



## Workplace Stress Policy

### A) INTRODUCTION

According to the HSE (Health and Safety Executive), in 2015/16 over 480,000 people in the UK reported that work-related stress was making them ill. This amounts to nearly 40% of all work-related illness.

The well-being of a workforce is essential to both their physical and mental health. Whilst pressures from outside work can affect health and well-being, an employer should be controlling the factors within the workplace that may affect the health of employees by promoting a good, supportive working climate and environment, and a culture of openness, where employees concerned about their well-being can access appropriate support.

It is therefore important that an employer takes steps to tackle the work-related causes of stress in its organisation and encourages staff to seek help at the earliest opportunity if they begin to experience stress.

### B) FACTORS CAUSING STRESS

The HSE (Health and Safety Executive) has identified the six primary causes of work-related stress to be:

- The **demands** of the job - staff can become overloaded if they cannot cope with the amount of work or type of work they are asked to do
- Amount of **control** over work - staff can feel disaffected and perform poorly if they have no say over how and when they do their work
- **Support** from managers and colleagues - levels of sickness absence often rise if staff feel they cannot talk to managers about issues troubling them
- **Relationships** at work - a failure to build relationships based on good behaviour and trust can lead to problems related to discipline, grievances and bullying
- How a **role** fits within the organisation - staff will feel anxious about their work and the organisation if they don't know what is expected of them and/or understand how their work fits into the objectives of the organisation
- **Change** and how it is managed - change needs to be managed effectively or it can lead to huge uncertainty and insecurity.

### C) OUTWARD SIGNS OF STRESS

It is important to never make assumptions, but signs that a team member may be stressed include:

- changes in the person's usual behaviour, mood or how they interact with colleagues
- changes in the standard of their work or focus on tasks
- appearing tired, anxious or withdrawn and reduced interest in tasks they previously enjoyed
- changes in appetite and/or increase in smoking and drinking alcohol
- an increase in sickness absences and/or turning up late to work.



#### **D) THOSE ARE HIGHER RISK**

Some people are at higher risk of work-related stress than others. These include those who:

- work with valuables or medications.
- work alone.
- work in situations or roles where there is risk of violence.
- work in conditions where noise, heat or safety issues pose threats to safety and security.
  
- are in positions of authority or enforcement roles.
- work with those who suffer from mental ill-health and the elderly.
- work with those who take drugs or alcohol.
- new and expectant mothers.

#### **E) LEGAL DUTIES**

- There is no specific legislation which regulates stress in the workplace, but the prevention of stress is included in the general duty of an employer to his or her employees under Safety, Health at Work legislation.
- The law also requires that health surveillance should be established for individuals who are identified as at high risk of or have suffered adverse effects from workplace stress in the past.
- The Employment Equality Act applies to employees with mental or physical disabilities or conditions and may impose particular requirements if an employee is diagnosed as suffering from stress.

#### **F) RECORDS**

Risk assessments for stress will be documented and kept with safety management records. Where assessments are conducted for individual employees, the assessments are subject to the GDPR and will be kept in the employee's personnel file or with occupational health records. Records of training provided for employees will be kept in the individuals personal files.



**G) REPORTING**

If any employee believes they may be suffering with stressed related symptoms then we ask that they bring these to the attention of their Manager in order to arrange an informal welfare meeting. If any employee goes on sick leave due to stress we will as soon as practicable arrange a return to work interview.

Signed by Chair of Trustees..... Date.....

