Policy Name	Stress Management Policy
Policy Author	Director EVH Model Policy
Approved by Sub Committee	N/A
Approved by Management Committee	September 2022
Latest date of Next Review	September 2027

West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative will provide this policy on request at no cost, in larger print, in Braille, in audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages. Please contact the office.

HAPPY TO **TRANSLATE**

1. Introduction

West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative (WWHC) is committed to reducing and where possible eliminating stress for its employees. Although stress in itself is not an illness, in can be a contributory factor in many conditions and can cause both physical and mental illnesses.

Stress can result in poor mental health of employees even if the effects are not severe enough to result in a medical diagnosis. WWHC recognises the need to promote a culture of good mental and physical health in its duty of care under the requirement of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

2. Background

Stress in the workplace is not new. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) introduced Stress Management Standards in 2004 and implemented tools to accompany them which have developed over the years.

The management standards cover six key areas :

- Demands
- Support
- Change
- Control
- Role
- Relationships

Full descriptions of the standards and typical behaviours which can be a sign of stress are available from the HSE website.

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.

3. Policy Aims

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 WWHC will implement to help reduce and, where possible, eliminate stress and its causes

4. Legal Framework

Although there is no specific legislation on stress the following are relevant through case law.

- **Health & Safety at Work Act 1974**
  Under section 2 (1), employers have a duty to 'ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare at work of all...employees'

- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
  Requires that employers make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the H&S of its employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work and this includes stress.

5. Definitions

The following are definitions which will be applied in the context of this policy:

- **Stress**: the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them
- **Proactive measures**: aims to prevent the harm caused by stress by taking action before it occurs
- **Reactive measures**: actions which will respond to any stress related situation to minimise harm once it has occurred and assist in preventing it occurring again.

6. Confidentiality

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

The organisation will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Privacy Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in WWHC's employee privacy notice.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 Health & Safety Administrators

The Health and Safety Administrators are responsible for implementing health and safety procedures across the organisation to comply with legislation and best practice.

The Health and Safety Administrators responsibilities include:

- Promote the organisations culture of a physically and mentally healthy organisation
- To ensure that a stress risk assessment is conducted with staff on a routine basis
- To arrange sufficient training and / or awareness sessions in accordance with the recommendations outlined in the Health and Safety Control Manual
- To distribute to or signpost the employee to the organisation's supporting materials when there is evidence of stress or when requested by line managers / other staff.

7.2 Line Manager

Line managers play a key role in managing stress within the workplace. It is vital to the success of a stress policy that managers have a thorough understanding of what stress is, what the causes and early signs are.

The line manager's responsibilities include:

- Attending stress awareness training
- To be aware of the signs of stress and intervene where necessary
- Promote the organisations culture of a physically and mentally healthy organisation
- To manage staff effectively to minimise them experiencing stress
- Where issues of stress arise, intervene as early as possible
- Ensure staff contribute to the organisation's stress questionnaires when necessary
- To take steps to assist employees maintain a state of good mental health e.g. encourage rest breaks, fresh air, and holidays.

7.3 Employee

- To raise any concerns they may have regarding stress at the earliest opportunity
- To participate in WWHC's measures to assist in reducing or eliminating stress
- To be aware of the HSE Risk Management standards and the signs of stress
- To raise any concerns they may have for their colleagues in regards to stress with a manager

8. Managing Stress

8.1 Proactive Measures

To support the organisation's commitment to reducing the risk of stress occurring, WWHC will ensure that the following initiatives will be implemented and adopted.

- **Managers training**
  WWHC will ensure that all line managers attend stress awareness training and subsequent refreshers at appropriate intervals.

- **Stress Risk Assessments**
  WWHC will commit to conducting a stress risk assessment among staff on a periodic basis to help inform the team/section risk assessment. This will assist in identifying any 'at risk' areas within the organisation.

- **Analysing Information**
  Commitment will be given that WWHC will review appropriate data e.g. absence, employee concerns, employee questionnaires to identify areas where stress is or could be a risk.

- **Risk Assessments**
  Stress risk assessments will be conducted on a periodic basis (whether these are carried out organisation wide or at section level will depend on the size of the organisation).

- **Promoting the Wellbeing of Employees**
  WWHC is committed to 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.

8.2 Reactive Measures

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.

