



Policy for Managing Stress & Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace

Procedure Revision No:

1

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Ratified by (Group and Date):

Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee 15th September 2010
University Court

Effective From:

Review Date:

Lead Reviewer:

Convenor, Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee

Dissemination Arrangements:

Health, Safety & Wellbeing Website, SEPS, Occupational Health

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Section 1 Procedure status

This is a policy that has been prepared to complement the Health and Safety Policy

Section 2 Introduction

Poor mental health, including that attributable to work-related stress, is the primary cause of employee sickness absence in the UK. Work-related stress (see Section 4 for definition) is a primary cause of occupational ill health, leading to decreased productivity and increased human error, with the potential for increased accidents at work. It is also, to some extent a preventable cause of distress, suffering and, in some extreme cases, morbidity and mortality in the workforce. There are many terms for poor mental health, this document uses as number of different phrases in the recognition that readers may not all be familiar with the same term.

Stress in the workplace is a major concern for all of us. It can cause a lot of ill health and suffering and costs employers much in lost productivity and absence from work. Stress is the single largest cause of occupational ill health in the public sector, accounting for around half of all days lost to work-related ill health.

Effective stress management, combining preventive measures with support for affected staff, can significantly improve an organisation's performance through improved absence levels, helping it to reach its strategic goals. To reach the best results, however, the planned interventions need to be supported by efforts at all levels within the workplace.

To deal positively with stress in the workplace, we recognise the importance of:

- The duties and responsibilities of the employer to provide a safe and healthy working environment, and
- To ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees.
- To ensure the working environment is safe and healthy with adequate welfare arrangements insofar as these might affect stress, wellbeing and mental health.
- To keep under review the measures taken to ensure the effective management of the health and safety of employees in relation to stress and those activity (ies) that could adversely affect the health and safety, including mental health and wellbeing of themselves and/or others.
- The link between home and the workplace and creating balanced working lives
- Appreciating that the causes of stress may often lie outside the workplace
- Identifying particularly vulnerable groups
- The potential negative effects of prescribed medication on work performance

Costs to the individual due to stress, including work-related stress, are numerous and diverse. There is convincing evidence that prolonged stress has an impact on both physical and psychological aspects of health, as well as significantly altering behaviours.

The University recognises the important part it must play, as an employer, in ensuring that it does all that is reasonably practicable to protect the safety and both the physical and mental health of its employees at work. This is implicit in the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy.

Whilst many people suffering from stress experience physical symptoms alone, some will unfortunately also have adversely affected mental ill health as a result of stress. The University of Glasgow values the health and wellbeing, including the mental health and well-being of all employees and will strive to reduce stigma associated with mental ill health and, through learning, develop an understanding of stress and mental health problems. We will continually promote and endeavour to maintain a culture of positive mental health attitudes and values for all employees.

The way we talk about mental health, mental well-being, mental health problems and mental illness can often be confusing.The idea of well-being includes how people feel – their emotions and life satisfaction –and how people function – their self-acceptance, positive relations with others, personal control over their environment, purpose in life and autonomy. Each person's experience differs. Some people who experience mental illness may have a good quality of life and experience good mental well-being. Others who do not experience mental illness may nevertheless have poor mental well-being and a poor quality of life.

Many staff will at some time or another have health and wellbeing issues, including those that affect their physical or mental wellbeing. Work-related stress and its physical, behavioural and psychological consequences, are primary causes of employee sickness absence in the UK.

Costs to the organisation from work-related stress alone include adverse impacts on:

- Employee commitment
- Staff performance/ productivity
- Human error-related accidents
- Staff turnover
- Attendance
- Recruitment and retention
- Student satisfaction
- Organisational image/ reputation
- Potential litigation

There are also all the usual disadvantages associated with increased sickness absence, such as the increased pressure-induced de-motivation of remaining work colleagues and detrimental effect on service quality.

