

STRESS MANAGEMENT

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Policy Statement

This organisation is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees and recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

Employers have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety & welfare of its employees. Under the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 employers must assess the nature and scale of risks to health in the workplace and base control measures upon this assessment.

The guidance contained within this policy will allow the identification of measures already in place to tackle stress and identify through risk assessments, areas in need of further development.

This policy covers everyone that is employed by this organisation whilst in the course of their duties, including temporary staff.





Principles

- This organisation places a high value on maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all its employees and recognises its duty of care extends to the physical and mental well-being of the workforce:
- A manageable level of pressure can be healthy and lead to improved motivation, job satisfaction and performance
- A manageable level of pressure means that the worker feels in control and pressure only becomes stress when the worker feels a lack of control or an inability to manage the pressure
- This organisation is committed to identifying sources of pressure in the workplace and taking action in conjunction with the worker where reasonable and practicable to reduce or remove harmful stress
- This organisation does not expect staff to accept incidents of violence or aggressive behaviour as the normal part of the job and we will work with residents to manage the risks.*
- This organisation seeks to have an organisational culture that is both supportive and empowering; with a management style that reflects this culture
- Staff are also encouraged to take personal responsibility for themselves at work and support others to do the same.

By implementing this policy, it is expected that awareness of the causes of stress will increase, as will awareness of the support available. This will lead to a reduction in the overall levels of stress within the organization and promote an open and transparent dialogue between management and workers which will assist in the management and reduction of absence.









The Policy

- We aim to increase general awareness of stress and deploy methods to prevent and combat harmful, excessive work place stress through training initiatives for managers, senior staff and other workers.
- To identify workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate or reduce stress and/or control the risks from stress.
- To assist staff in managing stress in others and themselves
- To manage issues that occur and provide supervision for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors

-  To manage the return to work of those who have had stress related problems
-  To provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement this Policy on Stress.
-  As an organisation we endeavour to support staff through difficult personal issues *however we offer support not counselling*, and therefore the support, mechanisms will be discussed and reviewed regularly.
-  *Staff will be encouraged to seek other means of support via there GP surgery.*







Occupational Health

Management Responsibilities are:

-  To ensure that they, in consultation, set clear objectives, have good communications channels, involve staff in decision making, provide management support and appropriate training
-  To ensure that tasks and responsibilities are well defined, skills are used appropriately and suitable training is provided
-  To ensure that staff are treated with respect and dignity, have effective systems in place for dealing with interpersonal conflict e.g. bullying or harassment
-  To ensure they seek advice from the senior members of staff and if appropriate all staff where appropriate.
-  To acknowledge that their own behaviours and managerial approach can lead to or exacerbate symptoms of stress in others.
-  To access training made available in managing work related stress in their teams
-  To provide detailed supervision with accompanying written records should be in place.
-  To review dates and mechanisms and should be clearly stated in the supervision notes.

Where specific adjustments to the work schedule or duties and responsibilities are requested the senior staff team must be involved in the decision making. Where this is agreed a full written letter of variation must be issued to the employee and should include review dates.





Employees Responsibilities are:

-  To take a share in the joint responsibility of management of the health and stress hazards in the workplace
-  To ensure they highlight to managers/supervisors anything that may lead to stress or other health related hazards
-  To take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing including working healthily, taking regular breaks, rest and holidays and supporting one another
-  To be responsible for attending work on a regular basis in accordance with their contracted working hours and to fulfil their contract of employment. The employee should comply with the absence reporting procedures and adhere to the policies of this organisation.
-  To seek support at any time and if they feel they cannot approach their manager about a stress-related issue, they should approach
-  To report to their manager if they are absent from work with ill health as a result of work related stress.

Please Note: In a collective bargaining agreement organisation care must be taken to involve the groups representative where applicable and with the consent of the worker.

What Causes Stress?

