

The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Strategy for the Prevention of Slips Trips and Falls

Effective: January 2010

Review: January 2013

1. Executive summary

The Trust is committed to reducing the risk to patients, visitors and staff of slipping in our hospitals. Furthermore the Trust recognises the requirement to ensure that floors and traffic routes within our buildings are free from the risks of slips as identified in the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

The aim of this strategy document is to provide a framework to highlight specific areas where action is necessary to adequately assess the risks of slips associated with floors and buildings. In addition it is intended to consider areas where intervention is required to control the risk from slipping, in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

2. Introduction

Every year thousands of workers are involved in slips, trips and falls incidents. Many employees are left with injuries and although it is rare, in some instances falls can be fatal. Slips, trips and falls account for some 15% of all injuries in the United Kingdom. Moreover patient falls are one of the most frequently reported patient incidents, which in a small number of cases do result in serious injury.

Some of these accidents are preventable and the incidence can be dramatically reduced through risk assessment and proactive management together with good housekeeping.

This strategy is intended to be a working document for all staff to utilise throughout the Trust, laying down the basic structure of a template for the reduction of slips, trips and falls to patients, visitors and staff. To ensure that this is achieved, working with staff side representatives Newcastle upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust will take all reasonably practicable measures to ensure that workplaces under its control are safe and without unnecessary risk. Recognising the importance of on-going risk assessment, both managers and employees are required to be familiar with this strategy and understand their role and responsibilities.

3. Risk assessment- Staff and Environmental

3.1 Risk Assessment

As indicated in the Health and Safety Operational Policy ([http://intranet/Policies/healthsafety/HealthSafetyOperationalPolicyDecember2007\(2008\).pdf](http://intranet/Policies/healthsafety/HealthSafetyOperationalPolicyDecember2007(2008).pdf)), managers have a responsibility to ensure that a robust risk assessment process is in place. Risk assessors must be appointed, trained and given the opportunity and time to undertake risk assessments within the local directorates/departments. Risk Assessment should include:

- identification of types of hazard and how likely it is to occur
- characteristics, quality and condition of the flooring and use

- influence of the weather and other external elements
 - programmes for maintenance, renewal and cleaning procedures
- work-place users
- education and training provision
- outcomes, suitable controls and monitoring effectiveness.

- **All** managers are responsible for ensuring that slips, trips and falls incidents have a thorough investigation carried out and that suitable proactive initiatives are put in place to reduce falls by reviewing a risk assessment in the event of a falls accident. Where appropriate, staff side representatives should be involved with the investigative process.

- **All** managers must ensure that regular environmental inspections are carried out and that any risks identified that pose a slip, trip or falls hazard have an appropriate risk assessment undertaken and action plans developed that identify processes to reduce the risk. Managers should ensure that all staff are involved in the risk assessment process and have an opportunity to identify hazards, potential risks or near miss events relating to the workplace.

- **All** managers are responsible for ensuring that suitable proactive initiatives are put in place to reduce falls by undertaking risk assessments and investigation of falls incidents.

- A Floor Review Programme to test floor surfaces for wear, slipperiness, roughness and suitability to the proposed environment and use will be undertaken. To facilitate the Floor Review Programme Estates staff will utilise the Surtronic Duo Roughness Checker by Taylor Hobson.

- Where floors are identified as being of a particularly slippery/worn surface an action plan will be developed based on the HSE Risk Assessment Tool Outcomes to establish suitable controls to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls.

- Walk off matting in public areas, external weather conditions and cleaning regimes will also be considered as part of the risk assessment process.

- The risk assessment process for all wards and departments must take into consideration recommendations from the Floor Review Programme. Where the need for floor replacement has been identified this should be undertaken as soon as practically possible and as an interim, additional controls should be put into place, such as:
 - alert notices and barriers
 - reduction of volume and type of traffic including disabled pedestrians/patients
 - mop drying of floors
 - safety footwear for staff and patients.

- The Health and Safety Advisors will provide advice and guidance for Managers and Risk Assessors on the prevention of slips, trips and falls, and assist in the procurement of finding safe solutions/outcomes.