We are therefore committed to a plan of action, which includes:

- Implementing procedures, processes and working practices designed to minimise the causes of stress and mitigating their effects
- Making assessments of and monitoring the likelihood that something will go wrong in relation to significant stress causing factors in relation to the University's operations, processes and business practices
- Assessing in each, how serious are the likely consequences of these factors on University staff?
- Assessing the frequency and prevalence of each risk factor across the University

- Determining who would be affected in each case
- Assessing how many people would be affected and where this would occur
- In each case determining whether the effects are immediate or chronic
- In each case making a determination of what the law requires
- Defining processes and practices that recognise stress early
- Managing the return to work of those who have suffered mental or physical health problems associated with stress to make sure their skills are not lost;
- Increasing knowledge of the causes of stress in the organisation through a mixture of training and other suitable awareness raising measures, such as the information provided at **Appendix 1**.
- Taking action to tackle stress and helping staff to manage stress
- Managing health problems associated with stress by:
 - Recognising stress early;
 - Managing stress appropriately;
 - Providing access to confidential counselling;
 - Providing advice and sources of help.

Section 3 Purpose of this Procedure

This policy aims to describe the value of maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all staff and acknowledge our duty of care, on both physical and mental health at work. We are committed to providing a supportive environment that maintains, fosters and actively promotes the health and wellbeing of employees. In order to achieve this, we aim to:

1. Ensure effective risk assessment for workplace stress and work pressure to highlight the key causes of stress within the University of Glasgow.
2. Identify potential solutions to reduce stress and optimise systems aimed at minimising risks arising from stress
3. Encourage staff wellbeing within the Organisation and discourage the stigma associated with stress and mental ill health
4. Raise awareness of stress and mental ill health and support staff in building their capacity for coping with pressure and stress
5. Maximise individual performance and opportunities through supportive performance management systems
6. Provide a workplace where individuals experiencing stress or mental ill health issues can raise them with their line manager, confident that they will be addressed sympathetically, appropriately and in confidence
7. Ensure the application of effective and sensitive support systems for sickness absence as a result of stress and mental ill health
8. Provide assistance to employee experiencing stress and/or mental ill health

9. Ensure staff have the opportunity to experience a good balance between work and their other commitments
10. Recognise that all employees, line managers included, may be placed in stressful situations when dealing with difficult work relationships, including those between peers
11. Encourage staff to seek help at an early stage
12. Educate staff in techniques for coping with pressure and stress
13. Ensure that line managers receive additional help as appropriate to manage stressful situations
14. Make sure there is confidentiality for those who want help

Section 4 Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>Stress</i>	<i>“the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them”</i> Health & Safety Executive (HSE) HSG218 Managing the causes of work-related stress
<i>Mental Health</i>	
<i>Poor Mental Health</i>	
<i>Other terms commonly used to describe poor mental health</i>	Mental Ill Health, mental health problems/ issues, mental illness,

Section 5 Section 5 Accountability, Responsibility and Compliance

The Principal remains responsible overall for the management of Health and Safety. In addition to the responsibilities laid down in the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy, there are further specific duties inherent within this procedure. These are detailed below

5.1 Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for Health, Safety & Wellbeing and ensuring that suitable systems are in place for its management and monitoring.

5.2 Secretary of Court

The Secretary of Court is responsible, through the Director of Health, Safety & Wellbeing, for:-

- Ensuring that there are policies and procedures in place, which describe the arrangements for assessing the risk of work-related stress arising out of Glasgow University work activities
- Ensuring that there are policies and procedures in place, which describe the arrangements for recognising and supporting employees who may be experiencing mental ill health, and their line managers

Also

- The Secretary of Court must also liaise with other members of the Senior Management Group to make the case for securing resources for implementing the Procedures.