People react in different ways to different types of stress. What one person finds exciting and challenging another can find daunting. An individual's reaction to stress can often be influenced by their personality, experience, motivation and the level of support received by their manager, colleagues, friends and family. Stress can come from a variety of sources and can often occur when:

-  Pressures pile on top of each other or are prolonged (overload)
-  There is inadequate or inappropriate level of knowledge and skills for the job
-  The job attracts certain stressors given the nature of the work
-  Staff become confused by conflicting demands upon them

- ? Staff feel a high degree of uncertainty about their work, objectives, and job or career prospects
- ? There are poor working relationships between individuals
- ? There is lack of understanding, leadership or support
- ? Staff are working additional hours
- ? Staff are not taking appropriate breaks
- ? There is inadequate or unreliable equipment to undertake their duties
- ? There is insufficient training and development for their role
- ? There is little communication from line managers/colleagues
- ? Staff find it difficult to manage their work and personal time effectively
- ? There is inadequate feedback from managers/colleagues on how well an employee is undertaking their role
- ? Certain jobs may place extra emotional demands on staff as well as physical conditions within the workplace

It should also be remembered that the source of stress may be from outside the workplace. Staff experiencing stress from home, family or financial pressures may find it difficult to separate these from their working life and consequently are not able to deal with work matters efficiently and effectively.

Risk Assessment





Risk assessments should be undertaken when a staff member indicates that they feel that they are unable to cope with the demands placed upon them at work to proactively manage the pressures prior to them leading to ill health and absence. Risk Assessments should also be undertaken on a reactive basis when a staff member returns to work following a period of absence diagnosed as work related stress.

- ? **What to do if you believe you, or a work colleague, are experiencing work related stress?**
There are many things which can be done to relieve the symptoms of stress. A leaflet produced by the HSE outlines some of them. If you notice symptoms of stress in yourself or experience any health issues which affect your work, you should discuss this with your manager. If you are suffering ongoing stress-related ill health, whether or not you believe work may be a factor, you are advised to contact your own GP.

Identifying the signs of stress

People can react in many ways when facing danger or feeling threatened. Listed below are a few of the common signs that may indicate when someone may be suffering from stress:

- ✗ **Physical Effects:**
 - ? Raised heart rate
 - ? Blurred vision
 - ? Increased sweating
 - ? Aching neck/shoulder
 - ? Headaches
 - ? Skin Rashes
 - ? Dizziness Loss/gain in weight
 - ? Tiredness
 - ? Faster breathing/pulse
 - ? Lowering resistance to infections
- ✗ **Behavioural Effects:**
 - ? Poor work Mood swings/depression
 - ? Lack of self esteem
 - ? More accident prone
 - ? Changing sleep patterns
 - ? No enthusiasm













-  Poor concentration
-  Increased anxiety/irritability/frustration/aggression
-  Inability to deal calmly with everyday tasks/situations
-  Tendency to drink more alcohol/smoke more

Applying the 6 HSE Standards to Effectively Combat Stress:

Stress Management: 7 Golden Rules

1. **Set clear roles and responsibilities and be reasonable in the targets you set:** resist role-creep (when staff are asked to take on ‘just one more thing’).
2. **Provide a safety valve.** This could be a trusted senior member of staff or the deputy or other colleague to whom care staff can speak confidentially, or an external confidential helpline.
3. **Technology has created a culture of 24/7 availability and care is often a round the clock, 7 day a week activity.** But respect people’s privacy when they are off duty.
4. **Deal with environmental causes of stress,** for example, fix problems with heating and lighting promptly and ensure supplies are ordered well before they run out.
5. **Give people the authority to fulfil the tasks you have delegated to them.**
6. **Make sure changes (for example, to rosters) are made with sufficient warning:** don’t ‘ambush’ people with changes for which they have had no chance to prepare.
7. **Involve people in decisions that affect them.** Don’t just tell them about changes, ask in advance for their views and allow them to genuinely influence your decisions.

