records.

Work Hours
Through 1:1 meetings, e-mail times etc.

Cross-Referenced in Primary Document: MPD370

Travelling

Through expenses (mileage, accommodation and subsistence claims) and travel bookings made on the NHSBT approved on-line booking system, use of video conferencing and telephone conferencing, whereabouts and through 1:1s.

Meetings

Number and attendance at meetings, 1:1 meetings.

E-mails

Monitoring work e-mails – content and compliance with this CoP and use of 'Out of Office' assistant.

Work Load

This can be monitored through 1:1s and sickness absence.

In addition it is an expectation that Managers will actively take personal responsibility to comply with the requirements of this CoP.

9.0   Managing Stress should it arise

Where issues arise, such as an individual exhibiting signs of stress, Managers must follow:

MPD370   Work Related Stress

DAT660   Work Related Stress Risk Assessment Manual

and refer individuals, via management referral to Occupational Health, for a specific stress risk assessment to be carried out based on the generic work related stress risk assessment which should have been completed for the role beforehand (see MPD370).

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