



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
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To: Each Member of the Directorate and Leadership Team
Each Assistant National Director, HR
Each Chief Officer, CHO
Each CEO, Hospital Group
Each CEO, Section 38 Agency
Each Employee Relations Manager
HR Senior Staff

From: Rosarii Mannion, National Director Human Resources

Date: 31st July, 2017

Re: **HR Circular 027/2017 re Nursing / Midwifery Health, Safety and Welfare at Work**

Dear Colleagues,

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, places responsibility for occupational health and safety on all stakeholders. The Act develops the role of employers, employees and Government in framing and implementing occupational safety and health policy in Ireland.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 takes a preventative approach to reducing accidents and ill health at work. It also deals with the use of intoxicants, employee's medical fitness for work, penalties upon conviction and the introduction of 'on the spot fines'.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 sets out the main provisions for securing and improving the safety, health and welfare of people at work. The 2005 Act replaces the Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Act 1989. The 2005 Act sets out:

- The requirements for the control of safety and health at work.
- The management, organisation and the systems of work necessary to achieve those goals.
- The responsibilities and roles of employers, the self-employed, employees and others.
- The enforcement procedures needed to ensure that the goals are met.

Local Senior Managers are responsible for the effective integration of safety, health and welfare across all disciplines and services within their area of responsibility as far as is reasonably practicable, and this includes proactive management of employees during sickness absence and promoting employee rehabilitation in the workplace.

Senior Managers, Health and Safety Managers and Nurse/ Midwifery Managers in the Hospital Groups, National Ambulance Service and Community Healthcare Organisations are required to bring this Safety, Health and Welfare Circular to the attention of all employees and in particular the Nursing / Midwifery workforce.

The Nurse/ Midwifery Agreement signed in February 2017 sets out proposals in relation to health, safety and welfare. This Agreement recognises that health, safety and welfare is a priority and is to be progressed as a key element of the national agreement. These include:

Manager Empowerment for Injury at Work and Critical Illness protocols

All frontline managers will be encouraged to train up in respect of existing agreements, circular letters and regulations with regard to health, safety and welfare at work, injury work scheme, critical illness protocol, the sick leave regulations and the managing attendance policy through the HSE Land eLearning Programme. Approximately 1,200 managers across the system have been trained to date.

Roll out of 12 service delivery units nationally during 2017 which will serve as Work Well HUBS as a one stop shop for staff in relation to six areas: (1) occupational health, (2) counselling, (3) critical stress debriefing, (4) health promotion, (5) health and safety and (6) rehabilitation and return to work (including musculoskeletal, ergonomics etc.).

Safety Reps, Time Release

A minimum of two Nursing/Midwifery Safety Reps will be elected in each work place. The HSE will facilitate such representation with the necessary time off, with pay, to undertake appropriate training. Safety representatives will be given time to discharge the proper functions of their role, as per Health and Safety Regulations. Management will work proactively with the INMO/SIPTU to promote the Health & Safety agenda and initiatives in the workplace.

HSE Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit (WHWU)

The HSE Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit has been established within the HR Division in line with the Health Service Executive's People Strategy 2015-2018 under Priority 2 Staff Engagement. The HSE Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit aims to improve the general health and wellbeing of staff in the Health Services and support more people with health conditions to stay in work or enter employment. The Unit is working to help create healthier workplaces, improve occupational health services and rehabilitation support, and increase employment opportunities for people who are not in work due to ill-health or disability. It is implementing all elements of a positive workplace, including appropriate supports for both staff and management in relation to known workplace stressors.

The key work streams include:

- Comprehensive and Streamlined Supports for Employees in the Irish Health Service

- Development of Standards for Occupational Health Services
- Providing a safe working environment for all staff
- Standardisation of Counselling services and approaches for staff needing support, including resilience programmes and Critical Incident Stress Management Programme.

The **Safety Health and Welfare Act, 2005**, sets out the main provisions for organisations to secure and improve the safety, health and welfare for all people at work and the guidelines apply to all staff. Local Senior Managers are responsible for the effective integration of safety, health and welfare across all disciplines.

A list of all available Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Guidance/ Information Manager Empowerment documentation, online learning and guidance, including staff safety representatives can be found in [Appendix 1](#) attached.

Queries

Queries from individual employees or managers regarding these arrangements should be referred to local HR Departments. Queries from HR Departments in relation to the contents of this Circular may be referred to mairead.lyons3@hse.ie

Yours sincerely,



Rosarii Mannion
National Director of Human Resources

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Guidance/ Information Manager Empowerment

HSE Learning & Development Resource

The following programmes are available on the HSE Learning & Development resource www.hseland.ie (registration required for first time users of this website).

Management of Health and Safety in the Healthcare Setting. In accordance with the HSE policy on Statutory Health and Safety Training, it is a statutory requirement for all line managers to undertake this module.

Display Screen Equipment – This programme is considered statutory health and safety training for all users of display screen equipment (anyone who uses DSE/VDU for an hour a day, more or less daily) and their managers.

Health, Safety and Security – This programme is essentially a statutory requirement for all staff & should be attended as part of induction.

Manual Handling Awareness Programme – This training is a statutory requirement for all staff involving in manual handling operations. Please note that it will be necessary for some staff to attend face-to-face practical training (e.g. for patient handling).

