



Stress in the Workplace Policy

Policy and Finance Committee Approved: 19 February 2025
Due for next Review: February 2028

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Council is committed to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of all members of staff.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that work related stress can affect mental and physical health and that work related stress is a health and safety issue which the Council will address by identifying and reducing workplace stressors and developing good working practices.
- 1.3 The Council recognises its duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its staff. This includes taking reasonable steps to prevent them from suffering stress related illness as a result of their work.
- 1.4 This policy will apply to everyone in the Council including temporary or casual staff.
- 1.5 All managers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

2. Definition of Stress

- 2.1 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as ‘the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them’.
- 2.2 The Council understands that the HSE clearly links work related stress to factors such as: excessive work demands, overwork, lack of control over work, bullying and harassment, lack of support from colleagues, managers and supervisors, lack of adequate training, unclear job roles or job role conflict and change.

3. Effects of Stress

- 3.1 The Council recognises that stress can have a number of negative effects on an individual including:
 - Fatigue
 - Anxiety and depression
 - Low self esteem

- Adverse effects on performance
- Problems sleeping
- Other health problems, such as migraine, raised blood pressure, increased alcohol use etc
- Burnout – physical and emotional exhaustion caused by severe or prolonged stress

3.2 Stress can also have the following effects on the Council

- High levels of absenteeism and staff sickness
- Increased staff turnover
- Low staff morale
- Increased number of accidents and mistakes
- High levels of conflict

3.3 The Council recognises that stress can affect anyone and is not a sign of weakness. Everyone is different and the threshold for becoming stressed will vary from individual and will also depend on what is going on in their life outside work.

4. Policy Statement

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

- Identifying workplace sources of stress through a process of risk assessment, which will be regularly reviewed.
- 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 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
- The Council will ensure staff are fully trained to undertake their duties.