

Agenda



HYNDBURN

The place to be
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Management Review Committee

Tuesday, 1 December 2015 at 10.30 am,
Scaitcliffe House, Ormerod Street, Accrington

Membership

Chair: Councillor Miles Parkinson

Councillors Clare Cleary, Paul Cox and Tony Dobson

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence, Substitutions, Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

2. **Minutes of Last Meeting** (Pages 3 - 4)

To submit the Minutes of the last meeting of the Management Review Committee held on 22nd April 2015 for approval as a correct record.

Recommended - That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.

3. **Proposed Replacement of Stress Management Policy** (Pages 5 - 52)

To present a draft Emotional Wellbeing Handbook, a Guide for Managers designed to support a reduction in stress / anxiety / depression related absence.

Recommended (1) That the Committee considers and agrees the proposed document, to replace the Stress Management Policy; and,



(2) That the Head of Human Resources implements the changes and the proposed actions.

MANAGEMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 22nd April 2015

Present: Councillor Miles Parkinson (in the Chair) and Councillors Peter Britcliffe, Clare Cleary, Nick Collingridge and Paul Cox

545 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

546 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations.

547 Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of the Management Review Committee held on 4th March 2015 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Resolved - **That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.**

548 Revised Working Parents Policy

The Head of Human Resources submitted a report seeking approval of a revised Working Parents Policy. The revised Policy was appended to the report. The current Policy had been developed in 2003 and over the years had been revised as the legal position had changed. The Policy was again due a refresh and the revised document covered:-

- Maternity Leave and Pay
- Paternity Leave and Pay
- Maternity Support Leave
- Adoption Leave and Pay (including fostering to adopt)
- Shared Parental Leave and Pay (new)
- Parental Leave and Pay
- Time Off for Dependents
- The Forms to support all of the above
- Frequently Asked Questions

Unison had been consulted and had no objections to the revised Policy.

Resolved - **That the revised Working Parents Policy be approved.**

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed.

Agenda Item 3.

REPORT TO:		Management Review Committee	
DATE:		01 December 2015	
PORTFOLIO:		Cllr Gareth Molineux - Resources	
REPORT AUTHOR:		Kirsten Burnett, Head of HR	
TITLE OF REPORT:		Proposed replacement of Stress Management Policy	
EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A)	No	Not applicable	
KEY DECISION:	No	If yes, date of publication:	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present a draft Emotional Wellbeing Handbook, a Guide for Managers designed to support a reduction in stress / anxiety / depression related absence.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee considers and agrees the proposed document, to replace the Stress Management Policy.
- 2.2 That the Head of HR implements the changes and the proposed actions.

3. Reasons for Recommendations and Background

- 3.1 Our current Stress Management Policy (Appendix 1) was introduced in 2004. It meets the legal requirements and was based on best practice at the time, including the then new HSE Stress Management Standards. The Standards include a set of six areas (demands, control, support, relationships, role and change) that, if not appropriately managed, can have a negative impact on employee well-being across organisations of different sizes and sectors. These were used to form the basis of a Stress Risk Assessment form (starting on page 24 of the policy).
- 3.2 Nationally and across local government, stress / anxiety and depression is the highest cause of sickness absence. The 2013/4 Local Government Survey showed that 22.8% of absence was for this reason (18.2% for districts). At Hyndburn, it was our highest cause of lost days at 367.92 days, or 17.6% of total absence.
- 3.3 The WHAT team decided that this area should be a priority for the coming year and we asked for volunteers (outside the WHAT team) to be on a short-term working group. The group discussions and insights were invaluable in shaping the proposals. In

particular, the group noted that the current policy was long-winded (27 pages), not user-friendly, not a document most staff would read until at a “crisis point” and the risk assessment form was completely unfit for purpose. It mirrors the HSE standards and follows the format of most risk assessments, but given that often people will be in a state of distress when asked to complete it, it was really unhelpful and could in fact make people feel more anxious. The experience of HR officers is that nobody fills it out “properly” and any helpful information is gleaned from discussions, or sometimes other written accounts from the employee. The new version is a single page diagram designed to prompt areas of concern, contributing to a constructive discussion which leads to meaningful actions. Feedback from people who have previously been off with stress / anxiety / depression is that this version would have been far more helpful to them. It is still framed around the areas identified in the HSE Standards and the process surrounding it would still comply with our duty of care.

3.4 The new draft Handbook (Appendix 2) is very different from the current policy. Whilst it deals with stress-related cases, it represents a much more positive approach based on the latest research, showing that people can learn skills to enhance their own happiness, their inner resilience and ability to bounce back from life’s troubles. It includes some really practical tips and links. There are a number of new suggestions, some of which are included within the Handbook. It is designed to be read and followed by people who are well, not just those who perceive that they are stressed (in a bad way).

3.5 A Guide for Managers has been developed to support the Handbook (Appendix 3).

3.6 Planned Actions

- i. We are establishing a group of “Friendly Faces”, people around the council with some basic training in counselling, mental health awareness (so they recognised when someone might need professional psychological help) and some of the relevant HR policies or support mechanisms. We already have a small number of volunteers from within the working group and WHAT team.
- ii. We will roll out training to managers, including elearning on supporting the emotional wellbeing of staff as part of their management responsibilities. This would be accompanied by some management training around a revised performance review process which included feedback from the member of staff about how they feel about their job and workloads.
- iii. We have reviewed our Employee Assistance Programme which gives all staff access to 24/7 telephone support, and face to face counselling. It offers free, confidential and independent resources to help balance work, family and personal life on a variety of life events such as emotional wellbeing, bereavement and loss, managing change and debt and money management. We have established that this is more cost-effective than paying for counselling through our Occupational Health Service and that it has helped reduce days lost to stress / anxiety / depression.
- iv. We have delivered training on personal resilience and will continue to offer sessions as part of the annual training plan to support emotional wellbeing.

4. **Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection**

4.1 We could retain the existing policy. However, the working group believe the proposed approach will contribute to a happier and healthier workplace, where people are more able and motivated to contribute to the objectives of the Council.

5. **Consultations**

5.1 A Unison representative was included on the working group and the branch officials were very supportive of the proposals. The JNCC meeting, to which all Trade Unions are invited, met on 29 September and approved this.

6. **Implications**

Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)	There would be some costs for training, but there is a small WHAT team budget, funded by savings from the cycle scheme, which would support any training provision.
Legal and human rights implications	The Council has a legal responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) of a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees
Assessment of risk	
Equality and diversity implications <i>A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i>	See CFA following this report. The EAP is a support mechanism which complements our Attendance Management Procedure. This was subject to a CFA and has been revised from 1 January 2014, following training for all managers. http://www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/downloads/CFA_-_Attendance_Management_Framework.pdf

7. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985:** **List of Background Papers**

7.1 None.

8. **Freedom of Information**

8.1 The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and all information can be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

1. Purpose

- What are you trying to achieve with the policy / service / function?

A document outlining the support and preventative measures we offer or can signpost people to to prevent ill health through stress, anxiety and depression. Keeping sickness absence due to this cause to a minimum. Contributing to a supportive culture where employees are healthy, engaged and motivated to give their best efforts and work with colleagues in line with the Council's values.

