NEW AND EXPECTANT MOTHERS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Outcomes First Group provides high-quality care, education and clinical support every day. We create happy places that are safe, friendly and supportive, so that we can be trusted to be doing the best for each person in our care. The effective management of health and safety of all new or expectant mothers is crucial to the delivery of this service. This policy describes the means by which the organisation exercises its responsibility for ensuring that all new or expectant mothers are protected from risks in connection with the work undertaken. It also gives guidance on implementing changes in working conditions where potential harm could be caused to the new or expectant mother and/or unborn baby.

- The definition of a new or expectant mother is someone who is pregnant, has given birth within the previous six months, or is breastfeeding.

- It is the personal responsibility of each new or expectant mother to provide the Company with written notification that they are pregnant or breastfeeding as early as possible.

- Line managers are required to take action to ensure that new or expectant mothers are not exposed to any significant risk. **NEM1** provides an outline of the action line managers will take to do this. Although risks are likely to remain the same throughout the pregnancy the risk may vary through the different stages of pregnancy.

- This policy applies to all staff members who have a contract of employment with Outcomes First Group. This policy does not apply to agency/external consultancy staff or self-employed project workers.
2. **PRINCIPLES**

- All staff including managers should ensure that they are familiar with and use this policy.

- It is important to ensure that any management action taken is fair and consistent and in keeping with Outcomes First Group’s Equality Policy and practices. Therefore, the policy, procedures and processes identified within this document are applied to all staff irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, marital or civil partnership status, nationality, offending history, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, social status, trade union membership or working patterns.

3. **NOTICE REQUIREMENTS**

- For notice requirements and action to be taken when a staff member notifies you of their pregnancy please refer to section 3 of the Family Friendly Policy.

4. **RISK ASSESSMENT**

- The Company is required to protect each new or expectant mother’s health and safety while in the workplace and by doing so will carry out regular risk assessments every 2-6 weeks throughout the pregnancy dependent on different working environments. See template NEM1 and NEM2.

- Staff members are expected to help with this and it is important that any advice new or expectant mothers have received from their doctor or midwife that could impact on the assessment is passed on to the Company. Some of the more common risks might be:

  - Movement and Posture;
  - Manual Handling;
  - Noise;
  - Chemical or Biological Agents;
  - Fatigue;
  - Working Hours;
  - Work-related stress;
  - Pollutants;
  - Working Environment;
  - Violence and verbal abuse.

- Line Managers will involve new or expectant mothers in what is being proposed to reduce, remove or control the risks. Line Managers will regularly monitor and review any assessment made to take into account possible risks that may occur at different stages of the pregnancy.

- It is the Line Manager’s responsibility to complete all risk assessments for their staff members and to give these to the Administration Manager to be placed on their personnel file.

- Where a risk has been identified following the assessment, affected staff members should be informed of the nature of the risk and the preventative measures to be adopted. The assessments should be reviewed on a regular basis following completion.

- If the Expectant Mother’s contact with Young People is reduced as a preventative measure and they do not agree, Line Managers will not be able to ignore the risk assessment under any circumstances.

5. **AFTER COMPLETING THE RISK ASSESSMENT**

- After completing a risk assessment with a new or expectant mother where there are risks outlined these are the preventative measures which could be considered:

  **Risk: Movement and Posture**
  Preventative Measures: ensure that there is ample space to get to and from work station, using a step stool to reach high shelve
Risk: Sleep In’s
Preventative Measures: in most cases expectant mothers are removed from carrying out sleep in duties up to when they commence their maternity leave. They will be paid for the average amount of sleep in’s they would have worked each month (using the amount of sleep in’s worked in the 3 months prior to their removal from sleep in duties). Please contact your admin team to get this process once you have completed the risk assessment.

