

Managing Wellbeing & Stress at Work Policy

Version 1, April 2025.



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1	ELT 28/07/2025	New policy (replaces Management of Stress at Work Policy)	Sacha Campbell – Wellbeing & Inclusion Manager

Introduction

Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) is committed to managing staff health, safety and wellbeing at work to encourage an open and supportive culture. The Trust recognises that staff wellbeing is essential to the delivery of high quality patient care.

The Trust also recognises that there will be times when staff experience excessive stress that may affect their wellbeing and work performance.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers have a duty to assess the risk of stress-related ill health caused by work activities. We also have a duty to reduce those risks under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

This policy sets out the responsibilities of the Trust, line managers and staff to support their health and wellbeing at work.

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to promote good wellbeing at work, prevent stress and foster a culture of compassion and inclusion. In doing so, this policy seeks to improve staff engagement, motivation and performance.

Scope

This policy applies to all Trust staff, including employees, volunteers and students.

Definitions

Wellbeing – a person's comfort, health and happiness. This often includes aspects such as physical, mental, social, financial, environment and occupational wellbeing.

Stress – the adverse reaction people may have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them.

Pressure – the need to complete tasks and activities to a set deadline or standard. This can be a positive motivator, but too much or prolonged pressure can become stress.

Work-Related Stress Indicator Tool (WRSIT) – a risk assessment completed by colleagues that identifies potential factors of work-related stress.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) – a confidential service that provides impartial advice and support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, including a telephone helpline, counselling and more.

Duties

Trust Board:

- Ensure the health, safety and welfare of Trust staff as far as reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that the organisation-wide risk assessment for work-related stress is complete, suitable and sufficient.

Line Managers:

- Hold regular wellbeing conversations to identify and manage potential risks to staff wellbeing.
- Offer and complete work-related stress risk assessments where this is found.
- Familiarise themselves with any Trust policies that are likely to affect wellbeing, such as the Supporting Health in the Workplace Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Flexible Working and Reasonable Adjustments Policy and the Dignity and Respect at Work Policy among others.
- Engage with wellbeing and inclusion communications via the Wellbeing & Inclusion team and ensure that this is shared with team members.
- Familiarise themselves with employee support services, such as the Wellbeing & Inclusion team, EAP, Occupational Health services, financial support and more.
- Liaise with the relevant teams to make sure that staff who are on a period of sickness absence are supported.

Employees:

- Take responsibility for their own health and safety and the safety of others.
- Build healthy working habits into their day, such as working appropriate hours and taking regular breaks.

- Raise any health, safety and wellbeing problems affecting their work with their line manager or the Wellbeing & Inclusion team at qvh.staywell@nhs.net.
- Take advantage of wellbeing support opportunities via the Wellbeing & Inclusion team, EAP, Occupational Health services and more.

Employee Relations & Wellbeing team:

- Provide training to line managers to identify and manage risks to wellbeing, such as work-related stress.
- Monitor and report reasons for sickness absence, identifying trends and working with line managers to create action plans.

Occupational Health:

- Give specialist advice on managing stress to staff referred for support.
- Support staff who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their manager on a planned return to work.
- Offer information about access to the EAP and other support services available.
- Advise staff or suggest routes to other healthcare professionals as appropriate.

Managing Wellbeing

The Trust has invested in a range of initiatives to help maintain and enhance staff health and wellbeing, such as:

- Counselling via our EAP

- Support from the Trust's Psychological Therapies team
- Financial wellbeing and discounts
- Menopause support and [guidance](#)

A full list of the support available can be found on the [Stay Well hub](#) on Qnet. Staff are encouraged to be open about any issues they are experiencing or adjustments they need to ensure are given the right support.

The [NHS People Promise](#) details the commitment staff must make to each other to improve the experience of working in the NHS for everyone. This includes:

- We are compassionate and inclusive
- We are rewarded and recognised
- We each have a voice that counts
- We are safe and healthy
- We are always learning
- We work flexibly
- We are a team

We are compassionate and inclusive

To achieve this, managers will:

- Hold regular wellbeing conversations with team members (at least annually during the appraisal).

- Proactively seek to understand individual and team wellbeing.
- Consider inclusion when planning activities and meetings with the team; for example, ensuring that meetings are accessible to all colleagues in attendance.
- Encourage staff to bring their whole selves to work, celebrating the value diverse teams bring to the Trust.
- Proactively discuss reasonable adjustments and any support needed by team members.

Employees will:

- Actively participate in maintaining and enhancing their wellbeing, including engaging in wellbeing conversations.
- Discuss wellbeing and inclusion needs with their line manager, including making requests for reasonable adjustments and wellbeing support where needed.



