



Williamsburgh

HOUSING ASSOCIATION

• Limited •

Stress at Work Policy

This policy can be made available in different languages and other formats such as Braille, large print or tape, on request.

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1. Introduction

Williamsburgh Housing Association consistently strives to achieve high standards of health and safety throughout the organisation. We consider the safety and well-being of all staff members to be fundamental in the effective operation of the Association. The Association recognises that the duties placed upon it by legislation encompass both the mental as well as physical well-being of staff. As part of our Health and Safety risk assessment process, the subject of stress at work is examined.

2. Stress at Work

It is a recognised fact that all employees suffer some pressure in the workplace and indeed, from a psychological viewpoint, some pressure is inevitable and beneficial. When pressure and demands become excessive, however, this can cause stress which can result in employees failing to perform, suffering various minor ailments and, ultimately, being susceptible to some psychiatric illness, such as a major depressive episode.

(a) Responsibilities

Williamsburgh Housing Association is committed to ensuring that staff members work in a supportive and pleasant environment. The Committee and senior management team seek, at all times, to develop and promote an open and effective form of management, where staff are encouraged to achieve their potential and are able to cope with the demands and pressure associated with their role.

Should staff members feel they are suffering from stress as a result of their work activities, the Association will seek to resolve identifiable problems in a sensitive and supportive manner.

Determination of stress-related problems may frequently be difficult to identify, as individuals will respond differently to the effects of stress. It is, therefore, extremely important that staff members make it known if they consider they may be suffering from work related stress.

2. Stress at Work Contd.

(b) Signals

The effects of stress may be physical, psychological or behavioural. In many instances, stress will manifest as a combination of these effects. These effects may be a short term response to pressure which will disappear when the source or cause has been removed. If pressure is sustained for a prolonged period, however, this can result in individuals experiencing anxiety, anger and frustration, irritability, intolerance and over indulgence in alcohol, tobacco and/or medication.

In physical terms, stress may result in sleep disturbance causing tiredness, tension, nausea and dizziness, headaches, weight loss/gain and in very extreme circumstances chest pains, high blood pressure and heart disease. Mentally, it may manifest itself in indecision, lack of ability to concentrate, memory loss, poor judgement, loss of motivation and impairment of perception.

3. Prevention

The procedures adopted by the Association in relation to work-related stress are detailed within the Health and Safety Control Manual.

Managing stress, however, is not a matter of solving the problem when it occurs – it is very much a case of preventative medicine.

To this end, the Association regularly assesses stress within the workplace, as part of the overall risk assessment process.

4. Independent Advice/Counselling

In certain circumstances, staff members may consider that external counselling is more appropriate to their needs than in-house assistance. Through the Association's membership of Employers in Voluntary Housing, all staff members have access to the Employee Counselling Service.

Contact details are contained within the Health and Safety Control Manual and displayed in the staff room, where advice leaflets are also available.

5. Evaluation and Monitoring

Williamsburgh Housing Association seeks to maximise the efficiency of our business performance while maintaining our reputation and financial well-being. These objectives will be pursued while protecting the interests and safety of tenants and service users. Equally important will be consideration of the safety and well-being of staff members. This is fundamental to the effective operation of the Association and to achieving the high standards of health and safety set by Williamsburgh Housing Association.

Having identified our aims and objectives, we will assess whether the policy is being implemented effectively through monitoring:

- instances where work related stress are identified, and
- our adherence with the procedures, in relation both to prevention and responding to cases presented.

Unless the monitoring arrangements indicate problems with the procedures or we identify an increase in the stress levels experienced by staff, the Management Committee will be advised, at the time of the policy review, whether we are achieving our objectives or whether more effective measures require to be introduced.

6. Review

The Management Committee will have regard to this policy, as per our review schedule. As such, the policy will be considered every three years to ensure that it responds to any relevant updates to the Health and Safety Control Manual, relevant revised legislation or guidance issued by regulatory bodies.

The review will take place following the appropriate consultation with residents, as outlined in our Tenant Participation Strategy.