- Who defines and manages it?

Managers and HR.

- Who do you intend to benefit from it and how?

All staff and by extension our customers.

- What could prevent people from getting the most out of the policy / service / function?

Lack of awareness.

- How will you get your customers involved in the analysis and how will you tell people about it?

Staff have been involved in the proposals and we would communicate through newsround, emails, posters and production of paper copies for distribution where appropriate.

2. Evidence

- How will you know if the policy delivers its intended outcome / benefits?

Reduction in stress-related absence. Feedback via employee surveys and from individual staff members who are supported by us.

We have sickness data broken down in detail, by department, gender, age, reason etc.

We will be conducting our next employee survey in 2016.

Employee data is broken down by all equality characteristics.

3. Impact

The data suggests that the provisions are available to all staff with no disadvantage to any particular group.

4. Actions

Agree and implement new Emotional Wellbeing Handbook.

Consider what training and other interventions will support the emotional wellbeing and resilience of employees.

Continue to monitor sickness absence, in particular that for stress / anxiety and depression.

Continue to promote the Employee Assistance Programme and access to counselling.

Name: Kirsten Burnett

Service Area: HR

Dated: 3 September 2015

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HYNDBURN

The place to be
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Stress management

Policy and

General Information Guide including

Work Related Stress Risk Assessments

Approved by Cabinet: 21 July 2004 for implementation 1 September 2004

Contents

	Page
1. Policy statement	3
2. Policy aims	3
3. Definition of stress	4
4. Prevention	4
5. Recognition	7
6. Rehabilitation	7
7. Employees' Responsibilities and Confidentiality	8
8. Audit and Evaluation	9
9. The Legal Background	9
10. Council related policies and procedures	10

Appendices

Procedure and guidance for undertaking work related stress risk assessments

"A Managers guide to Managing Stress"

"Stress Awareness" - An employees guide to managing stress

"A Councillor's guide"

STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Hyndburn Borough Council is committed to providing a working environment that values and promotes the health and wellbeing of all its employees. It recognises and accepts that there are increasing demands and pressures placed upon employees, and to some extent these could be considered an integral and unavoidable part of working life.
- 1.2 At the same time the Council is fully aware of the need to manage work related stress and is taking positive action by implementing this stress management policy throughout the organisation.
- 1.3 It will assist those experiencing ill health, and take positive action to support their recovery.

2. Policy Aims

- 2.1 Our aims are to:
 - To recognise the incidence of work related stress and to take action to minimise such risks
 - To manage all cases of stress presented in the workplace through effective and sensitive people management
 - To develop working practices that reduce the factors that may lead to stress in the workplace
 - To assist employees in managing stress for themselves and others
 - To monitor the effectiveness of the policy

3. Definition of Stress

3.1 The Health and Safety Executive has defined stress as:-

“ the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them. It arises when they worry that they can’t cope”.

This definition makes an important distinction between the beneficial effects of reasonable pressure and challenge, and work related stress, which is the natural but distressing reaction to demands or pressures that the person perceives they cannot cope with at a given time.

3.2 Anyone can suffer from stress – no one is immune. Pressures can arise from an individuals personal life as well as from work and individuals will vary in their ability to cope with different types of pressure. Some may recognise that their health is affected and will seek help; others may fail to recognise the symptoms and affect it may be having on them. They may rely on those around them, including their manager and work colleagues to recognise it and take action.

3.3 Although outside factors may be outside an employer’s responsibilities, these factors cannot be ignored as they could make employees vulnerable to stress at work as well as affecting their performance in the workplace.

3.4 The Department of Health guidelines on managing work related stress suggest that there are three levels at which employers can and should take action to demonstrate their duty of care to employees. These are:

- Level 1 – Prevention**
- Level 2 – Recognition**
- Level 3 – Rehabilitation**

4. Level 1- Prevention

4.1 Measures at an Organisational level

The authority will promote a culture that values employees as individuals and aims to maximise employee morale and well being by:

- Encouraging open communication throughout the organisation
- Respond to the views and concerns of employees arising from Employee Surveys

- Reviewing and improving policies and procedures that can be effective in improving employee health and well being
- Providing access to management development programmes for those with managerial and supervisory responsibility
- Raising the awareness of managers and employees about stress and how to manage it, their own and others
- Developing individual workplans that agree clear and achievable work objectives
- Providing a working environment that protects the well being of employees
- Supporting employees to develop themselves, ensuring they possess the relevant skills and abilities
- Providing opportunities for employees to maintain and promote their health and well being
- Monitoring sickness absence levels to measure the incidence of absence due to stress or nervous debility
- Undertaking stress risk assessments which involve consultation with health and safety representatives

4.2 Supporting managers

The authority will:

- Develop guidance notes on good management practices to reduce the incidence of work place stress
- Provide guidance to managers on how to assess risk in relation to workplace stress
- Provide training and development opportunities for managers
- Ensure that managers are aware of their responsibilities within the Councils Bullying and Harassment policy and other related HR policies
- Ensure that managers are aware of their responsibilities in the management of capability issues arising out of poor attendance or poor performance at work

- Support managers to carry out regular development and review meetings as part of the overall performance management framework
- Require managers to conduct regular team meetings as part of the Council's communication strategy, where employees are encouraged to raise concerns and deal with issues

4.3 Supporting employees

The authority will:

- Provide guidance and advice on managing stress, understanding the causes and preventative measures
- Encourage a working environment in which stress arising from work can be discussed sympathetically and positively and the information gained from these discussions fed into risk assessments.
- Implement a performance management framework that provides an opportunity for employees to agree clear and achievable work objectives with reasonable timescales attached.
- Provide access to training and development in accordance with the Employee Development and Appraisal scheme.
- Keep employees informed on issues that affect them and provide opportunities for them to be involved in decision making
- Promote a culture of consultation, participation and two way communication throughout the organisation, either individually or through the Councils formal mechanisms e.g. JCC and Corporate Health and Safety Team and Health and Safety Committee
- Take reasonable care for employees' safety in relation to their physical and mental well being

4.4 Supporting elected members

The authority will:

- Develop guidance and advice on managing stress, understanding the causes and preventative measures
- Support elected members to develop effective officer member relationships within the officer/member protocol and code of conduct

- Review role descriptions to ensure they provide clarity and guidance to individuals within the political management framework
- Ensure that elected members have access to training and development in accordance with the elected member development strategy
- Promote understanding on the responsibilities and accountabilities attached to the political decision making processes

4.5 Assessing risk

4.5.1 Risk assessment is the key to managing stress. The Health and Safety Executive identifies the following key factors which they believe can lead to workplace stress:

- Culture
- Demands
- Control
- Support
- Relationships
- Roles
- Change

4.5.2 Risk assessments will focus on these key factors and will examine whether existing measures to control harm are sufficient or if more needs to be done. The council has developed a related procedure for work related stress risk assessments. For further information and guidance refer to this procedure.

4.5.3 It is recognised that despite any preventative action to identify, remove or reduce stressors, there may still be occasions when employees may suffer from work related stress.

