



SOUTH LANARKSHIRE
Leisure & Culture

Managing Stress at Work Policy

February 2011

1. Introduction

South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all employees. The Trust recognises that there are a variety of factors related to work that can have a detrimental effect on the mental health of employees.

In line with the requirements of The Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, the Trust is committed to doing all that is reasonably practicable to identify, manage and reduce the factors that can lead to stress at work.

The Health and Safety Executive stress management standards provide a framework for measuring performance in how we manage work related stress. Each stress management standard provides simple statements about good management practice in each of the six areas. This policy has been developed to support the achievement of the HSE stress management standards across the Trust.

The management standards are:

- **Demands**
Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands (workload, work patterns and work environment) of their jobs.
- **Control.**
Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work.
- **Support.**
Employees indicate that they receive adequate encouragement, information and support from their colleagues and managers.
- **Relationships.**
Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work.
- **Role.**
Employees confirm that they understand their role and responsibilities and that they do not have conflicting roles and responsibilities.
- **Change.**
Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing any organisational change.

This achievement of the work related stress management standards is dependent of the effective application of a wide range of existing Trust policies and procedures. At the heart of all the related procedures is the commitment of the Trust to the health safety and wellbeing of its employees.

2. Policy Statement

Aim

The aim of the policy is to identify, eliminate or reduce and thereafter manage the factors that can lead to work related stress in Trust employees.

The policy contributes to the Trust's long term vision to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life for the people of South Lanarkshire and supports the Trust's values of being an excellent employer and people focussed.

The policy ensures that the causes of work-related stress are recognised and understood by managers and that they are committed to the prevention of work related stress through effective and sensitive management.

Policy Objectives

- The promotion of positive mental health in the workplace
- Creating greater openness and understanding of the causes of work related stress
- Ensuring greater consistency of approach and improved skills in dealing with stress through providing effective information, instruction and training to managers and employees
- Encouraging managers, employees and their representatives to work in partnership to address work related and personal stress
- Undertaking effective assessment of work related stress risks
- Through the process of risk assessment, taking steps to eliminate or reduce the risks of work related stress
- Undertaking effective monitoring to ensure that work related stress is identified
- By recognising that employees will occasionally be dealing with personal stress and to ensure that issues at work don't contribute to their overall stress level.

The Managing Stress at Work Policy will provide the following benefits to the Trust, its employees and customers:

- Create a culture in which employee welfare is valued
- Improve employee involvement and engagement in identifying and managing the causes of work related stress
- Create a safe and healthy working environment for employees

3. Organisation

Key responsibilities for managing stress are outlined below to ensure that risks to employees are minimised at all times.

3.1 Responsibilities

The **General Manager** is responsible for ensuring:

- that the risk of work related stress is effectively managed through the implementation of this policy and the other policies and procedures that support it
- that consideration is given to the factors that can cause work related stress in the planning and delivery of Trust services and
- that regular monitoring of the policy takes place to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

The **Senior Management Team** are responsible for ensuring:

- that appropriate arrangements to support the achievement of the policy are developed and implemented within their areas;
- that the factors that can cause work related stress are considered during area and service planning
- that managers are able to recognise and respond to the factors that can lead to work related stress among their employees
- that effective risk assessment is used to identify and manage stress risk factors
- that they routinely monitor and review how stress risks are being managed across their areas of responsibilities

All **Managers and Supervisors** are responsible for:

- Minimising and managing work related stress risks through effective service planning and employee communication and consultation
- Ensuring appropriate job related information, instruction and training is provided to employees
- Establishing and agreeing clear roles and responsibilities with employees
- Monitoring and managing employee workloads responsibly
- Understanding and identifying the signs and symptoms of work related stress
- Directly supporting employees who may be experiencing work related stress and facilitating further support through SLC's Employee Support Team where required
- Maintaining their awareness of and understanding of the employee supports available and promoting the use of Employee Assistance Programme
- Managing poor performance and attendance in line with the Trust's policies and procedures
- Routinely monitor and review work related stress through effective risk assessment

All **Employees** are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they understand their roles and responsibilities when at work
- Undertaking any instruction and/or training required to ensure their competence to undertake tasks

- Ensuring the health safety and wellbeing of themselves and their colleagues when at work
- Behaving responsibly and acting reasonably when at work
- Reporting concerns regarding work related stress to their line managers
- Contribute to the stress risk assessment process and the development of work related stress action plans

All **trade union representatives** are responsible for:

- Promoting a partnership approach to ensuring the health, safety and well being of all of employees by assisting in the implementation of the Managing Stress at Work Policy.
- Communicating information to employees on positive mental health and stress awareness to support the policy
- Maintaining their awareness of and understanding of the employee supports available and promoting the use of Employee Assistance Programme to their members.
- Contributing to the stress risk assessment process and the development of work related stress action plans

4. Planning and Implementation

This policy acts as a framework for the effective use of the Trust's other policies and procedures either in isolation or collectively to achieve the HSE management standards for work related stress.

