Work-related Stress Policy

Aim

This policy provides a framework for preventing and managing work-related stress and creating a supportive and healthy working environment for everyone. It aims to:

- Promote employee wellbeing and create a supportive environment.
- Increase knowledge of the causes of work-related stress.
- Identify workplace changes to help reduce stress.
- Support employees to manage stress effectively.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees. It also applies to bank, secondees, agency, sessional workers, volunteers, contractors, and those on placement, such as trainees, students, or individuals undertaking work experience.

In this policy, 'employee' includes all these groups unless stated otherwise.

This policy complies with current legislation and meets the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010.

Definitions

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines **work-related stress** as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them."

It's important to remember that pressure can be a positive and motivating factor. However, stress happens when pressure becomes excessive and unmanageable.

Stressors are the specific things that an employee perceives to be causing stress.

Roles and responsibilities

There is a range of standard expectations which underpin all policies. Read more about standard roles and responsibilities. In addition, the following specific responsibilities apply to this policy.

Employer

The employer is responsible for creating a culture where work-related stress is recognised and addressed. They must make sure managers are trained and that suitable support is available for all employees.

The employer should:

- Encourage an inclusive workplace culture where mental wellbeing and physical wellbeing are regarded as equally important.
- Promote a positive organisational culture where work-related stress is recognised and responded to appropriately.
- Train and support managers to assess and manage risks related to work-related stress.
- Take appropriate actions to identify and address work-related stress.

Manager

The manager should:

- Assess and manage the risks of work-related stress in their team.
- Facilitate an appropriate induction and work-related training for new employees. This should include information on support services like occupational health, human resources, organisational development, and employee counselling.
- Take action to identify and support individuals who may be experiencing stress, for example, by carrying out an individual risk assessment.
- Monitor workloads by regularly reviewing excess hours, absence, and staff turnover.
- Promote a healthy work-life balance and encourage your team to take regular breaks.

Employee

The employee should:

- Be aware of their own wellbeing and recognise when pressure might be turning into stress. Some stress is normal but it can have a negative impact if experienced acutely or long term.

- Speak up if they are feeling stressed. Talk to a manager, a trusted colleague, or a trade union representative.
- Know what support is available and access it when needed.
- Support colleagues who may be experiencing stress and encourage them to get help.

Effects of stress

Anyone can experience work-related stress because of work pressures. These may include the demands of the job or a lack of clarity of the role.

Work-related stress is not an illness, but if it goes on a long time, it can contribute to ill-health. The physical effects may include:

- raised blood pressure
- heart disease
- musculoskeletal pain
- stomach problems
- minor illnesses

The psychological effects may include:

- anxiety
- depression
- dietary and lifestyle choices that have a negative impact on health

Identifying and managing work-related stress

To help reduce work-related stress, organisational factors that could be potential stressors should be considered. These include:

- organisational culture
- how change is managed
- communication systems
- work environment
- workforce data, like absence rates

By looking at these areas, a plan can be developed to address the risks and create a healthier workplace. These risks are monitored and reviewed regularly.

[Download the Individual risk assessment form](#).

More information is available in the following resources:

- [Work-related Stress Policy : guide for managers](#)
- [Work-related Stress Policy : guide for employees](#)

Monitoring and review

The activities resulting from the introduction of this policy will be examined, and the activities of each component part will be closely monitored.

In addition to the policy itself, the risk assessment process should be reviewed if there are any changes to work activities.

Related policies

The following policies are related to the Work-related Stress Policy:

- [Attendance Policy](#)
- [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)