5. Level 2 – Recognition

5.1 Any employee exhibiting signs of stress should be given the opportunity to discuss this in a sympathetic and constructive environment. An appropriate manager should carry out an individual risk assessment with the employee concerned following the guidance set out in Procedure for Undertaking work related stress risk assessments. This procedure will act as a guide for the manager to explore areas that the employee may be having difficulty with. Where the employee identifies that the Line Manager/Employee relationship is a major factor that contributes to their Stress at Work an alternative manager or an officer from Human Resources (**see section 7 on confidentiality**) should be allocated to

undertake this role. An employee has the right to representation at the meeting. Outcomes of the meeting should be recorded on an individual action plan and a review date set.

- 5.2 Where individuals may be exhibiting symptoms of stress due to conflict or a breakdown in relationships; managers should take positive action to mediate such problems and resolve them. All employees have a duty to work cooperatively and to pursue a professional working relationship with managers, colleagues and peers at all times.
- 5.3 Where deemed appropriate, employees identified as suffering from stress may be referred to the Councils Occupational Health Advisor who may recommend counselling for the individual. In such circumstances employees will be afforded time off to access counselling and support.
- 5.4 Every effort will be made to support employees experiencing difficulties at work because of stress caused in their home life. This support may take the format of offering flexible hours (see Flexible Working Policy for further guidance) or providing time off for counselling.

6. Level 3 – Rehabilitation

- 6.1 Rehabilitation will generally be required following a period of sickness absence. Considerations may include a phased return to work (see Capability Policy for further guidance).
- 6.2 Where the illness was caused by work place factors, managers should seek to eliminate or reduce the risk in relation to any identified sources of stress. Following periods of long-term absence managers should undertake an individual risk assessment to enable them to take any necessary action to reduce or eliminate the risk prior to that employee returning to work. Any alterations should be considered in accordance with the sickness absence management policy.
- 6.3 It is the duty of line managers to smooth the path for employees returning to work after a period of sickness and to avoid them being exposed to any further risk. Employees suffering from stress or a stress related illness should be treated with the same degree of care as those suffering from a physical illness or condition.

7. Employees ‘ Responsibilities and Confidentiality

- 7.1 All employees are encouraged to be aware of their own levels of stress; take adequate care of themselves and take action to prevent deterioration

in their health. They need to work with managers to minimise the incidence of work related stress. This may involve making reasonable adjustments when working practices need to change due to forces outside the managers control.

- 7.2 Employees are requested to report matters of concern of a health and safety nature, as soon as they arise, including stress at work, to their manager. Employees have a role to play in identifying solutions or proposing actions to bring about improvements. Discussions with managers will be confidential; however it must be recognised that their manager has a responsibility to take appropriate action to resolve an issue. This may require the need to discuss any issues with a more senior manager, or a member of staff within Human Resources, or the Councils Occupational Health Advisor.
- 7.3 Likewise employees approaching Human Resources staff direct must again understand that any issues raised may need to be referred to a senior manager. Issues identified which may involve bullying, harassment or inappropriate management will be managed through the appropriate policies.
- 7.4 Where employees are referred for counselling, confidentiality will be afforded over the use of sessions and their content. An employee must understand that matters raised with a counsellor are confidential and the Council will not be aware of the contents, or able to take any appropriate action to resolve matters.

8. Audit and evaluation

- 8.1 The authority will need to become aware of the factors that are most likely to lead to excessive pressure and stress in the workplace. It is committed to working with managers, employees, elected members and trade unions to identify which aspects of the working environment are causing most difficulties and to work together for improvements. Any work related stress audit will make use of best practice and available guidance from the Health and Safety Executive.
- 8.2 The Councils existing procedures in relation to performance management will contribute towards evaluating the effectiveness of the policy. Examples include: sickness absence monitoring, Investors in People reviews, employee surveys, grievances, exit questionnaires.
- 8.3 In addition results of risk assessments and monitoring activities will be made available to the Corporate Health and Safety Team and the Safety Committee.

- 8.4 The policy will be reviewed bi-annually to ensure it meets the needs of the organisation and its employees. The results of this evaluation will be reported to the Safety Committee and Cabinet

9. Legal background

- 9.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty on employers to take reasonable care for employees' safety in relation to their physical and mental well being. In addition the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to identify and assess risks to employees' health and safety and take appropriate preventative measures to remove or reduce them.
Health and Safety Law is not the only legal reason why action needs to be taken to tackle work related stress. It should be noted as follows:
- 9.2 Section A4 of the Public Order Act 1986, makes it a criminal offence to use threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour likely to cause harassment, harm or distress. This can be relevant to bullying.
- 9.3 The prevention of Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence for a person to pursue a course of conduct , which amounts to the harassment of another person.
- 9.4 The European Working Time Directive provides for a maximum 48 hour working week and regular rest breaks. Harassment that may lead to stress related illness, as a result of discrimination is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

10. Related Council Policy and Procedures

Undertaking stress risk assessments – guidance for managers

Capability Policy and Guidelines

Flexible Working Policy

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Communications Strategy

Corporate Health and Safety Policy

Employee Development and Appraisal Scheme

Performance Management Framework

Substance Misuse Policy

**The above policies can be accessed through the Councils Hyntranet
or via the Employee Handbook**

Undertaking Work Related Stress –Risk Assessments – Procedure and Guidance for managers

1. Steps to take prior assessment

1.1 The following will help to prepare for the assessment:

- Discuss work-related stress with all employees, explaining that you want to identify if there is a problem within your area;
- Make them aware that the council has a stress management policy and as part of the policy is committed to undertaking regular risk assessments in regard to work related stress
- Share your aims with your employees and explain the risk assessment process and the risk factors identified by the HSE
- Remind employees of the guidance booklet for employees on stress awareness and ensure they all are able to access a copy
- Remind them that they should raise any concerns they may have at any time, either on a an individual basis or at team meeting

2. The risk assessment process

The work-related stress risk assessment follows the same principles as any other risk assessment:

Step 1 –Identify the hazards

Step 2 – Decide who may be at risk and how

Step 3 – Evaluate the risk by

i) Identifying what action you are already taking

ii) Deciding whether it is enough or whether there is more you need to do

Step 4 – Record any significant findings

Step 5 – Review the assessment at appropriate intervals

2.1 Identify the hazards

For work related stress there are seven broad categories of risk factors as identified by the HSE:

- **Culture** – of the Council and the department – how work-related stress is approached

- **Demands** – such as workload and exposure to physical hazards;
- **Controls** – how much say a person has in the way they do their work;
- **Relationships** – covering issues such as bullying and harassment;
- **Change** – how change is managed and communicated;
- **Role** – whether the individual understands their role; and whether the council ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles;
- **Support, Training and Unique Factors** –
 - **Support** – from peers and line management;
 - **Training** – for the person to be able to undertake the core functions of the job;
 - **Unique Factors** – are there any special needs or circumstances that need to be taken account of

More detailed information on these factors can be found in the Stress Guidance booklets for managers and employees and at appendix A.

There are a variety of ways in which the information can be gathered for the risk assessment, for instance:

Informal talks to staff - either at team meetings or via normal daily contact. You should be able to pick up if staff are continually unhappy or not performing well.

Performance Management interviews – this provides an ideal opportunity for them to explore individually with staff what factors may be preventing them from performing better in their job.

