



“ It’s really important that staff know there is somebody to talk to about how they’re feeling, and that the feelings they may be experiencing are normal feelings to an abnormal event. ”

Paula Fawcett, a senior staff counsellor in our occupational health team, regularly helps members of staff through difficult times in their lives. Sometimes, these difficult times might be caused by a serious incident at work, so Paula and her team have introduced a new process to improve how occupational health and line managers can work together to make sure we have the right wellbeing support for all of us.

Incidents at work

Due to the nature of our work, staff are well trained to deal with difficult situations. But sometimes, someone might be involved in a serious incident at work that causes them to experience an unusually strong emotional reaction. This distress might be apparent straight away, and other times it can take days, weeks or even months for signs and symptoms to appear.

Here to help

The occupational health team can help staff manage the distress caused by a work incident. Our new process encourages line managers to share the name and contact number of staff involved in a serious incident with us, so we can contact the staff member by phone and ask if they need someone to talk to. If they do, they will be offered a priority appointment with one of our four counsellors for an initial 50-minute conversation, followed by more counselling sessions if needed. If a staff member involved in a serious incident doesn’t wish to take up the offer of counselling, we’ll call them again a month later just to check they’re still doing ok.

Stress can affect us all in different ways. So, we’ve also created an information sheet to highlight some of the potential signs and symptoms of a stress reaction after witnessing a critical incident. The information sheet also includes some tips to try and make staff feel better, like giving themselves permission to not feel right, talking to people about their experience and feelings, keeping busy and eating well. There’s also some advice for family and friends who may notice they’re struggling and may want to offer their support.

Wellbeing support for all of us

This new and proactive approach to supporting staff after a serious incident at work will ensure improved access to support. Our wellbeing at work matters to all of us. We want staff to be healthy and happy because we want to be an outstanding place to work. We also know that improving our health improves care outcomes.

If you have any questions...

Or would like support from our staff counselling team, call 01924 316049. You can find out more about the support we offer on the intranet.



In a nutshell

Our new, proactive approach to supporting staff through serious incidents at work means they will be offered a priority appointment with one of our counsellors straight away, and if they don't choose to take us up on it, we'll get in touch a month later to check they're still feeling ok.

Signs and symptoms of a stress reaction to a critical incident

Physical – nausea, dizziness, chest pains, rapid heart rate, difficulty breathing

Cognitive – nightmares, poor concentration, blaming someone, confusion

Emotional – fear, guilt, panic, anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, depression

Behavioural – withdrawal, antisocial acts, inability to rest, loss or increase of appetite

How the process works

Work place incident

- Manager collates all names and contact numbers of staff involved in the incident
- Staff are informed that Occupational Health staff counsellors will be contacting them

Manager/Team leader

- Manager / team leader emails all names and contact numbers of staff to occupationalhealth.lypft@nhs.net with the email subject: 'Post Incident Support'

Counselling Team

- Telephone contact is made to all members of staff involved in the incident
- Staff, if required, will be given priority face to face follow up appointment
- If no support is required, a follow up call takes place after 1 month to check they're still ok