

## NHS Health and Wellbeing: Implementation of the Boorman Review 2010: Checklist for reps.

A colleague of mine recently made the statement 'the cobbler's children have no shoes' whilst discussing the recently published "Boorman Review". This rather old saying applies well to NHS staff who are busy looking after everyone else's health and wellbeing, which makes it all too easy for SoR members to neglect their own.

Sadly this does sometimes give employers the excuse not to support and promote the health and wellbeing of its workforce, but we must ensure that the NHS as an employer does not follow this route.

### Introduction

Late 2009 Dr Steve Boorman released his final report and recommendations\* to the government and Department of Health on NHS staff health and well-being. Key recommendations include:

- Ensuring that NHS organisations have prevention focused health and wellbeing strategy, which will be measured as part of the annual assessments of NHS performance.
- Ensuring that there are early interventions for staff with musculoskeletal and mental health conditions, to help minimise the time staff spend suffering with these problems and provide sufficient support that can enable a return to work.

Throughout 2010 NHS employers are expected to work in partnership with local staff sides to review existing occupational health services and policies in light of the above recommendation. This is an opportunity to improve rehabilitative support to staff affected by ill health as well as promote good health and wellbeing in the workplace.

### The 'Wellbeing' debate

Sometimes the discussion about wellbeing may focus on the individual employee's mental and physical resilience rather than include a proper review of the organisation's work structures and practices. When such a narrow parameter is applied the initiatives introduced tend to be just about smoking cessation/weight reduction programmes and incentives to encourage gym membership. These initiatives can be helpful but should only be seen as a wider comprehensive health and wellbeing strategy for staff.

The following list (which is not exhaustive) is to assist you in ensuring your trust properly addresses the key issues that can improve staffs health and wellbeing in the workplace.

### 1. Health and Safety

Is there a safety culture within your workplace which ensures accidents rarely occur and if they did they would be promptly be investigated and the hazards identified effectively resolved?

Does your employer have in place a detailed risk assessment programme that not only assesses the work environment but the individual employee's needs?

You can utilise the NHS Staff Council Occupational Health and Safety Standards to review your trusts health and safety policies and practices. These standards are available from [www.nhsemployers.org](http://www.nhsemployers.org)

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## 2 Rehabilitative Support

The Boorman review recommends that staff should have the right to self refer to Physiotherapy and counselling services which should be provided in all NHS trusts and occupational health services. Is your employer providing this support?

Does your trust have a rehabilitation policy? If so, it should contain the following:

- a) The primary goal to maintain an ill injured or disabled employee in meaningful work.
- b) Ensure that the employee has an active role throughout the process.
- c) Rehabilitation to be provided as early as possible, subject to appropriate medical opinion being sought.
- d) Occupational health to ensure the individual employee is given rehabilitation programme that is regularly monitored and reviewed with involvement of both the manager and employee.
- e) A transparent process/procedure that delivers effective co-ordination and communication. There should be joined up action undertaken with clear lines of responsibility between the various people involved, such as line managers, HR, occupational physicians and nurses, psychologists, disability advisers, trade union reps and external medical practitioners.
- f) That occupational health meets the service standards of the Faculty of Occupational Health which includes ensuring workers are treated fairly and with respect.  
Faculty of Occupational Medicine web address is [www.facocmed.ac.uk/standards/index.jsp](http://www.facocmed.ac.uk/standards/index.jsp)
- g) That the policy accurately incorporates the relevant terms of Annex Z, NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook

## 3. Progressive HR policies and training/development practices

A useful resource for union reps is the NHS Staff Council framework for Improving Working Lives in the NHS. The framework was designed to assist organisations to put in place good HR policies in partnership at local level. Section 5 “Healthy workplace” of this document sets out a checklist of key principles, including examples of good practice that should deliver a comprehensive workplace health strategy.

‘Improving Working Lives in the NHS: a framework developed by the NHS Staff Council July 2009’ is available from [www.nhsemployers.org](http://www.nhsemployers.org).

Another useful website with good information and resources, including tool kits and case studies for the NHS is ‘Working for Health’ [www.workingforhealth.gov.uk](http://www.workingforhealth.gov.uk)

We hope you find this checklist helpful and please don’t hesitate to contact your Health and Safety Officer or Regional Officer for further advice or support.