

Introduction

Stress Management is key in terms of employee health, safety and wellbeing; sickness absence; employee morale and general employee relations.

Managers must ensure that stress associated symptoms that affect the employee are recognised and suitable actions taken to manage and reduce work-related stress in the workplace.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees with the exception of those employees working in maintained schools under the direct control of a School Governing Body.

School Based Employees:

Newport City Council commends this policy to individual Governing Bodies for adoption. If adopted by a Governing Body, the policy will apply to all employees under the direct control of that Governing Body.

Legislation

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

To be read in conjunction with:

- Health & Safety Policy
- Managing Stress at Work Guidance
- Management of Attendance Policy and Guidance
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Capability Policy
- Corporate Diversity Policy
- MSD Policy

1. Principles

The Council recognises that its employees are its most valuable resource in delivering high quality services to the community and will take all practical steps to protect the health, safety and well-being of Council employees.

In fulfilling its responsibilities to their employees, the Council is committed to identify and reduce levels of harmful stress, as far as is reasonably practicable through:

- Identifying the foreseeable causes of work-related stress and controlling or eliminating the impact of these causes;
- Supporting employees to address pressures and stressors inside and outside of the workplace that may impact on their work and well-being;
- Providing training, support and guidance to managers and employees on identifying the symptoms of stress in the workplace in addition to providing assistance to minimise the causes and consequences.
- Providing an Occupational Health referral system which includes access to confidential counselling for employees affected by stress.

2. Definitions

The Council has adopted the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) definition of stress as being ***"The adverse reactions people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them."***

Other definitions used in this policy:

Manager

Wherever the designation Manager is used throughout this policy, it is taken to mean Head of Service, Head Teacher, Line Manager, Supervisor, Officer in Charge or anyone who has a responsibility for employees through their work.

Employee

The term "employee" is used to mean any person who has a contract of employment with Newport City Council, whether a permanent, fixed-term or temporary contract or has an agreement to undertake work on behalf of the Council e.g. agency workers, casual workers or secondments into the Council.

3. Responsibilities

This section provides the roles and responsibilities of all individuals involved in the management of stress. Employees have a responsibility to comply with health and safety legislation and the provisions within this Policy. Failure to do so could result in personal and/or corporate liability.

The Chief Executive:

- has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy within Newport City Council, and as such will support Service Areas, Managers and Teams to address work-related stress throughout the Authority.

Strategic Directors:

- have responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy within Newport City Council, and as such will support Service Areas, Managers and Teams to address work-related stress throughout the Authority.

Heads of Service:

- have responsibility for ensuring the implementation of this policy in their service areas;
- will ensure all line managers and supervisors attend appropriate training courses, and this to be monitored;
- will ensure the risk assessment process in relation to the management of stress is implemented;
- will allocate suitable and sufficient resources to implement this policy;
- will liaise with the HR and H&S teams in monitoring the implementation of the policy in their service area;
- will ensure consultation processes are implemented with employees and Trade Unions, particularly during periods of change for example via the Employee Joint Liaison Group.

Managers including all employees who have a supervisory role:

- have responsibility for ensuring the implementation of this policy in their team;
- conduct the relevant risk assessments and implement any recommendations identified in accordance with the policy;
- must attend Stress Awareness and Stress Assessment training;
- ensure employees receive appropriate and relevant Stress training;
- ensure good communication between management and employees, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes;
- ensure, where possible, employees are provided with meaningful developmental and consultation opportunities for example via regular Supervision, 1-2-1 meetings and Your Review;
- ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated;
- provide additional support to an employee who is experiencing non work-related stress e.g. bereavement or separation, as required;
- monitor the Team's sickness absence in accordance with the Council's Management of Attendance Policy and work with Occupational Health to manage the employee's recovery appropriately including any return to work strategy.

Employees:

- understand and be aware of the Council's Stress Management Policy
- complete the relevant Stress Awareness training;
- identify and recognise any potential causes of stress for yourself or your colleagues and work with management to reduce their effect;
- assist your manager in tackling stress in the workplace and support initiatives and solutions;
- support colleagues known to be experiencing work related stress;

Human Resources:

- provide guidance to line managers and employees on the policy;
- provide specialist advice and facilitate training on stress;

- monitor the effectiveness of measures implemented to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics;
- support employees who have been off sick with stress related illnesses and advise them and the line manager on a plan to return to work;
- provide continuing support to line managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational health where appropriate;

Health and Safety Officers/Advisor:

- provide guidance to line managers and employees on the policy;
- provide specialist advice on work-related stress;
- assist in identifying appropriate interventions to help with the successful management of stress;
- work with Human Resources to develop common strategies and monitoring processes to reduce stress related sickness absence;

Occupational Health:

- provide appropriate numbers of appointments for stress related referrals;
- provide access to appropriate counselling sessions;
- provide management information as requested by the HR and H&S department so the Council can review the Occupational Health service including usage, cost and benefits;

4. Arrangements:

Managers are responsible for the well being of their teams whilst in work. This will involve being able to identify any signs of workplace stress and help to eliminate or control its effects through effective management. Full details of how to achieve this can be found in the Managing Stress at Work Guidance. The guidance provides information on:

- Common causes and the effects of stress;
- How to approach an employee regarding an individual assessment;
- How to undertake a Team or Individual assessment;
- Who to contact for support and/or advice.

In addition to the guidance document, Newport City Council will identify and provide relevant training and guidance to assist Managers and employees with the Management of Stress. The information and guidance provided will follow the recommended Stress Management Standards published by the Health and Safety Executive.

Stress Awareness Training for all employees will be provided and attendance is recommended;

Stress Awareness and Stress Assessment training for any employee with supervisory or managerial roles is mandatory.

Access to training will be available through the Corporate Training Directory on the intranet. If there are no courses booked managers and/or employees should use the enquiry facility which is available.

All guidance and associated documentation can be found on the intranet or upon request from your Line Manager, your HR or H&S Officer / Advisor.