



Stress Management Policy

Review Due:	May 2023
Last Review	May 2020
Applicable to:	All Trust Schools
Reviewed By:	SP
Approved By:	Board of Trustees May 2020

Comments:

This is a new policy which has been drafted to comply with new HSE recommendations around employers' responsibilities to support the mental health of employees. The policy has been reviewed by Trust Leaders and a risk assessment template has been added as a result. Draft approved by external solicitors.

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1. Scope

This policy defines work-related stress and the Bath and Mendip Partnership Trust's responsibilities with respect to work-related stress under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

This policy is also accompanied by a work-related stress risk assessment. It adopts the approach recommended by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which is based on a set of 'Management Standards' primarily concentrating on 6 key areas; Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Roles and Change

2. Introduction

An employee's mental and physical health can be affected by a number of factors which may or may not be work-related. Work-related stress is a significant cause of illness and disease and is known to be linked with high levels of sickness absence, staff turnover and also with a negative impact on teams and the organisation.

The Bath and Mendip Partnership Trust believes that its members of staff are its most important asset and is committed to promoting a positive working environment for all colleagues. The Trust recognises that under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, it has a legal duty to assess the risks of stress-related ill health arising from work activities and to take action to control that risk.

3. Definitions

Work related stress is distinct from reasonable pressure and challenges at work. The Health and Safety Executive defines work-related stress as:

"the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them."

There is a clear distinction between pressure, and work-related stress, which can occur when this pressure becomes excessive and exceeds the person's capacity and capability to cope. The stage at which excessive pressure leads to work-related stress will vary between individuals as each person has different tolerance levels. People may also be affected by nonwork related issues which can lead them to react to work pressures adversely.

4. Policy statement

It is the policy of the Trust to take all reasonable and practicable steps to safeguard the health and safety of employees while at work. The Trust is committed to:

- Identifying workplace sources of stress through a process of risk assessment.
- Reducing the risk of work-related stress as far as reasonably practicable through the development of good working practices, based on the Health and Safety Executive Management Standards.
- Supporting managers, supervisors and individual employees to recognise work-related stress and the appropriate actions to take.
- Providing central and local support to employees who are experiencing work-related stress to enable them to remain in work or support them in returning to work; and
- Defining responsibilities in relation to the management of work-related stress.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Headteachers/School Management

Headteachers/School Management are responsible for ensuring that arrangements for risk assessments are adequate for the school/service and are communicated effectively including a risk assessment for work-related stress. The risk assessment should use the Health and Safety Executive's management standard as a framework (see template as appendix one)

5.2 Line managers/supervisors

Line managers/supervisors are responsible for identifying where possible, and responding appropriately to work-related stress issues within their teams. This may include:

- addressing potential work-related stressors;
- taking appropriate action when a member of their staff indicates that they may be experiencing symptoms of work-related stress

- proactively managing employee absence and gaining appropriate advice from HR.
- review workplace conditions to ensure that they do not contribute to work-related stress
- monitor working hours and overtime to ensure employees are not overworking
- monitor holidays to make sure employees are taking their full entitlement
- review factors that might indicate stress in the workplace, such as high rates of absenteeism or staff turnover;

5.3 Employees

All employees are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others likely to be affected by their actions;
- informing their line manager if they believe that they are experiencing work-related stress or have concerns regarding other team members;
- working with their line manager to identify work-related stressors and any possible control measures that may be put in place to reduce work related impact.

Members of staff who do not feel able to speak to their line manager or who feel that their manager is not adequately addressing their concerns may speak directly to HR. Employees may also seek advice and support from their Trade Union representative or any Employee Assistance Programme that may be in place.

APPENDIX ONE - STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Subject of risk assessment Role/Team/Individual/Location/Job Type

No. of employees

Reason or Trigger for Risk Assessment

Current Control Measures – things that are already happening

Stressor to consider:				
A: DEMANDS	Problems identified	Additional controls	Priority (H,M,L)	Action taken/ By whom/ Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work overload • Long hours 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise tasks • Look at job design and working practices 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper rest and holidays Inadequate staffing OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check leave is being properly taken • Is work being taken home? • Is there constant communication during off-duty time by e-mail, text and phone? • Cut out unnecessary work and communications Review workloads and staffing, and enable individuals to plan their work 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriately qualified for the job • Over promotion • Skills not recognised – promotion prospects not fulfilled • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure individuals are matched to jobs – people can be over and under qualified • Analyse skills alongside the tasks • Provide training for those who need more, e.g. when introducing new technology • Review and consider selection, skill criteria, job summaries, training and supervision 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career planning discussion, training needs evaluation • Monitor workplace policies in practice 		
<p>Boring or repetitive work Too little to do OTHER</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job enrichment/job rotation/role review • Assess workstation and work practice for possible solutions • Consider changing the way jobs are done by moving people between jobs, giving individuals more responsibility, increasing the scope of the job, increasing the variety of tasks, or giving a group of workers greater responsibility for effective performance of the group 		
<p>Inadequate resources for task OTHER</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse requirements for any project/task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equipment • staffing 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • priorities • deadlines 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees experiencing excessive workloads • Employees working under excessive pressure 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review workload and demands regularly and as an integral part of the performance management process • Support staff in planning their work. • Try to establish what aspects of their job they find challenging. • Redistribute work or set different work priorities if they are not coping • Check that holiday leave is being taken. • Check management skills and assess training needs 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The physical working environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor temperature control • noise • lack of facilities for rest/breaks 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure workplace hazards are properly controlled • Undertake risk assessments of workspace and significant tasks 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor lighting • poor ventilation • badly placed or designed workstations • OTHER 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The psychological working environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • threat of aggression or violence • verbal abuse • poor management practices • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report violence to line manager / Headteacher/ occupational health • Investigation of complaints and appropriate training • Monitor absence levels and trends. Compare with other departments, other businesses • Look at the individual and any risk factors that apply to this particular person 		
B. CONTROL	Problems identified	Possible solutions	Priority (H,M,L)	Action taken/ By whom/ Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being able to balance the demands of work and life outside work • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage a healthy work-life balance • Ensure staff take all their allocated holiday allowance and 		

