



Dudley Mind Staff Well-being: Policy for the Avoidance and Management of Work Related Stress

1. Introduction

1.1 Dudley Mind believes that its staff are its most important asset and is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all Dudley Mind employees. All those employed by Dudley Mind and members of the Board will be made aware of this policy.

3. Definition of stress

3.1 The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on 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.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Managers

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risk assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to perform their duties.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking. Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend training in good management practice and health and safety as requested.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their team.
- After consultation with the employee claiming to be suffering with stress and taking appropriate advice, determine to what extent the stress is work related.

- Take appropriate remedial action when they become aware that a member of staff is suffering from work related stress/or has suffered in the past.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work eg. Bereavement or separation.

4.2 Human Resources Officer

- Give guidance to managers on the stress policy.
- Assist in monitoring the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- Advise managers and individuals on training requirements.
- Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to the employee assistance programme where appropriate.

4.3 Employees

- Raise issues of concern with their line manager.
- Inform their line manager/HR Officer if they believe that they are suffering from work related stress.
- Accept opportunities for stress reduction strategies eg. counselling/training when recommended

5. Policy

- 5.1 Dudley Mind will identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- 5.2 Dudley Mind will provide training for all management in good management practices.
- 5.3 The organisation will provide access to an employee assistance programme for each employee that offers face to face counselling where appropriate to those affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
- 5.4 The organisation will provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement our agreed stress management measures.

6. Implementation

6.1 Dudley Mind is committed to working towards best practice in the six management standards for stress as identified by the HSE. This means looking at the demands made on employees; the level of control employees have over their work; the support employees receive from managers and colleagues; the clarity of an employee's role within the organisation; the nature of relationships at work; and the management of organisational change.

6.2 Dudley Mind will maintain the following organisational practices in order to reduce the potential for work related stress becoming problematic to individual employees:

- Clear line management structures and lines of accountability
- Clear job descriptions outlining individual roles and responsibilities
- An induction and orientation programme to assist new staff to settle into their job
- Regular support and supervision meetings with staff to provide the opportunity to discuss working practices, training needs and personal issues
- Employee quarterly meetings to promote an organisational culture based on cooperation and consultation
- Written policies and procedures to avoid conflict and ensure fairness, to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour, and to adequately support employees
- The provision of an employee assistance programme for employees suffering the ill effects of stress.
- The provision of unpaid parental leave (for employees with children under a certain age) and unpaid time off for dependant care leave (in respect of emergencies relating to dependents) to prevent stress relating to caring responsibilities (full details of eligibility can be obtained from the corresponding policy).

6.3 Dudley Mind employees are encouraged to report work related stress to their direct line manager. This information will not be passed on to other staff without the permission of the employee concerned. It may however, be necessary to bring it to the attention of the HR Officer and/or Chief Executive Officer if the stress or its cause has a bearing on the interest of Dudley Mind as a whole.

6.4 Information on the causes and effects of stress is available from the HR Officer.

7. Measures to deal with work related stress

7.1 Dudley Mind, as an employer, will need to react in different ways according to the cause of the stress suffered by the employee. The manager will do everything they reasonably can to offer support to the employee and to deal with the problem reported to them.

7.1.1 Attention will be given to assessing the cause of stress at work and introducing measures to reduce or prevent stress. The advice and assistance of other agencies may be sought in this.

7.2 In the event of a traumatic event occurring at work eg. an assault, the employee will be encouraged to make use of the counselling and stress relief therapy offered through the employee assistance programme and healthcare scheme.

7.2.1 Dudley Mind may also use its discretion to fund additional counselling sessions deemed necessary after the employee assistance programme has been utilised.

7.2.2 Reasonable time off work for recuperation will be discussed and offered as appropriate. The return back to work will be fully supported by whatever possible means available.

7.3 Where stress causes deterioration in job performance, this will be treated as a health problem and the sufferer will be encouraged to seek help under the terms of this policy. There will be no discrimination against individuals suffering from stress.

7.4 Efforts will be made to offer alternative employment to employees who are unable to continue in their job because of stress related illness, but this may not be possible if alternative posts are not available.

7.5 Efforts will be made to alter working arrangements, including hours of work, type of work etc to enable employees suffering from stress related illness to continue in employment. As in the paragraph above 7.4, requested alterations to working arrangements may not be possible if the requests directly conflict with the needs of the client group served by Dudley Mind, or if the request is proven to not be feasible for financial, business or health and safety reasons.

8. Counselling

8.1 With the exception of counselling for post-traumatic stress caused by work events or incidents, Dudley Mind does not have the resources to meet all counselling fees on behalf of staff.

8.2 Where an employee is suffering from stress resulting from their work or personal life and feels that they could benefit from counselling, they should contact the employee assistance programme confidential helpline for telephone counselling. Through the employee assistance helpline employees may be offered up to 6 face to face counselling sessions and paid time off to attend those sessions where they cannot reasonably be booked outside working hours (subject to proof of appointment).

9. Risk Assessments

9.1 The provision of a healthy and safe working environment, and the conduct of risk assessments to sustain that environment, is the overall responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer.

9.1.1 Service risk assessments (Appendix 2) should be completed annually by the relevant service team manager.

9.1.2 Each member of staff should also complete an individual stress risk assessment (Appendix 1) annually with their line manager or more often if they have stated that they are feeling stressed by their work or their line manager has observed signs of stress developing. If any further action is needed line managers must ensure appropriate steps are taken to reduce the stress where practicable, in consultation with the HR Officer.