Focus Groups – if information already available identifies particular groups or sections that are more susceptible to work related stress then a focus group can be set up to examine the causes and look for possible solutions.

One to one Interviews – if information available identifies that a particular group or section is more susceptible to work related stress then in some circumstances it may be more appropriate to hold one to one interviews rather than a focus group.

Return to Work Interviews – these provide a valuable opportunity to examine whether short-term absences may be linked to work related stress.

Sickness/Absence Statistics – the format of return to work interviews has been changed to make it easier to capture information on absences which may be attributable to work related stress.

Consultation – reports from undertaking staff surveys may highlight information for further examination. As may local health and safety reps or union reps. These possible valuable sources of information should not be ignored.

2.2 Decide who might be harmed and how.

2.2.1 Work related stress could affect any member of your team, especially those exposed to the risk factor categories mentioned above.

2.2.2 There are times when people are more vulnerable to work related stress and management should give serious consideration to anyone in the categories mentioned below:

- Suffered previous stress related illness;
- Experiencing recent domestic crisis, such as bereavement;
- Vulnerable worker for example young workers.

2.3 Evaluate the risk – to decide if enough has been done.

2.3.1 Consider how likely it is that each hazard mentioned in 2.1 above could cause harm to your employees. In taking action ask yourself for each:

- What action is being taken?
- Is it enough?
- If not, what more will you do?

2.3.2 You should eliminate the risk as far as possible. You should try to take action that protects everyone, rather than just a few individuals.

e.g for example an employee may be working at a level detrimental to their health and the manager may have to intervene to reduce their exposure to further stress, thereby protecting both the individual and the Council.

2.4 **Record the significant findings**

- 2.4.1 You must record the significant findings of your risk assessments on the attached form and communicate your findings to employees.
- 2.4.2 The assessment should be used to monitor progress and keep an eye on particular hazards.

2.5 **Review the assessment**

- 2.5.1 You are required to review all risk assessments including those relating to work related stress annually or on a significant change of circumstances to ensure they are still relevant and where necessary reassess.

APPENDIX A

(Guidance extracted from HSG218 Tackling Work Related Stress by HSE)

FACTOR 1 – CULTURE

Organisational culture is key to determining how successful you will be in managing work related stress. Organisational culture is often very strong, rooted in history and difficult to change. An organisation has a positive culture when:

- Work related stress and health issues are treated seriously and the organisation responds positively to any concerns
- There is good open communication between employees and between employees and management
- Staff are consulted and, where possible, able to participate in decisions that may affect them
- Staff are supported emotionally and practically
- Staff 'buy into' their work i.e. they are undertaking tasks because they understand what they are trying to achieve and are proud of their achievements for personal and organisational reasons
- Problems are recognized and solved promptly
- Working long hours is not encouraged
- Staff are not encouraged to take work home

Some ideas for improvement

- Communicate regularly with staff, particularly those working remotely and be open and honest about what is happening at work and how it may affect them
- Adopt partnership approaches in the workplace to encourage staff to work with you to tackle work related stress or any emerging business problem. Encourage staff to talk to you at an early stage about work related stress, mental health issues and their concerns about work. Create an environment where these issues do not carry a stigma.
- Try to involve staff in the planning process so they understand how their work 'fits'.
- Offer internal support. This could be practical things, like coaching or it could be emotional support during personal crises.

The way you embrace these issues can influence how committed employees feel towards the organisation and how committed they feel the organisation is to their welfare. It can also affect how willing employees are to talk about matters that are causing them genuine concern.

FACTOR 2 – DEMANDS

Demands on the individual are often quoted as the main cause of work related stress.

There are five areas of concern regarding demands:

Work overload

Work overload can occur when a person is allocated a great deal of work, but insufficient resources (in terms of ability, staff, time or equipment) to cope with it. This can be quantitative overload (simply having too much work to do) or qualitative overload (where the work is too difficult for the employee to do).

Employees faced with work overload may try to cope by working excessive hours, which may lead to health problems and problems outside work. Working excessive hours can lead to fatigue which in turn can impact on performance, creating a vicious circle of more time and effort being put into the work, with less being achieved. Employees may also take work home, which can be detrimental to their family and social life.

We also know that work involving a fast pace and the need to resolve conflicting priorities is associated with a higher risk of psychiatric disorder, poor physical fitness or illness. An example is several people giving the same person large amounts of work with short deadlines. It is important to remember that most staff need to have a certain amount to challenge and pressure to keep them interested in the work and motivated. The key is to strike the right balance through discussion with all those involved in the work.

There may be occasions when the section has to work at extreme levels to meet a deadline. In such circumstances staff should be told why it is essential and that their extra efforts are appreciated.

Capability and capacity

Regulation 13(1) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers, when entrusting tasks to employees to take into account their capabilities as regards health and safety. Paragraph 80 of the Approved Code of Practice says:

When allocating work to employees, employers should ensure that the demands of the job do not exceed the employees' ability to carry out the work without risk to themselves or others... Employers should review their employees' capabilities to carry out their work, as necessary.

This includes making sure that employees' mental health is not put at risk through the work they are required to do. Providing training for the job is an important ingredient. Particular attention must be paid to the demands placed upon young workers. The above Regulations prohibits the employment of a

young person for work that is beyond their psychological capacity; e.g. dealing with violent and aggressive behaviour, or having to take decisions under pressure may be work that is beyond a young person's emotional coping ability.

Work underload

The problem here lies with the employee not being sufficiently challenged by work. Job underload, associated with repetitive, routine, boring and under-stimulating work can lead to the employee feeling dissatisfied and under utilised.

Physical environment

Aspects of the physical environment that can affect employees include noise, vibration, temperature, ventilation, humidity, lighting and hygiene.

Some studies have shown that employees make a greater number of errors when there are high noise levels, and noise levels have also been found to increase vulnerability to accidents. Exposure to noise is associated with reported fatigue, headaches, irritability and reduced ability to concentrate. In one study reported stress levels were increased by a combination of different factors, depending on where people were working and the physical environment they were exposed to. Vibration is considered to be a powerful source of stress. It affects brain chemistry and function. In those exposed to harmful substances, fears concerning effects of these can increase anxiety.

Psychosocial environment

People who deal directly with the public may face aggressive or violent behaviour. They may be sworn at, threatened or even attacked. This can be a cause of anxiety.

Some ideas for improvement:

- Ensure there are sufficient resources to do the work allocated.
If there is not then seek guidance on priorities.
Support your staff by helping them prioritise or renegotiate deadlines
Cover workloads during staff absences
- If people are underloaded, think about giving them more responsibility, but make sure they have been adequately trained.
- Strike a balance between ensuring that employees are interested and busy, but not underloaded, overloaded or confused about the job.
- Train staff so that they are able to do their jobs
- Talk to your team regularly about what needs to be done, because this can:

Help you understand the challenges the team faces

- Find ways of sharing the work out sensibly and agreeing the way forward for the team
- Gain team commitments and cohesion to the work you have planned.
- Lead by example

FACTOR 3 – CONTROL

Control is the amount of say an individual has in how their work is carried out. Research has shown that not having much say in how work is done may be associated with poor mental health and a higher risk of alcohol dependency. Research also suggests that when there are greater opportunities for participating in decision-making, greater satisfaction and higher feelings of self-esteem are reported. Non-participation appears to be linked to work related stress and overall poor physical health.

