

RESEARCH COUNCIL HEALTH PROMOTION POLICY

Management Guidance

This document provides some additional guidance for managers, employees and the HR team on the Health Promotion policy. It includes the Research Council's Health Promotion Policy, which is contractual. The additional guidance, which is shaded, is not intended to be legally binding and does not form part of the Research Council's Policy.

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RESEARCH COUNCIL HEALTH PROMOTION POLICY

Policy statement

The Research Council recognises that the promotion of good health among its employees can help to maximise the productivity of the organisation, and enhance its employee relations and employer image. It also recognises that staff wellbeing contributes to making employees feel valued and reduces sick absence.

The Research Council is committed to fulfilling its legislative obligations and to maintaining a healthy and well-motivated workforce. To this end, the promotion of good health forms part of a comprehensive approach to health and safety issues.

The Health Promotion Policy complements the Research Council's Health and Safety and Sickness Absence Management Policies.

The Health Promotion Policy has been agreed with the Trade Union Side and complies with statutory best practice.

The Health Promotion Policy applies to all employees of the Research Council. This includes those employed on permanent or temporary contracts, and for the avoidance of doubt does not include visiting workers, students or those workers provided by a third party agency.

The UK Shared Business Services (SBS) provides HR Services across the Research Councils. However some employees are deployed at establishments/facilities/ships that do not access services from the SBS. In these cases references to the SBS or System (Employee Self Service) will not apply and employees should refer to their Research Council HR team for assistance.

Whether a worker is deemed to be a worker or employee is not always clear under employment legislation. In cases where managers or employees have any doubt as to whether the Health Promotion Policy should apply, advice should be sought from the Research Council HR team.

1. Principles

- a) The Research Council is committed to promoting the health of its employees at all times and seeks to create a culture where any issues are identified, minimised and managed before they affect the wellbeing of staff.
- b) All employees will be subject to pre-employment health screening.
- c) All health matters of individual employees will be treated fairly and in confidence.
- d) Employees will be given support and advice wherever possible.

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2. Occupational health services

2.1.1 An Occupational Health Service is available either through Occupational Health specialists who are contracted by the Research Council or by an in-house service. Their role is to provide independent expert medical advice on matters relating to employee health and the workplace. The services include:

- a) Pre-employment health screening.
- b) Health monitoring.
- c) Immunisation.
- d) Health assessment.

2.1.2 Some Research Council Occupational Health providers may offer additional services (e.g. self-referral). For more information contact the Research Council HR Team.

2.2 Pre-employment health screening

2.2.1 All appointments to the Research Council are made subject to satisfactory pre-employment health screening. After an offer of employment prospective employees complete a confidential health questionnaire (the Health Declaration Form) which asks a number of questions about past and present health conditions.

2.2.2 The Research Council's Occupational Health Adviser uses this information to assess whether an individual is able to undertake the duties and responsibilities of the position to which they are being recruited without impacting their health and to be able to attend work on a regular basis.

2.2.3 In the event that the Occupational Health Adviser deems that the work may be hazardous (see 2.3) or that the individual may be at risk because of his/her own health, suitability to different duties, if available, should be considered.

2.2.4 Health Declaration Forms are kept in confidence by the Occupational Health Adviser for reference should any queries arise about an employee's state of health in the future. Health Declaration Forms are retained by Occupational Health in accordance with legal requirements (see Sickness Absence Management Policy).

The Occupational Health Adviser will confirm in writing to the Shared Business Services (SBS) an employee's fitness to work. The SBS will then notify the employee's manager and the Research Council HR team. In some cases, where Units have their own Occupational Health provider, Units will receive the letter directly from Occupational Health and will then notify the SBS.

2.3 Health monitoring

2.3.1 The Research Councils will ensure that health surveillance of individuals is provided where required under statutory provisions or where a risk assessment has identified the need for monitoring. Certain categories of work (e.g. working with hazardous substances) are restricted to employees who are willing to undergo health monitoring during their employment. Further information is available from the Research Council Health and Safety Advisor.

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Examples of the employees who may be required to undergo health monitoring during their employment include:

- a) employees whose work exposes them to hazardous substances and agents such as carcinogens or certain pathogens
- b) employees involved in genetic modification experiments
- c) classified ionising radiation workers
- d) employees working regularly with animals
- e) classified drivers
- f) shift workers and/or security staff
- g) employees who travel abroad on Research Council business on a regular basis
- h) employees involved in significant manual handling operations
- i) employees working in noisy environments, workshops, other dusty environments etc.
- j) employees required to work at altitude, at sea, etc.

Further Information is available from the Research Council Health and Safety Adviser.

- 2.3.2 Health monitoring may include the completion of a health questionnaire, relevant medical tests or a full medical examination. In some circumstance, a blood sample may be taken at the start of employment for storage in case a basal measurement should be required at a later date.

