



STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

APPROVED BY HHP BOARD:
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hebridean housing
partnership

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INTRODUCTION

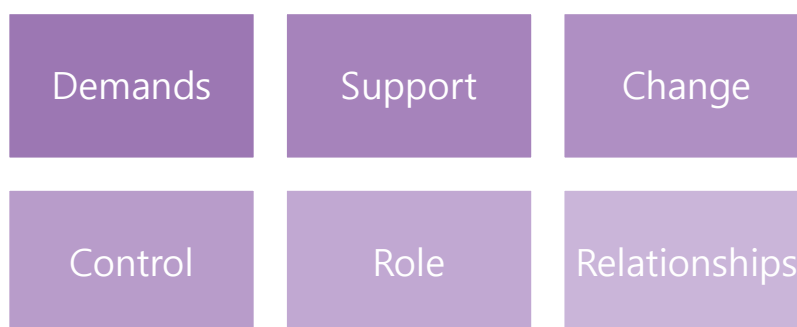
- 1.1 HHP is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees. We recognise that work-related stress can damage the mental and physical health of our employees and we are committed to reducing and where possible eliminating stress for our employees.
- 1.2 Stress can result in poor mental health of employees even if the effects are not severe enough to result in a medical diagnosis. We recognise the need to promote a culture of good mental and physical health in our duty of care under the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health

- 1.3 This Policy will apply to everyone in the organisation including temporary employees, but we recognise the particular difficulties of identifying stress in small offices, or with employees who predominantly work out with our office environment.
- 1.4 Stress can affect anyone and is not a sign of weakness.

BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Stress in the workplace is not new, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) introduced Stress Management Standards several years ago and implemented tools to accompany them which have been developed over the years.
- 2.2 The Management Standards cover six key areas:



- 2.3 Full descriptions of the Standards and typical behaviours which can be a sign of stress are available from the HSE website (www.hse.gov.uk).
- 2.4 It is important to distinguish the difference between stress and pressure. In most work situations some pressure is healthy, but stress is when a person experiences too much pressure and the effect of the pressure becomes negative.

POLICY AIMS

- 3.1 This Policy aims to:
- Promote a culture of mental and physical wellbeing;
 - Increase awareness of stress;
 - Provide Managers with a clear process to use should an employee report that they are experiencing symptoms of stress;
 - Provide details of the proactive measures we will implement to help and reduce and, where possible eliminate stress and its causes; and
 - Provide adequate resources to enable Managers to implement our agreed Stress Management Strategy

IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

- 4.1 The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of this Policy.
- 4.2 Procedures relating to the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of this Policy will be developed and maintained by the Health & Safety Committee and updated as required.
- 4.3 We will:
- Train and support Managers in the risk assessment process
 - Keep a central record of stress risk assessments and check whether these are suitable and sufficient
 - Ensure that appropriate stress management training is provided to Managers by competent training providers
 - Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress by collating sickness absence statistics and any other relevant data

- Provide training for Managers and staff on all areas relating to stress management
- Provide continuing support to Managers and employees and encourage referral to specialist counsellors where appropriate
- Support employees who have been off work due to stress and advise them and their Line Managers on a planned return to work

4.4 The day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of this Policy lies with Line Managers but all employees are obliged to adhere to, and facilitate the implementation of the Policy in the workplace.

CONFIDENTIALITY

4.5 We will ensure that employees experiencing stress are dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

4.6 We will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current Data Protection Regulations and our own Data Protection Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in HHP's employee privacy notice.

LINE MANAGER RESPONSIBILITY

4.7 Line Managers play a key role in managing stress in the workplace. It is vital to the success of a Stress Management Policy that Managers have a thorough understanding of what stress is and what the causes and early signs are.

THE LINE MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Attending stress awareness training;
- To be aware of the signs of stress and intervene where necessary;
- Promote our culture of a physically and mentally healthy organisation;
- To manage staff effectively to minimise them experiencing stress by ensuring:
 - good two-way communication between themselves and staff;
 - that employees are consulted and provided with constructive feedback in the course of their work particularly when changes are being proposed or implemented;
 - ensuring that bullying and harassment is not tolerated;

- appropriate risk assessments are carried out;
- recommendations of risk assessments are implemented as required;
- working hours and overtime of employees is monitored to avoid overworking or overload;
- employees take their full holiday entitlement;
- employees have adequate opportunities for rest, meals and refreshments;
- employees are fully trained to carry out their duties;
- employees are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities;
- that employees experiencing stress have access to appropriate sources of advice and support;
- lone workers are provided with effective supervision and support;
- additional support is offered to employees who are experiencing stress outside the workplace, should it be appropriate; and
- encouraging a culture where stress is not regarded as a weakness.

EMPLOYEES RESPONSIBILITY

- 4.8 Individuals need to be aware of their own range of feelings and reactions to stressful situations and their personal methods of coping.
- 4.9 Excessive pressure and personal stress is not always evident in individuals, and Line Managers may not be aware of the stressors or triggers that affect their staff. Employees have a level of responsibility to take in maintaining their own health and well-being and have a duty to inform their Line Managers when work pressure is excessive to that reasonable steps can be taken to reduce this wherever possible.

Employees responsibilities include:

- raising any concerns they may have regarding stress at the earliest opportunity;
- to participate in our measures to assist in reducing or eliminating stress including attending counseling when recommended;
- being aware of the HSE Risk Management Standards and the signs of stress;

- raising any concerns, they may have for their colleagues in regard to stress with a Line Manager

HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

- 4.10 The Health & Safety Committee will perform a pivotal role in ensuring that this Policy is implemented, and will oversee monitoring of the efficacy of the Policy and other measures to reduce work-related stress and promote workplace H&S.

