



**A Case Study on the Implementation of Work
Positive/ Management Standards for work -
related Stress within Craigavon Area Hospital
Group Trust**

Lurgan Hospital Site

Marian Hassard, Assistant Health & Safety Advisor, CAHGT

CASE STUDY

WORK POSITIVE INITIATIVE – LURGAN HOSPITAL SITE

Background

Within Great Britain the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) has identified six key aspects of work which if not properly managed could lead to work related stress. Using these 'risk factors' a stress indicator tool and analysis tool have been developed. In addition the HSE has also developed Management Standards and these standards identify the 'states' that need to be achieved if these six risk factors are not to be contributory to the development and sustenance of work related stress.

In October 2005 the Health & Safety Executive within Northern Ireland (HSENI) identified six pilot 'employers' against which these indicator and analysis tools could be used to assess workplace stress levels. Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust was chosen and in order to ensure that the initial pilot area was manageable yet provided an adequate population sample Lurgan Hospital site was chosen.

The Trust's Health & Safety Department were given the responsibility of coordinating the 'pilot' process.

Getting Started

In order to introduce both the process and the concept of the Work Positive Initiative and the process associated with it a series of awareness sessions were arranged for the staff members employed within Lurgan Hospital.

Research Methodology – Questionnaires

In December 2005 the Trust's Health and Safety Department carried out a survey (based on the Health and Safety Executive Great Britain indicator tool). The survey was conducted using an anonymous questionnaire that was distributed to 180 staff members working within a broad range of occupational groupings within Lurgan Hospital.

A total of 110 anonymous questionnaire returns were received and this figure is reflective of a 61% response rate.

Analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires indicated that Lurgan Hospital staff members have an '**urgent need**' for action with respect to demands, relationships, roles and change and a '**clear need for improvement**' in the areas of control, managers' support and peer support.

Twenty eight percent of staff who completed the questionnaire reported that they are 'always, often or sometimes bullied'. Clearly this situation requires addressing urgently.

Focus Groups

The development of focus groups formed an important and pivotal role within this Work Positive Initiative.

The purpose of using focus groups as part of the risk assessment process for work related stress is to allow employees to draw on their own detailed knowledge of local and contextual factors to:

- Explore the sources of undue pressure in their work and to enable them to share perceptions and perspectives on underlying causes etc.;
- Confirm or challenge the indications from the HSE Indicator Tool, other surveys and other management information;
- Prioritise the specific areas in which there is a need for action;
- Explore potential solutions; and
- Develop a set of suggested recommendations to help address the main causes of work related stress.

A total of 25 staff members took part in 4 focus group sessions. These sessions generally confirmed the questionnaire findings and greater in depth discussions also highlighted specific issues that could be further contributory factors to work place stress.

Steering Group

It has been established that one component driving the experience of work - related stress is the feeling of not being in control. It has been found that the most effective action plans have used a consultative and participative approach. In order to ensure that such an approach is taken and ensure that priorities for action are adequately implemented within set time frames a 'Steering Group' was established.

The constitution of this group included the following members of senior management and staff representation:

- Director of Finance – Chairperson
- Senior Nurse for Lurgan Hospital
- Physiotherapy Team Leader for Lurgan Hospital
- Directorate Administrator, Medical Directorate
- Staff side Representation

Clearly defined '*Terms of Reference*' governed the group's roles / responsibilities and ensured that the actions taken would have the greatest impact in dealing with the process findings.

The Steering Group analysed the findings of the questionnaires and the discussion outcomes from the focus group sessions. Quantitative data in the form of sickness absence figures/accident statistics and violence and aggression incidents towards staff was also considered.

Following the analysis of these identified process outcomes a time bound action plan was developed by the Steering Group.

In order to ensure that this process is transparent and effective in it's communication all staff members working within the Lurgan Hospital site will be informed of the findings and the progress that is being made through a series of staff feedback sessions facilitated by members of the Steering Group and Mrs Linda Murphy, HSENI.

Action Plan

Each of the focus group recommendations was considered and proposed actions/responses have been/will be made to each.

Nursing Group

	Suggested recommendations from Focus Group	Proposed Action / Response
1	Staff being moved at short notice to areas of unfamiliarity. Worries over unsafe practice and accountability. Particular problem with staff being 'pulled out' of Day Hospital. Suggestion: - Annual Rotation of N/Auxiliaries	This is a management decision as all areas are required to be covered safely. Not a problem now staff are not moved. Reduced WTE in Day Hospital
2	Can patients have tests carried out before coming to Lurgan Hospital? This could be one way to address the issue of Lurgan Hospital staff having to accompany patients being transported to Craigavon Hospital.	Tests are done when possible but cannot keep patients in beds in CAH waiting for tests. Some tests are ordered on Lurgan site.
3	Training in dealing with conflict/complaints/follow up service.	Ongoing (ref. David Cardwell)
4	Information for patients/relatives. Information booklet for relatives – specify most appropriate telephone times.	Information booklet: i.e. Services at Lurgan, all wards. Information booklet presently being updated
5	Improved advertising of Occupational Health Services.	Confidential Staff counsellor – Tuesdays Staff Support – Occ. Health Nurses Advisors

