eWIN HOT TOPIC *Yorkshire and the Humber*

NHS **NHS** North West

HIGH IMPACT CHANGES FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING:
SUPPORTED BY IMPROVED MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY

INTRODUCTION

The NHS faces a huge challenge to reduce its sickness absence rate to an average of 3.4% over the year 2013/14 and all NHS organisations have a part to play to help meet this. To achieve this goal each Trust needs to develop a clear focus on staff health and well-being, as outlined in the Department of Health's **NHS Health and Well-Being Improvement Framework**.

This hot topic is the third of a series of five documents, linked to the high impact changes:

1. Strong visible leadership

2. Local evidence-based improvement plans

3. **Supported by improved management capability**

4. Access to better, local high quality accredited occupational health services

5. Staff are encouraged, and enabled, to take more personal responsibility

IMPROVED MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY

A number of recommendations were put forward by the Boorman Review, with several specifically related to how Trusts and line managers can help achieve better staff health and well being by improving management capability. Recommendations include:

- That all NHS leaders and managers are developed and equipped to recognise the link between staff health and well being and organisational performance.

- Leaders and managers' actions are judged in terms of whether they contribute to or undermine staff health and well being.

- That all NHS Trusts should implement the guidance both from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) on promoting mental health and well being at work

KEY MANAGEMENT SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

This Hot Topic specifically looks at the skills and competencies needed by line managers to improve wellbeing, as managers are critical in maintaining employee health in the following three overlapping areas:

- **Prevention-** preventing the occurrence of poor health in the workplace through practices that do not harm health and also those that positively promote healthy lifestyles.

- **Recovery -** support to individuals during recovery, whilst in treatment and off work.

- **Return to Work-** help individuals manage their return to work by giving them the support needed.

LINE MANAGER SELF-AWARENESS

HSE has developed a tool that line managers can use to assess their **management competencies** in relation to managing health and wellbeing, particularly in reducing stress. The tool enables managers to assess whether stress management behaviours are part of their repertoire or not, and identify any gaps in skills or behaviours. The information can then be utilised for targeting help and guidance.

Training packages are also available for managers specifically aimed at managing mental wellbeing. The following is not an exhaustive list:

*   **Mental Health First Aid**

*   **Impact on Depression**

An excellent, much reproduced written resource for managers is the **Line Mangers' Resource from Mindful Employer,** which is free to download

JOB DESIGN

Line managers play a critical role in specifying task and job requirements and allocating individual job roles for those in their immediate team. This is a key part of job design, and managers actions and behaviour have a very important impact on the quality of working life of their team.

HSE's management standards cover 6 areas

*   **Demands –** this includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.

*   **Control –** how much say the person has in the way they do their work.

*   **Support –** this includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

*   **Relationships –** this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

*   **Role –** whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.

*   **Change –** how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation

Lack of control and lack of reward at work are critical determinants of a variety of stress related disorders and are more prevalent among lower occupational status groups. Further detail is available **here**

TIMELY AND APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION

Managers play a pivotal role in communicating – for example about change – and fostering both 'upward' and 'downward' communication flows. Poor communication reduces employee control and sense of support reducing engagement and creating a risk to health.

It is important to ensure that where the manager and organisation have determined actions that these are delivered promptly and implemented properly.

Managers are often the first port of call for employees with problems, and as such should be equipped with the skills necessary to support staff and have difficult conversations. CIPD have developed a **fact sheet** on communication available to members.

PARTICIPATION

The NICE Guidelines on **'Promoting mental wellbeing through productive and healthy working conditions'** indicate the importance of line managers having a style that encourages; participation, delegation, constructive feedback, mentoring and coaching. Interventions that include employer-employee partnership and/or consultation have proven to give improved results. Participatory committees that increase employee control are known to have a positive impact on self-reported employee health.