5.3 Director of Health, Safety & Wellbeing

The Director of Health, Safety & Wellbeing is responsible for:-

- Developing suitable policies and procedures which describe the arrangements for assessing the risk of work-related stress arising out of University of Glasgow work activities
- In association with other employee support services, developing suitable policies and procedures which describe the arrangements for recognising and supporting employees who may be experiencing mental ill health, and their line managers

5.4 Heads of College, Heads of School, Directors of Research Institutes and Heads of Service

- The implementation of this procedure within their College, School, Directorate or Service Area;
- Ensuring that resources (personnel, resources and facilities) are allocated to ensure that legislative requirements for ensuring the mental wellbeing of employees are satisfied; and
- Ensuring that if additional resources are required, a request is submitted to the appropriate University of Glasgow forum.

5.5 Line Managers (whether in Schools, Research Institutes or University Services)

Line Managers shall:

- Identify hazardous situations within department that pose a risk of causing work-related stress or other mental ill health in employees, through the process of general risk assessment
- Where stress is identified as a factor in the deterioration of staff morale, well-being and performance levels, give priority to identifying and then working to eliminate the causes of stress and ensuring that staff are protected from working in a stress-inducing environment
- Include discussions of these situations with their teams and/or individual staff during the course of routine team meetings or one-to-one sessions to enable identification of situations where individual stress risk assessments, such as the one supplied at Appendix 3, or local use of the survey questionnaire at Appendix 2 may be helpful.
- Nominate designated employees to be involved in any more detailed risk assessments that are highlighted as necessary by:
 - The result of a staff survey
 - An identifiable trend in sickness absence due to work-related stress or other mental ill health issue
 - An individual or group of individuals raising concerns over work-related stress
 - Occupational Health or another staff support service raising concerns over work-related stress
 - Ensuring designated risk assessors receive any training identified as appropriate for this purpose by the Organisation.

- Support staff experiencing sickness absence in relation to poor mental health, in line with relevant existing HR policies on absence management.

5.6 Health and Safety Representatives

Trade Union Representatives will represent the interests of all members of staff and will:

- Work in co-operation within the University and in particular with the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service Department in managing issues of a Health & Safety nature;

Health and Safety Representatives are appointed Trades Union members who have been nominated by their union to represent other union members in matters relating to health and safety in the workplace in accordance with the Safety Representatives and Committees Regulations 1977. Below are highlighted key aspects of the role of Health & Safety Representatives:

- Have an understanding of the hazards and risks to the Health, & Safety of their colleagues within their work area; investigate potential hazards and dangerous occurrences at the workplace, and to examine the causes of accidents in the workplace working with management to introduce and monitor the controls necessary to minimise these;
- Are encouraged to complete the accredited, formal Health and Safety training program of their Professional Organisation/Trade Union;
- Ensure that the University is notified in writing by the union that a safety rep has been appointed and that their manager is aware of their accredited status as such within their Professional Organisation/Trade Union; the safety rep is then entitled to carry out their functions under Regulation 4 of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations.
- These functions include:
 - Represent members who have grievances related to health and safety;
 - Investigate potential hazards and dangerous occurrences at the workplace, as indicated above;
 - Investigate complaints by any member relating to health, safety or welfare at work;
 - Make representations to the University on matters arising out of the above investigations and on general matters affecting the health, safety and welfare of employees at the workplace;
 - Carry out inspections in accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of HASAWA;
 - Represent members in consultations at the workplace with inspectors from the HSE, the Environment Health Department or the Fire Service;
 - Receive information from inspectors from the three above enforcing authorities.
 - Attend meetings of the Safety Committee as prescribed in Regulation 9 of HASAWA;

Accredited Trade Union Representatives are legally entitled to carry out these duties with the full assistance of the employer and without fear of victimisation or reprisal.

