

## Staff Counselling Service

HR66

Additionally refer to :       HS01 Health & Safety Policy  
  HR31 Managing Attendance and Employee Wellbeing  
  HR65 Occupational Health Service

Version:	V2
V1 issued	January 2009
V2 approved by	TNCC – PAG - HEC
V2 date approved	November 10 <sup>th</sup> 2014
V2 Ratified by:	Trust Board
V2 Date ratified:	November 27 <sup>th</sup> 2014
Document Lead	Workforce Director
Lead Director	Workforce Director
Date issued:	November 2014
Review date:	October 2015
Review date extended until:	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021
Target audience:	All employees of the Trust including fixed term and temporary staff, excluding agency or contractors not employed directly by the Trust.

<b>Document Lead/Contact:</b>	Workforce Director
Document ID	HR66
Version	V2
Status	Draft
Date Equality Impact Assessment completed	May 2014
Issue Date	November 2014
Review Date	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021
Distribution	Please refer to the intranet version for the latest version of this policy. <b>Any printed copies may not necessarily be the most up to date</b>
Key Words	Staff Counselling; NOSS;
Dissemination	Staff Briefing, HR pages on internet and intranet; Staff Quarterly News placed on notice board;

**Version history**

Version	Date	Author	Status	Comment
V1	Pre June 14		Final	
V2	June 14	J Hulse	DRAFT	Reformatted into new Trust template Sections updated to reflect changes to Occupational Health provision of counselling services work & private situations Sections 3 & 4 have been inserted as per template

**Contents**

1 Document Statement .....4

2 Overview .....4

3 Definitions .....4

4 Duties .....4

5 Policy detail .....5

6 Process .....5

7 Confidentiality.....6

8 Training Needs.....6

9 Review process.....6

10 Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) .....6

11 Process for monitoring compliance .....7

12 References.....7

## **1 Document Statement**

- 1.1 This document outlines the role of the Staff Counselling Service and the process by which employees may be referred to their services.
- 1.2 Employers have a legal obligation to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of their employees. The Trust believes that all staff should have the opportunity to receive appropriate support for any physical or psychological health issues.
- 1.3 The Staff Counselling Service aims to support employees so as to enable employees to function effectively, both professionally and personally. Issues can be discussed and resolved through one to one counselling and group mediation sessions. The service helps individuals to recognise, accept and deal with any issues that affect their wellbeing at work and their relationships with colleagues, managers and patients.

## **2 Overview**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff who are directly employed by the Trust, whether full time or part time, permanent or temporary including those employed by the Trust via the Temporary Staffing Department.
- 2.2 The policy does not apply to individuals employed by agencies or other contractors. Issues relating to these individuals should be referred to the appropriate employer.
- 2.3 In implementing this policy, managers must ensure that all staff are treated fairly and within the provisions and spirit of the Trust's Equality & Diversity Policy. Special attention should be paid to ensuring the policy is understood when using it for staff new to the NHS or Trust, by staff whose literacy or use of English is weak or for persons with little experience of working life.

## **3 Definitions**

NOSS	Network of Staff Supporters
OHS	Occupational Health Service
Trained Counsellor	A person who is an accredited counsellor

## **4 Duties**

- 4.1 Directors and Senior Managers have a responsibility under the Health and Wellbeing agenda for the NHS to ensure that the provision of this type of support is available to all staff to enable them to remain in work or return to work following a period of absence.
- 4.2 Managers have a responsibility to ensure that Staff are informed of and have access to this policy and to the services provided by Occupational Health and NOSS where applicable.
- 4.3 Staff have a responsibility to read and understand this policy in terms of accessing the support offered through the Occupational Health Service provider and through the Network of Staff Supporters.
- 4.4 Staff should also be aware that they may be able to access counselling through their own GP services and if they choose to do so, it would be helpful to inform their manager so that no unnecessary referrals are made to the Trust's OHS provider.