Risk: Manual Handling
Preventative Measures: keep manual handling to a minimum, appointing other team members to do any lifting

Risk: Noise
Preventative Measures: Ensure staff are warned prior to the alarm going off

Risk: Chemical or Biological Agents:
Preventative Measures: ensure all cleaning agents used are not hazardous to an expectant mother, ensure that washrooms are cleaned to meet standards

Risk: Fatigue/Work-related stress/Working Hours
Preventative Measures: flexibility with lunch breaks dependent on how expectant mother is feeling, regular breaks if expectant mothers are sat down for a long period of time, vary activities undertaken during the day, utilize annual leave regularly, reduce working hours

Risk: Pollutants
Preventative measure: ensure that there is no exposure to any people’s tobacco smoke

Risk: Working Environment
Preventative measures: alone, try to reduce frequency of any travelling, ensure that VDU risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis

Risk: Violence and verbal
Preventative measures: reduce contact with young persons who have challenging behaviour by reducing their role to complete any outstanding administration, food preparation or shopping, ensure that they are notified of any incidents so they are able to remove themselves from the area to make themselves safe

For example, if, as a result of a risk assessment, stress has been identified as a possible risk then the Company will where possible, remove the risk. If this is not possible then the working conditions or hours of work of the pregnant worker will be reviewed. This could include changing hours of work. The Company will review areas such as breaks as part of the risk assessment process.

- Line Managers must seek advice from either the Administration Manager or the HR department prior to making any adjustments to working conditions/hours or offering alternative work as the list above is not exhaustive and there may be other alternatives to consider.

- In the event that a significant Health and Safety risk is identified relating to any additional responsibilities undertaken by a New or Expectant mother, managers must inform the New or Expectant mother that their allowance will be temporarily ceased until they are no longer defined as a New or Expectant mother and/or the risk is minimal (notice periods will apply). In these circumstances the Request for the Removal of Additional Responsibilities form must be completed and submitted to the Administration department.

- If all adjustments or preventative measures put in place do not reduce the risk to an acceptable level Line Managers must seek advice from the Administration Manager and the HR department where it may be considered that the new or expectant mother is sent home from work on full pay for as long as they are defined as a new or expectant mother.
• The Company is only required to take action specifically to protect the new or expectant mother when the Company is advised in writing of her condition, for example: either that she is pregnant, has given birth within the previous six months or is breast feeding.

• The Company will not need to maintain the altered arrangements as a result of the risk assessment once the staff member is no longer defined as a New or Expectant mother.

6. NEW OR EXPECTANT MOTHERS SICKNESS

• For the purposes of absence monitoring, sickness directly related to pregnancy will be discounted. However, a record should still be kept of any sickness.

• When the Company receives a Statement of Fitness for Work which outlines a condition which will be made worse by work managers should conduct a specific risk assessment which identifies what work practices could reduce and/or eliminate the risk by taking into account the medical advice given.

For example, a Statement of Fitness for Work is given from a pregnant worker which states that they have back pain but are fit to work on amended duties which details that they can do limited manual handling. In this instance, a specific risk assessment must be carried out to concentrate on manual handling. This may identify any potential hormonal changes which could affect ligaments and postural problems as this may increase as the pregnancy progresses.

The avoidance measures line managers may consider would vary according to circumstances. However, examples of avoidance measures would be to alter tasks to reduce the risk for all staff members, or address specific needs of the individual or provide aids to reduce the risks taking into account the potential for violence at work. In addition, restriction on some duties and possible team working should be considered.

• After a specific risk assessment has been carried out the Company will monitor this at regular intervals and take into account any new medical advice which may be given.

• The Company will endeavor to ensure that every possible risk is assessed and preventative measures are actioned to reduce the event of a pregnant worker being absent from work due to sickness as it may not resolve the cause of any health problems which may appear again with other new or expectant mothers.

• The Company is not required to maintain any of the altered working conditions or hours unless the New or Expectant Mother provides written conformation, in the form of a certificate from a registered practitioner or midwife, within a reasonable time of any written request to do so.

7. MATERNITY RIGHTS

• Maternity Rights are covered separately under the Family Friendly Policy.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF SUPPORTING TEMPLATE FORMS AND INFORMATION

• NEM1 Flowchart for Risk Assessment
• NEM2 Risk Assessment

The above list of template forms and letters, in Word format, can be found on the Outcomes First Group Resources Portal at http://www.optionsgroup.co.uk/resources/resources_downloadable_res.php under PPM Forms and Template Letters.
Please refer to the latest monthly update email for current log-on details for the Portal. Local Administration departments can assist where required.