Integral Valve Oxygen Cylinder Guide - This training is a statutory requirement for any staff who use integral valve oxygen cylinders.

Risk Assessment and Safety Planning for Nurse Working in Mental Health Services at Hand Hygiene

Non Clinical Hand Hygiene

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Guidance/ Information Manager Empowerment

1. Existing agreements [here](#)
2. Circular letters [here](#)
3. Safety, Health and Welfare Regulations [here](#)
4. Corporate Safety Statement [here](#)
5. Guidance on Documentation to support the implementation of Safety Management Programme [here](#)
6. National Health and Safety Function has developed a “Fast Fact” on the policy [here](#)
7. HSE Policy on Statutory Health and Safety Training [here](#)
8. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on statutory Health and Safety Training outlining the process of training needs assessment and featuring a “matrix” of statutory training courses for each of the broad staff groups [here](#)
9. Injury work scheme, critical illness protocol, the sick leave regulations in Guidelines on Terms and Conditions of Employment (March 2017) [here](#)
10. Managing Attendance Policy [here](#)
11. Directions to e-learning programme on Safety Health & Welfare at Work Regulations/ policies/ guidance [here](#)

Other Training Programmes:

Fire Safety: This obligation requires all employees to work safely and to co-operate fully with procedures and practices set down by the employer. All employees should be familiar with the day-to-day fire prevention measures as well as the equipment that should be used in the event of a fire. HSE has developed a Fire Safety Management Strategy which includes the General Fire Awareness Lecture every two years, the Site Specific Evacuation Training every year, the practical use of fire fighting equipment every year and E-Learning on Line.

People Management The Legal Framework Programme covers HR Policies and Procedures including Managing health and safety at work

First Time Managers Programme – a programme to develop skills for a new manager

Equality Diversity

Display Screen Equipment [here](#)

Musculoskeletal (MSK) and stress related illness:

Key Performance Indicators for the Health and Safety Divisions have been developed.

Work Well HUBS -12 Service Delivery Units are in the early stages of being set up, and this includes the 7 Hospitals Groups, National Ambulance and 9 Community Healthcare Organisations.

- 1) **Occupational Health:** Occupational Health Teams provide medical and nursing expertise on fitness for work, advice on workplace adjustments, prevention of ill health and promotion of health and wellbeing. They play a key role in rehabilitation by advising on optional treatment strategies, early intervention and timely return to work for healthcare workers.

Safer Better Care: Standards for Occupational Health Services is available to view on the HSE website at www.hse.ie/workwell

A Work Positive Programme is in place for staff.

Employee Assistance Programme Standards- draft standard and plan for launch in November 2017.

Guidance on Occupational Safety Training [here](#)

- 2) **Counselling** [here](#)

- 3) **Critical stress debriefing**

The Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit is involved in a series of **multi-stakeholder National Workshops regarding stress** in the workplace. Stress campaign information [here](#)
Preventing & Managing Critical Incident Policy: a guide for managers [here](#)

- 4) **Health Promotion Guidance** [here](#)

Guidance on healthy work places [here](#)

- 5) **Health and Safety**

It is recommended that managers review Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on statutory Health and Safety Training, which outline the process of training needs assessment & feature a “matrix” of statutory training courses [here](#)

Access to health and safety support can be obtained nationally via the health and safety helpdesk [here](#) or [here](#)

The National Health & Safety Helpdesk can be contacted on: **1850 420 420** between 10:30-12:00 and 14:00 – 15.30 Monday to Friday.

- 6) **Rehabilitation and Return to Work** (including musculoskeletal, ergonomics etc).

Workplace Health and Wellbeing, via the Health and Safety Function Safety, offers advice on Manual Handling/Ergonomics issues, as well as facilitating ad-hoc inspections on request. Additionally the Unit is working with HBS Procurement to establish a national framework of Ergonomists, which will be accessible through the National Health and Safety Function Helpdesk.

National Health and Safety Function Helpdesk available [here](#)

Rehabilitation of employees - guidance [here](#)

Safety Representatives (Reps), Time Release:

The National Health and Safety function provides leadership and support on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) matters. Assurance data is gathered on health and safety performance and provides an oversight to the organisation on the status of the Health and Safety Management System and helps drive improvement. The data is reported to the Health and Safety Management Advisory Committee, Risk Committee and the HSE Leadership Team.

Occupational Safety and Health Data Returns: data is being collated for all Hospital Groups and Community Health Organisations. Correspondence was issued on the 2nd June 2017 and data is to be returned on a quarterly basis.

Safety Committees- data is being collated for all Hospital Groups and Community Health Organisations as part of the Occupational Safety and Health Data Returns.

Guidelines on Safety Consultation - Workplace Health and Wellbeing have developed and detailed guidelines [here](#)

Newly appointed Safety Representatives can obtain training through the National Health and Safety function. Organisational support for Safety Representatives is set out in the Corporate Safety Statement and detailed in Site Specific Safety Statements and guidance [here](#)

Fast Facts Sheet- Safety [here](#)

Guideline Document on the Safety Consultation & Selection/ Election of Safety Representatives [here](#)