
Management of risk from Musculoskeletal Disorders

Findings from HSE Inspections 2018-2022

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MSDs Inspections Background

- 60 NHS Trusts and Boards inspected between 2018-22 on management of Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) and workplace Violence & Aggression(V&A) risk
- Aligned with HSE Health and Work priorities
- Thorough management review based on 'Plan, Do, Check, Act' principles
 - Pre visit documentation review
 - numerous levels of engagement through Board to Frontline
 - feedback directly to senior management / Directors

MSD NHS Inspections Enforcement summary

Material Breach Rate	
	MSDs
2018-19	10 (50%)
2019-20	11 (55%)
2021-22	7(35%)
TOTAL	28 (47%)

- Includes:
 - 5 Improvement Notices in 2018-19 across 2 organisations
 - 9 Improvement Notices in 2019-20 across 5 organisations
 - 6 Improvement Notices in 2021-22 across 3 organisations
- 28 (47%) of organisations inspected had enforcement taken
- Caution not to place too much weight on enforcement level trends as a small numerical change on small sample can have significant % impact
- Can be said that MSDs remain significant issue within healthcare

Analysis of issues

- Inspections identified a range of issues that can be categorised into four broad areas
 - Risk assessment
 - Training
 - Roles and Responsibilities
 - Monitoring and Review

Analysis of issues (cont.)

Risk Assessment

- Refers to the steps taken by NHS employers to conduct suitable and sufficient risk assessments to control the risk to employees from MSDs
 - assessments too generic, with high-risk areas not being identified;
 - assessments not including non-clinical workers who were exposed to the risk
 - inconsistencies in the approach to risk assessment across the same organisation.

Training

- Refers to the training on controlling risk from MSDs provided to employees
 - training too generic and lacked evidence it was based on a training needs analysis
 - where training was identified as mandatory, in practice it was optional
 - non-clinical workers exposed to the risk not included in training;
 - no suitable assessment of the competency of the trainers

Analysis of issues (cont.)

Roles and Responsibilities

- Refers to the allocation of specific roles and responsibilities within the organisation to effectively supervise and manage the risk to employees from MSDs.
 - a lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities
 - a lack of wider organisational awareness of who does what
 - inadequate provision of time and resource given to those with roles and responsibilities
 - no suitable assessment of the competence of those with specific roles and responsibilities to carry out that work.

Monitoring and Review

- Refers to conducting effective monitoring and review of existing risk control measures to ensure they are effective and that the risks to employees from MSDs are being managed
 - failure to actively monitor and review control measures to ensure they are effective
 - insufficient time and resource allocated to monitoring and review
 - failure to use available data sources (e.g. absence data, incident reporting) or engage other departments (H&S, OH, HR) in the review process
 - a lack of clarity over what should be reported and how, leading to non-reporting.

Positives

- 22 (37%) out of 60 visits had no formal enforcement action taken
 - Even where action was taken there was still compliance with other duties
- Although caution with a low sample, there was a drop in formal enforcement between campaigns in 2019-20 and 2021-22
 - 55% to 35% for MSDs
- Some innovative practice observed
 - Designing out manual handling risk when developing new hospital facility
 - Innovative IT solutions for tracking course attendance and equipment maintenance

MSDs in NHS - Plan for 2023-24



- Letter and Report to NHS Trust / Board CEOs – copy available
 - Highlight findings of 2018-22 Inspections (alongside workplace Violence & Aggression (V&A))
 - Advise of Assurance Inspection Campaign
 - HSE ebulletin - [HSE ebulletin: Managing violence and aggression and MSDs in the NHS \(govdelivery.com\)](https://www.govdelivery.com/groups/HSE)

- Assurance Inspection Campaign (alongside management of V&A)
 - Step one – high level HSE Senior Operations Manager / NHS CEO meeting to discuss
 - Organisational measures in place to address the findings.
 - Leadership in ensuring sufficient attention, resource and priority given

 - Step two – ‘on the ground’ inspections to assess delivery and effectiveness of those measures
 - Engagement with cross section of management and workforce