

<b>Incident Policy Practice Guidance Note Supporting Staff Involved in an Incident – V04</b>		
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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust / NTW) values its staff and as such wants to ensure support is available to those following traumatic or stressful incidents.

1.2 As outlined in the NHS England – Serious Incident Framework (March, 2015):

“It is important to recognise that serious incidents can have a significant impact on any staff who were involved or may have witnessed the incident. Like victims and families staff may want to know what happened and why, and what can be done to prevent the incident happening again.”

1.3 Post incident supporting is about creating space and time for reflection, ventilation of feelings and sharing of concerns or anxieties.

## **2 Scope**

2.1 This Practice Guidance Note applies to all staff employed by the Trust, either directly or as part of a contracted service.

## **3 Support for Staff**

3.1 The Trust will be supportive to all staff who have been involved (directly or indirectly) in an adverse / critical incident within the work place and aim to reduce where possible and practicable the impact of a critical incident on the staff members wellbeing. The primary aim of this guidance is to signpost staff to support when they have been exposed to incidents that have the potential to have an ongoing impact upon their health and wellbeing.

## **4 Accessing Support**

4.1 Line Managers, Team Leaders and Heads of Service have a responsibility to identify if an individual staff member requires specialist support and what level of support is required by discussing with the staff concerned and making them aware of the various options. (See Appendix 1).

## **5 Impact on Staff**

5.1 All staff should be given the opportunity to choose what level of support would be of most benefit to them through support and discussion with their Line Manager / Team Lead.

5.2 The level of support required may vary and this will be dependent on the severity of the incident and whether or not the staff member was directly involved.

## **6 Levels of Support available for Staff**

### **6.1 Level 1 - Local**

6.1.1 Because of their qualifications and experience, many of the staff within the Trust have the required competencies and skills to enable them to provide support to colleagues post incident.

6.1.2 At a local level (for example, at ward or team level) a staff support session can be held. This type of local support is usually facilitated by a Ward Manager or Team Leader as soon as is reasonably practicable following the incident occurring.

6.1.3 The support session should allow all those involved in the process to be able to reflect on the incident, vent their feelings, and discuss the events as a group or team in an open and non-judgemental environment.

6.1.4 Staff need to be aware that following a critical incident there will be a period of time where staff may experience a range of emotions and consequent changes in behaviour. Within the support process staff must be reassured that this is a normal reaction to what may be an abnormal incident and that most people start on a process of “self-repair”.

6.1.5 Support can also be offered to staff on an individual basis if that is preferred. This can be facilitated by the Ward Manager or Team Leader.

### **6.2 Level 2 – Local with Additional Specialist Support**

6.2.1 Following an initial staff support session where a Manager has concerns a further follow up meeting might be required.

6.2.2 The Ward or Team Manager can request additional support for this follow up meeting from a suitable competent practitioner, for example Senior Clinical Nurse, Psychologist, PMVA Specialist, Safeguarding Practitioner, Pharmacist, Security Specialist.

6.2.3 The post Incident Review Meeting would involve all members affected by the incident facilitating opportunity to consider how staff members are feeling about and coping with the after affects. Staff may also consider whether any additional types of support would be helpful.

6.2.4 In line with current practice and research this type of meeting would normally take place within 3 – 4 weeks post incident and the evidence would suggest that the follow up meeting should not take place within 7 days of the incident.

### **6.3 Level 3 – Formal Support**

6.3.1 Where more formal support is required the Manager may need to refer the individual to the Occupational Health Provider.

- 6.3.2 Line Managers, Team Leaders and Service Leads should pay attention to the behaviour and wellbeing of all staff following a critical incident and if concerned may make a referral to the Occupational Health Provider at any time.

## **7 Range of Staff Support Mechanisms**

- 7.1 In addition to the above, there is a range of support mechanisms which can be accessed in the Trust. This can be done by line management referral or self-referral (see Appendix 1).

## **8 Support for Staff who are required to Give Evidence in Court**

- 8.1 It is recognised that having to prepare witness statements and appear in court to give evidence can be both anxiety provoking and stressful for staff.

- 8.2 Should staff be called to provide evidence at court the Trust will ensure that they have the appropriate legal representation and support in both statement preparation and court attendance. The Solicitor supporting the Trust will meet with them to prepare them fully prior to the court appearance. This will be arranged via the [Safer Care](#) Department for Inquests and via Information Governance and Medico Legal for all other court appearances.

- 8.3 Staff will be accompanied to the appropriate court and de-briefed following the conclusion of the case.

- 8.4 Additional support in relation to these processes for staff can be obtained through the Head of Clinical Risk and Investigations and the Head of Information Governance and Medico Legal.

## **9 Monitoring**

- 9.1 There are no monitoring arrangements. Any monitoring of the activity would be picked up by the Policy monitoring of the Trust's Incident Policy – NTW(O)05.

## Appendix 1

### Range of Staff Support Mechanisms Available in the Trust

Support Mechanism	Contact details
Occupational Health	<a href="http://nww1.ntw.nhs.uk/services/index.php?id=3780&amp;p=4505">http://nww1.ntw.nhs.uk/services/index.php?id=3780&amp;p=4505</a>
Freedom to Speak up Guardian	Contact St Nicholas Hospital via main switchboard
Chaplaincy	<a href="http://nww1.ntw.nhs.uk/services/?id=3016&amp;p=2780">http://nww1.ntw.nhs.uk/services/?id=3016&amp;p=2780</a>
Counselling Service	0800 174319
Equality and Diversity Officer	Contact St Nicholas Hospital via main switchboard
Workforce and Organisational Development	Contact St Nicholas Hospital via main switchboard
Unison – Sunderland Office (Union)	<a href="http://www.unison-cityofsunderland.org.uk/">http://www.unison-cityofsunderland.org.uk/</a>
Unison – Newcastle Office (Union)	<a href="http://unison.ncl.ac.uk/">http://unison.ncl.ac.uk/</a>
Unison – Northumberland Office (Union)	<a href="http://unison-northumberland.org.uk/">http://unison-northumberland.org.uk/</a>
Royal College of Nursing	<a href="https://www.rcn.org.uk/">https://www.rcn.org.uk/</a>
Unite (Union)	<a href="http://www.unitetheunion.org/">http://www.unitetheunion.org/</a>
GMB (Union)	<a href="http://www.gmb.org.uk/">http://www.gmb.org.uk/</a>
Patient Safety Officer	Contact St Nicholas Hospital via main switchboard