

Stress at Work Policy

Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain, it can affect you physically and have a harmful effect on your work or daily life. Stress can not only damage our mental health, but also our physical health which can increase coughs and colds. When stress is not dealt with this can result in more serious health conditions, including lung, liver and heart disease and mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression.

A number of factors can influence whether pressure turns into stress, and these can be different for different people. Pressure can be external from minor everyday hassles to serious trauma and many things in between. It can also be internal, poor mental health is very common at the moment.

If you have been feeling under pressure look out for emotional changes, physical changes and changes in your behaviour. A combination of these things can be your stress warning sign, if you spot something, it's important to take early action.

A lack of pressure can be just as damaging as an overload. Feelings of unworthiness can be fed by not having enough to do, and boredom can lead to stress. You could consider asking for more responsibility at work or taking up a new hobby in your spare time.

The HSE highlights six key areas that could be the causes of work-related stress, poor health and increased absences.

1. The DEMANDS of your job
2. CHANGE and how it's managed
3. Your working RELATIONSHIPS
4. The SUPPORT you get from colleagues and managers
5. Your ROLE in your workplace
6. And your CONTROL over the direction of your work

If you can identify and manage the pressures upon you as they arise, you can have strategies ready to prevent pressure from turning into stress. It is important that you know how to identify stress and take steps to reduce or

remove it. There are effective strategies that can help to prevent stress appearing in the first place. Our optimum state or our 'stretch zone' is where we are motivated, productive, take on challenges and meet our goals. With the right amount of pressure, we can become the best version of ourselves.

If you need to remove some of the pressure, keep the word PIP in mind

- P - Pause
- I - Identify
- P - Prioritise

To help you prioritise you can use the 4D's strategy

- Delete
- Defer
- Delegate
- Do

The 4 biggest triggers of work-related stress are:

- Workload pressures
- Excess responsibility
- Unrealistic deadlines
- Lack of managerial support

Pathways have a legal responsibility to look after your health and safety in the workplace, and we must assess the risks, including stress-related ill health. We will aim to help with these pressures by:

- Ensuring good communication between all staff
- Ensuring staff are fully aware and capable of their duties
- Monitor workloads
- Ensure training is provided where possible
- Be vigilant i.e. if a member of staff is experiencing stress outside of work
- Be approachable

It is your responsibility to look after yourself and keep yourself healthy and safe. Simple self-care and talking to someone when you need help can be a great way to reduce or prevent stress.

If a colleague is causing you stress, they may not realise it. A non-confrontational chat may be enough to nip any problems in the bud. If this does

not resolve things, speak to your manager and they can help you with the next step.

Time spent on our families, jobs and social life can mean that we forget to set aside time for basic self-care. Taking time to look after yourself can have a positive impact. Try to find at least one tool that can help you take back control of any situation when you're feeling overwhelmed.

It is our reaction to our circumstances that causes most of our stress. We may not always be able to control our circumstances, but we can control our attitude.

As part of Pathways, you as the employers have access to a 24/7 GP service, this also extends to anyone living under the same roof as you, so family members. Please call 0800 285 1571. Further details on how to access this can be found in the office.

You will also have access to Optima Health which is for your mental health and well-being. They can provide practical and/or emotional support online and by phone for any personal or work-related issues including:

- Emotional support to help you manage difficult situations in your personal life (e.g. financial difficulties/relationship problems/health issues/bereavement/low mood/depression and anxiety)
- Advice, information and support to help you improve and maintain a healthy mental wellbeing day-to-day, both at home and at work
- Legal information on a range of matters (e.g. housing/consumer rights, family law, caring responsibilities, finance, debt or bereavement)

Please call the helpline on 0800 197 4512 for confidential advice. Further details on how to access this can be found in the office.