

Not Protectively Marked



Derbyshire Constabulary

STRESS POLICY POLICY REFERENCE WAA

This policy is suitable for Public Disclosure

INDEX

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The following information has been taken from an internal Force web site serving employees.

Introduction

Derbyshire Constabulary is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees. The Force recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stress. The Force also recognises the organisational benefits of marketing the psychological well being of its staff in achieving the Force's performance objectives

The policy will apply to all staff. Managers are responsible for implementation and the Force is responsible for providing reasonable resources.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) **defines stress as:** -

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

Everyone suffers from some stress at some point in their lives. Pressure and challenge can be stimulating; it enables people to perform well and can spur them on to greater effort. Stress is a natural reaction to too much pressure or other types of demand. If stress goes on for some time and unmanaged, it can lead to mental and physical ill health, e.g. depression, heart disease etc. Stress does not necessarily need to be excessive for this to happen.

A **commitment to a healthy workforce** and the **psychological health** of staff is a priority for the Force, which places a high value on both **physical and mental** health with an acknowledgement that mental health problems can have many causes.

Managing stress at work is an integral part of the Force's strategy for general health promotion. Psychological health has been described as psychological well being, which allows individuals to enjoy life and be able to cope with the inevitable problems of living. Factors that can contribute to an individual's psychological well being can be both work-related and external to work demands or a mixture of both.

This includes: -

- Assessing the nature and scale of risks to health in the workplace
- Increasing the understanding of causes of mental ill-health amongst staff
- Taking action to alleviate the causes of workplace stress

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- Helping staff to minimise stress by clarifying roles and responsibilities
- Effective management of mental health through early identification and appropriate management including early access to support services
- Taking positive action to manage the return to work of those who have suffered mental ill-health to ensure that their skills are not lost to the organisation and ensuring support
- Audit and evaluation of initiatives and programmes of action
- Providing Learning and Development opportunities to managers and supervisory staff to enable them to identify stressors and conduct risk assessments, which would be reviewed on a regular basis, to eliminate stress or control the risk from stress.
- Consulting with the Staff Associations on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress
- Providing adequate resources to enable managers to implement the Force's action plan.

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Policy Statement

The organisation is committed to facilitating and promoting psychological well being of staff and to developing strategies to actively address stress related issues. It is intended that this policy will compliment existing initiatives to promote behaviours that will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour within the workplace, which may contribute to stress.

Guidance will be provided to staff within the organisation with regard to measures aimed at addressing workplace stress and a comprehensive approach will be developed to promoting psychological well being. The policy will support the development of a year on year programme of addressing reducing stress and promoting psychological well being in the organisation. These will ensure early intervention as well as promoting preventative measures as being a much better strategy to managing this issue.

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Guidance and Procedures

The Force has a legal duty to ensure reasonable care is taken so that the health of staff is not put at risk through excessive and sustained levels of stress. These could arise from the way work is organised, the way people relate to each other and work together, or from the day to day demands placed upon them.

It is important that the force should be alert to any developing problems and be prepared to act upon them if harm to health seems likely. Both managers and employees should take full advantage of Force guidance and awareness raising literature in relation to dealing with work-related stress.

Further information is available from the Health Management unit and the force intranet. Where stress is as a consequence of bullying or harassment reference should be made to Force guidance and awareness raising literature in relation to this issue.

Roles and Responsibilities

Executive and Senior Managers

Executive Officers, Divisional Commanders, Heads of Departments and Senior Managers will be alert to the detrimental effects of inappropriate workloads on the physical, emotional and psychological health of staff.

Executive Officers, Divisional Commanders, Heads of Departments and Senior Managers must ensure that no member of staff is subject to intimidation of any sort. This can encompass improper exclusion from sources of information or other rightful opportunities.

Line Managers

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risk assessments within their area of control.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are competent to discharge their duties.
- Seek to provide staff with meaningful developmental and training opportunities.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Use Learning and Development opportunities as required on management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their area of control.

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- Be vigilant and offer additional support to members of staff who are experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement.
- To recognise and reward both effort and achievement.
- Work with staff to plan workloads and alleviate unnecessary pressures.
- Recognise and monitor the effects of emotional strain relating to work activities.

Employees

- Raise issues of concern with Line Manager, Supervisor, Personnel (HR Manager), Staff Association Representative, Occupational Health, Welfare and Counselling or Health and Safety.
- Accept opportunities for counselling or other appropriate support when recommended.

Occupational Health/Health and Safety/Welfare and Counselling

- Provide specialist advice on stress and lifestyles (including health promotion and risk assessment).
- Support individuals who have been absent from work with stress and advise them and their managers of a planned return to work.
- Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- Carry out health promotion initiatives led by the Health Management Unit.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- Delivery, monitoring and evaluation of Critical Incident De-briefing.
- Delivery, monitoring and evaluation of Colleague Support Scheme.
- Fast track referral to specialist counselling and psychological services including regular audit.
- Inform the Force Health and Safety Committee and Strategic Risk Management Group of any significant changes or developments including case law in the field of work-related stress.

Learning and Development

- Ensure the Learning and Development plan supports this policy.
- Provide learning opportunities, which will support managers in implementing stress risk assessments within their area of work.

HR Managers

- Provide appropriate guidance on the Psychological Well-being policy.
- Assist in monitoring the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics and acting on any areas of concern.
- Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to Occupational Health or Workplace Counsellors where appropriate.

Function of Safety Representatives

- Whilst responsibility lies with managers, appointed Safety Representatives need to be consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that precipitate stress.
- Must be able to consult with members on the issue of stress including conducting any workplace surveys or audits.
- Must be involved in the risk assessment process.
- Should be allowed access to collective and anonymous data appertaining to workplace stress.
- Should be provided with reasonable paid time away from normal duties to attend any training that relates to workplace stress that is provided by the Staff Associations.
- Wherever possible should attend joint inspections of the workplace with local management on a quarterly basis to ensure that environmental stressors are properly controlled.

Role of Safety Committees

- The Force Health and Safety Committee in conjunction with the Divisional / Departmental Health and Safety Committees will perform a pivotal role in ensuring this policy is implemented.
- The Force Health and Safety Committee will oversee the monitoring of the efficiency of the policy and other measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and well-being reporting on its progress to the Strategic Risk Management Group.

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Certificate of Compliance

This document was audited in October 2008 by S Donscha, within the guidelines of the Human Rights Act 1998. The audit was carried out on the assumption that the guiding legislation is itself compliant with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Where there are areas of potential interference with individuals' rights under the Act due regard has been given to the issues of legality legitimate aim proportionality and fairness.

Subject to any new legislation or changes in case law which require immediate amendment this document next requires reviewing in October 2010 by the Head of Department.