Mental Health & Stress

HR26 - Mental Health & Stress Policy

The Company is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees. The organisation recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

The Company's Commitment

The Company places high value on maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all employees and seeks to minimise the causes of stress in the workplace. The Company recognises that reducing stress in the workplace can help improve staff morale and commitment, lower absenteeism, reduce costs and improve staff recruitment and retention.

The Company's line managers and individual employees all have a role to play in reducing stress. The Company is committed to identifying sources of stress in the workplace and taking action to reduce harmful stress.

Whilst this policy primarily focuses on work-related stress arising in the workplace, it is recognised that stress may be influenced by a variety of factors and that no single cause may be identified. The Company will make every effort to support staff in managing stress irrespective of its source.

The Company believes that its employees are its most valuable resource and that their wellbeing is vital to effective performance at work and the continued provision of high-quality services. To this end the Company is committed to providing maintaining and promoting a healthy and supportive working environment.

- Under the terms of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 the Company has a duty to ensure the health and safety of its employees as far as is reasonably practical.

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 place a duty on the Company to assess and control the degree of stress in the workplace.

- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a duty on the Company not to discriminate against employees who suffer from a disability under the act which includes long term ill health caused by stress at work.

While the Company has no control over external or personal factors it is committed to managing stress and risks within its control, and to providing support to employees who are suffering from stress.

Aim of Policy

The aim of this policy is to:

- To ensure the physical and mental health of all employees.

- To promote a healthy, safe, and friendly working environment and control and reduce risks to mental health.

- To help provide and maintain a supportive and nonjudgmental working environment.

- To provide effective support to all employees in managing stress and other mental health problems, and to encourage better recognition of mental health issues; and

- To recognise that the prevention of stress is easier than dealing with it once it has arisen.

Definition of Stress

Whilst there is no specific legislation on stress, the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require all employees to be protected from risk and harm and for employers to assess the risks of workplace hazards. The Health and Safety Executive define stress as, 'The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demands placed on them at work.'

Work-related stress develops because a person is unable to cope with the demands being placed on them. It is not in itself an illness, but physical or mental illness may manifest if not tackled.

FERNS

Recognising the Signs of Stress

Stress can show itself in different ways and being aware of some of the symptoms of stress will help employees and employers to find a solution more quickly. Below are a list of stress indicators to help staff and managers recognise the signs of stress.

Work Performance

- Declining/inconsistent performance
- Uncharacteristic errors
- Loss of control over work
- Loss of motivation/commitment
- Indecision
- Lapses in memory
- Increased time at work
- Lack planning
- Regression crying
- Arguments
- Undue sensitivity
- Irritability/moodiness
- Over-reaction to problems
- Personality clashes
- Immature behaviour
- Anger
- Negative thoughts
- Increased anxiety
- Panic
- Mood swings
- Tearful withdrawal
- Leaving work early
- Extended lunches
- Arriving late to work
- Absenteeism
- Resigned attitude
- Reduced social contact
- Aggressive behaviour
- Malicious gossip
- Criticism of others
- Vandalism
- Shouting
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Temper outbursts
- Physical signs sweating
- Tiredness/lethargy
- Upset stomach
- Tension headaches
- Hand tremor
- Rapid weight gain/loss
- Constantly feeling cold
- Tightness of chest/chest pains
- Nausea
- Aching and tense muscles/neck or backache
- Raised blood pressure
- Sleep disturbance other behaviours out of character behaviour
- Difficulty relaxing
- Increased consumption of alcohol
- Increased smoking
- Lack of interest in appearance/hygiene
- Accidents at home/work
- Unnecessary risk taking

Examples of Signs of Stress in a Team

Poor performance increased workplace disputes within team Increase in sickness absence Increase in staff turnover Increase in number of grievances/complaints.

Although the Company has no control over external factors which may be more difficult to identify the Health and Safety Executive has identified 6 main causes of stress at work which the Company can affect:

- Demands made on employees.
- The level of control employees have over their work.
- The support employees receive from managers and colleagues.
- The clarity of an employee' s role within the organisation.
- The nature of relationships at work; and
- The way that changes are managed.

The Company is aware that stress is easier to manage before it becomes a problem and with that in mind will endeavour to operate in a fashion that takes all of the above factors into account. The Company will also always be open to discuss how an alteration of one or more of these factors might produce a better working environment.

Management Standards for Work-Related Stress

The Health & Safety Executive have identified management standards that cover six areas of work design that if not properly managed are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence:

· Demands
· Control
· Role
· Support
· Relationships
· Change

Roles & Responsibilities

The Company is responsible for ensuring effective management arrangements are in place to minimise and manage organisational stress and maintain a positive and supportive working environment for all of their employees.

Mental Health Statement

Mental wellbeing in the workplace is relevant to all employees and everyone can contribute to the improvement of Metal Health at work. Addressing Workplace Wellbeing can help strengthen the positive factors of employment, reduce risk factors related to ''Mental Ill Health'' and improve overall general health.

Principles

· The Company will conduct an annual assessment of the risks to employees health, both mental and physical, based on data collected from staff at work including absence data, staff turnover, grievance cases, accidents and exit interviews.

· The Company will always listen to any concerns that employees may have. All such concerns will be treated with respect and dignity, and employees will be provided with the necessary information to make informed decisions.

· The Company recognises that stress and other mental health issues may require periods of sick leave, or absence to recover from stress.

· Where necessary the Company will facilitate the managed return to work of employees who have been absent due to stress.

· All cases will be dealt with in accordance with the Company's policy on equality and diversity details of which are available in the Company handbook.

· All discussions, requests for help and advice will be kept strictly confidential and the information gathered will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

· Where necessary the Company will provide access to specialist psychological assistance, via the Company Benefits Scheme.

![FERNS logo]

The Company's Commitment

The Company are committed to:

- Ensuring the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of Physical, Mental and Social Wellbeing.

- Dealing sympathetically with staff suffering from Mental Health problems due to circumstances outside the workplace, and who consequently find it difficult to do their job properly.

- Promoting a culture of open conversation so we talk about our Wellbeing and Mental Health having our co-workers in mind and make support available when employees may be struggling.

- Encouraging staff to consult our Occupational Health or their own doctor, with issues relating to any Mental Health concerns.

- Seeking a confidential counselling provider for staff who may be affected by Mental Health issues caused by either work or external factors.

- Treating all matters relating to individual employees and their Mental Health issues in the strictest confidence and share on a ''need to know'' basis only with consent from the individual concerned.

- Monitoring the levels of sickness absence as a result of Mental Health issues.

- Monitoring the workloads to ensure that employees are not overloaded.

- Monitoring the working hours and overtime to ensure that employees are not over worked.

- Facilitate and support all employees wishing to develop and progress within the company business.

Employees Responsibility

Employees have a responsibility to:

- Seek help and support by raising any concerns regarding their own mental or physical health to Human Resources Department, SHEQ Department or Line Manager.

- Accept opportunities for Counselling when recommended.

- Demonstrate commitment in attending services offered to all either by the company of own doctor.

Ian fern, CEO
January 2026

Mental Health & Stress – Policy Statement No. HR26   Review Date: 08/02/2027 Last Amended: 08/02/2026