Some ideas for improvement:

- Give more control to staff by enabling them to plan their own work, make decisions about how that work should be completed and how problems should be tackled.
- Enrich jobs by ensuring staff are able to use various skills to get task completed and that staff can understand how their work fits in with the wider aims of the unit.
- Only monitor employees' output if this is essential. Regular meetings with staff could be arranged to see how things are going. At these meetings managers could provide advice and support where necessary, and ensure staff are coping
- A supportive environment is crucial. Staff need to know that managers will support them, even if things go wrong or if they find that they are unable to cope with added pressures.

FACTOR 4 – RELATIONSHIPS

We use the word relationships to describe the way we interact with people at work for business purposes.

Other people can be important sources of support but they can also be sources of stress. At work, relationships with bosses, peer and subordinates can dramatically affect the way we feel at the end of the day. There are two particular aspects of relationships that could lead to work related stress – bullying and harassment.

Harassment is taken to mean unwanted conduct based on sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, colour, religion or belief, nationality, ethnic or national origin or disability that affects the dignity of people at work.

Bullying is taken to mean persistent unacceptable behaviour (or a single, grossly unacceptable act) by one or more individuals in the organisation against one or more employees. The behaviour is perceived by the person experiencing it to be offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or involving an abuse of power.

Bullying and harassment are two forms of behaviour that are unacceptable in organisations and almost inevitably generate stress and can lead to stress related illnesses.

Some ideas for improvement:

- Work in partnership with employees to ensure that bullying and harassment never emerge as an issue.
- Ensure that employees are aware of the various procedures already in place such as the Harassment at Work Procedure, Disciplinary Procedure and Grievance Procedure.
- Create a culture where members of the team trust each other and can be themselves while they are at work
- Encourage employees to recognise the individual contributions of other team members and the benefits of the whole team pulling together.

FACTOR 5 – CHANGE

Many organisations have undergone significant change in the last decade or so. They have had to adapt the way they work to accommodate, for example, new technology, competition and changing market conditions. Often their response has included restructuring, downsizing and adopting entirely new ways of working. Poor management of change can lead to individuals feeling anxious about their employment status and reporting work related stress.

Some ideas for improvement:

- Explain what the organisation wants to achieve and why it is essential that the change takes place – explain the timetable for change and what the first steps are going to be. Talk about what the change will mean in terms of day to day activity and discuss whether there are any new training needs.
- Communicate new developments quickly to avoid the spread of rumors in the organisation.

- Face-to-face communication is usually best so that people have the opportunity to ask questions and say what they feel, but any means e.g. paper or electronic would be helpful.
- Have an 'open door' policy where staff can talk to you about their concerns or any suggestions they have for improving the way the change is managed.
- Give staff the opportunity to comment and ask questions before, during and after the change.
- Involve staff in discussions about how jobs might be developed and changed and in generating ways of solving problems.
- Supporting your staff during change is crucial.
- After the change think about revising work objectives to avoid role conflict and role ambiguity.
- Revise your risk assessments to see if any changes have resulted in increased hazards to staff.

FACTOR 6 – ROLE

You can help reduce stress by ensuring that a person's role in the organisation is clearly defined and understood, and that the expectations placed on them do not conflict. There are two potentially stressful areas associated with a person's role in an organisation. They are role conflict and role ambiguity.

Role conflict – role conflict exists when an individual is torn by conflicting job demands or by doing things they do not really want to do, or things which the individual does not believe are part of their job. Workers may often feel themselves torn between two groups of people who demand different types of behaviour, or believe the job entails different functions.

Role ambiguity – role ambiguity arises when individuals do not have a clear picture about their work objectives, their co-workers' expectations of them and the scope and responsibilities of their job. Often this ambiguity results simply because a manager or supervisor has never adequately explained what is required of them or because the job has changed without this being acknowledged in the job description. A wide range of situations can create role ambiguity, e.g. entering a new job or organisation, a promotion or transfer, a new boss, the first supervisory responsibility or adapting to a change in the structure of the existing organisation.

Some ideas for improvement:

- Make sure staff have a clearly defined role, e.g. through a personal work plan which enables them to understand exactly what their roles and responsibilities are;
- Encourage your staff to talk to you at an early stage if they are not clear about priorities or the nature of the task to be undertaken;
- Talk to all your staff regularly to make sure that they are completely clear about the current job, what it entails, what you expect of them and what they can expect from you;
- Make sure that new members of staff receive a comprehensive induction to the service area
- If your organisation has undergone change, check with members of your team to make sure they understand their new roles and are comfortable with them.

FACTOR 7: SUPPORT, TRAINING AND FACTORS UNIQUE TO THE INDIVIDUAL

The HSE insist that every employer should provide adequate health and safety training but they also recommend that employees also receive sufficient training to undertake the core functions of their jobs.

Employees need to be competent and feel comfortable doing their jobs. You should provide training to equip staff with the skills they need. If new work is taken on, make sure that objectives can be achieved using skills and competencies that staff have, or that can be developed quickly.

If you are recruiting new employees, make sure that they are matched to the job (in terms of skills, ability and commitment), receive an induction and are aware of your policy on work-related stress.

The way you support both new and existing staff is key to reducing or moderating work related stress. The way you provide that support can vary from offering help in times of crisis, through to informally congratulating a member of the team for a job well done.

Even when the work has not been completed to the standard you required, you should attempt to provide constructive, supportive advice. For example, you can provide advice on where things went wrong and what you would like to see happen in the future. Simply reprimanding your staff and doing nothing else is unlikely to be helpful – your staff will not learn anything and they are likely to be anxious about undertaking similar tasks in the future.

You need to take account of the make-up of your team. For example, some members may thrive on working to tight deadlines, others might like to plan their

work so that they know what they have to do and when. Try, as far as possible, to cater for these individual differences by talking to your staff as a team – you might find that there is scope to allocate work in a way that suits all team members, or that you can manage the work in a different way for different people.

Do not try and train staff to be stress-resistant. There is little evidence it works, but even so, stress management is not the answer – stress prevention is.

Some ideas for improvement:

- Give support and encouragement to staff, even when things go wrong;
- Listen to your staff and agree a course of action for tackling any problems – it is important for staff to feel that the contribution they make at work is valued;
- Involve your staff – they need to ‘do their bit’ to identify problems and work towards agreed solutions
- Encourage staff to share their concerns about work-related stress at an early stage;
- Provide your staff with suitable and sufficient training to do their jobs;
- Give new staff a proper induction into the unit and organisation;
- Take into account that people’s skills and the way they approach the work will differ;
- Value diversity – don’t discriminate against people on the grounds of race, sex disability or other irrelevant reasons;
- Encourage a health ‘work-life balance’
- Encourage staff to take their annual leave entitlement and their meal break

GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT WORK-RELATED STRESS

SERVICE AREA		WORK AREA/ ACTIVITY BEING ASSESSED:		
DATE				
ASSESSORS		INDIVIDUALS/ GROUPS AT RISK		
<u>IDENTIFICATION OF HAZARDS</u>				
FACTOR	ANY HAZARDS IDENTIFIED	LEVEL OF RISK H/M/L	PREVENTATIVE ACTION	BY WHOM BY WHEN
FACTOR 1 CULTURE- Of the organisation and how it approaches work-related stress				
FACTOR 2 DEMANDS- Such as the workload and exposure to the physical hazards <i>e.g Is it realistic? Can employees cope with what is expected of them? Are their opportunities to discuss workload? pls see appendix A for further guidance</i>				
FACTOR 3 CONTROL- How much say the person has in the way they do their work Are workplan reviews carried out? Are employees involved in organising and planning work? pls see appendix A for further guidance				

FACTOR	ANY HAZARDS IDENTIFIED	LEVEL OF RISK H/M/L	PREVENTATIVE ACTION	BY WHOM BY WHEN
<p>FACTOR 4 RELATIONSHIPS- Covering issues such as bullying and harassment Are there tensions within the team? <i>pls see appendix A for further guidance</i></p>				
<p>FACTOR 5 CHANGE- How organisational change is managed and communicated <i>e.g. Are employees consulted/involved in local changes? Do they understand why change is necessary and how it will affect them?</i> <i>pls see appendix A for further guidance</i></p>				

FACTOR	ANY HAZARDS IDENTIFIED	LEVEL OF RISK H/M/L	PREVENTATIVE ACTION	
<p>FACTOR 6 ROLE- Whether the individual understands their role in the organisation; how they contribute to the “bigger picture”.</p> <p><i>pls see appendix A for further guidance</i></p>				
<p>FACTOR 7 SUPPORT, TRAINING, FACTORS UNIQUE TO THE INDIVIDUAL- Support from peers and managers. Training to undertake the core functions of the job. Catering for individual differences</p> <p><i>Are employees aware of flexible working opportunities?</i></p> <p><i>Do they get praise and recognition for a job well done?</i></p> <p><i>Do team meetings provide opportunities to discuss any problems?</i></p> <p><i>pls see appendix A for further guidance</i></p>				

REVIEW REQUIRED BY:

WORK-RELATED STRESS INDIVIDUAL ACTION PLAN

NAME OF EMPLOYEE		JOB TITLE	
DATE OF MEETING		SERVICE AREA	
MEETING ATTENDED BY			
ACTION PLAN			
CAUSES OF STRESS IDENTIFIED	AGREED ACTION		ACTION DATE
			REVIEW DATE
ACTION PLAN AGREED BY:	EMPLOYEE:		DATE
	MANAGER:		DATE
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW MEETING	DATE:		

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Emotional Wellbeing Handbook



HYNDBURN

The place to be
an excellent council

When asked what we'd want most for our loved ones, wouldn't most of us simply answer, "I just want them to be happy"? Emotional wellbeing matters. It affects how we feel physically, how we work and therefore the valuable services we provide. Happiness isn't some fuzzy emotion. It's an attitude. It's a set of skills and techniques. 1 in 4 people will experience some form of mental health problem in any given year. That's why understanding and equipping ourselves with the tools to manage our own emotional wellbeing matters.

Happy, resilient people:

- Are more motivated, energised and productive;
- Are healthier, less likely to suffer from anxiety or depression;
- Take fewer days off sick;
- Have fresh ideas;
- Keep things in perspective;
- Stay with their employers;
- Are more liked by their colleagues;
- See the positives even in difficult situations;
- Spread their happiness to those around them.

All of us have times of stress, loss, failure or trauma in our lives. But how we respond to these has a big impact on our wellbeing. We often cannot choose what happens to us, but usually we can choose our own attitude to what happens. Resilience, like many other life skills, can be learned.

What is resilience?

- Being able to cope with life's problems;
- Letting go, not being weighed down by resentments;
- Accepting what you can't change;
- Able to adapt to changes at work;
- Emerging from adversity feeling stronger and more resourceful;
- Staying focused on what you're trying to achieve even when things aren't going to plan.

Building emotional wellbeing

You are in charge of your own happiness and you can take action to increase your resilience. You can't always predict or control what life throws at you, but you can gain skills to help you deal with challenges, recover more quickly and learn and grow as a result. This can even lower your risk of depression and anxiety. The same skills can help you manage the fear of taking on new opportunities and so help you develop in other ways too. Here are 10 suggestions.

1

Work on happiness when you're feeling emotionally well

The best time to work on your own happiness and resilience is when things are going well. You could think of it as being a bit like paying into an insurance policy: put the effort in when times are good and you'll be in a better position to deal with the difficult things later.

2

Deal with problems early

It's always better to tackle issues soon after they arise, before they get worse. To begin with, this might just mean asking for some advice or talking it through with someone to help you decide what to do. Holding things in or hoping they'll go away might mean you're in pretty bad shape emotionally before getting help and then it takes much longer to feel better.



If you're finding it difficult to work with a colleague, think about whether mediation would help. We have trained mediators who can help arrange a structured, honest discussion between people who aren't getting along. This means that the decision on how to resolve the situation rests with the people concerned, rather than someone telling you what you have to do or how you have to behave. You get to tell the other person what you're upset about as well as listening to their point of view. You might not walk out of a mediation session being the best of friends but chances are you'll have an agreement on how you're going to work together in the future.

3

Get help if you're struggling

We all respond emotionally to things that happen, or that other people say or do. It's important to recognise those feelings. Sometimes the kindest thing you can do for yourself is take time out for a good cry or go to trusted friends or colleagues for some support. Sometimes that's not enough and people need a bit more support from counselling or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). This can provide a safe space and professional guidance for us to explore difficult issues and emotions, cope with crises or losses, improve relationships, or develop new ways of thinking and living.



You can contact our Employee Assistance Programme at any time, 24/7, about anything that's troubling you. It can be work or personal, relating to health, money, legal matters, caring responsibilities – anything. They can arrange counselling locally and it's all completely confidential. Just ring 0800243458, or go to www.workplaceoptions.com



Friendly Faces

Here at the council we have a network of what we like to call "friendly faces". They're trained to listen and might be able to offer some advice. You can contact one of this group if you're struggling.

4

Be kind to yourself

It's also important to accept yourself for who you are, flaws and all. Find out what your strengths are and try and use these more. Forgive yourself for mistakes of the past: you can do this by learning from them, putting right what you can and moving on.

Remember that emotions are natural human reactions, including sadness, guilt, grief and anxiety. You have to accept them before you can move on.

Try to engage in activities that are both personally significant and enjoyable. Make times for the things you enjoy and the people who help you feel positive.



We have great flexible working policies including a generous leave entitlement and compassionate leave when people are dealing with caring responsibilities, family illness or bereavement.



It can be tempting to use alcohol as a way of winding down at the end of the day. This can get out of control and move into dependency or addiction. Our Drug and Alcohol Policy lists many sources of support. If you're struggling to control your drinking, it's really important to remember that you're not alone and there is help.

5

Do good to feel good

Caring about others really helps with your own sense of wellbeing and makes you healthier. It builds stronger connections between you and other people. It doesn't have to involve money – your time, ideas and energy are just as valuable. You could:

- Make someone smile;
- Give your time to the people who matter to you – play with your kids, call a friend or relative;
- Offer to help someone;
- Give blood;
- Volunteer;
- Give your change to charity;
- Pay someone a compliment;
- Reach out to someone who's struggling and let them know you care.