5.7 Employees

Employees have duties in their own right; these include but are not limited to;

- Reporting any concerns they may have over the mental wellbeing of themselves or colleagues to their line manager or one of the support services made available by the Organisation
- To fulfil any role they may have been designated under this policy and its procedures, attending appropriate training as identified.
- Reporting any related incidents through the available incident reporting and recording systems

Section 6 Procedures

6.1 Risk Assessment

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess health and safety risks, including stress, and to introduce suitable control measures based on such risk assessment. Priority will be given to assessing the causes of stress at work and introducing measures to reduce or, where reasonably practicable, prevent it

6.1.1. Organisational Risk Assessment

A key component of Organisational Risk assessment will be the use of the complete series of questions from the Health & Safety Executive Stress Management Standard questionnaire, now embedded in the regular staff survey. (**Appendix 2**)

This will be used, to identify 'hot spots' where stress is identified as a particular issue within the organisation.

The information arising from the survey will be considered in conjunction with other organisational data, such as absence management statistics and occupational health activity statistics, to give a more detailed and informed picture of the incidence of work-related stress at the University of Glasgow and its causes.

6.1.2. Focus Groups

The results of the survey element of the risk assessment will be analysed by appropriate staff support services staff, using the HSE Management Standard Indicator Tool software, to identify the primary causal factors associated with work-related stress in the particular subject area.

Focus groups will then be set up by appropriate staff support service staff for employees in 'hot spot' areas in order to facilitate exploration of and potential resolution to the specific local issues contributing to work-related stress and to ensure suitable and sufficient support services are available to assist employees and managers in combating those issues.

6.1.3. Local Risk Assessment

Responsibilities of Line Managers and Supervisors for local risk assessment are highlighted in section 5.5 above. Routine regular staff meetings and one-to-one sessions with employees should be used to discuss ongoing work activities to assess whether they currently or are likely in the future to have the potential to cause stress.

Individual Stress issues may come to light at any time throughout the year and should be addressed by the Manager at the first appropriate opportunity. There is an example of a work-related stress hazard identification pro-forma at **Appendix 3**, which may be a helpful tool to use to agree suitable mechanisms to support the individual. Advice on such measures may require to be sought from Occupational Health and/or Human Resources.

During Performance & Development Reviews (P&DR) the issue of workload and related stress may also come to light. If so, managers may use the opportunity to begin to discuss the matter, or they may decide to deal with the issue promptly, but separately and outside the formal P&DR process.

Staff Support Services

There are a variety of services available to assist and support staff experiencing problems that are impacting on their mental health or wellbeing. Details are given below.

6.1.4. Occupational Health

Occupational Health provides a wide range of services that are available to employees through both self-referral and management-referral. These include consultations with the Clinical Occupational Health staff, health surveillance, physiotherapy, and psychiatric/psychological support. Further details are available from the Occupational Health area of the Health, Safety & Wellbeing website.

6.1.5. Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy Service is committed to offering support to staff and students and their relatives. A non-denominational service, Chaplains are available to people of all faiths (and to those of no faith) and can be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Chaplaincy Services provides a range of information, training and resources, further details of which are published in the Chaplaincy Service leaflets and on the Chaplaincy Service pages of the website.

6.1.6. External Service Providers

University of Glasgow may appoint, as appropriate, external service providers to assist in the support of staff experiencing stressful situations or mental ill health. This may take the form of, for instance, externally provided counselling services for employees and will be *strictly confidential* for the user. Contact information for such services can be found under Staff Counselling on the Occupational Health Unit website.

6.1.7. Safety & Environmental Protection Services (SEPS)

Safety and Environmental Protection Services provide a range of advisory services and information as well as training courses covering a variety of health and safety issues, including risk assessment.

The staff respond to requests for assistance following adverse events in order to provide support for employees and their managers in dealing health and safety management issues. SEPS also operate proactively in carrying out inspections and audits of work to make sure that departments have appropriate safety procedures in place. SEPS can provide advice on the legal requirements concerning occupational health and safety at work.

