

Stress and Wellbeing Policy

The Company is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of all of our employees. We recognise the importance of identifying and tackling possible workplace stress or triggers that may have a negative impact on the mental health and wellbeing of our employees. We also recognise that personal stress, while unrelated to the workplace, can adversely affect the wellbeing of employees at work.

We want to support the mental wellbeing of all our employees. We will provide appropriate support to any employee who is suffering from stress or mental ill health, on a confidential basis where appropriate, regardless of its source.

What is Stress?

Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or demands placed on them. Stress is not an illness but, sustained over a period of time, it can lead to mental and/or physical illness.

What is Mental Health?

Mental health is a term to describe our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing; it affects how we think, feel and act and how we cope with the normal pressures of everyday life.

There is an important distinction between working under pressure and experiencing stress. Certain levels of pressure are acceptable and normal in every job. They can improve performance, enable individuals to meet their full potential and provide a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. However, when pressure becomes excessive it produces stress and undermines mental health.

Pressures outside the workplace, whether the result of unexpected or traumatic events such as accidents, illness, bereavement, family breakdown or financial worries, can result in stress and poor mental health. They can also compound normal workplace pressures.

We recognise that individuals react to similar situations in different ways and that what triggers stress and poor mental health varies from person to person.

As part of our commitment to you, we will;

- Promote a culture of open communication. We want employees to feel confident that any concerns they raise about their work or working environment will be addressed.
- Provide opportunities to discuss health and wellbeing both informally via regular communication and formally through our appraisal [and one-to-one] processes.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that employees are not overworking and monitor holidays to ensure that employees are using their entitlement.
- Ensure risk assessments include or specifically address work-related stress.
- Facilitate requests for flexible working where reasonable and in accordance with our Flexible Working Policy.
- Ensure that in any workplace reorganisation our change management processes are designed to minimise uncertainty and stress.
- Implement policies and procedures to address factors that can cause stress at work, or add to personal stress, in particular so that we can provide a workplace free from harassment, bullying and victimisation and address inappropriate behaviour through disciplinary action.
- [Provide training for [all] managers [and supervisors] in good management practices.
- [Provide training to help employees understand and recognise the causes of work-related stress and mental ill health, the impact of stress from factors in everyday life and the steps they can take to protect and enhance their own mental wellbeing and that of their colleagues.]
- [Provide support [services such as [occupational health] [and] [confidential counselling [and]]] [an employee assistance programme] [and] [mental health champions [and]]] [mental health first aiders] for staff affected by or absent by reason of stress.]

All managers have a responsibility to recognise potential issues of work-related stress or mental ill health within their team. [They [will be given training to support them in this and] should seek advice [from the [DEPARTMENT]] in the event that they have concerns.]

Support [and Services]

If you believe you are suffering from stress or mental ill- health we encourage you to discuss this with your manager at an early stage. If you feel unable to do so you should contact another manager [or director] within the business. We will listen to you and discuss with you what steps can be taken to support you. If the issue is work related we will take the relevant steps to address this.

[We also have a number of [mental health champions [AND/OR]] [mental health first aiders] who can be contacted by any employee who is experiencing any mental health concerns or distress. These colleagues can provide you with details of available support. Details of [mental health champions [and]] [mental health first aiders] can be [found on [DETAILS] OR obtained from [DETAILS]].*

[We also have the following services in place to assist any employee who may be suffering from stress or mental ill- health:

- [Detail any applicable services, such as training and workshops, EAP helpline, stress advice clinics, access to occupational health]

Help and information can also be obtained from Mind, the mental health charity, www.mind.org.uk or the Samaritans, www.samaritans.org. You may also wish to contact your GP if you are suffering with stress or experiencing any form of mental ill-health.

If any employee is considered by their manager or colleagues to be at serious risk of self-harm, or of harming others, action must be taken straight away. The matter should be referred to [\[\[POSITION\]\]](#) who will seek medical advice if that is reasonably practicable. Every effort will be made to contact any person nominated by the member of staff as an emergency contact. Where necessary the emergency services will be called. The wellbeing of the member of staff and those around them will at all times be our first concern.

Confidentiality

We understand that information about stress, mental health and mental wellbeing can be highly sensitive. We are all responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required when dealing with information about stress or mental health. This includes in circumstances where we are supporting a colleague or in relation to the operation of a workplace policy or procedure.

Breach of confidentiality will be treated seriously and may give rise to disciplinary action.

However, there are occasions when information about stress or mental wellbeing need to be shared with third parties. For example:

- Where steps need to be taken to address work-related stress such as reallocating work within a team.
- Where medical advice is required on how to support a member of staff, address issues raised by work-related stress or address issues raised by mental ill health.
- Where allegations of harassment, bullying or other misconduct require a disciplinary investigation or proceedings to take place.
- Where an employee presents an immediate danger to themselves or others.

In these circumstances, wherever possible, matters will be discussed with the employee concerned before any action is taken.

Employees who report that they are suffering from work-related stress or mental ill health, who support a colleague in making such a report or who participate in any investigation connected with this policy in good faith will be protected from any form of intimidation or victimisation. Any concerns in relation to this should be raised in line with our grievance procedure.

[This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.]