6

Get active

Take care of your body and your mind will feel better too. Exercise instantly lifts your mood, even just a brisk walk and some fresh air. Find something that you enjoy and make time to fit it into your day. Eating properly, drinking more water and getting enough sleep is really important too.



Council employees benefit from reduced leisure rates at local leisure centres and other discounted activities. See our Employee Benefits booklet for more details. Watch out for activities for staff, such as boxercise classes. Go for a lunchtime walk, maybe invite a colleague to join you.

7

Appreciate the world around you

Stop and take notice of the beauty around you: birds singing; the smell of your favourite food; or a great view. Mindfulness helps our overall wellbeing and keeps us in tune with how we're feeling. It can stop you dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. Try to take a couple of minutes during the day to stop, breathe and be in the moment.

We can always find things to be grateful for, whatever's happening around us. These are usually the little things, because they tend to turn out to be the most important – a smile from a loved one, a favourite book or TV show, a cup of tea and a catch-up with an old friend. Try and see the glass as half-full rather than half-empty.



A useful exercise is to write down, at the end of each day, 3 good things that have happened to you. Being grateful can help people cope with stress and can even have a beneficial effect on heart rate. This action is easy to do yet its benefits have been scientifically proven. In tests, people who tried it each night for just one week were happier and less depressed one month, three months and six months later.

8

Grow and learn

Learning opens your minds to new ideas and can be a real self-confidence booster. Having goals for the future which are challenging but achievable is really important for our happiness too.



We have lots of ways you can learn new things at work, whether it's attending a course, completing a qualification, borrowing a book from our learning library, or improving your English, maths or ICT skills. Courses are run locally outside work in all sorts of subjects. Why not contact Louise, our Union Learning Rep and OD officer, for advice on how you can find out what's available.



We have a group of people trained in coaching throughout the council and also links to external coaches. They can help you work out how to deal with a situation that's proving problematic or how to break down a goal into achievable steps.

9

Try and keep things in perspective

Here are some useful questions you can ask yourself:

- On a scale of 1-10, how bad is this?
- In 3 months' time, how important will this be?
- Is this within your control?
- What would my most trusted friend advise me to do?
- What can I do to make this situation a bit better?
- What can I take from this situation that's positive?
- What can I learn from this and what might I do differently next time?



Try this free online Happiness at Work survey:

www.app.happinessatworksurvey.com/?a=afh

It gives you instant, confidential results and suggestions on actions you can take.

USEFUL LINKS

Mind - the charity for better mental health: www.mind.org.uk

Action for Happiness: www.actionforhappiness.org

CBT overview: www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfoforall/treatments/cbt.aspx

NHS self-help therapies: www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/self-help-therapies.aspx

5 steps to mental wellbeing: www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/improve-mental-wellbeing.aspx

Samaritans: <http://www.samaritans.org>, 08457 90 90 90

TED talks, free talks by inspiring people: www.ted.com

Anxiety UK, user-led mental health charity: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Citizens Advice: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Healthy Minds East Lancashire: <http://www.eastlancshealthyminds.co.uk>

Self Help Guides: <http://www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp/>

OUR FRIENDLY FACES TEAM...

10

Deal with work stress

Stress can be a good thing. It challenges us, makes us grow and can help us be more productive. Unhealthy work-related stress develops because a person is unable to cope with the demands being placed on them. It can be a significant cause of illness.

If you're feeling that aspects of your job are becoming difficult to cope with, we want to help you deal with these as soon as we can. In the past, traditional approaches to stress management have been to offer support when someone is signed off sick, or is already very upset. It's always easier to resolve things before that stage. We don't want people becoming ill because of things that happen at work. We believe that work should contribute to your happiness, not make you unhappy. Whenever you raise issues, we'll try and support you by listening to your concerns and supporting you to take constructive actions. Where we can make some helpful changes, we'll try to do that too.



If you see colleagues behaving towards other people in a way that you don't think is acceptable, check out our Dignity at Work policy for some practical advice on what to do.



Stress is an inevitable part of work. The next time you're feeling overwhelmed, try this exercise: make a list of the things causing you stress. Put them into two groups—the ones you can control and those you can't. Choose one thing that you can control and come up with a small, concrete step you can take to reduce it. Try it with another. In this way you can find your way back to a positive—and productive—mind-set.

The document on the next page is designed for you to note some aspects of your job, or relationships at work, that are proving difficult. It includes external factors too since people often find they're struggling with a combination of things. We'll use this to discuss and explore what's going wrong and what you or we can do to improve things.

You can just use bullet point / word prompts if you like, or just even underline the possible causes you think might apply to you.

Our discussion with you will include:

What's going on? How long for?

What have you tried to do to make things better?

What else can you do? What can we do to help you?

Dealing with change

- Able to ask questions and express views
- Able to influence decisions

Getting the right support

- Given relevant information
- Encouragement from colleagues and managers
- Receive regular feedback
- Understand the policies and procedures being used

Your Job

- Workload
- Deadlines
- Working hours
- Skills needed to do the job
- Working environment
- Safety

Your role

- Understand how role contributes to "bigger picture"
- Clear about responsibilities and boundaries
- Feel empowered

Your sense of control

- Able to develop new skills
- Having a say in what you do
- Using your skills and initiative

Anything else?

Issues outside work

- Friends and family difficulties
- Relationships
- Bereavement
- Debt
- Health problems
- Caring responsibilities
- Life changes
- Moving house
- Other commitments and responsibilities
- Other employment
- Work-life balance

Relationships at work

- Sense of fairness
- Able to deal with conflict
- Tensions within the team
- Clear standards of acceptable behaviour
- Able to tackle unacceptable behaviour
- Feel valued

Promoting Emotional Wellbeing

A Guide for Managers



This short guide is to support the Emotional Wellbeing Handbook. It tells you about your responsibilities as a manager and ways you can help people in your teams to remain resilient. It also gives you some guidelines on what to do when someone isn't in the best place emotionally - when they're saying they feel stressed or anxious, for example, or when their behaviour suggests that something's not right.

We all have different strengths, experiences and ways of looking at the world. Some managers are more comfortable than others in dealing with emotional issues and people will need varying levels of support according to each circumstance.

Briefly, you should:

- Read the Emotional Wellbeing Handbook and this guide.
- Take responsibility for your own emotional wellbeing. Practice the wellbeing actions suggested in the Handbook yourself.
- Complete this e-learning course: register at <http://www.managingemployeewellbeing.com/bitc/index.html>.
- Be aware of your own behaviour and how this can affect your team.
- Be alert to concerns as they develop involving team members and take appropriate action.
- Use employee survey feedback to encourage discussion about making improvements within your work area.
- Understand and be prepared for how people react in times of change
- Know and use the support available to you and your staff.
- If you manage other managers or supervisors, make sure they understand their responsibilities too and offer them support when they need it.

Support for you

Managing people can be difficult, however skilled you are. Remember that you're not alone and we're not asking you to be an expert in wellbeing and mental health issues. Where appropriate, we'll get advice based on people's individual circumstances and support needs.