4.1 Management Standards for Work Related Stress

The management standards for work related stress are:

4.1.1 Demands

Demands include issues like workload, work patterns and the work environment.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

This will be achieved through effective use of, for example, the Trust's **competence initiative** and **occupational health and safety management system** to ensure that:

- Managers provide employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work.
- Employee skills and abilities are matched to the demands of jobs.
- Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees.
- Employees concerns about their work environment are addressed in a timely manner.

4.1.2 Control

Control is about how much say the employee has in the way they do their work. The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

This will be achieved through effective **communication and consultation** with employees on their work; and through for example, the **performance development review** process and use of the Trust's **flexible working policy**, to ensure that:

- Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work.
- Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work.
- Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new work.
- Where possible, employees have a say over when breaks can be taken.
- Where possible, employees are consulted over their work patterns.

4.1.3 Support

Support includes encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the Trust, line management and colleagues. The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

This will be achieved through effective service planning and use of, for example, SLC's **Employee Support Team** and the **Employee Assistance Programme** to ensure that:

- Adequate support is available and accessible to employees.
- Managers are enabled and encouraged to support their employees.
- Employees are enabled and encouraged to support their colleagues.
- Employees are aware of what support is available and how and when to access it.
- Employees have access to the required resources to do their job.
- Regular and constructive feedback is provided to employees

4.1.4 Relationship

Relationships include promoting a positive working environment to avoid conflict and having systems in place to deal with unacceptable behaviour. The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns in a timely manner.

This will be achieved through the effective use of, for example, **Dignity at Work Policy and Code of Conduct** to ensure that:

- The Trust promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness.
- Employees are able to share information relevant to their work.

- Action is taken to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour.
- Managers are enabled and encouraged to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
- Employees are enabled and encouraged to report unacceptable behaviour.

4.1.5 Role

Role relates to whether employees understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the employee does not have conflicting roles. The standard is that:

- Employees confirm that they understand their role and responsibilities.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns in a timely manner.

This will be achieved through, for example, the effective use of the Trust's **competence initiative**, and through effective **communication and consultation** with employees to ensure that:

- As far as possible, managers ensure that the differing requirements they place upon employees are compatible.
- Managers provide information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities.
- Managers ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the requirements they place upon employees are clear.
- Employees are enabled and encouraged to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.

4.1.6 Change

Change is how organisational change is managed and communicated in the Trust. The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that the Trust engages them frequently when undergoing any organisational change.
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns in a timely manner.

This will be achieved through effective, for example, **communication and consultation** and use of the **competence initiative** to ensure that:

- The managers provide employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes.
- The managers ensure adequate employee consultation takes place on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals.
- Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If appropriate, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs.
- Employees are aware of timetables for changes.
- Employees have access to relevant support during changes.

4.2 Occupational Health and Safety Management System

As part of our Service Level Agreement with South Lanarkshire Council, the Trust has access to their Occupational Health and Safety Management System where

guidance Note 2.C.4 contains specific guidance on the management of work related stress.

The guidance note outlines the legislative requirements and provides the procedure that managers should follow to ensure that they are identifying, assessing and managing work related stress risks to the required corporate standard.

The guidance is supported by work instructions developed at Trust level to further aid managers and provide procedures and safe systems of work that are relevant and specific to local needs.

4.2.1 Stress Risk Assessment

Effective risk assessment is fundamental to the identification and management of the factors that can cause work related stress. The occupational health and safety management system provides the methodology that should be adopted by managers when undertaking stress risk assessment.

This output of the stress risk assessment process will support managers in identifying factors that are contributing to stress at work and enable them to work with their employees and their representatives to identify and implement solutions.

4.4 Specific Related / Supporting Policies

The following related policies and procedures should be utilised by managers and employees to effectively manage the risk of work related stress:

4.4.1 Maximising Attendance Policy

The Maximising Attendance Policy is intended to demonstrate a pro-active view by:

- ◆ Demonstrating an ongoing concern for employee's health, safety and well being.
- ◆ Taking a preventative stance and tackling issues before they become problems.
- ◆ Identifying and addressing the root causes of absence, rather than simply monitoring or policing.

