



STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. PURPOSE

Sudbury Town Council are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

This policy will apply to everyone in the company. Managers are responsible for implementation, and the organisation is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Councillors

The council will strive to support other personnel working on site including;

- Agency Workers
- Contractors
- Consultants

3. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

STC will manage this policy in accordance with:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Management Strategy
- Code of Conduct
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Dignity at Work
- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Member - Staff Relations Policy
- Employee Privacy Notice
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedures

- Occupational Health and Wellbeing Support
- Model Councillor Code of Conduct

And the following:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- HSE Management Standards for Work-Related Stress

4. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Deputy Town Clerk will be responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy, supported by managers and the relevant Council committee.

The Council will monitor indicators of work-related stress, including sickness absence, staff turnover, exit interview feedback, grievances, bullying and harassment complaints, and any relevant risk assessment findings, to identify emerging trends and areas for improvement.

This policy will be reviewed every five years, or sooner where there are significant changes in legislation, Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance, employment best practice, organisational structure, or following any significant incident or identified concern relating to work-related stress.

5. DEFINITION OF STRESS

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as 'The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health. The point at which workplace pressures become excessive will, of course, vary with individual levels of tolerance and with levels of pressure in other areas of life at times. Stress may affect people in a variety of ways, and in serious cases may be a causative factor of a physical or mental illness. In addition, people may interpret their experience of stress in different ways, for example according to their philosophical or religious belief.

6. POLICY

The Council's stress policy provides a source of reference material for all staff dealing with stress at work. Managing stress presents a challenge to all those concerned, it can be difficult to identify and tackle, with an impact both on the stressed person and those around them, seriously affecting quality of working lives

and effectiveness in the workplace. It is therefore important to take prompt action to prevent, minimise and take action to manage stress.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council aims to minimise the risk of stress through a management process involving the identification, assessment and implementation of control measures to workplace stressors. In support of these aims:

Managers

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risk assessments within their area of responsibility
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes
- Ensure staff are fully trained and resourced to discharge their duties
- Undertake regular (at least two yearly) staff appraisals and departmental risk assessments
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking. Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement
- Supporting staff in recovering from sickness, including stress related illnesses and managing the return to work after any period of sick leave
- Conduct exit interview with staff leaving the Council employment
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation

Employees

All staff have an individual responsibility to minimise the risk of any kind of harm to themselves and their colleagues and to co-operate with the Council in its efforts to manage work related stress.

If you are experiencing stress, we want you to tell us so we can help to do something about it and give you the support you need. Stress can happen to anyone, and we understand it can affect people differently. Stress isn't always work related, but we will try to support you with things going on outside of work as well.

- Raise issues of concern with your Line Manager or one of the managers

- If you feel you cannot speak to one of the managers for any reason, other sources of support include your GP, Occupational Health, HR or the Employee Assistance Programme.
- Try to recognise your own training and development needs and communicate these to your manager
- Work with your line manager to help understand what is causing the problems, identify stressors and what changes are needed to your work or working environment to help
- Act on the advice given by the Occupational Health Service and your GP

Councillors

Councillors have an important role in promoting a positive, respectful and supportive working environment. Councillors are expected to recognise that inappropriate behaviour, unreasonable demands, bullying, harassment or poor communication can contribute to stress and adversely affect the health, wellbeing and performance of both employees and fellow councillors.

- Communicate professionally and constructively, including during meetings, correspondence and informal discussions
- Respect the different roles of councillors and officers, recognising that officers are employees of the Council and are responsible for providing impartial professional advice and implementing Council decisions
- Raise concerns about officer performance, conduct or Council services through the appropriate management or formal Council procedures
- Refrain from making unreasonable demands on officers, including excessive or inappropriate contact outside normal working arrangements
- Support a culture in which individuals feel able to raise concerns about stress, wellbeing, bullying or unacceptable behaviour without fear of reprisal
- Comply with the Council's Code of Conduct, EDI, Dignity at Work policies and all relevant standards of behaviour

Stress Management Resources:

www.hse.gov.uk/stress

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/stress/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/stress/managing-stress-and-building-resilience/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/media/lbahso3x/mind-wellness-action-plan-workplace.pdf>

<https://www.acas.org.uk/managing-work-related-stress>

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/keep-well-and-active/mental-health-and-wellbeing>

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