We are recognised and rewarded

To achieve this, managers will:

- Ensure that positive feedback and praise is given to motivate individuals and teams.
- Ensure that team members are aware of how their role contributes to the Trust's vision.
- Participate in recognition schemes within the Trust, such as Star Awards and VIP awards.
- Ensure that local reward initiatives, such as festive celebrations, are accessible to all who wish to attend.
- Provide meaningful feedback to team members, highlighting specific behaviours and achievements.

Employees will:

- Proactively recognise and praise the contributions of colleagues
- Highlight their own achievements in 1:1 conversations and appraisals.
- Familiarise themselves with the reward schemes available within the Trust, such as the NHS Pension scheme.



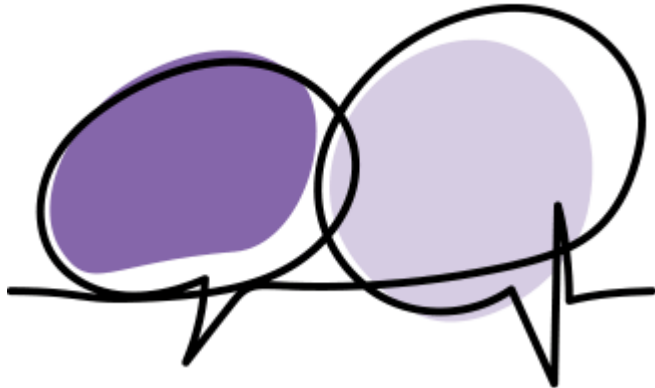
We each have a voice that counts

To achieve this, managers will:

- Foster a culture of openness and transparency, involving team members in changes that affect them.
- Be open to feedback from peers and team members.
- Encourage staff to report concerns to support shared learning.
- Adopt a restorative and just learning culture approach to errors, accidents and near misses.
- Act upon concerns raised swiftly and feed back to individuals.
- Ensure that team members are aware of where and how to report concerns.

Employees will:

- Familiarise themselves with the channels they can use to report concerns.
- Report concerns, errors, accidents and near misses to allow swift resolution and to facilitate shared learning.
- Foster a culture of speaking up by encouraging colleagues to report concerns as they arise.



We are safe and healthy

To achieve this, managers will:

- Take a proactive approach to identify and reduce work-related stress among teams, such as by offering work-related stress assessments.

- Ensure that staff are aware of and able to access appropriate support, such as the Trust's EAP, Occupational Health service and Psychological Therapies team.
- Ensure that staff receive the appropriate instruction, information, training and supervision to complete their duties.
- Proactively monitor workloads to ensure that staff are not overburdened.
- Monitor working hours and overtime in line with the Trust's TOIL (Time Off In Lieu) Guidelines.
- Take responsibility for the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves and others.
- Complete risk assessments as required.
- Encourage and facilitate staff to take frequent breaks.
- Take swift action to resolve health, safety and wellbeing concerns at work.
- Encourage team members to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviours, including staying active, healthy eating and smoking cessation.

Employees will:

- Take responsibility for the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves and others.
- Inform the Trust if they believe their work or environment is becoming difficult to manage.

- Participate in identifying and making improvements to the working environment.
- Actively participate in the risk assessment process as required.
- Ensure that breaks are taken for rest, meals, hydration and using the toilet.
- Adopt positive health behaviours.
- Consider participation in initiatives to protect themselves and others, including the flu vaccination programme.



We are always learning

To achieve this, managers will:

- Hold annual appraisals with all team members, offering a separate career conversation if requested.

- Regularly review the skills and competencies needed within their teams.
- Ensure that staff are aware of and have access to career development resources, such as training courses, coaching, mentoring and more.
- Provide meaningful and constructive feedback to staff to facilitate improved performance.

Employees will:

- Actively participate in the appraisal process, setting meaningful goals and working to achieve them.
- Highlight any development needs to their line manager.
- Ensure that mandatory and statutory training (MAST) is completed and up to date.
- Be open to constructive feedback and act upon this to improve performance.



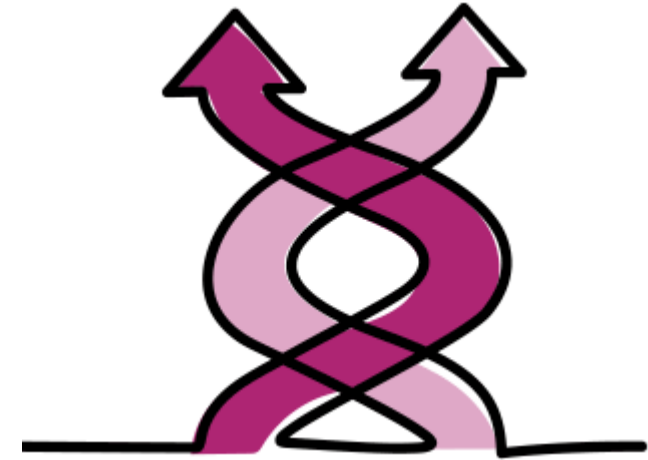
We work flexibly

To achieve this, managers will:

- Familiarise themselves with the options available for flexible working and flexible retirement.
- Regularly discuss working patterns and hours with staff.
- Consider all applications for flexible working fairly, starting from a position of “yes” in line with the [NHS England Supporting Your Team to Work Flexibly](#) guide.
- Review all flexible working arrangements regularly, ensuring that these are appropriate and beneficial to the employee.