4.4.2 Competence Initiative

The Competence Initiative has three main elements:

- ◆ **Job evaluation** – making assessments about the relative nature and content of jobs
- ◆ **Job Families** – groups of occupations that relate to each other in similarity of tasks performed or transferability of knowledge and skills. By grouping occupations into job family, employees can see how they can gain more knowledge and experience or progress their career in South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture
- ◆ **Performance Development Review Process** – provides managers with a framework to follow when setting key work objectives and competencies for managing team and individual performance.

4.4.3 Flexible Working Policy

The Trust recognises the difficulties faced by parents/carers in trying to juggle work responsibilities and either raising their children or caring for someone. There are a range of flexible working arrangements intended to support parents and carers. The type of changes which may be requested include the hours of work, the times of work and the location of work.

4.4.4 Dignity at Work Policy

The aim of the Dignity at Work Policy is to prevent behaviour and actions that could be viewed as harassment, bullying, discrimination or victimisation in the workplace. It provides informal and formal processes to address dignity at work issues.

4.4.5 Employee Assistance Programme

The Employee Assistance Programme provides different supports to help employees when they may need it including the prevention and/or management of stress. The main elements of the programme include access to:

- ◆ **The Employee Counselling Service (ECS)**. Available via line manager and/or the HR department; or confidential self referral.
- ◆ **24/7 confidential helpline (ECS)** which can be used to access confidential advice or to arrange counselling on 0800 389 7851
- ◆ **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy** which is a clinically and research-proven therapy for mental health problems and life issues.
- ◆ **Health Benefits Scheme** where employees have the option to join a not-for-profit scheme.
- ◆ **Financial Advice** via Money Matters.
- ◆ **Physiotherapy**
- ◆ **Discounted Complementary Therapies** – in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council
- ◆ **Occupational Health Support**, for example, health checks and medical assessments
- ◆ **Early intervention** support ensures employees who are absent with a psychological absence are aware of the support and help available to them.
- ◆ **Training** for managers to assist with sensitive discussions with employees.

More information can be gained from the HR team, line manager and trade union representatives. There is also information available on SLC's intranet.

4.5 Other Policies and Procedures

The following policies and procedures may also be effective in identifying and managing work related stress:

4.5.1 Addiction Policy

The Addiction Policy has been created to support commitment to and recognition of the growing problem of substance abuse and addiction in society. The Trust will act to prevent and eliminate, in so far as it is reasonably possible, any such abuse which will increase the potential for ill health, absence, accidents, poor performance or which will otherwise adversely affect the Trust, its employees or the members of the public

4.5.2 Personal Safety Policy

From time to time the personal safety of employees can be threatened, either in the workplace or in the process of delivering a service. Everyone must be alert to the possibility of a dangerous or threatening situation occurring, how to minimise the risk and if necessary manage the situation. The Trust will take a pro-active approach to the management of personal safety risks.

4.5.3 Recruitment and Selection Policy

The Trust has a recruitment and selection strategy which is fair, lawful, and consistent and delivered in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council and their recruitment charter.

4.5.4 Discipline and Grievance Policy

The disciplinary procedures have been prepared using the ACAS Guidance on Discipline and Grievances at Work and to comply with the provisions of the Revised ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. Clear rules and procedures benefit both the Trust as an employer and employees.

4.5.5 Mediation Policy

Mediation is an informal process that complements the Trust's formal procedures for dealing with workplace issues. It aims to improve working relationships between individuals, perhaps where there has been a breakdown between them. A fully trained mediator works with the individuals to help them find their own solutions and rebuild their relationship. The process is confidential and voluntary.

4.6 Training and Information

Through our Service Level Agreement with South Lanarkshire Council, training courses on managing and dealing with work related stress are available for both managers and employees.

For Managers:

Managing Stress in the Workplace
Maximising Attendance Policy
Brief Intervention Training

For Employees:

Handling Stress Positively
Positive Thinking

5. Monitoring and Auditing

5.1 Maximising Attendance

In partnership with SLC, the Trust regularly contributes to the Council's Maximising Attendance Group which reviews absence monitoring information on a quarterly basis to identify hotspots and trends. The monitoring information will specifically identify those absences that are related to stress and differentiate between personal stress and work related stress to support the effective monitoring the policy.

5.2 Healthy Working Lives

In partnership with South Lanarkshire Council the Trust participates in the Healthy Working Lives Group (HWL) which is a sub group of the Maximising Attendance Group and is responsible for directing initiatives to promote health and wellbeing among employees. The group meets on a quarterly basis and evaluate the effectiveness of the health promotion initiatives, which may include stress awareness.

5.4 Occupational Health and Safety Management System Audits

The OHSMS is subject to ongoing monitoring and auditing to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of managers, and that the guidance and instructions developed within it remain relevant and effective.