Managers are advised to discuss with their employees so that they are fully aware of the monitoring procedures, understand they are in place to help protect their health and that they know their part in them. They should provide them with a copy of the risk assessment which will note any health monitoring that takes place and the reasons behind carrying out such monitoring. In this way, evidence of their justifiable reasons for carrying out such monitoring is available if ever challenged.

2.4 Immunisation

- 2.4.1 Immunisation will be offered at no cost to employees including in the following circumstances, as determined by local risk assessments:

- a) Hepatitis B for all employees who handle blood or tissues of human origin.
- b) Tetanus for all employees who work regularly with animals.
- c) Against other pathogens.
- d) Against appropriate pathogens for employees travelling abroad for work purposes or for employees taking up appointments overseas and for their partner and any children who will be living abroad with them.

Further Information can be found in the Research Council Health and Safety Policy.

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2.5 Occupational Health assessment

- 2.5.1 In cases where an employee's absence record is a cause for concern, the Occupational Health Adviser will be asked to provide advice to management regarding their state of health and the likely timescale for recovery. This will be carried out in accordance with the processes set out in the sickness absence policy.

3. Workstation/ergonomic risk assessments

- 3.1 For details on workstation/ergonomic risk assessments refer to the Research Council's Policy and guidance on working with Display Screen Equipment (DSE).

4. Employee assistance programme

- 4.1 The Research Council may offer a full Employee Assistance Programme (Employee Care) or other welfare support to all its employees. The aim of the programme is to provide support to employees on lifestyle and work related issues.

Managers who have concerns about an employee may only suggest and encourage that they use the service.

- 4.2 Details of the programme can be obtained from the Research Council HR team.

5. No smoking at work

- 5.1 The Research Councils comply with the relevant legislation on smoke free workplaces (including the use of e-cigarettes).
- 5.2 Each Research Council location has local rules and provisions in place to support the implementation of this policy.

Managers should ensure that employees are aware of, understand and comply with relevant local arrangements.

- 5.3 Further information and support for those employee who wish to give up smoking can be obtained from the Employee Assistance Programme (where available) and NHS UK (www.smokefree.nhs.uk).

6. Alcohol and drug misuse

- 6.1 The Research Council will seek to ensure that any employees with an alcohol or drug issue which affects their work receive advice, information and if necessary help with getting treatment.
- a) Employees have a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to 'take reasonable care for the health and safety of him/herself and other person who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work.'
- b) Employees who think they have an alcohol or drug issue are encouraged to seek help voluntarily at the earliest possible moment.

A list of recognised support organisations is provided at Annex 1.

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- c) Should employees refuse diagnosis or help, this will not in itself be grounds for disciplinary action. However, where misuse leads to safety concerns, unacceptable behaviour or poor standards of work this may lead to disciplinary action. Refer to the Research Council's Disciplinary policy for further details.
- d) Employees' individual problems will be dealt with in the strictest confidence at all times, subject to the provisions of the law and the safety requirements of the particular location.
- e) In circumstances where the risks to health and safety are high, e.g. in a laboratory or workshop, it may be necessary to arrange a temporary change of duties to ensure a safe environment for the employee as well as others.
- f) Where there is deterioration in an employee's work or behaviour in the workplace, which is believed to be as a result of an alcohol or drug related problem, the employee will be invited to discuss their situation confidentially with their manager or the Research Council HR team or Trade Union representative and be offered the opportunity of professional advice and help.
- g) Cases will be considered on their merits. In the light of professional advice, sympathetic consideration will be given to the need for further treatment, if appropriate, under normal sick leave provisions, although this cannot be continued indefinitely.
- h) Should necessary improvement(s) in an employee's performance and or attendance at work not be achieved, the matter will be dealt with under the appropriate Research Council procedure.
- i) Where employees commit misconduct or serious misconduct, or where their efficiency at work becomes affected through consumption of alcohol or drug or substance abuse, action under the Research Council Disciplinary Procedure may be taken. It is an offence for a person to have a controlled drug in their possession, except where it has been medically prescribed. It is an offence for a person to have in their possession, whether lawfully or not, a controlled drug with the intent to supply to other persons.
- j) Where it is suspected that a criminal offence has been committed at work, the matter should be raised with the Research Council HR team who will advise appropriately.

7. Stress at work

7.1 What is work related stress?

- 7.1.1 The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as "the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them". Stress may affect any employee and organisations should never dismiss it as an issue.
- 7.1.2 The causes of work-related stress are multifactorial and may lie within the work organisation, environment or relationships.

7.2 Managing stress

- 7.2.1 The Research Council is committed to minimise the risk of employees experiencing stress in the work place. See also the Research Council's Health and Safety Policy.
- 7.2.2 Both employees and managers/supervisors have a duty of care to take prompt and appropriate action to eliminate, reduce or manage stress. Managers will be encouraged to undergo training in stress awareness/management. A key element in the reduction and

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management of workplace stress is effective two way communication between the employee and their manager/supervisor.

