

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1.1(i) Some level of stress is a normal aspect of everyday life. However, the harmful effects of stress, particularly when chronic, are now regarded as having a significant negative impact on the overall physical and psychological well-being of individuals. Harmful stress is seen as a contributory factor in a wide range of diseases and conditions and it is accepted that the recognition, management and reduction of stress can have substantial benefits in improving an individual's general health.

1.1(ii) Stress in the workplace¹ can be a major factor in reduced staff performance, commitment and motivation, increased sickness absence, loss of productivity and general absenteeism. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) reports that stress continues to be one of the main causes of short and long-term absence at work. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) reported 17.9 **million** working days lost to stress in 2019/20.

1.1(iii) For these reasons, the University, as a responsible employer, wishes to address the issue of stress in the workplace by **means** of the following policy and its associated documents. The University believes that the measures set out here will have a substantial effect on reducing those potential causes of stress within the control of the institution.

1.2 NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

The term “*staff*” is used throughout this document to refer to **all** employees of the University. Similarly, “*line managers*” is used to describe all those with a responsibility for the management of staff, in whatever category.

2 STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

2.1 POLICY STATEMENT

2.1(i) This policy sets out the University's aims and objectives for the management of health and safety in relation to harmful stress at work. The intention of the policy is to ensure that staff members who experience stress are helped, whatever the causes of that stress.

2.1

2.1(ii) The University believes that its staff are its most important asset and that their well-being is essential to

2.1(v) The key aims and objectives of this policy are therefore

- to increase awareness of stress and the methods available to combat it
- to initiate appropriate action to manage and reduce stress at work
- to assist staff in managing stress in others and themselves
- to manage problems which do occur and to provide confidential support
- to manage the return to work of those who have been absent as a result of stress

2.1(vi) Whilst the University has no control over external factors, it is committed to identifying sources of stress in the workplace and will take action to reduce or, where possible, to eliminate those causes of stress within its control.

2.2 STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

2.2(i) The University's management of stress are integral to the University's responsibilities towards its staff and form an important part of the role of managers and supervisors. This policy is therefore primarily concerned with stress arising from the workplace. However, it is recognised that stress may be influenced by a variety of factors and that no one cause may necessarily be identified.

2.2(ii) The emphasis of this policy is to encourage and assist staff and all those with responsibilities for their management to identify and deal with

2.3(ii) INDUCTION, PROMOTION AND TRANSFER / REDEPLOYMENT

All new staff will receive local induction into their posts. Starting a new job can be stressful and a planned programme of activity will help to eliminate many concerns.

Staff already employed by the University can be at particular risk of stress when they are promoted, take on new roles or are subject to transfer or redeployment. In these cases, a local induction programme similar to that for newly appointed staff should be arranged. The staff member's manager or supervisor should monitor progress and well-being at regular intervals.

2.3(iii) ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

Absence which appears to be a result of work-related stress should be managed in accordance with the current policy on sickness absence. The following procedures should therefore be observed:

Managers and supervisors must ensure that all absences are properly recorded

2.3(vi) GUIDANCE NOTES AND INFORMATION

Guidelines for line managers are appended to this document (*q.v.* Appendices 2 and 3 respectively). Information for all staff on the recognition of stress, stress reduction and sources of help and advice may be found in Appendices 1 and 4.

2.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

2.4(i) Monitoring and evaluation are essential to any effective policy of stress management. They provide feedback which is critical to the maintenance and development of strategies and procedures to control stress in the workplace.

2.4(ii) For this reason, the University will carry out stress audits from time to time, the key objectives of which are as follows:

- to ensure that the requirements and standards set out in the policy are being met
- to assess and compare the effectiveness of different aspects of the policy
- to provide information to justify continuation of current policy or to propose any necessary changes in strategy
- to assess the cost-effectiveness of

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX STRESS MANAGEMENT

POLICYAPPENDIX 1

RECOGNISING STRESS AND ITS SOURCES

1. WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is what we experience when we feel we cannot cope with the pressures and demands placed on us. We all vary in our capacity to cope with different levels or types of pressure. Some pressure, even when high, can be positive and is frequently challenging and motivating. Responding effectively to this kind of pressure can lead to job satisfaction. However, when pressure reaches a level we cannot cope with, we may experience negative stress. This may alshath,

3. RECOGNISING SIGNS OF STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Be aware of these possible signs: -

An increase in overall sickness absence - especially frequent short absences.

Poor work performance - less output, lower quality of work, poor decision making, poor timekeeping, increased occurrence of accidents.

Relationships at work - poor relationships with customers or people you work for, conflict between colleagues.

Staff attitude and behaviour - poor timekeeping, loss of motivation or commitment, working long hours but with decreasing effectiveness.

Some of these signs may also be symptoms of other problems, including psychiatric illness, alcohol or drug misuse (any one of which may also, of course, be related to stress). If you wish to discuss any of these matters or need to seek advice or guidance, contact your line manager.

4. POSSIBLE SOURCES OF STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

These may be some of the sources of stress arising from your b0008866 0s). loss

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX STRESS MANAGEMENT

POLICY APPENDIX 2

THE LINE a ! b ! D9w { ROLE IN STAFF CARE:

The University's managers have a key role to play in the implementation of the Stress Management Policy. The recognition and management of stress are seen as integral to that role. The following points, all drawn from the policy, are offered to managers and supervisors as actions which they could take to produce a significant impact on stress reduction amongst the University's staff. Some managers may already be doing some of these things, some may be doing all of them. Nevertheless, an improvement of practice in these areas could produce beneficial results.

Seek advice from your HRBP or from the Occupational Health Sera.7i9(cuJTJETQ.000008866 0 594.96 842.04 reW

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX STRESS MANAGEMENT

POLICY APPENDIX 3

RISK ASSESSMENT

1. Health and safety legislation requires the University to undertake an assessment of the risks arising from work hazards. This process forms the basis of a pro-active and preventative approach to health risk management and must consider risks to psychological as well as to physical health.
2. For this reason, risk assessments in relation to stress and psychological hazards must be carried out by those responsible for other aspects of routine risk assessment. The procedures for these assessments are set out in the University Safety Policy and other documents.
3. Assessment of the hazards associated with work stress should aim to identify
 - factors at work likely to cause stress
 - whether these factors are currently causing stress
 - those staff who are at risk of experiencing work stress
 - existing preventative or precautionary measures
 - action required to eliminate or reduce the risk
4. The principles of risk assessment for work-related stress do not differ from other forms of

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX STRESS MANAGEMENT

POLICYAPPENDIX 4

HELP WITH STRESS

1. SELF HELP

You can help yourself

