

University Policy Statement on Managing Stress in the Workplace

The University of Liverpool (UoL) is committed to providing a safe environment for its staff by conducting its business in a way that protects the health, safety and welfare of each individual and satisfies enforcing authorities/bodies. The UoL therefore recognises its responsibility to ensure that all staff do not suffer unduly from stress at work and that

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Code of Practice on Managing Stress in the Workplace

1. Introduction

Employees may suffer from work related stress conditions which have a substantial and longterm adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. The Equality Act 2010 may apply in some cases, requiring reasonable adjustments to be made to conditions or arrangements to help an individual to function better and prevent deterioration of health.

The Working Time Regulations 1998 were introduced through a European Directive as a health and safety measure. It places limitations on the number of hours worked during an average working week and makes provisions for rest breaks and paid holidays.

This Code of Practice provides general information on work related stress and refers to a specific stress risk assessment form that can be used by managers to manage stress in their area of control.

3. Key Aims

The recognition and management of psychological wellbeing are integral to the University's responsibilities towards its staff and form an important part of the role of senior and line managers. This policy is therefore primarily concerned with the negative effects of stressors arising from factors within the workplace and their impact on psychological health.

The University's aim is to prevent, or where this is not possible reduce to as low a level as is reasonably practicable, stress in the workplace. This will be achieved by:

- Acknowledging the existence and effect of work related stress on individuals and departments/teams.
- Reducing any stigma associated with the disclosure of stress by creating a positive climate for tackling the issues surrounding stress at work.
- Managing the process through stress risk assessments.
- Eliminating or minimising stressors in the workplace and reducing the adverse effects on ill health and wellbeing.
- Promoting open communication, participation and encouragement.
- Monitoring and auditing the arrangements for stress in the workplace.
- Providing helpful resources to and helping managers and staff manage stress.
- Supporting staff to promote personal effectiveness and to take positive action to deal with stress.
- Raising awareness of stress and approaches to managing it.
- Supporting staff who return to work following absence due to stress.

Perception of Stress

The University recommends that staff seeking help should normally approach their line manager in the first instance. They may also want to talk to their trade union representative

- Review the University's Health and Safety objectives and key performance indicators on a regular basis.
- Be aware of significant health and safety stress risks facing the institution.
- Consider the stress implications of strategic decisions such as large projects.

The Council will seek assurances that:

- All mandatory health and safety requirements are met.
- Health and safety arrangements for managing stress are adequately resourced.
- Stress risk control measures are in place and are being acted upon.
- There is an effective process to identify stress management training and competency needs.
- There is a process for auditing stress management arrangements.
- The University has access to competent health and safety advice.
- There is a process for employees or their representatives to be involved and engaged in decisions that affect health and safety.

6.4 Line Managers

Line managers must ensure that:

- Where required/requested, stress risk assessments are carried out in their area of responsibility. A programme of monitoring and reviewing risk assessments must be in place as part of local health and safety plans.
- People are communicated with about any stress issues including changes to policy and guidance (e.g. a change to the existing Employment Assistance Programme).
- Resources are deployed effectively at local level to ensure stress objectives are achieved.
- The Policy and Code of Practice are implemented at local level.
- Local health and safety plans include stress.
- Staff are made aware of stress issues as part of the induction process.
- Training for those involved in implementing the stress management process is completed and completion rates monitored.
- Issues raised during stress assessments are investigated and appropriate action taken.
- There is good communication with competent advice.
- Stress related illness and absence are analysed to identify any trends.
- The process of stress risk assessments is reviewed as part of a formal annual review process and findings are used to further improve existing management systems.
- Feedback received on stress related concerns is fed back into the health and safety plan.

6.5 Supervisory Staff

Supervisory staff must ensure that they:

- Understand the Stress Code of Practice as it relates to their area of responsibility.
- Undertake risk assessments for staff they are responsible for when requested and ensure actions raised are completed in good time.
- Ensure staff attend training based on the competency training matrix/framework.
- Communicate effectively any generic findings from stress risk assessments.
- Discuss stress issues with staff so that they understand the processes involved.
- Implement any stress actions identified in the local health and safety plan.
- Ensure that the process of stress risk assessment and the support available to staff is discussed as part of local inductions.
- Provide anonymised feedback to line and senior managers following stress risk assessments.
- Formally review assessments and findings and implement any actions to ensure

committees.

6.9 All Staff

In relation to stress staff should:

- Familiarise themselves with this Policy.
- Be aware of the main stressors in the workplace.
- Where possible, take action themselves to reduce and manage stress.
- Report any illness or injury which may be caused or exacerbated by work.
- Engage with line managers when completing stress risk assessments.
- Raise any concerns or potential development needs with their line managers.

7. Practical Considerations

7.1 Manager's Role i

Difficulty with making decisions
Dizziness
Poor planning and task execution
Palpitations

assessment/action plan should be kept by both the individual and the person undertaking the stress risk assessment. If agreement cannot be reached on what control measures are appropriate, or if there is disagreement about whether control measures have been implemented effectively, the stress risk assessment should be reviewed by an independent person from a different department/function. This should be discussed with Human Resources in the first instance and advice on who would be suitable to review the action plan taken.

To assist those individuals tasked with completing a stress risk assessment, a specific

Roles

Key factors to consider are:

- Clarity and understanding of role itself.
- How the role should be carried out.
- How it relates to other immediate team members' roles.
- How it relates to the wider department, Institute, School, Faculty or Professional Services area.
- How it relates to the University's strategic aims and plans.

Relationships and Support

The key factors to consider are:

- Inter relationships with immediate colleagues.
- Inter relationships with managers and senior staff.
- Bullying and harassment.
- Direct conflict situations.
- Support in dealing with work difficulties (from colleagues and managers).
- Accessibility.
- Constructive criticism and feedback.
- Praise and encouragement for good work.

Management of Change

The key factors to consider are:

- Communicating change in a timely manner.
- Consultation with all affected

7.4 Ongoing Review

The stress risk assessment and action plan developed should be subject to a regular review. Circumstances can change in the workplace and it is important that the action plan remains appropriate for the staff member. The frequency of meetings to discuss the efficacy of the plan can be agreed in the initial assessment process. Staff members should not be discouraged from approaching their line manager outside of these agreed times if they feel the agreed plan needs review. Should the member of staff believe that the agreed upon control measures are not being implemented fully they should f

- Managers support line providing a sounding board for handling difficult staff issues.
- Financial guidance including debt support and tax information.
- Legal guidance.
- Health and medical information including advice from an occupational health nurse.

The confidential helpline number for staff is 08003584858 (+44 1412717179 outside the UK).

The online portal can be accessed via https://www.validium.com/login/login_vclub/.

Username = UoL; Password = EAPsupport.

Human Resources (HR) Department

The appropriate Area HR Business Partner can be contacted for advice and support. Individuals should discuss their situation with their immediate supervisor or manager in the

Return to Work Questionnaire when employees return to work from sick leave due to stress related illnesses a return to work questionnaire should be completed.