

Stress at Work Policy

*We will provide this policy on request at no cost,
in large print, in Braille, on tape or in another
non-written format.*

We can produce information on request in large print, Braille, tape and on disk. It is also available in other languages. If you need information in any of these formats please contact us on Freephone 0800 479 7979.

如果你向我們提出要求，我們可以為你提供本資訊的其他語言的版本，或者是盲文或磁帶。如果你需要本資訊的任何一種這些版式的版本，請聯繫我們，電話號碼是 0800 479 7979。

Si vous nous le demandez, nous pouvons vous remettre ces informations en d'autres langues, en braille ou sur cassette. Si vous souhaitez que ces informations vous soient fournies sous l'un de ces formats, contactez-nous en composant le 0800 479 7979.

چنانچه مایل باشید می‌توانید این مطالب را به فارسی یا زبان‌های دیگر و همچنین بریل و یا بر روی نوار کاست دریافت دارید. در صورت نیاز خواهشمندیم با شماره تلفن 0800 479 7979 با ما تماس بگیرید.

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰੋ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ (ਨੋੜਹੀਣਾਂ ਲਈ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ) ਵਿੱਚ, ਜਾਂ ਟੇਪ ਉੱਪਰ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ 0800 479 7979 ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Na Pana/Pani życzenie możemy zapewnić te informacje w innych językach, alfabetem Braille'a lub na kasecie. Jeśli chciał(a)by Pan(i) uzyskać te informacje w którejś z tych form, prosimy skontaktować się z nami pod numerem telefonu 0800 479 7979.

Haddii aad na weydiisato waxaanu warbixintan kugu siin karaa iyadoo ku qoran luuqad kale, farta ay dadka indhaha la' akhriyaan ama cajalad ku duuban. Haddii aad jeclaan lahayd in warbixintan lagugu siiyo mid ka mid ah qaababkaas, fadlan nagala soo xidhiidh telefoonka 0800 479 7979.

По вашей просьбе данная информация может быть предоставлена на других языках, шрифтом Брайля или в аудиозаписи. Если вам требуется информация в одном из этих форматов, позвоните нам по номеру 0800 479 7979.

Approval body	<i>Executive Team</i>
Date of approval	<i>27 September 2022</i>
Review Year	<i>October 2025</i>
Customer engagement required	<i>No</i>
Trade union engagement required	<i>Yes - For Consultation</i>
Equality Impact Assessment	<i>No</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy is designed to recognise that the demands and pressures placed on an employee may sometimes exceed or mismatch the individual's ability to cope, thus creating excessive stress. As a good employer WHS will attempt to help people cope with problems which do not result from workplace experiences. Employees are however expected to have the prime role in managing stress resulting from non-work-related causes.
- 1.2 WHS acknowledges its legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure the health of employees is not put at risk by excessive pressures or demands arising from the way work is organised and we are committed to protecting your health, safety, and well-being while you work for us.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy and Procedure applies to all employees and staff.
- 2.2 This Policy and Procedure is non-contractual and may be amended or withdrawn at any time at the discretion of WHS, following consultation with the Trades Unions.
- 2.3 This Policy defines stress as the adverse reaction experienced in response to excessive pressures or demands. Stress is not an illness but, sustained over a period of time, it can lead to mental and/or physical illness.
- 2.4 There is an important distinction between working under pressure and experiencing stress. Certain levels of pressure are acceptable and normal in every job. They can improve performance, enable individuals to meet their full potential and provide a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. However, when pressure becomes excessive it produces stress.
- 2.5 Stress can be caused by a variety of factors including, but not limited to: the work itself (if over burdensome), the working environment (for example due to harassment or bullying in the workplace), pressures outside the workplace, whether the result of unexpected or traumatic events such as accidents, illness, bereavement, family breakdown or financial worries. They can also compound normal workplace pressures.
- 2.6 We recognise that what triggers stress and the capacity to deal with stress varies from person to person. Individuals react to similar situations in different ways.

3. BASIC PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The primary aim of WHS is to ensure that its employees are kept safe and healthy at work and are not subjected to excessive workloads, onerous working practices or a detrimental working environment which might, if unchecked, cause the employee stress. The secondary aim is to identify and assist those employees who are suffering from stress, for whatever reason, and finding it difficult to cope by offering reasonably practicable support mechanisms.

3.2 Employees may seek help themselves from a GP, a counsellor, Occupational Health, or colleague or complain to their manager or Director (particularly if it is their belief that their work or the working environment is the problem). If employees feel they are unable to go to their manager or Director, they can of course contact the HR department. Any such complaints must be heard sympathetically, fully investigated, and appropriate steps taken to assist.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

General responsibilities are outlined in this section for:

i. Responsibilities of EMT and / or Board

The Board and Executive Management Team's responsibilities include, but are not to be limited to:

- Reviewing this Policy in line with the policy review dates and ensure that it is reflective of WHS values and practice

ii. Responsibilities of the Line Managers

The line managers' responsibilities may include, but will not be limited to:

