



**Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna**  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí Sláinte  
Ospidéal Dr. Steevens'  
Baile Átha Cliath 8

**Office of the National Director of Human Resources**  
Health Service Executive  
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## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Chief Executive Officer  
Each National Director  
Each Assistant National Director HR  
Each Hospital Group CEO  
Each Hospital Group Director of HR  
Each Chief Officer CHOs  
Each Head of HR CHOs  
Each CEO Section 38 Agencies  
Each HR Manager Section 38 Agencies  
Each Employee Relations Manager  
Each Group Director of Nursing & Midwifery  
Each Group Director of Midwifery  
Each Clinical Director  
Director National Ambulance Service

**From:** Ms Anne Marie Hoey, National HR

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020

**Subject:** HSE Policy for the Prevention and Management of Stress in the Workplace 2018 and Supplementary Note to this policy for Managers and Employees on promoting employee wellbeing and prevention of stress in the workplace

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Dear Colleagues,

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our healthcare employees have and continue to work in high-pressurised circumstances, managing the risk of infection while also adjusting to temporary modification in job roles, responsibilities, work locations, and work patterns. A changed working environment has the potential to cause stresses for employees. While some staff may have experienced more autonomy and greater productivity during the COVID-19 period, it is important to acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 in healthcare work environments and among individuals and teams.

The HSE acknowledges that the challenge has been immense and healthcare managers and employees have responded with great courage, flexibility, resilience and professionalism. We want to ensure that healthcare services continue to safeguard against work related stress by continuing to

support a work environment that protects the safety, health and wellbeing of all. As services begin to resume non COVID-19 work in a COVID environment and teams begin to reengage it is an optimum opportunity for healthcare managers and employees to work collaboratively in addressing potential work related stress and proactively use the risk assessment framework as a vehicle for change.

The focus of the HSE’s approach to the management of work related stress is on primary interventions through risk assessment and hazard reductions. This approach is reflected in the [HSE’s risk assessment tool](#), as adapted from the Health & Safety Authority (HSA) and Health Service Executive (HSE’S) UK Management Standards, which aims at identifying potential risks, putting in place control measures and engaging with the workforce in a collaborative way to address hazards.

The [HSE’s risk assessment tool](#) identifies six key areas for assessing potential sources of work related stress (WRS)

- **work demands, work controls, support, relationships, roles and change**

The ‘[HSE Policy for the Prevention and Management of Stress in the Workplace, 2018](#)’, and the “[Supplementary Note](#)” to this policy provides in-depth guidance for managers and employees on how to prevent, identify and manage stress in the workplace and outlines the key roles and responsibilities for both managers and employees. The policy specifies that risk assessment should be carried out as follows:

- Proactively, engage with the employee or collaboratively with a service/team to identify workplace stress hazards, conduct risk assessment and implement controls to reduce employees’ exposure to workplace stressors or
- Reactively, engage with the employee who is exhibiting signs of stress or is seeking support, or work collaboratively with the service/team where there is information to suggest that they may be experiencing workplace stress (See table 1 below for more detail).

**Table 1: details the interventions that can support you in responding to work related stress (WRS) both for the Managers and employees.** Please note this is non-exhaustive list.

<b>Intervention Type:</b>	<b>Managers:</b>	<b>Healthcare Workers:</b>
<b>Primary:</b> Aim of <i>primary interventions</i> is to prevent stress from occurring by removing the sources of stress and enhancing the causes of well-being thereby reducing the need for future interventions.	<a href="#">WRS Risk Assessment</a> <a href="#">Risk Assessment Training</a> Management training e.g. Mentoring <a href="#">Frist Time Managers Training</a> <a href="#">Implementation of CSS</a> <a href="#">Site/Service Safety Statement</a> Health and Safety Policies Creating and investing in safe and health work environments Implement <a href="#">Dignity at Work</a> Framework <a href="#">Supporting Your Staffs Mental Health – a programme for HSE Managers.</a>	Engaging in WRS Risk Assessment Selection & Assessment & best practice recruitment processes Pre-employment medical examination <a href="#">Health &amp; Safety Training catalogue on HSELand</a> Local Induction <a href="#">Corporate Induction</a> Training Programmes Annual Work Reviews <a href="#">Personal Development Plan</a> <a href="#">Dignity at Work - HSELand</a>
<b>Secondary:</b> aim of secondary prevention is to reduce the	Using best <a href="#">practice recruitment processes</a> <a href="#">Induction process training on HSELand</a> Providing identified training	Stress Management Training & Workshops Health Promotion, e.g., focus on individual health Access to <a href="#">Occupational Health and</a>

severity or duration of stress once it has occurred and to prevent the level of stress becoming problematic	<p>requirements to HCWs</p> <p><a href="#">Providing any needed coaching, mentoring and support for the employee</a></p> <p>Providing performance feedback</p> <p>Access to competent <a href="#">H&amp;S advice and support</a></p> <p>Access to <a href="#">Organisational Health</a></p> <p>Access to <a href="#">Occupational Health and EAP</a></p> <p><a href="#">Staff Engagement</a></p>	<p><a href="#">EAP</a></p> <p>Personal and Interpersonal skills training</p> <p><a href="#">Stress Control Programmes</a></p> <p><a href="#">Consultancy &amp; Advisory</a></p> <p><a href="#">Access to specialised clinical services for employees that need them</a></p>
<p><b>Tertiary:</b></p> <p>Aim is to manage, rehabilitate and minimise potential harm.</p>	<p><a href="#">Confidential advice, guidance, support or counselling</a></p> <p><a href="#">Access to specialist clinical services for managers that need professional advice</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Access to support services EAP confidential supports advice &amp; counselling</a></p> <p><a href="#">Critical Incident Stress Mgt</a></p> <p><a href="#">Occupational Health Services</a></p>

These supports will also assist healthcare teams and managers in dealing with the aftermath of this pandemic and into recovery phase.

Please take the time to familiarise/re-familiarise yourself with the HSE policy, as it sets out the framework for the prevention and management of stress in the workplace including, line manager role and responsibilities in relation to risk assessment.

Should you require any additional information or support, your health and safety queries can be directed to [1850 420 420](tel:1850420420) which is currently the dedicated Healthcare Worker COVID-19 helpline or alternatively log your request at <http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing>




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**Anne Marie Hoey**  
National Director of Human Resources



“To view the Health Services People Strategy 2019 - 2024 please click [here](#).”