- We offer learning opportunities to managers in emotional wellbeing issues and you should discuss any learning needs with your line manager or HR.
- HR officers can support you and talk through difficult situations.
- Occupational Health will give you updates and advice, including making reasonable adjustments and whether someone might be classed as having a disability under the Equality Act 2010. HR will usually liaise with Occupational Health on your behalf.
- The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a resource that you can use as a manager if you have a difficult situation, as well as something you can signpost your staff to.
- A coach can help you explore tricky situations and potential solutions.

What is your role in your team's wellbeing?

As a line manager, it's really important that you handle situations fairly and sensitively, not least because it's the right thing to do, in line with our corporate values, but also because doing the wrong thing can contribute to workplace conflict, ill health including sickness absence or even legal claims.

Employers have a legal duty under health and safety legislation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees as far as reasonably practicable. Employers are also under a "common law" duty to have reasonable care for the health and safety of their employees. This includes taking steps to minimise the risk of stress or stress-related illnesses.

You have a vital role to play in supporting the health and wellbeing of your team.

Direct impact – your behaviour has a direct influence on how your team members feel, for example whether they feel valued or taken for granted, whether they are clear about what is expected of them or confused about what they are supposed to do. You can prevent (or cause) stress by the way that you behave towards your team and the degree of openness in your communications with your team.

Gatekeeper role – you are often the interface between other managers, services, or customers and the employees you manage. You can influence whether your team members are protected from, or exposed to, difficult working conditions. For instance, it would be your role to negotiate an extension to a deadline on a new piece of work when your team is working to full capacity.

"Good line management can lead to good health, well-being and improved performance. Line managers also have a role in identifying and supporting people with health conditions to help them to carry on with their responsibilities, or adjust responsibilities where necessary."

Dame Carol Black, National Director for Health and Work

Taking action - you are likely to be involved in finding solutions to problems at, or affecting, work. You are responsible for applying HR policies and procedures (for example Attendance Management, Grievance, Drugs and Alcohol).



WHAT IS

STRESS

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines work-related stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work”. According to the HSE, stress is not an illness but a “state”. Stress may become an illness if it is excessive and prolonged and a mental and/or physical illness develops as a result.

A certain amount of pressure is a normal part of most jobs and it can help to keep an individual motivated and thriving. However, there is a point at which too much pressure can result in stress symptoms. The tipping point will differ from person to person. Some employees are better able to cope with pressure than others, depending on their own level of resilience at that time, and the kind of issue they’re dealing with.

Signs that an employee isn’t thriving include:

- withdrawal from others;
- increased accidents, incidents and errors;
- difficulty completing tasks on time and to the required standard, when they have previously performed well;
- increased absenteeism or lateness;
- high blood pressure, insomnia, more frequent illness and visits to the doctor
- emotional outbursts;
- easily upset or angered; and
- increased use of alcohol or other drugs.

Creating a healthy work environment where people can thrive

If you understand how resilient and happy people behave, and communicate regularly with the people you manage, you will probably recognise when someone is struggling. Your role then is to support them to restore a balance of healthy pressure, opportunity and encouragement.

Always remember that people need time to recuperate and recharge their batteries. Keep in mind that what motivates one worker may overwhelm another. Things that can prove a challenge include:

- An uncontrollable or unpredictable event, including things that happen outside work. This might include a serious accident, bereavement, relationship breakdown, or a sudden job change.
- Being overwhelmed. Too many things can be on someone’s plate at once.
- People working beyond their capabilities, skill level or coping resources. Common examples are taking on new responsibilities without enough training, or caring for an elderly parent.

How to open up a conversation about emotional wellbeing

A guide produced by Mind / CIPD includes some questions that you can use to start a conversation with a team member who appears to be showing signs of being emotionally unwell. These should help to shape the conversation rather than being used as checklist.

- How are you doing at the moment?
- You seem a bit down / upset / under pressure / frustrated / angry. Is everything OK?
- I’ve noticed you’ve been arriving late recently and I wondered if you’re OK.
- I’ve noticed the reports are late when they’re usually on time. Is everything OK?
- Is there anything I can do to help?
- What would you like to happen? How?
- What support do you think might help?
- Have you spoken to your GP or looked for help anywhere else?

Risk assessment – when people are experiencing stress

- Use the back page of the Handbook (a risk assessment tool) to explore with your team member(s) what's causing problems.
- From that discussion agree an action plan.
- Make sure you follow through on things you've agreed to do and tell your team member(s) what you've done and if applicable, what the outcome is.
- Check back regularly to see if people are OK or if there's any further action required.

Top Tips – helping people thrive

- Listen. You can't help if you don't understand. You can only understand if you accept that we all have different ways of reacting to what happens.
- Be quick to praise good work and initiative.
- Greet people with a genuine smile and acknowledgement – say “good morning / afternoon” or “hello”.
- Encourage a healthy work-life balance.
- Signpost employees to the employee assistance programme for support in dealing with practical or emotional problems.
- Encourage skill development so that team members are prepared for new challenges.
- Talk with your employees about the Council's goals and successes and how they contribute to this.
- If a difficult conversation is necessary, do it in private and make your sure your feedback is constructive.
- Don't blame others for failure; encourage others to learn from failure and apply that learning when a similar situation crops up in the future.
- Consider using mediation when there is conflict, before matters become entrenched.

YOUR AROUND-THE-CLOCK MANAGER ASSIST™ SERVICE

Sometimes managers need some help managing it all.

As a manager, supervisor or team leader your employer expects you to handle a lot of responsibility at work, whilst also balancing personal and family obligations. To support you with these challenges your ManagerAssist service is available to provide free, confidential information, referrals and counselling. Support is available on topics including work-life balance, recognising troubled employees, discussing difficult subjects, workplace transition, handling grievances, stress management, referring employees to counselling, and more.

Your ManagerAssist service is a free, confidential and independent resource to help you balance your work, family and personal life. Available any time, any day, by phone, e-mail or online, the service provides information, resources and counselling on any of the challenges that life may bring.

AROUND-THE-CLOCK, FREE, CONFIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE

FREEPHONE: 0800 298 2021

E-MAIL: assistance@workplaceoptions.com

WEBSITE: www.workplaceoptions.com

OUTSIDE THE UK: +44 (0)20 8987 6550

SMS (FOR CALL BACK): +44 (0)7909 341229

MINICOM: +44 (0)20 8987 6574



Dealing with change

- Able to ask questions and express views
- Able to influence decisions

Getting the right support

- Given relevant information
- Encouragement from colleagues and managers
- Receive regular feedback
- Understand the policies and procedures being used

Issues outside work

- Friends and family difficulties
- Relationships
- Bereavement
- Debt
- Health problems
- Caring responsibilities
- Life changes
- Moving house
- Other commitments and responsibilities
- Other employment
- Work-life balance

Your Job

- Workload
- Deadlines
- Working hours
- Skills needed to do the job
- Working environment
- Safety

Your role

- Understand how role contributes to "bigger picture"
- Clear about responsibilities and boundaries
- Feel empowered

Your sense of control

- Able to develop new skills
- Having a say in what you do
- Using your skills and initiative

Anything else?

Relationships at work

- Sense of fairness
- Able to deal with conflict
- Tensions within the team
- Clear standards of acceptable behaviour
- Able to tackle unacceptable behaviour
- Feel valued

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