MANAGING STRESS

- 5.1 To support our commitment to reduce the risk of stress occurring, we will ensure the following initiatives are implemented and adopted.

PROACTIVE MEASURES	
Managers Training	All Line Managers will attend stress awareness training and subsequent refreshers at appropriate intervals
Stress Risk Assessments	We commit to conducting a stress risk assessment among staff on a periodic basis to help inform the team/department risk assessment. This will assist in identifying any 'at risk' areas within the organisation
Analysing Information	Commitment will be given that we will review appropriate data e.g. absence, employee concerns, employee questionnaires to identify areas where stress is or could be a risk
Promoting the Well Being of Employees	We are committed to developing a Well-Being Strategy, facilitating a culture of promoting physical and mental health in the following ways: • Provide stress awareness sessions for staff. • Ensure that staff take any allocated breaks. • Manage staff holiday entitlement in order that leave is taken throughout the year at reasonable intervals. • Promote the benefits of physical activity for both physical and mental health. • Ensure that staff are not working excessive hours on a regular and prolonged basis. Provide opportunities for employees to be active throughout their working day where possible and appropriate.

REACTIVE MEASURES

- 5.2 Stress is a very individualised condition and, as a result, it is unfortunate that even with the above measures being put in place some employees may nonetheless find themselves experiencing a stressful period in their lives. This may be caused by work or personal circumstances, or a combination of both.
- 5.3 We will use a number of processes and procedures to help identify and then deal with a situation where an employee raises concerns of stress. Different procedures may be required depending on the circumstances involved. If the employee's Line Manager is a contributing factor to the employee's stress there will be separate procedures for this instance.
- 5.4 If it is identified that the stress is being caused by another employee then appropriate investigations may be required in line with our Grievance Policy.
- 5.5 If through discussions with an employee a Line Manager becomes aware of a stress risk they will raise this in the appropriate way to ensure it is addressed at an organisational level. This will be done while maintaining the employee's confidentiality.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & COUNSELLING SERVICE

- 6.1 If deemed appropriate an employee may be referred to an occupational health specialist to help identify any actions that could be taken to assist the employee.
- 6.2 The details of the service available to employees are displayed on the staff notice boards, intranet or can be sought from the employee's Line Manager.

COMMUNICATING THE POLICY

- 7.1 HHP will inform its employees about the Stress Management Policy.
- 7.2 All new employees will be given access to a copy of Stress Management Policy and training on its procedures as part of their induction process.
- 7.3 The Staff Handbook will include the Policy.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE POLICY

- 8.1 We will review this Policy every 3 years. More frequent reviews will be considered if, for example, there is a need to respond to new legislation/policy guidance.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

9.1 The following policies and procedures are referenced as part of this Policy:

- Data Protection Policy; and
- Grievance Policy.

INTERPRETATIONS & ABBREVIATIONS

The following interpretation and abbreviations are used in this policy:

WORD	INTERPRETATION
<i>HHP or Partnership</i>	Hebridean Housing Partnership
<i>Board</i>	Means the Board of the Hebridean Housing Partnership
<i>Board Members</i>	All Members of the Board including co-opted Members
<i>H&S</i>	Health & Safety
<i>Stress</i>	The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them
<i>Proactive measures</i>	Aims to prevent the harm caused by stress by taking action before it occurs
<i>Reactive measures</i>	Actions which will respond to any stress related situation to minimise harm once it has occurred and assist in preventing it occurring again
All references to the masculine gender in this policy shall read as equally applicable to the feminine gender	



HHP is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, Registered Number: 2644R(S), Registered Office: Creed Court, Gleann Seileach Business Park, Willowglen Road, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis HS1 2QP. It is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number: SC035767, registered as Registered Social Landlord with the Scottish Housing Regulator, Registration Number: 359 and registered as a Property Factor, Registration Number PF000183

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Individual Employee Stress Questionnaire

You have been given this questionnaire to complete following on from your initial meeting with your manager regarding any stress you are experiencing.

The purpose of this questionnaire is for you to identify what factors may be contributing to you feeling stressed, and for you to think about, and detail what you feel would help you manage your current situation.

Once you have completed the form, please return it to your line manager who will then arrange a further meeting with you to discuss your stressors and what support may be available.

If, due to the circumstances it would be better to discuss your current situation with an alternative manager this can be arranged.

Stressors

Please list the factors that you feel are contributing to you feeling stressed, once you have done this, please rank them from 1-10 with 10 having the biggest impact on you and 1 the least. The factors detailed may be within or out with the workplace.

Stressor	Stress Factor Rating (1-10)
Workplace factors – e.g. Workload/working relationships/work/life balance	
External factors – e.g. Home life/family/financial	

Moving Forward

Taking each stressor in turn please complete the below section prior to the meeting. Section 3 & 4 will be completed at the meeting with your line manager.

Stressor 1 – Outline the background
How do you see this situation being resolved?

Stressor 2 – Outline the background
How do you see this situation being resolved?

Stressor 3 – Outline the background

[illegible]

How do you see this situation being resolved?

This section below will be completed with your line manager at the meeting

Section 3 – Agreed Actions

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Section 4 – Review Date

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Employee signature

Date

Line managers signature

Date