6.1.8 Trades Union Health & Safety Representatives

Trades Union Health & Safety Representatives at the University of Glasgow are here to represent and where necessary advise and support all employees, whether union members or non-union members, on matters relating to health and safety in the workplace, as outlined in section 5.6 above. It would naturally, however, be hoped that the majority of issues can be resolved locally through the normal management processes in the most instances.

Section 7 Information, Instruction and Training

7.1 Chaplaincy

Chaplaincy organise a variety of courses including ones on recognising suicidal tendencies and potential interventions. Further information on these can be accessed through contacting the Chaplaincy service or through their website.

7.2 Safety & Environmental Protection Services (SEPS)

SEPS provide and arrange a variety of statutory, mandatory and advisory training. This includes training in health and safety management as well as risk assessment. For further details contact the service at Pearce Lodge or visit the SEPS section of the Health, Safety & Wellbeing website.

Section 8 Measuring Performance

It is essential that the contents of this procedure are monitored and accurately evaluated in order to ensure its continued effectiveness. This will be done partly through the audit programme delivered by SEPS but primarily through monitoring of sickness absence and occupational health data and regular surveys. The results of these monitoring processes will be submitted to the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee for consideration and review in partnership.

Section 9 Record Keeping

Any risk assessments carried out should be retained for a period of 10 years. Records may be electronic. Information concerning any significant risks identified and staff populations affected must be made available to staff, along with control measures in place to minimise these risks in accordance with the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations and in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Section 10 Review of Procedure

This policy and associated procedures will be reviewed at least every two years, or in the event of any significant change which impacts on the validity of the document.

Appendix 1: Information on Stress Recognition

What is work-related stress?

Work-related stress is defined as ‘the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other demands placed on them’. Work-related stress is not an illness in itself, but if it is prolonged or particularly intense it can lead to physical and/or mental ill health.

Stress is encountered both at work and outside it. Some people cope well, others less well with the same stressors depending on personalities and circumstances. Stressors at home can affect those encountered at work and vice versa.

Pressure is not the same as stress. A certain amount of pressure is stimulating and gives satisfaction. Problems arise when the pressure is too great, goes on for too long or comes from too many directions at once. This leads people to feel that they are losing control, which can lead to stress.

Possible sources of stress in the workplace

Work organisation and conditions:

• Continual changes in work	• Over promotion
• Lack of control over work	• Complexity and demands of new work systems
• Job security	• Low pay or low status
• Unclear reporting lines	• Lack of facilities for rest breaks
• Long work hours	• Lone working
• Lack of participation in decision making	• Excessive workload
• Inadequate staffing	•
• Lack of recognition of promotion prospects	•

Work relationships

• Inconsistent management	• Conflicting demands
• Lack of support or assistance	• Surveillance
• Social isolation	• Time pressures
• Boring or repetitive work	• Stakeholder complaints
• Under-use of skills	• Lack of appropriate training
• Poor communication from management	• Violence, actual or threatened
• Bullying	• Uncertainty about responsibilities
• Harassment	• Responsibility for other

Physical conditions

- Excessive noise
- Poor lighting
- Poor temperature control
- Poor ventilation
- Poor equipment
- Poor workstation design
- Exposure to adverse weather conditions
- Exposure to fumes, chemicals or other unpleasant chemicals

The ability of staff to cope with pressure at work may be determined to a greater or lesser extent by the amount of pressure being experienced outside work, resulting from non-work pressures such as bereavement, family sickness, mental or other inter-personal problems. Although the University will have no control over these areas, we should try and understand the potential resultant impact on staff's work performance. If managers are aware that a member of staff is experiencing personal difficulties, he/she should encourage the staff member to seek support from the University Staff Counselling Service.

Signs and Symptoms of stress

The first signs that indicate employees may be suffering from excessive pressure or stress are changes in behaviour or appearance. A guide on the kinds of changes that may occur is given below.

