

# MANAGEMENT PROCESS DESCRIPTION MPD370/4

## Work Related Stress

*This Management Process Description replaces  
MPD370/3*

**Copy Number**

Effective

**16/11/15**

### ***Summary of Significant Changes***

New OH Process

### ***Policy***

It is the policy of NHSBT to ensure the health, safety and well being of its staff, by identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the measures to be taken by NHSBT to identify and reduce workplace stressors.

This procedure applies to NHSBT.

### ***Responsibilities***

Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that work related stress is adequately assessed by a work related risk assessment and effective controls put in place.
- Ensuring good communication between management and staff, particularly for organisational and procedural change.

The Health Safety & Wellbeing Department is responsible for the provision of work related stress risk assessment training, including additional support for stress risk assessments.

The Occupational Health Service (OHS) is responsible for reviewing cases and making recommendations of employees referred to them suffering, or suspected to be suffering, from stress.

The Employee Assistance programme (EAP), administered by the Health Safety & Wellbeing Department, is responsible for the provision of a confidential staff helpline.

The Human Resources (HR) Operations Department is responsible for the provision of information which assists in determining stress in NHSBT e.g. Staff attitude surveys, sickness absence data, staff turnover etc.

The Organisation Workforce Development Department is responsible for the provision of training throughout NHSBT, this includes management training (aimed at managing out stress from the workplace) and staff training (aimed at providing staff with individual stress reduction techniques).

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#### **Definitions**

**Must** – This is the minimum criteria that is to be met. Any standard below this is not acceptable.

**Should** – Where reasonably practicable this criteria is to be met

**Stress** – The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them. Work related stress is not an illness, but it can contribute to ill health, for example:

- Physical effects, such as raised heart rate, increased sweating, headache, dizziness, blurred vision, aching neck and shoulders, skin rashes and a lowering of resistance to infection;
- Behavioural effects, such as increased anxiety and irritability, a tendency to drink more alcohol and smoke more, difficulty sleeping, poor concentration and an inability to deal calmly with everyday tasks and situations.

There is no simple way of predicting what will cause stress. People respond to different types of pressure in different ways. An exciting challenge to one person may be a daunting task to another; a repetitive job might be viewed by some as boring and monotonous, but others like and feel comfortable with routine. Much depends on a person's personality, experience and motivation and the support available from managers, colleagues, family and friends.

People need to have a certain amount of challenge and pressure to maintain interest and motivation in their work – this is not stress.

**Relationships** – The way people interact with others at work for business purposes.

**Guidance** – This is advice on steps to be taken to control a risk. Non conformance to the guidance is not in itself a breach of this policy. However the responsible person must demonstrate how else this policy has been complied with

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#### ***Applicable Documents***

The legislation applicable to stress is the Health and Safety at Work Act, and includes the following regulations, Approved Codes of Practice and guidance

- Management of Health and Safety At Work Regulations and Approved Code of Practice (AcoP) and Guidance L21
- Tackling work related stress, The Management Standards Approach INDG 406
- The Management Standards and the 5 steps to Risk Assessment

NHSBT Documents:

- [DAT660](#) – Work Related Stress Risk Assessment Manual
- [FRM872](#) – Work Related Stress Risk Assessment
- [DAT659](#) – Manager’s Code of Practice (CoP) for Long Working Hours and Stress Reduction
- [INF171](#) – Work related Stress
- [MPD1090](#) – H&S Risk Management
- [MPD468](#) – Critical Incident Debriefing Policy
- [MPD788](#) – Occupational Health – Occupational Health and Wellbeing
- Disciplinary Policy (UCD/HRO/DISCIP/007)

Employee Assistance Programme Documents

- Referral of Employee for EAP Services – Form 1: Referral Form
- Referral of Employee for EAP Services – Form 2: Consent for Release of Additional Information

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#### *Process Description*

##### **Work Related Stress Risk Assessment on Role**

Referring to Stress Risk Manual [DAT660](#), Model Work Related Stress Risk Assessments and Manager's Code of Practice (CoP) for Long Working Hours and Stress Reduction [DAT659](#), managers must ensure that work related stress risk assessments are carried out (using [FRM872](#)). Based upon the HSE Management Standards, the issues to be considered during a work related stress risk assessment include:

- **Demands** – such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- **Control** – such as how much say the person has in the way they do their work
- **Support** – such as the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- **Relationships** – such as promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role** – such as whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.

The risk assessment must focus upon potential work stress caused by the job and is not an assessment of stress individual to the employee.

This risk assessment must be communicated by the manager to the employee and reviewed periodically to ensure its suitability.

Change is also one of the HSE Management Standards, but as the risk assessments at this stage are based on the job and not the individual it can not be incorporated into the assessment. The impact of change – such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation would have to be assessed when the change occurs.

##### **Individual Work Related Stress Risk Assessment**

Should there be any symptoms of work related stress evident in a member of staff, the manager must follow the Occupational Health referral process [MPD788](#). Where the outcome summary report advises that the stress may have an element related to work then an individual work related stress risk assessment must be completed as described in [DAT660](#). A face to face meeting will be arranged by the local H&S advisor, with the manager and individual to complete this risk assessment. HR may attend as appropriate and an individual will also be offered the opportunity for a colleague or union representative to be present for support.

Once complete, any actions must be completed by the manager responsible.

The requirements of the H&S Risk Management Policy [MPD1090](#) must be complied with.

##### **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**

Employees must have confidential access to an Employee Assistance Programme to advise on the following issues:

- Work
- Family, marital and relationship difficulties
- Coping with change
- Bullying and harassment
- Legal and financial matters
- Health and psychological problems
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Bereavement

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Where a group of staff are exposed to a traumatic incident they may benefit from Traumatic Incident Debriefing, see [MPD468](#).

- Management Referrals for counselling as a result of recommendations in the individual work related stress risk assessment can be made to the EAP provider. These referrals can only take place with consent of individuals, a HR Advisor must be involved in this process, and forms (Form 1: Referral Form and Form 2: Consent for Release of Additional Information) are available through the H&S Department to access this.

A Work Related Stress leaflet is available for staff [INF171](#).

### ***Exclusions***

Actions and behaviours in breach of the Disciplinary Policy (UCD/HRO/DISCIP/007)