## **5 Policy detail**

- 5.1 The Staff Counselling Service will provide private and confidential counselling to any employee who is being affected by work-related or personal issues. Examples of work-related issues include stress at work, personality conflicts at work, serious incidents experienced at work and bullying and harassment. On a personal level, staff may experience issues in their private lives that may have a significant effect on them, and their ability to undertake their duties effectively and to support them as our employees the Trust offers pro-active measures to ensure staff are kept in work whenever possible.
- 5.2 Employees may choose to access counselling services via their own GP for personal issues if preferred, but should be made aware of the support that the Trust can offer them.
- 5.3 Trained Counsellors will facilitate the Staff Counselling sessions as either a one-off individual session, a series of appointments or a group session.
- 5.4 Sessions will be facilitated using a number of different methods. Direct face to face sessions may take place either at the workplace or at a neutral, mutually agreed location. Sessions may also be conducted on a telephone basis or via e-mail. These sessions are organised in advance with the individual to enable them to have some choice as to which method best meets their personal needs.

## **6 Process**

- 6.1 Staff who wish to be referred to the Staff Counselling Service should approach their line manager. The manager should then refer the employee to the Occupational Health Service using the standard Occupational Health Referral Form
- 6.2 Where an employee feels unable to approach their manager they may approach a more senior manager or, where there is no senior manager available, they may contact the Occupational Health Service directly.
- 6.3 In exceptional circumstances such as where staff have experienced a traumatic event at work employees may self-refer to the Staff Counselling Service. This should only be done when there is an immediate need and where waiting to go through the normal management referral route may cause the employee stress or harm that could be avoided through an urgent self-referral. In these instances the employee should contact the Occupational Health Department.
- 6.4 Where a number of employees have been affected by the same traumatic incident, arrangements should be made for the Staff Counselling Service to run specific group sessions at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.5 The Occupational Health Service must discuss the reasons for the referral with the employee prior to their appointment with the Staff Counselling Service to determine if such an appointment will be beneficial to the employee and, if so, how urgently it is needed. If an appointment with the Staff Counselling Service is deemed appropriate the employee will then be provided with the necessary information to make their appointment directly with the Staff Counselling Service.

## **7 Confidentiality**

7.1 Counsellors will maintain confidentiality at all times. The disclosure of information will only be made where:

- employees consent during their consultation with Occupational Health
- disclosure is required by a court of law
- disclosure is justified in the public interest (e.g. serious crime)

7.2 Confidentiality is not an absolute obligation. Situations may arise where the harm in maintaining confidentiality is greater than that in disclosing the information. For example:

- when confidential information is needed to protect someone's health and safety
- concern for public welfare
- concern for the safety of other specific persons
- police requests for client information with statutory authority or court order
- when necessary in order for the Trust to comply with its statutory duties under health and safety law, in particular the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 1995

This list is not exhaustive

The issue of confidentiality will be discussed and agreed at the first counselling or group session. The reason for the referral will be discussed with the employee to enable them to give informed consent before any counselling takes place.

Should informed consent be unobtainable, the employee will be referred back to the Occupational Health Service.

## **8 Training Needs**

There is no mandatory training associated with this guidance. If staff have queries about its operation, they should contact their line manager in the first instance.

## **9 Review process**

This policy will be reviewed and monitored by the Workforce Directorate. This will include regular review meetings with the Occupational Health Service and the Network of Staff Supporters, the annual business planning meeting and through consultation with managers, staff and staff representatives. Any queries relating to the application of this policy should be referred to the Workforce Directorate.

## **10 Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**

This policy applies to all employees equally and does not discriminate positively or negatively between protected characteristics.

**11 Process for monitoring compliance**

<b>Aspect of compliance or effectiveness being monitored</b>	<b>Monitoring method</b>	<b>Responsibility for monitoring (job title)</b>	<b>Frequency of monitoring</b>	<b>Group or Committee that will review the findings and monitor completion of any resulting action plan</b>
Use of the counselling service through out the Trust	Via reports from OHS or NOSS	Health & Wellbeing Officer	Quarterly	Workforce Committee

**12 References**

HS01 Health & Safety Policy  
 HR31 Managing Attendance and Employee Wellbeing  
 HR65 Occupational Health Service