Work performance

- declining/inconsistent performance
- uncharacteristic errors
- loss of control over work
- loss of motivation/commitment
- indecision
- lapses in memory
- increased time at work
- lack of holiday planning/usage

Withdrawal

- arriving late to work
- leaving early
- extended lunches
- absenteeism
- resigned attitude
- reduced social contact
- elusiveness/evasiveness

Other behaviours

- out of character behaviour

Regression

- crying
- arguments
- undue sensitivity
- irritability/moodiness
- over-reaction to problems
- personality clashes
- sulking
- immature behaviour

Aggressive behaviour

- malicious gossip
- criticism of others
- vandalism
- shouting
- bullying or harassment
- poor employee relations
- temper outbursts

Physical signs

- nervous stumbling

- difficulty in relaxing
- increased consumption of alcohol
- increased smoking
- lack of interest in appearance/hygiene
- accidents at home or work
- reckless driving
- unnecessary risk taking
- speech
- sweating
- tiredness/lethargy
- upset
- stomach/flatulence
- tension headaches
- hand tremor
- rapid weight gain or loss
- constantly feeling cold

Appendix 2: HSE Stress Management Standard Questionnaire

Instructions: It is recognised that working conditions affect worker well-being. Your responses to the questions below will help us determine our working conditions now, and enable us to monitor future improvements. In order for us to compare the current situation with past or future situations, it is important that your responses reflect your work in the last six months.

	Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Always
1 I am clear what is expected of me at work	1	2	3	4	5
2 I can decide when to take a break	1	2	3	4	5
3 Different groups at work demand things from me that are hard to combine	5	4	3	2	1
4 I know how to go about getting my job done	1	2	3	4	5
5 I am subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour	5	4	3	2	1
6 I have unachievable deadlines	5	4	3	2	1
7 If work gets difficult, my colleagues will help me	1	2	3	4	5
8 I am given supportive feedback on the work I do	1	2	3	4	5
9 I have to work very intensively	5	4	3	2	1
10 I have a say in my own work speed	1	2	3	4	5
11 I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are	1	2	3	4	5
12 I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do	5	4	3	2	1
13 I am clear about the goals and objectives for my department	1	2	3	4	5
14 There is friction or anger between colleagues	5	4	3	2	1
15 I have a choice in deciding how I do my work	1	2	3	4	5
16 I am unable to take sufficient breaks	5	4	3	2	1
17 I understand how my work fits into the overall aim of the organisation	1	2	3	4	5
18 I am pressured to work long hours	5	4	3	2	1
19 I have a choice in deciding what I do at work	1	2	3	4	5
20 I have to work very fast	5	4	3	2	1
21 I am subject to bullying at work	5	4	3	2	1
22 I have unrealistic time pressures	5	4	3	2	1
23 I can rely on my line manager to help me out with a work problem	1	2	3	4	5
	SD	D	N	A	SA
24 I get help and support I need from colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
25 I have some say over the way I work	1	2	3	4	5
26 I have sufficient opportunities to question managers about change at work	1	2	3	4	5
27 I receive the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
28 Staff are always consulted about change at work	1	2	3	4	5
29 I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work	1	2	3	4	5
30 My working time can be flexible	1	2	3	4	5

31	My colleagues are willing to listen to my work-related problems	1	2	3	4	5
32	When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will work out in practice	1	2	3	4	5
33	I am supported through emotionally demanding work	1	2	3	4	5
34	Relationships at work are strained	5	4	3	2	1
35	My line manager encourages me at work	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

Appendix 3: Work Related Stress Hazard Identification Form

Location		Department		Manager	
Name					
Role					
EXPOSURES (Workplace exposures recognised as a potential stressor)					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
CAPABILITY CONSTRAINTS (List constraints of time, staffing, qualification, work pattern, health)					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
KEY RELATIONSHIPS (List individuals or groups within or out-with the team, which team members must relate to at work)					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
Signed _____ Manager Signed _____ Staff Member					