

Stress Management

Approved by:	Chief Executive	Date: March 2023
Last reviewed:	March 2023	
Next review due by:	March 2026	

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1.Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of developing this policy is to ensure that all employees and managers understand the Trust's approach to stress and stress related illness, and that in having a policy on stress it is made clear that support and understanding will be available without any stigma or blame being attached, regardless of whether the stress is caused by issues in home or working life.

Stress is a part of everyone's lives and is essential for effective functioning on a daily basis. However, if it is not managed properly it can affect the mental and physical health of individuals, both at home and at work.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) say (2016) "Work related stress develops because a person is unable to cope with the demands being placed on them".

It is important to note that the effects of stress vary from one person another, that the level of stress may be difficult to measure, and to remember that stress caused by factors or situations outside the work place can also be an issue for employers and employees. Stress and stress-related illnesses will be treated in the same way as ill health due to any other cause.

2.Health and safety

This policy should be read in conjunction with the risk assessment included in the Trust's health and safety documents, as that risk assessment is based significantly upon the detail in this policy.

3.Causes and symptoms of stress

The Trust recognises that there are many causes of stress, both at home and in the workplace, and that it is impossible to put together an exhaustive list of all the factors that may cause individuals to become stressed. The Trust aims to prevent work-related stress by having favourable conditions of employment and sensible working practices.

Each year in the Autumn term the Trust will review absence figures to build up a picture of the causes of absence across the Trust.

HSE has developed the Management Standards approach to tackling work related stress; these Standards represent a set of conditions that, if present, reflect a high level of health, well-being and

organisational performance. This approach helps those who have key roles in promoting organisational and individual health and well-being to develop systems to prevent illness resulting from stress. These 'stressors' are given below, together with an assessment of the measures the Trust has in place to deliver best practice within the restrictions of Trust terms and timetabled lessons.

Stressor	Measures	
Demands; this includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment	• Performance management process in place • Regular meetings with staff, both team meetings and one to one/ performance management which would discuss and anticipate workload. • Ensure that skills and abilities are correctly matched to job (person spec and job description) • Head / Managers monitor sickness absence data and staff turnover rates. • Work environment concerns, e.g. temperature, ventilation, noise, are taken seriously and investigated.	
Control; how much say the person has in the way they do their work	• Within professional boundaries and the time constraints of Trust terms and timetable staff are able to self determine their routines. • Staff encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work. • Staff encouraged to develop new skills to help them. undertaken new and challenging pieces of work.	An example of this is that teachers have a minimum 10% time allocated for Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) within their timetable but are able to choose their arrival and departure time, outside the core time, to suit their personal circumstances.
Support; how much say the person has in the way they do their work	• Employees are supported through Trust policies and procedures. • Regular team meetings / one-to-ones to discuss emergent issues. • Staff are aware of the support that is available to them • Staff receive regular constructive feedback as part of their performance management • Identification of any training needs conducted through performance management • Staff can access CPD on a fair and equitable basis • Mentoring and coaching available where necessary	Same as above

Relationships; this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour	• Staff are encouraged to raise concerns as soon as possible both during their induction and by reference to the grievance policy which is attached to the staff handbook. • Managers are encouraged to deal with and staff encouraged to report unacceptable behaviour • Training provided to help staff deal with difficult situations	There is adequate provision within the staffing structure to allow
Role; whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles	• Staff understand their role and are suitably trained • Performance management used to help individuals clarify their role and priorities • Standards of performance agreed • New employees receive adequate induction into their role and objectives • Recruitment process in place with Job Descriptions and Person Specifications • Effective system of induction for new and supply staff	
Change; how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.	• Staff made aware of why change is happening and key steps for change • Realistic timetable set out for change • Individuals directly affected are involved in the change process • Regular communication and consultation with all those affected • 'open door' policy to help individuals who have concerns • Training provided for new / changed roles	

The following lists cover **some** of the factors that may cause people to feel stressed or to suffer from a stress-related illness:

In the workplace

Long hours
Lack of control
Lack of job satisfaction
Insecurity
Bullying
Poor job design
Bad working relationships
Job isolation
Discrimination
Lack of skills/knowledge

Personal/home life

Death/illness of close family member
Accident
Divorce/separation/partnership problems
Moving house
Financial difficulties
Parenthood/birth of child
Court appearance
Drug/alcohol solvent abuse
Mental health problems
Care of elderly

The symptoms of stress also vary widely from person to person but may include:

Physical

Weight loss/gain
Raised blood pressure
Heartburn
Diarrhoea
Sleep problems
Headaches
Fainting
Nausea
Tearfulness
Shaking
Sexual impairment

Emotional

Anxiety/nervousness
Irritability
Boredom
Fear of illness/death
Defensive
Lack of confidence
Withdrawal
Feelings of rejection
Aggression
Neuroses
Restlessness

Intellectual

Loss of concentration
Loss of perspective
Illogicality
Poor communication
Avoiding responsibility
Inappropriate comments
Poor time management
Negativism
Confusion
Forgetfulness

4.What the Trust can do

The type of help that is available for people who are suffering from stress or a stress-related illness will vary from person to person and will depend very much on the nature of the illness and what the person feels will be appropriate – long term problems will require a very different solution to short term “crisis” stress.

In view of the above, it is not appropriate to have one “procedure” or route to help employees who are suffering with stress, but to have range of options available that can be tailored to meet the needs of each individual. However, the Trust can only help, particularly in the early stages, if employees are prepared to approach their manager, senior manager or their union for support and assistance. Managers are also expected to monitor the wellbeing of their team members, recognising any possible symptoms of stress and responding sensitively and proactively to support the individual.

The help that the Trust may be able to offer includes:

- Stress awareness workshops for both managers and staff
- Opportunities for staff to share their concerns with others
- Inclusion of reference to stress within the staff handbook and induction
- Temporary or permanent change in working hours (where possible)
- A change in working practices or patterns (where appropriate and possible)
- Use of any of the provisions in the flexible working arrangements, particularly to help deal with personal/home life stress (where appropriate and possible)

All the above would need to involve a discussion with the relevant manager/s, but if any members of staff felt unable to do this, then they are able to request their line manager, HR or a member of the senior leadership team to arrange a meeting with the Occupational Health Provider. During discussion between the employee and their manager, the range of options available would be discussed. A senior manager would then be asked by the employee's manager or by the employee to set up any support strategies.

5.Occupational Health Provider

The Trust can arrange for a confidential counselling service to be provided by an Occupational Therapist with experience in dealing with a wide range of personal issues.

The therapist will refer any stress/personal issues, or mental/psychiatric problems, for further specialist opinion as agreed with the staff member.