Lead Employer Trust

Management of Stress in Workplace

POLICY INFORMATION SHEET

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Lead Employer Trust (LET) is committed to protecting the **health, safety and welfare** of its employees. It is recognised that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors for those affected by those stressors. The correct level of positive stress or pressure can be stimulating and enhance performance. However, long term or excessive stress is counter-productive and has a negative effect on creativity, achievement and health.

The LET has a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities; and take measures to control that risk.

2. DEFINITION

The Health and Safety Executive define 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 is a negative consequence of excess pressure.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to all staff employed by the Lead Employer Trust.

The LET is committed to promoting the health and well-being of employees by seeking to identify and minimise the potential causes of stress in the workplace. To promote this the LET will work closely with the host training organisations and communicate their own less than full time working policy and assistance available to employees through confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.

4. CAUSES AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

Stress can arise for a wide range of reasons. Appendix B is a list of the more frequent sources of stress based on the Health and Safety Executives Management Standards. Appendix A indicates the more common symptoms of stress. These lists are not exhaustive and employees demonstrating several of these symptoms may or may not be experiencing unhealthy stress.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. Supervisors and Host Training Organisations will:

- Ensure good communication between supervisors and staff at all times. This is of particular importance during times of organisational and procedural changes.

- Create a positive and supportive environment where employees will feel encouraged to bring up concerns at an early stage.

- Ensure employees are fully supported to undertake their duties.

- Review workloads to ensure that employees are not overloaded.

- Ensure that any inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated

- Review working hours to ensure that employees are not overworking.

- Review annual leave records to ensure that employees are taking their entitlement.

- Ensure that any inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated

- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.

- Conduct risk assessments where requested/recommended by the LET's Trainee Support Service and implement measures to reduce the risk of stress within their areas.

- After reviewing the Stress Risk Assessment for their role, direct staff to the LET for appropriate advice and support.

- Record and monitor data on sickness absence and report to the LET.

b. **Employees will:**

- Raise issues of concern with either their supervisor, LET HR Contact, the host training organisations medical staffing or the Trainee Support Service.

- Raise concerns at an early stage to ensure that any appropriate corrective action can be taken.

- Consider attending for counselling when recommended/offered, or when work is being affected by stress or poor mental health caused by personal issues

- Attend training (including mandatory training) relevant to role.

- Make available to their supervisors details of additional hours worked, in order to assess compliance with the Working Time Regulations

    c. **The Trainee Support Service will:**

- Provide specialist advice to the LET and employees to identify work-related causes of stress and how they can be minimised.

- Support and provide guidance to the LET and the host training organisations to ensure implementation of stress risk assessments.

- Support employees who have been off sick with stress and advise them and the LET on a planned return to work.

d. **The LET will:**

- Give guidance to supervisors and the host training organisation on their stress policy.

- Provide support to employees, supervisors and host training organisations in change management issues and encourage referral to the Trainee Support Service where appropriate.

- Monitor data on sickness absence and manage, referrals to the Trainee Support Service. Where areas of concern are identified, these will be raised with the appropriate Training Programme Director and action taken under the LET's Management of Attendance policy.

- Record recommendations for a risk assessment detailed in Trainee Support Service Reports, and follow recommendations up with supervisors and host training organisations to ensure these are carried out.

6 SUPPORT MECHANISMS

It is hoped that where good communication links between employees and their supervisors are in place, many concerns can be discussed informally as they arise. However, there are other areas of support that staff can utilise:

- LET HR Department
- Trainee Support Service
- General Practitioners

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The LET is committed to providing equality of opportunity, not only in its employment practices but also in all the services for which it is responsible. As such, an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy to identify any potential discriminatory impact. The LET also values and respects the diversity of its employees and the wider community it serves. In applying this policy, representatives of the LET will have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Provide for good relations between people of diverse groups

For further information, please refer to the LET's Equality Diversity and Human Rights Policy.

8 REVIEW

The LET Head of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring the document is reviewed no later than three years from the date of issue. The policy may be amended at any time by joint agreement.

9 REFERENCES/LEGISLATION

Management of Attendance Policy
Dignity at Work Policy
Special Leave Policy
Less than Full Time Working Policy
Health and Safety Executive www.hse.gov.uk

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

The more common signs of stress can include:
- Chronic tiredness and depression
- Anxiety attacks
- Headaches/migraines
- Excessive drinking/smoking
- Over eating/Under eating
- Irritability and other "out of character" behaviour
- Muscle tension (neck/back)
- Sleeplessness or a change in sleep pattern
- Frustration/dissatisfaction
- Deteriorating Work Performance
- Symptoms of mental illness or coronary heart disease
- Absenteeism or presenteeism

Psychological symptoms may include the following:

Fixation
- Repetition of arguments
- Belligerence
- Refusal to listen to advice and suggestions

Regression
- Crying
- Arguments
- Immature behaviour
- Personality clashes
- Sulking
- Temper
- Emotional responses

Withdrawal
- Arriving late
- Leaving early
- Long lunch breaks
- Avoidance of colleagues
- Absenteeism
- Resigning

Aggressive behaviour
- Malicious gossip
- Criticism of others
- Refusal to work normally
- Refusal to work
- Graffiti
- Damaging property
- Shouting
- Placing unreasonable demands on more junior staff
- Intimidation of colleagues

CAUSES OF WORKPLACE STRESS

The Health and Safety Executive believes that stress in the workplace is caused by 6 stressor areas, and their Management Standards define a desirable set of conditions to work towards.