How to prevent stress: the manager and the deputy will:

-  Monitor what’s happening and provide feedback.
-  Ensure everyone has clearly defined objectives and responsibilities.
-  Provide training and support for those with responsibility for others.
-  Provide opportunities for staff to contribute ideas, especially in organising their own jobs.
-  Introduce good communication, clear objectives, and close employee involvement, particularly during periods of change.
-  Be honest with yourself, set a good example, respect others and listen to them. Focus on learning not blame when things go wrong
-  Provide as much support as possible for staff to develop their skills.
-  Never turn a blind eye to either bullying or harassment.
-  Create a culture where employees who complain (or are complained about) know they will be treated fairly.
-  Recognise that teasing can quickly escalate into bullying.
-  Lead by personal example. Bullying thrives in organisations where directors/managers show that bullying and harassment are ok.
-  Make sure policy and behaviour are consistent with each other. It’s behaviour that defines a culture, not what the policy says – in the typical employee’s mind, how managers behave counts for more than fine words in a policy document.

| EFFECTIVE STRESS MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST | | | |
|--|---|------------|-----------|
| | Do You Have a Stress Problem? | YES | NO |
| 1 | Do you have a number of cases of sickness absence due to stress? | | |
| | Do you know someone who is currently off due to stress? | | |
| | Would your employees be unlikely to recommend your organisation as a good place to work? | | |
| 2 | Management and Culture | | |
| | Have you made yourself aware of the HSE’s 6 stress risk standards (demands, control, support, relationships, role and change) and management standards? | | |
| | Have you included stress in your general risk assessments? | | |
| | Does everyone have clear roles and responsibilities? | | |
| | Do you provide the right resources (people, tools, equipment, systems, procedures, facilities)? | | |

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| | Has everyone been trained so that they can carry out their duties safely and confidently? | | |
| | Do you review performance regularly (an annual performance appraisal is good but most people need more frequent feedback and guidance to perform at their best)? | | |
| | Do you give consistent messages about what is important so that people can set priorities within their workload? ‘They don’t know what they want’ is a common reaction from stressed employees. If everything’s a priority, nothing is. | | |
| | Do you have a formal system for dealing with grievances? | | |
| | Do you recognise that too little pressure can be stressful as well as too much? (Allow people to take on greater responsibility when they are ready for it.) | | |
| | Have you addressed physical causes such as faulty equipment and poor heating/ventilation? | | |
| | Do your managers take action when stress issues arise? | | |
| 3 | Training | | |
| | Have you trained managers and supervisors to recognise and know how to handle stress cases? | | |
| | Have you provided diversity training? | | |
| 4 | Harassment and Bullying | | |
| | Have you set out your policy, either as a section in your health and safety policy or separately? | | |
| | Is everyone clear about what behaviour constitutes bullying or harassment and that they are unacceptable? | | |
| | Do you investigate any cases objectively? | | |
| | Do senior staff display a non-bullying approach in their dealings with others? | | |
| 5 | Violence and Aggression | | |
| | Have you identified if staff/residents are at risk? | | |
| | Have you set a policy, either as a section in your health and safety policy or separately? | | |
| | Does your policy cover how you will report, classify and record incidents? | | |
| | Do you have arrangements to monitor, investigate and (where appropriate) report to outside bodies such as the police? | | |
| | Do you have measures in place to support anyone suffering verbal abuse or physical injury? | | |

Training Statement

All staff will receive awareness of this policy through their Health and Safety induction and mandatory training updates. Should anyone require support, advice or guidance on any element outlined in this policy they should in the first instance speak to their manager. Where this is deemed inappropriate they should discuss with a senior manager.

Related policies
Appraisal
Challenging Behaviour, Anger and Aggression
Sickness/Absence
Supervision

Guidance:

- ✓ NICE Quality Statement 147 “Healthy workplaces: improving employee mental and physical health and wellbeing” published March 2017
- ✓ Good Work - The Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/627671/good-work-taylor-review-modern-working-practices-rg.pdf