10. Non-work related stress

10.1 There may be circumstances when a member of staff's ability to cope with pressure at work may also be significantly impacted or reduced by the amount of pressure being experienced by the member of staff outside of work, resulting from non-work pressures such as bereavement, family sickness and/or other personal circumstances. Though Dudley Mind recognises its duty of care to members of staff in such situations, it is not the responsibility of the organisation to deal with the causes of stress that are outside the workplace. In particular, Dudley Mind does not have any control over these areas but it recognises that it is important to deal with such matters sensitively and appropriately in the circumstances. Additional support may be offered as appropriate for example, allowing time off for dependant care leave or providing more frequent support and supervision sessions.

11. Related Legislation

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

12. Changes

Dudley Mind reserves the right to change the provision of the Dudley Mind Staff Wellbeing Policy by way of amendment, addition, deletion or substitution of new procedures from time to time at its discretion. Employees will be consulted and notified of any changes by appropriate means.

Appendix 1 – Individual Stress at Work Risk Assessment

To be completed by every staff member annually. It can also be used more often when employees have stated that they are feeling stressed by their work, or when the line manager has observed signs of stress developing. It should be completed in consultation with the employee and thereafter reviewed at an agreed and suitable frequency, depending on individual circumstances. The HR Officer can advise or assist with completion where necessary.

Answer the following questions

Risk factor controlled	YES	NO	COMMENTS	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED	ACTION COMPLETED
CONTROL					
Do you have some control over: Workload?					
How work is planned?					
How tasks are carried out					
How problems are tackled?					
Pace of work?					
Do you have some control over contact with client groups?					
Are you involved in work planning/decisions that affect you?					
DEMANDS					
Have you received sufficient training to do your job effectively?					
Are there regular meetings to communicate concerns and aspirations?					
Do you work over your contracted hours on a regular basis?					
Do you feel confident to report unacceptable					

behaviour?					
I am aware that the organisation has systems for managing unacceptable behaviour					
Are the demands placed upon you achievable and realistic?					
Are tasks not too difficult/too easy (physically and mentally)?					
Are conflicting demands manageable (ie. demands from several different people)?					
ROLE					
Do you clearly understand your role and responsibilities?					
SUPPORT					
Do you have regular (monthly) support and supervision sessions with your manager?					
Do you have an annual appraisal?					
Are there sufficient resources available for you to do your job properly?					
I am aware that there are written policies in place to support me in my role					
RELATIONSHIPS					
Do you feel supported by your manager to do your job?					
Are colleagues encouraged to support each other?					
CHANGE					
Are you consulted about organisational change?					
Do you feel you have some say in organisational change that affects you/your role?					
Do you feel supported during times of change?					

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Is there an 'open-door' policy to discuss any concerns?					
Do you feel confident to express any concerns?					

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Employee's Name.....

Employee's Signature.....

Line Manager's Signature.....

Date.....

Appendix 2: Workplace stress risk assessment

To be completed by the relevant service manager annually. It can also be used more often in instances where for example a new service, task or way of working is introduced. The HR Officer can advise or assist with completion where necessary.

Service Name		
Date of assessment		
Completed by		
Further action required?	Yes/No	Overall Risk Rating: High/ Medium /Low

Risk factor controlled	YES	NO	COMMENTS	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED	ACTION COMPLETED
MANAGEMENT					
Are Dudley Mind's procedures to reduce stress complied with?					
Is the workload reasonable?					
Do you and your staff feel secure within your jobs?					
Are work deadlines reasonable and achievable?					
STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS					
Have all staff and volunteers received sufficient training for their roles?					
Is the service staffed sufficiently to carry out the required duties?					
Are all staff aware of their roles and responsibilities (are job descriptions used and reviewed)?					
Do all staff take their annual leave?					
Are there regular meetings to communicate					

concerns and aspirations?					
Do staff and volunteers avoid working excessive hours?					
Are all incidents of inappropriate behaviour reported?					
Are regular supervision and annual appraisals carried out?					
RELATIONSHIPS					
Are clashes of personality/different styles of working managed adequately?					
Are bullying /harassment issues managed?					
CHANGE					
Are staff consulted about the need for change?					
Is there an 'open door' policy to discuss any concerns?					
Is there adequate training (for new equipment/new technology/new systems of work)?					
WORK ACTIVITIES					
Are work objectives clear?					
Are Dudley Mind's health and safety procedures complied with?					
Are there sufficient controls to avoid verbal and physical abuse?					
Has each work activity been risked assessed and controls put in place to keep risks low?					
ENVIRONMENT					
Is the workplace laid out to ensure safety?					
Are the service premises suitable for the activities performed there?					
Are there sufficient					

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controls to reduce risk?					
Are staff/volunteers aware of hazards?					
DOCUMENTATION					
Have all staff read and understood the stress policy?					
Are client risk assessments sufficient and available?					
Are risk assessments documented and reviewed?					
Are staff supervisions and appraisals documented?					
INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS					
Are all incidents and accidents reported?					
Have they been adequately dealt with?					

Additional Information

Manager Signature.....

Chief Executive Officer's Signature.....

Date.....

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