- **Managing Individual Stress Concerns**
  The following details the process that will be used by WWHC should an employee raise concerns of stress.

  ⇒ Manager becomes aware that an employee is experiencing stress
  ⇒ The manager should arrange to meet with the staff member within 3 days to discuss the issues.
  ⇒ The line manager will give the employee a stress questionnaire to complete (**Appendix 1**).
  ⇒ The employee completes the questionnaire and returns this to the line manager.
  ⇒ A second meeting is arranged to discuss the questionnaire, identify ways of managing the issues, and any support or interim arrangements that may assist the employee's recovery.
  ⇒ If appropriate the employee may be referred to an occupational health specialist, Counselling or any other appropriate service.
  ⇒ By the end of the meeting an action plan will be completed to summarise discussions and what actions will be taken by the organisation, line manager and employee.
  ⇒ If the employee is absent as a result of stress the absence will be managed in line with WWHC's absence management procedures, as well as providing the employee with the questionnaire to complete.

NB: If the employee's line manager is a contributing factor to the employee's stress, another appropriate manager e.g. a manager one level above will conduct the meetings.

If it is identified that the stress is being caused by another employee then appropriate investigations may be required in line with WWHC's Grievance Policy.

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**
  If deemed appropriate an employee may be referred to an occupational health specialist to help identify any actions that could be taken to assist in the employee's recovery.

- **Counselling Service**
  The details of this are displayed on the staff notice boards or can be sought from the employee's line manager

9. Equalities

We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment for all people in our work. In implementing this Policy, we will provide a fair and equal service to all people, irrespective of factors such as gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed in at least every five years or earlier in line with legislative or regulatory guidance/changes or good practice guidelines.

Additional Sources of Information

Healthy Working Lives

http://surveys.healthyworkinglives.com

Health and Safety Executive

http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/

Mind

https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/workplace-mental-health/work-and-stress/

Individual Employee Stress Questionnaire

You have been given this questionnaire to complete as it has been highlighted to your line manager that you are, or may be feeling stressed. The purpose of this questionnaire is 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 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.

Question	If yes, please provide brief details.
Do different people at work demand that you complete various tasks which are hard to achieve?	
Do you feel you must work very intensively or fast most of the time?	
Do you feel you must neglect some tasks as you have too much to do?	
Do you feel that you are unable to take breaks due to your workload?	
Do you feel pressured to work long hours?	

Do you feel you can decide when to take a break from your work?	
Do you feel you have a say in the pace/speed that you work?	
Do you feel you have any choice over how you do your work?	
Do you feel you have any choice in what work you do on a day to day basis?	
Do you feel that your work time is flexible?	
Do you feel your manager gives you enough feedback on the work you do?	
Do you feel you can rely on your manager to assist you with a work problem?	
Do you feel you can talk to your manager about something that may upset, annoy or distress you at work or outside of work?	
Do you feel that your manager encourages you at work?	

Do you feel you get the help and support from your colleagues that you need?	
Do you feel you are respected by your work colleagues?	
Do you feel that you get on well with your colleagues?	
Are you clear about what your duties and responsibilities are at work?	
Are you clear about the goals and objectives for your team?	
Do you understand how your work fits in to the overall aims of your organisation?	
Do you feel you are consulted about changes within your workplace?	
When changes are made in work, do you feel that they are clearly explained as to how they would work in practice?	
Do you feel that there are any other factors in work that may be contributing to the way you are feeling just now?	

Do you feel that there is anything outside of work that maybe contributing to the way you are feeling just now?	

Factors outside of work

This list of questions is mainly focused on factors at work. However, there may be factors outside work, e.g. family life, which may be affecting your ability to cope at work, and which in normal circumstances you would be able to deal with.

It may be benefit you to share these with your line manager (or another manager) as you can discuss with them if there are any short-term support measures that could be put in place to assist you at this time.

In addition, your manager may be able to direct you to any additional support services available.

What do you feel could help change the current situation?

Stressors

Now that you have identified your stressors please rank them, detailing the examples you have provided above in the order of 1-10 with 10 having the biggest impact on you and 1 the least.

Example of Stressor	1-10	Example of Stressor	1-10

Action Plan

This will be discussed and completed between you and your line manager

Please summarise your discussion below.

Stressor/Area of Concern	Agreed Action	Review Date