- Bringing any breach of this policy to the attention of the Human Resources department
- Remaining aware that employees whose performance at work inexplicably deteriorates or whose behaviour becomes erratic or who are long-term absent might be suffering from stress.
- Ensuring they are properly prepared for any interviews that take place with employees suffering from stress.
- Remaining aware that stress can be caused by a number of factors

iii. Responsibilities of the Employees

The employees' responsibilities may include, but will not be limited to:

- Bringing any behaviour in breach of this policy to the attention of the line manager or where appropriate to the Human Resources department

5. POLICY

5.1 Managers need to be aware that employees whose performance at work inexplicably deteriorates or whose behaviour becomes erratic or who are long-term absent might be suffering from stress. They might display a variety of symptoms, which are an indication that, far from being a conduct or performance issue, they are suffering from stress, for whatever reason, which is adversely impacting on them at work. For example:

5.1.1 Absenteeism

- (a) This might be at a high or intermittent but frequent level.
- (b) Absence might follow a pattern, for example whenever a deadline has to be met.
- (c) Absences might be mainly self-certified for non-specific complaints such as headaches, nausea, stomach complaints, irritable bowel syndrome, etc.

5.1.2 Punctuality

- (a) Employees frequently late for work or appointments
- (b) Inability to meet deadlines

5.1.3 Prone to accidents

- (a) At work, because of drowsiness through lack of sleep or the use of alcohol or drugs.
- (b) Away from work, for example at home or travelling to and from it.

5.1.4 Poor Performance

- (a) An inability to concentrate or remember instructions
- (b) Lack of attention to detail
- (c) Inadequate completion of tasks

5.1.5 Conduct

- (a) Violent or aggressive behaviour
- (b) Drinking or taking drugs (prescribed or not) at work
- (c) Poor time keeping
- (d) Lateness

5.1.6 Mood Swings

- (a) Irrational behaviour
- (b) Irritable disposition
- (c) Easily confused
- (d) Depressed

5.2 Managers and Supervisors will ensure that they are properly prepared for interviewing employees. In particular for:

- Intermittent absence – level, frequency and reason for absence of the individual should be identified and any trend established.
- Long term absences/disability – review absence records, reason for absence of the individual and assess needs of the business for the work to be done
- Absence records – should be reviewed generally to establish any trend amongst the work force and/or to establish any margin by which the individual employee can be judged.
- Conduct/behavioural problems – review and assess taking statements, if appropriate, from work colleagues, try to establish the point at which problems first arose.
- Alternative employment – review vacancies to see whether or not there are any other jobs which the employee might be able to do if their present job is stressful or exacerbating their condition.

5.3 Managers and Supervisors should be aware that stress can be caused by a variety of factors including those outlined in clause 2.5. The purpose of the interview with the employee is to try to establish the cause for that employee's absence record, behavioural conduct or performance problems (as the case may be) and put in place appropriate measures to remove the cause of the stress or assist the employee in dealing with it. The factors set out below would be taken into consideration:-

- (a) The work is causing the problem. This might be because WHS is asking too much or for whatever reason, the employee can no longer cope with the demands of the job. Managers and supervisors should carry out an individual stress risk assessment to ensure that WHS is not making excessive demands of the employee. If it is, immediate action must be taken to adjust the work so that there is no breach on the part of WHS of its health & safety obligations and the employee is no longer exposed to a risk to his or her mental health.

If it is the case that the employee simply cannot cope for other reasons the manager/supervisor will need to consider whether or not the employee can be assisted, for example by a lessening of the load, a transfer to other duties (on a temporary or more permanent basis) or counselling.

- a. Harassment and bullying in the workplace must be dealt with in accordance with WHS's policies and procedures outlined in the Dignity at Work (Bullying and Harassment) Policy
- (b) Where stress has led to conduct and performance problems these should be reviewed and a plan for improvement should be put in place, after having established the cause of the problem and dealt with it accordingly. It might, in the meantime, be appropriate to make certain adjustments to the employee's work to make it more manageable.
- (c) Medical Opinion. This should be sought, where appropriate, particularly if the symptoms manifested by the employee indicate a dependency on drink or drugs (whether prescribed or not) and/or where the employee does not accept that they have a problem and/or that continued employment is damaging their health. In these circumstances, reference should be made to WHS's Misuse of Drugs Policy.
- (d) Disabled by stress. The employee will not be dismissed unless termination is justifiable and provided that WHS has first considered and put in place reasonable adjustments, where appropriate, and taken medical advice, if necessary.
- (e) Counselling and support mechanisms. These may be available, and the employee will be afforded reasonable time off work with pay to attend counselling and support sessions.
- (f) Termination of employment. This might be appropriate if, having established the cause of the problem and considered all reasonable options or adjustments; continued employment is damaging or likely to damage further the employee's mental well-being.

6. GOVERNANCE AND REGULATION

6.1 This policy is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department.

6.2 The policy is due for formal review every three years.

7. SANCTIONS

7.1 Any breaches of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under WHS's Disciplinary Policy.

8. RELATED / REFERENCED POLICIES

- WHS Code of Conduct
- WHS Carers' Support
- WHS Compassionate Leave Policy
- WHS Dignity at Work (Bullying and Harassment)
- WHS Disciplinary Policy
- WHS Grievance Policy
- WHS Misuse of Drugs Policy
- WHS Smoking Policy
- WHS Training policy