Employees will:

- Familiarise themselves with options available for flexible working and flexible retirement.
- Actively participate in conversations around flexible working.
- Consider the impact of their working patterns and hours on their work-life balance.



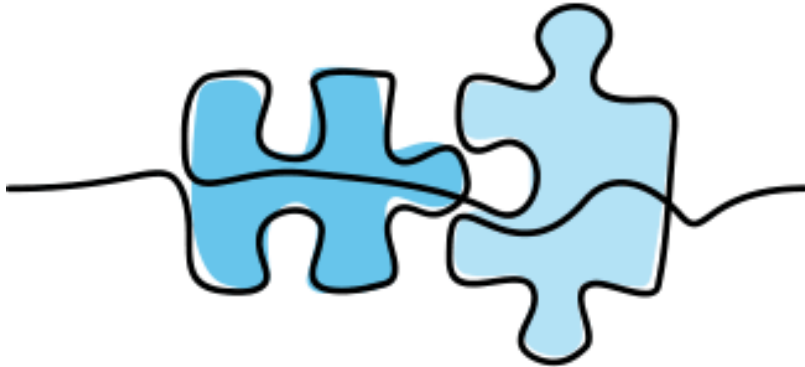
We are a team

To achieve this, managers will:

- Foster healthy relationships across their teams.
- Focus on relationships to build trust.
- Help staff to recognise and work to their unique strengths.
- Appreciate and value the different perspectives brought by team members.
- Hold regular team meetings to bring colleagues together and discuss work matters.
- Regularly review roles and responsibilities within teams to establish more efficient ways of working, making use of the unique skills and experiences of each team member.

Employees will:

- Work collaboratively within their own teams and other teams across the Trust.
- Appreciate and value the different perspectives brought by team members.
- Engage in team meetings, sharing their thoughts and perspectives.



Health Promotion & Wellbeing Activities

In addition to the wellbeing initiatives available at the Trust, other measures are in place to support staff to maintain positive health and wellbeing.

These include additional leave arrangements through the Special Leave Policy and opportunities for flexible working

through the Flexible Working and Reasonable Adjustments Policy. Staff are encouraged to make use of these options to support a healthy work-life balance.

The Trust also offers:

- Weight management support via the Trust's Dietetics department
- Active travel options, such as the Cycle to Work scheme and bicycle lockers
- Support with transport costs, including discounts with Stagecoach
- Salary sacrifice options for membership with a range of fitness centres through our EAP
- Nutritionally balanced food options in our canteen
- Private GP appointments through our EAP

Training and Awareness

This policy will be published on Qnet. Training will be provided to managers across QVH to build skills in good management practices and to ensure awareness.

Details of training availability will be available on Qnet or from the Organisational Development & Learning team.

Equality

This policy has been equality due regard assessed in accordance with the Trust's Equality Due Regard Assessment Guidance. Completed assessments are available upon request from qvh.edra@nhs.net.

Freedom of Information

Any information that belongs to the Trust may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This act allows anyone, anywhere to ask for information held by the Trust to be disclosed (subject to limited exemptions).

Further information is available in the Freedom of Information Act Trust Procedure, which can be viewed on the Trust Intranet.

Records Management

Records are created or received in the conduct of the business activities of the Trust and provide evidence and information about these activities. All records are also corporate assets as they hold the corporate knowledge about the Trust.

The Trust has a Corporate Records Management Policy for dealing with records management.

Compliance with and the application of this policy will ensure that the Trust's records are complete, accurate and provide evidence of and information about the Trust's activities for as long as is required.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years' time. Earlier review may be required in response to exceptional circumstances, organisational change or relevant changes in legislation or guidance.

Discipline

Breaches of this policy will be investigated if appropriate and may result in the matter being treated as a disciplinary offence under the Trust's Managing Conduct Policy.

Monitoring Compliance

Monitored Activity	Methodology	Responsibility	Frequency	Process for review and improvement
Sickness absence rates relating to stress	Measuring and reporting sickness absence rates	Employee Relations team	Monthly	Monthly report (IQPR)

Associated Documentation

Work-Related Stress Indicator Tool Template
Organisation-wide Work Related Risk Assessment
Your Health and Wellbeing at QVH Guide
Managing Sickness Policy
Wellbeing Conversations Toolkit
Managing Stress at Work: Line Manager's Guide

Signs of Stress Factsheet
Special Leave Policy
Flexible Working and Reasonable Adjustments Policy
Display Screen Equipment Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Occupational Health Policy for Staff Health Clearance and
Protection Against Communicable Disease