DEMANDS
Includes issues like workload, work patterns and the work environment.
The standard is that
- Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

Examples of what should be happening to achieve this standard are:
- The organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work
- People's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands
- Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees; and
- Employee's concerns about their work environment are addressed

CONTROL
How much say the person has in the way they do their work
The standard is that
- Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

Examples of what should be happening to achieve this standard are:
- Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work
- Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work
- Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them learn and undertake new and challenging pieces of work
- The organisation encourages employees to develop their skills
- Employees have a say over when breaks can be taken; and
- Employees are consulted over their work patterns

SUPPORT
Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues

The standard is that
- Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

Examples of what should be happening to achieve this standard are:
- The organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support employees
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff
- Systems are in place to enable and support employees to support their colleagues
- Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it
- Employees know how to access the required resources to do their job; and
- Employees receive regular and constructive feedback

RELATIONSHIP

Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
The standard is that

- Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

Examples of what should be happening to achieve this standard are:
- The organisation promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness
- Employees share information relevant to their work
- The organisation has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour; and
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour

ROLE
Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles
The standard is that
- Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

Examples of what should be happening to achieve this standard are:
- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible
- The organisation provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities
- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon employees are clear; and
- Systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role or responsibilities

CHANGE
How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the workplace
The standard is that
- Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

Examples of what should be happening to achieve this standard are:
- The organisation provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes
- The organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals
- Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs
- Employees are aware of timetables for changes; and
- Employees have access to relevant support during changes

When we are aware of the above issues happening in our work environment we must seek advice or support to ensure that solutions can be sought and practices changed wherever possible.

Staff can also be affected by stress where there are external factors involved, such as divorce, bereavement or financial difficulties.

Equality Impact Assessment

The preliminary impact assessment is a quick and easy screening process.

It should:

- Identify those policies, procedures, services, functions and strategies which require a full EIA by looking at:
    - negative, positive or no impact on any of the equality groups
    - opportunity to promote equality for the equality groups
    - data / feedback
- prioritise if and when a full EIA should be completed
- justify reasons for why a full EIA is not going to be completed

Division/Department

> LET HR Department

Title of policy, procedure, function or service

> Management of Stress in Workplace

Type of policy, procedure, function or service

    Existing   ☐

    New/proposed   X

    Changed   ☐

Q1 - What is the aim of your policy, procedure, project or service?

> To provide guidance to supervisors and employees on managing workplace stress.

Q2 - Who is the policy, procedure, project or service going to benefit?

> All LET Employees

Q3 - Thinking about each group below, does, or could the policy, procedure, project or service have a negative impact on members of the equality groups below?

Group	Yes	No	Unclear

Age		X	
Disability		X	
Race		X	
Gender		X	
Transgender		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Marriage & Civil Partnership		X	
Pregnancy & Maternity Leave		X	
Relationships between groups		X	
Other socially excluded groups		X	

If the answer is "Yes" or "Unclear" you _MUST_ complete a full EIA

Q4 – Does, or could, the policy, procedure, project or service help to promote equality for members of the equality groups?

Group	Yes	No	Unclear
Age	X		
Disability	X		
Race	X		
Gender	X		
Transgender	X		
Sexual Orientation	X		
Religion or belief	X		
Marriage & Civil Partnership	X		
Pregnancy & Maternity Leave	X		
Relationships between groups	X		
Other socially excluded groups	X		

Q5 – Do you have any feedback data from equality groups that indicate how this policy, procedure, project or service may impact upon these groups?

Group	Yes No Impact	Yes Impact	No	Unclear
Age			X	
Disability			X	
Race			X	

Gender			X	
Transgender			X	
Sexual Orientation			X	
Religion or belief			X	
Marriage & Civil Partnership			X	
Pregnancy & Maternity Leave			X	
Relationships between groups			X	
Other socially excluded groups			X	

Q6 – Using the assessments in questions 3, 4 and 5 should a full assessment be carried out on this policy, procedure, project or service?

Yes		No	X

If you have answered "Yes" now follow the EIA toolkit and complete a full EIA form

Q7 – How have you come to this decision?

No indication that equality groups would be adversely affected by this policy.

Q8 – What is your priority for doing the full EIA

High	Medium	Low
		X

Q9 – Who was involved in the EIA?

HR Department, Lead Employer Trust

This EIA has been approved by:
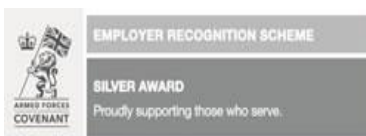
Head of Human Resources, Lead Employer Trust

Date: **6.11.2023** **Contact number:**

0191 275 4769

Please ensure that this assessment is attached to the policy document to which it relates.