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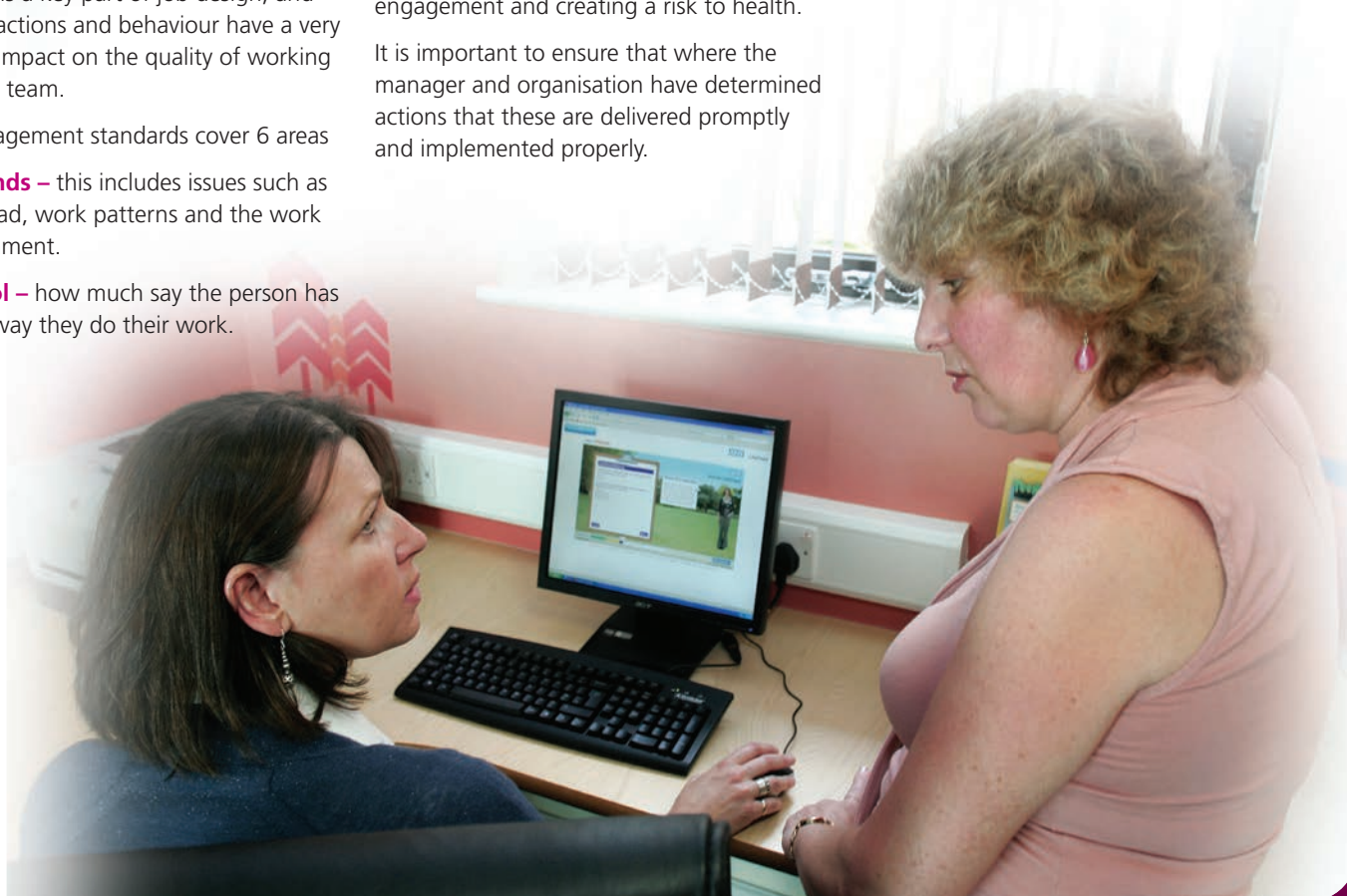
APPROPRIATE AND TIMELY REFERRAL TO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Line managers must have a good understanding of the services offered by Occupational Health and be able to use these proactively. Occupational Health teams need to develop good working relationships with Trust managers to ensure they are supported to make early and appropriate referrals. Often, Occupational Health teams will assign a named OH practitioner to each business directorate to ensure that communication is easily facilitated and that support is readily accessible.

Line managers need to be aware of the organisation's policy on Occupational Health Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and monthly performance against these KPIs should be made readily available to managers to raise their awareness of the service they should expect. Any health and wellbeing training that is offered to managers should include information on how to make the best of the Occupational Health service.

Further information on the role of the line manager in managing Long Term absence is available in **PH19 Management of long-term sickness and incapacity for work: guidance**

EFFECTIVE RETURN TO WORK MEETINGS

Return to work meetings are reported to be one of the most effective mechanisms of managing sickness absence **(CIPD annual survey report 2010).**

Organisations need to ensure that return to work meetings take place every time a member of staff is absent ,ideally on the day they return to work. This should be recorded on ESR and monitored by HR. The purpose of a return to work meeting is to gain an understanding of the reasons for sickness absence, find out whether the organisation can help in any way and to update the employee on what has been happening in the organisation.

Where an employee has had long-term sickness absence (more than four weeks) a more comprehensive meeting may be required prior to the employee returning to work to ensure that a suitable action plan is made with the employee. Click here for a **comprehensive checklist** in developing a return to work plan.

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Line Managers also need to feel supported with their own health and wellbeing. Increasing pressure to do more with less can leave line managers feeling overworked and overwhelmed. Each organisation should ensure it has mechanisms in place to develop the resilience of its management community.

On the **Robertson Cooper** website managers can complete a twenty minute personality questionnaire and receive a personalised i-resillience report which identifies which of the four key areas for developing resilience they naturally draw on. Managers can then access the portal to support their development in any of those areas which include; confidence, adaptability, purposefulness and social support.

Managers are role models to staff and their positive health behaviours can influence and support staff to become healthier through better lifestyle choices and to avoid unhealthy behaviours such as presenteeism and working long hours.

All staff, including managers, may benefit from the health information provided on the **NHS Choices** website which includes; emotional wellbeing, men and emotional health, 5 ways to mental wellbeing and dealing with loss to name a few of the resources.

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