

Stress Management Policy



Introduction

West Lindsey District Council are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of employees and recognises that work place stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. We acknowledge that we should act to prevent or reduce risks that are reasonably foreseeable.

The policy will apply to everyone in the authority. Managers are responsible for implementation, and the authority is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

The council recognises that it's most important resource is its employees. This policy shows our determination to identify sources of workplace stress and the effects on our employees, eliminate stress or control the risks from stress where possible.

Definition of Stress

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”.

This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health. Supporting this policy ~~are Appendix 1 Contributors to Stress and Appendix 2 Symptoms of Work Related Stress~~ is the Stress Management – Manager's Good Practice Guide, available on Minerva.

Legal Obligation

The Health and Safety at Work Act etc.1974 (HSWA) Section 2. Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations Regulation 3 West Lindsey District Council acknowledges the authority has a duty of care to the physical, mental health and well being of our employees and will assess workplace risks through the process of risk assessment.

We acknowledge that we should act to prevent or reduce risks that are reasonably foreseeable. The authority will make reasonable adjustments where practical if an employee becomes incapacitated through stress related illness. ~~We acknowledge that we should act to prevent or reduce risks that are reasonably foreseeable.~~

General Policy

The Authority will provide adequate resources to identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. Managers will review and monitor assessments at least every two years, after an incident, or if there is a significant change.

The authority will consult with union/safety representatives on proposed action relating to the prevention of work place stress.

The authority provides training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.

The authority will make resources available for staff affected by stress caused by work or external forces in the form of ~~Occupational Health~~ the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

West Lindsey District Council is committed to promoting a supportive culture to promote openness in the working environment.

Responsibilities

People and Organisational Development

- Give guidance to managers on HR issues.
- Advise managers and individuals on training requirements.
- Assist in monitoring the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- Provide support to Managers and individuals in a changing environment
- Promote ~~Occupational Health~~ the Employee Assistance Programme as an important resource in dealing with stress and its related problems. Employees are encouraged to seek advice from ~~Occupational Health~~ the Employee Assistance Programme who will discuss problems in confidence through its confidential counselling service.

Health and Safety Co-ordinator

- Will assist management by offering advice/ training on how to carry out risk assessments and support managers to monitor and review assessments.
- Review the Policy and consult the Safety Champions Group
- Undertake safety inspections, and safety audits.
- Horizon scan for future changes to legislation, assess and advise on the impact to the organisation.

Safety Champions Group

- Be consulted on and assist in developing of the Policy and risk assessments.
- Support managers and peers in the implementation of the policy and with adherence to legislation.
- Investigate work related incidents in accordance with the procedure.

Employees

- Employees should recognise their responsibilities under HSWA. Report any stress adversely affecting their health or work to their manager or senior manager if more appropriate.

- Employees are encouraged to seek advice through Occupational Health the Employee Assistance Programme, and attend appointments for counselling/support when recommended. Employees also have the opportunity to make a direct approach to Occupational Health.
- Cooperate with referrals to occupational health and participate in counselling when recommended by a health professional.
- Investigate health and wellbeing opportunities and look after your physical and mental health.

Management Responsibilities

- Managers need to identify causes of stress, recognise the signs, and support staff effectively encouraging guiding employees as appropriate.
- To monitor the effectiveness of the policy and to identify the route cause of Stress and action appropriately.
- To complete risk assessments and follow through on corrective actions.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours, overtime and holidays to ensure that staff are not overworking.
- Attend training to enable them to implement this policy effectively.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.
- Confidentiality must be respected and maintained and personal circumstances are not discussed with others without consent, unless in exceptional circumstances where this level of confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if there are health and safety concerns for the individual, fellow colleagues or clients of the council.

Equal Opportunities/Generic Equalities

West Lindsey is committed to equal opportunities. We will promote the equality of current employees and will ensure no one receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of race, gender, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, sex or sexual orientation, religion, marital status, age or disability or any grounds not relevant to the performance of the job or the service delivery.

Related Policies

- Lone Working/Violence Policy
- ~~Employee Development and Performance Review Appraisal Policy~~
- ~~Harassment at Work Bullying and Harassment Policy~~
- Management of Sickness Absence
- Equal Opportunity in Employment Policy
- Officer Code of Conduct
- ~~Statement of General Safety Policy. Health, Safety and Welfare Policy~~

~~Review Date January 2016~~

Policy Statement

West Lindsey District Council has a commitment to equal opportunities. It seeks to ensure that no potential or current employee receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Managers Guidance Notes

Responsibilities

Managers

- ~~1. Conduct and implement recommendations of Risk Assessments within their jurisdiction.~~
- ~~2. Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.~~
- ~~3. Ensure all staff are fully trained to carry out their duties and that they understand their role within the organisation.~~
- ~~4. Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.~~
- ~~5. Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not over working. Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.~~
- ~~6. Ensure bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.~~
- ~~7. Be vigilant and provide other additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside of work e.g. bereavement or separation.~~

Staff

- ~~1. Raise issues of concern with your supervisor, line manager.~~
- ~~2. Accept opportunities for counselling/support when recommended.~~

This section has been added into the main body of the policy

Take out Appendix 1 and 2 , have referred to the Guide in the main body of the report.

Appendix 1 CONTRIBUTORS TO STRESS

Occupational Contributors

The following have been known to contribute to stress, however, this is not an exhaustive list but is designed to show the broad range of stressors.

Physical conditions

- Noise
- Poor lighting
- Over-crowding
- Extremes of temperature
- Badly designed furniture
- Poor maintenance
- Working with VDU's

Balancing the demands of home and work

- Poor child care facilities
- Long hours
- Shift work/call out
- Need to take time off to care for sick children and other dependants

Job design

- Too much or too little work
- Surveillance and monitoring by computers, videos and listening devices
- Repetitive work
- Time pressures
- Uncertain responsibilities
- Excessive requirements
- Introduction of new technology
- Under-utilised skills
- Lack of information, instruction, supervision and training

Relationships in organisations

- Unsympathetic management
- Unsympathetic colleagues
- Lack of support, assistance or training
- Harassment (on the grounds of sex, ethnic origin, disability and general workplace bullying)

Customer complaints

- Poor communication
- Social isolation of work

Work organisation and conditions

- Lack of job security
- Lack of control over work
- Continuous changes in work organisation
- Lack of participation in decision making
- Rigid hierarchy
- Inadequate staffing
- Over promotion
- Under promotion

Non-occupational causes

- Death in the family
- Unemployment or fear of losing employment
- Financial worries, especially debts
- Single parenthood
- Relationship problems such as divorce
- Other family problems such as parents who are ill
- Moving house
- having a baby or infertility
- Serious terminal illness
- Retirement

Appendix 2

SYMPTOMS OF WORK RELATED STRESS

The range of symptoms includes the following:

Physical Symptoms

- Headaches and migraine
- Colds and other respiratory disorders
- Asthma
- Raised cholesterol and blood pressure levels
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Sleepless nights
- Possible effects on pregnancy

Mental Health Symptoms

- Irritability
- Depression
- Increased risk of suicide
- Withdrawal
- Anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- "Burn out"
- Post traumatic stress disorder

Psychosocial Symptoms

- Heavy drinking
- Smoking
- Drug taking
- Eating disorders
- Increased sickness absence
- Abnormal presenteeism
- Increased accident rate
- Breakdown of relationship

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