Where a risk assessment has identified specific hazards/risks the risk assessors have responsibility to ensure that their direct line manager is informed of the

outcome of the assessment, and what controls are required to resolve/reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls. The risk assessor should ensure that there is a realistic review date included in the risk assessment, that review is undertaken and managers are aware of any further action that is required. The manager must ensure that action is taken in accordance with the recommendation of the risk assessment to reduce / control the risk of slips trips and falls.

4. Patient

4.1 Risk Assessment

- All patients that are admitted to the Trust must have a falls risk assessment undertaken.
- All nursing staff should be familiar with the use of the SAFE (ST) assessment tool.
- Where patients are identified as at risk of falls, a clear intervention plan must be implemented.

See Management and Prevention of Patient Slips, Trips and Falls Policy.
<http://intranet/Policies/healthsafety/FallsPolicy201007.pdf>

5 Staff

5.1 Footwear

- Where there is a risk of slipping which cannot be reduced to an acceptable level by any other means, then slip resistant footwear will be provide to the staff affected.
- All footwear provided by the Trust will be the subject of a risk assessment to ensure that the most appropriate footwear is provided for the task.
- As a general principle all staff should be aware of their obligation to be attired in suitable footwear for the working environment. Any member of staff wearing inappropriate footwear will be advised that they are in breach of the Trust Dress and Appearance Policy
<http://intranet/Policies/nursing/DressAppearanceandUniformPolicy201101.pdf>.

6. Floor Cleaning Process

The current system of cleaning with micro-fibre mops must be followed as outlined in the Hotel Services procedure; however the following safety controls must be in place, during any floor washing process:

- Safety barriers must be in place to ensure that there is no access to the wet floor and to warn staff, patients and visitors of any impending dangers. Enhanced safety barriers may be required, including chains.
- In high risk areas with excessive moisture on the floor consideration should be given to the use of micro-fibre mops for drying the excess
- Cleaning of the floor must not extend beyond the safety barriers
- Prior to removing the barriers, hotel service staff must observe the cleaned area and ensure that it is dry for access

- Floor cleaning regimes should be planned wherever possible to coincide with quiet periods in departments.

7. Training and Education

- Training will be given to all Trust employees at induction on the prevention and dangers of slips, trips and falls.
- Where an area within the organisation has been identified as presenting particular slip potential, suitable training will be provided by the Health and Safety Advisors. This may be identified through risk assessment or an investigation following an incident.
- All managers should ensure that specific slips, trips and falls prevention training is part of local induction for all employees within their directorate/department.
- All nursing, occupational therapists and physiotherapy staff and staff who work within the Care of the Elderly Directorate must complete the patient falls reduction training Breeze package.
- An e-learning package on general aspects of falls reduction will be developed (the HSE STEP e-Learning package will be considered).

8. Communication

- Staff will be informed of slips trips and falls prevention information through Trust wide poster campaigns and update sessions at the Communications meeting. This campaign approach will include reminding staff of the need to report near miss events and those incidents which do not result in injury, in addition to those where injury is incurred.
- Staff Side will have open access to the Slips, Trips and Falls Group to raise concerns relating to identified hazards. In addition staff side representatives will be involved and consulted with on the monitoring of compliance with this strategy and the re-drafting of amendments and subsequent versions via the Health and Safety Committee. Where appropriate, the staff side will be involved with working projects to address slips, trips and falls issues at a local level.
- There is further information available on Slips, Trips and Falls via the Trust Intranet site. Click on the Risk Management/Health and Safety Link for the HSE Website- Shattered Lives Campaign.

9. Leadership Walkabouts

Leadership Walkabouts will consider incidence and risk of slips, trips and falls. Walkabouts will be conducted by members of the Trust Board.

10. Inspections

Health & Safety Advisors and members of the Health & Safety Committee will undertake targeted inspections on a rolling programme.

11. Monitoring

An action plan developed from this strategy will be monitored by the Slips, Trips and Falls Group. Progress with implementation of this strategy will be monitored by the Health and Safety Committee. The strategy will be reviewed and updated annually by the Health and Safety Committee.

Compliance and effectiveness will be monitored by a quarterly Compliance Audit Report which will be reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee. Identified actions from this report will be monitored by the Committee who will identify any deficiencies, devise corrective action plans and monitor these through to completion.

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