- **Managers** have a responsibility to look out for possible symptoms and causes of stress and to take appropriate action which should be managed sensitively and with appropriate confidentiality.

Managers should work proactively:

- to provide an environment that, so far as is reasonably practicable, will minimise work-related stress,
- to ascertain if there are underlying problems that could be identified and addressed, and
- to deal positively and sympathetically with identified cases of stress.

- **Employees** have a responsibility to be able to recognise both their own symptoms of stress and symptoms in others and to discuss problems with their manager/supervisor straight away.

7.2.3 There are a number of positive measures employees can take to improve their ability to cope with these situations, in discussion with their line manager as required. These include:

- a) Setting realistic goals, learning how to manage workloads, improving problem solving.
- b) Identifying their needs for developing personal, communication, time and work management skills.
- c) Improving job based skills.
- d) Improving support networks: family/friends/self-help groups/contacts with colleagues.
- e) Improving the balance between work and non-work activities e.g. making time for leisure interests/taking annual leave and/or going on holiday.
- f) Improving physical health by exercise/reducing alcohol and tobacco consumption/improving diet/general relaxation.

7.2.4 If symptoms of stress are identified, employees and managers are encouraged to seek advice and guidance from the Research Council HR team as soon as possible.

8. Display Screen Equipment (DSE) eye care policy

8.1 This policy meets the obligations of the Research Council under the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Regulations and is applicable to Research Council employees who habitually use display screen equipment and may be termed a 'DSE' user. See also the Research Council Health and Safety Policy.

8.2 Where most or all of the following factors apply to an employee then the person concerned should be classified a user.

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- a) The individual depends on the use of the DSE to do the job.
- b) The individual normally uses the DSE for prolonged spells of more than one hour.
- c) The individual uses the DSE more or less daily.
- d) The DSE work requires high levels of attention and concentration.

8.3 Principles

- 8.3.1 The Research Council will reimburse the cost of an eye examination for all DSE users once every two years (or more frequently as directed by the employee's optometrist).
- 8.3.2 The onus is on the employee to request an eye examination.
- 8.3.3 The regulations do not require the Research Council to screen the eye and eyesight of all DSE users.
- 8.3.4 Neither can the Research Council insist that an employee undergo an examination.
- 8.3.5 The Research Council will reimburse, on production of receipts, the cost of an eye examination if:
 - a) the employee is recommended to attend for an eye examination (as specified by the optometrist), OR
 - b) the employee has not had an eye examination in the past two years.
- 8.3.6 In addition, the Research Council will normally reimburse, on production of receipts, the cost of a pair of basic spectacles where the eye test confirms that spectacles are required for use with DSE work. Specifically, reimbursement towards the cost of spectacles will be granted if the optometrist recommends:
 - a) new spectacles are required for use with DSE work (this may include single vision DSE spectacles, varifocals or modified bifocals for use with the DSE)
 - b) an updated prescription is required (for single vision spectacles, varifocals or modified bifocals for use with DSE work).
- 8.3.7 The maximum reimbursement claim for the eye examination together with the cost of spectacles required for use with DSE work is £100.
- 8.3.8 The policy does not apply to contact lenses.

8.4 Prescription safety spectacles

- 8.4.1 If an employee requires prescription safety spectacles, they should speak to their local Health and Safety Coordinator. These will be provided to the employee free of charge.

8.5 Procedure

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- 8.5.1 The employee should make an appointment for an eye examination with a registered Optician. This appointment should be in the employee's own time unless this is not reasonably practicable.
- 8.5.2 The employee needs to obtain and complete an Eye Examination Form, which is available on the System. Parts 1 and 3 of the form should be completed by the employee and Part 2 by the optician.
- 8.5.3 Completed forms, with the relevant receipts should then be submitted to the SBS as per the instructions on the form.
- 8.5.4 Reimbursement will only be authorised if the correct forms and receipts have been signed and submitted.
- 8.5.5 Falsification of the form by the employee will be considered a disciplinary offence.
- 8.5.6 The form will be scanned and retained on the employee's Personnel file.

9. Policy review

- 9.1 This policy will be regularly reviewed to incorporate any legislation changes. The TU may request that a policy is reviewed.

10. Amendment history

Version	Date	Comments/Changes
2.0	1 June 2014	Inconsistent terminology between VDU and DSE rectified
3.0	1 October 2017	Para 5.1 amended to include a reference to e-cigarettes

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Annex1

Support organisations

Below is a list of recognised support organisations with their web site addresses:

- Alcoholics Anonymous - www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
- Narcotics Anonymous - www.ukna.org
- NHS UK - www.smokefree.nhs.uk
- BBC Health - www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions/mental_health/
- Employee Assistance Programme (if applicable)