		<p>distribute it fairly across the year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a communications protocol that ensures people have rest time completely free of all work-related messages. • Over-anxious people often need to be in constant contact. Over-controlling management tends not to respect off-duty time 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigid work patterns and breaks • Fixed deadlines occurring in different parts of the year • Lack of control over work • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to provide some scope for varying working conditions and flexible work schedules (e.g. flexible working hours, working from home) • Consult with people to allow them to influence the way their jobs are done, what the real deadlines are and what the priorities are 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicting work demands • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set realistic deadlines for tasks • Take into account that individuals are different, and try to allocate work so that everyone is working in the way that helps them work best, takes account of their home obligations and makes best use of their skills • Be clear about tasks required 		
C. SUPPORT	Problems identified	Possible solutions	Priority (H,M,L)	Action taken/ By whom/ Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to work system • Sickness and absence management • Managerial support through emotionally demanding work • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and systems in place, monitored and consistently applied • Measure trends and changes • Investigate variations • Check management skills and assess training needs • Ensure people have the support they require and access to any specialist advice 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inductions • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New staff properly inducted, existing staff transferring or promoted or returning to work after long absence also to be inducted • Special attention for young people as required • Mentoring roles • OH/HR support • DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) adjustments in place, reviewed and checked 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post disciplinary, grievance or suspension • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support staff as appropriate 		
D. RELATIONSHIPS	Problems identified	Possible solutions	Priority (H,M,L)	Action taken/ By whom/ Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor relationships with others • Staff complaints or rising absence trends • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate causal factors • Provide training in interpersonal skills, non-discriminatory rules and workplace conduct standards 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the problem openly with individuals • Follow complaint procedures • Check management skills and assess training needs 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying or confrontational communications styles • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage constructive and positive communications between staff • Managers should discuss and address bullying and/or confrontational communication styles with member of staff who display these behaviours • Consider training and policy guidance 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying, racial or sexual harassment • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and communicate Bullying & Harassments policy • Practise by example and make it clear what behaviours are not acceptable 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide details of any empirical evidence: absence trends, complaints, etc. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of support or fear culture within from management and co-workers • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and encourage staff, protect them from reprisals • Consider introducing a mentoring and counselling scheme • Investigate and take action as appropriate as soon as possible 		
E. ROLE	Problems identified	Possible solutions	Priority (H,M,L)	Action taken/ By whom/ Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear lines of accountability and responsibility • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure good communication systems exist and are in place from top to bottom • Set management standards to ensure best practice in: clarity of job function, responsibility for staff management and welfare 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it clear to staff that management will try to ensure that their problems will be handled sensitively and at the appropriate level of management 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication and consultation • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate clear business objectives • Aim for good communication and close employee involvement, particularly during periods of change or high pressure 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture of blame when things go wrong, denial of potential problems • Failure to recognise success • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest, set a good example, and listen to and respect others • Acknowledge and reward successes 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture that considers stress a sign of weakness • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approachable management which wants to know about 		

		problems and will try to help to resolve them		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An expectation that people will regularly work excessively long hours or take work home with them • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid working excessively long hours • Lead by example • Check management skills and assess training needs • Schedule work in a way that allows recovery time after unavoidable busy periods 		
F. CHANGE	Problems identified	Possible solutions	Priority (H,M,L)	Action taken/ By whom/ Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fears about job security / grading • Poor communication – uncertainty about what is happening • Not enough time allowed to implement change • Inexperience/fear of new technology • Lack of skills for new tasks 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide effective support for staff throughout the process • Consult with staff likely to be involved in a change of management programme – fear and uncertainty can lead to increased anxiety, unfounded gossip, poor employment relationships and increased absence 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough resource allocated for change process • Other personal fears, relocation • OTHER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting together as a team can help people to feel less isolated with their concerns • Ensure effective two-way communication throughout process – knowing exactly what is going to happen when can help people feel less anxious about a change • Consider training needs – do people have the tools and skills to effect change? • Consider changes in teams or work environment – a small change, e.g. a different positioning of desks, can have a major impact on communication and work relationships to help people not to feel isolated 		
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Assessment carried out by:

NAME

JOB TITLE

DATE

REVIEW DATE

REVIEW COMMENTS:

NAME

JOB TITLE

DATE

NEXT STEPS

Following the completion of the risk assessment, it may be useful to hold a meeting, or series of meetings, with individuals or groups of staff in order to devise an action plan for tackling the particular issues in your school which are causing stress. It is essential that the consultation with staff leads to concrete action for reducing stress, based on what have been identified as the key stressors. Without this the risk assessment will not be complete. All that remains is for a review process to be established. This could involve including stress as a regular item on the agenda of health and safety committee or staff meetings, so that new stressors can be identified and addressed.