

MODEL: Stress management policy

Introduction

The health, safety and welfare of our employees is important to our business and we are committed to ensuring this is met. We are committed to identifying and reducing the causes of workplace stress, as we acknowledge that this is an important health and safety issue.

This policy is applicable to all employees. It is the manager's responsibility to implement the policy, and it is the organisation's responsibility to provide the necessary resources.

Definition of stress

Stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". There is a distinct difference between stress and pressure, as if managed correctly pressure can have a positive effect on an employee, whereas stress can be seen as detrimental to their well-being.

The effects of long-term stress can be seen in physical, intellectual, emotional and behavioural signs. These can include headaches, crying, nausea, tiredness, palpitations, worrying, making mistakes, anger, irritability and job dissatisfaction.

The organisation will aim to identify all workplace stressors and risk assessments can be conducted to identify the risks and eradicate them, these will be regularly reviewed. When making proposals to prevent workplace stress the Trade Union Safety Representative will be consulted with. Training will be provided for all managers and supervisors in dealing with workplace stress, implementing the organisation's stress management strategy and identifying any warning signs. Furthermore, the confidential counselling for staff affected by workplace or external stress will be provided by the organisation.

Responsibilities

Managers

- compile sickness absence statistics to measure the effectiveness of the organisation's stress management policy
- provide support to staff
- encourage referrals to occupational workplace counsellors if appropriate
- implement recommendations developed from the risks assessments
- ensure clear communication between management and staff, specifically on organisational changes that may affect them personally
- ensure there are developmental opportunities available to all staff
- monitor staffs working hours to ensure they are not being overworked
- manage holidays to ensure staff are taking their full entitlement
- ensure that there is a zero tolerance on bullying and harassment
- offer additional support to members of staff who are experiencing stress outside work such as bereavement or separation.

Occupational Health and Safety staff

- provide stress management and risk assessment training for all managers and supervisors
- consult with workplace counsellors or specialist agencies when dealing with specific cases
- continually review the effectiveness of the organisation's policy of reducing stress.

Employees

- raise any issues relating to work place stress to the Safety Representatives, their line manager or occupational health
- undertake counselling that is offered, when applicable

Function of Safety Representatives/Committee* (**where applicable*)

- must be consulted on any potential levers for stress such as changes to work practices or design
- must be involved in the risk assessment and workplace surveys process
- should be allowed to access any relevant anonymous data from HR
- any time off relating to Trade Union training relating to workplace stress should be paid for by the organisation

- they should take part in a three monthly workplace audit to identify any environmental stressors
- will monitor the policy to ensure it is combatting the effects of stress and promoting employee wellbeing.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by [insert role] to ensure it remains up to date and reflects the needs and practices of the organisation.

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