	Suggested recommendations from Focus Group cont.	Proposed Action / Response
6	Review of security.	Security 7 nights per week 8pm – 2am
7	Clarification on the rumours regarding changes to staff rotas.	Not aware of changes
8	Consistency of managing e.g. annual leave.	Ward managers plan annual leave over a year with staff
9	Cordless phones for sisters	Cordless phones in ward areas ex Ward 6 (poor reception)
10	Bullying / Harassment	Labour Relations Agency offer bullying/harassment in the workplace seminars – to be organised for Lurgan staff. Team Building Communication Skills ½ day seminar for Lurgan staff offered by HSE to be arranged – April 2007
11	Staff facilities require upgrading	Painting and an additional shower being arranged with Estates Department.

Finance Group

	Suggested recommendations from Focus Group	Proposed Action / Response
1	Bullying and harassment – awareness training for managers and staff.	<p>Team Building Communication Skills ½ day seminar for Lurgan staff offered by HSE to be arranged – April 2007.</p> <p>Bullying & Harassment talks by Labour Relations Agency to be arranged – April 2007.</p>
2	Assessment of workload.	Response to be provided to Finance staff by Finance Steering Group representative
3	Address issue of staff working long hours.	Response to be provided to Finance staff by Finance Steering Group representative
4	Time management.	½ day Time Management seminar for Lurgan staff offered by HSE to be arranged – April 2007.
5	Improved induction for all new starts to include flexi time/annual leave entitlement etc.	Consistent orientation/induction process for new starts to be carried out by section supervisor/manager.
6	'Floater admin' to assist where most needed i.e. at busy times in all sections.	To be given consideration

Admin & Clerical / AHP Group

	Suggested recommendations from Focus Group	Proposed Action / Response
1	Permanent ward clerk / 'floater' clerical officer for Lurgan Hospital. Ideally ward clerk in each ward.	Response to be provided to Admin/Clerical staff by Directorate Administrator Steering Group representative
2	Audit of workload.	½ day Time Management seminar for Lurgan staff offered by HSE to be arranged – April 2007.
3	Recruitment – fill empty posts.	Response to be provided to Admin/Clerical staff by Directorate Administrator Steering Group representative
4	Lack of training opportunities – job specific.	Response to be provided to Admin/Clerical staff by Directorate Administrator Steering Group representative
5	AHP admin.–Isolation of specialties	Ensure Lurgan Admin + Clerical staff are included in staff meetings
6	Non-stock stationery orders not being delivered in a timely manner leading to lack of stationery resources	Response to be provided to Admin/Clerical staff by Directorate Administrator and Finance Steering Group representatives

Senior Managers' Group

All agreed that the issue of bullying and harassment must be addressed urgently:

	Suggested recommendations from Focus Group	Proposed Action / Response
1	Awareness sessions on bullying and harassment policy	Seminars for senior managers and staff to be organised with the Labour Relations Agency – April 2007. Review Trust policy ½ day Team Building seminar for Lurgan staff offered by HSE to be arranged – April 2007.
2	Training – in customer care and managing difficult situations/conflict	Ongoing (ref. David Cardwell)
3	Annual rotation of Nursing Auxiliaries to increase knowledge. (Physio helpers are rotated)	<i>See Nursing group Point 1</i>
4	Hours of work for nurses – specify in job advertisements	Not practical
5	Information booklet for relatives Cordless phones	<i>See Nursing group points 4 & 9</i>

	Suggested recommendations from Focus Group cont.	Proposed Action / Response
6	Staff shortages: Problems with 'backfill' and workload with demands outstripping resources	½ day Time Management Communication skills seminar for Lurgan staff offered by HSE to be arranged – April 2007.
7	'Floater' admin for Finance	<i>See Finance group point 6</i>

Conclusions

The 'Work Positive' initiative within Lurgan Hospital site has been reflective of a collaborative and consultative approach between the following key stakeholders:

- The Health & Safety Executive (N.I.)
- The Health & Safety Department at Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust
- Members of staff working within Lurgan Hospital, Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust

This Work Positive Initiative used a number of qualitative and quantitative research methods and from the information that was gathered a specifically tailored and time bound action plan was developed to effectively manage some of the key risk factors identified.

Since this initiative is not a 'one off' exercise but an ongoing process that needs to be embedded within the safety culture of Lurgan Hospital and indeed the whole organisation a review of any changes and identification of the tangible progress made in relation to this action plan will be carried out in approximately 18 months.

Upon reflection of the process a number of key lessons have been learned. When this process is repeated within the organisation the following changes should be made:

1. The Steering Group should be set up at the outset of the process.
2. The Steering Group should include an Occupational Health professional.
3. The process should be completed in 3 – 6 months.