



Stress at Work Policy

We are a responsible employer and are aware of our duty of care regarding the mental health and welfare of our staff. For this reason, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff are not placed under excessive stress by their work.

The Company recognises that its employees are its most important asset and it is committed to providing the support and assistance necessary to enable its employees to undertake their job duties in an environment that is as stress-free as possible. The Company's aim is to ensure employees' health and safety at work and that they are not subjected to excessive workloads, onerous working practices or a detrimental work environment

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires us to take reasonable steps to look after our employees' mental health and welfare. This means that we need to ensure that staff do not have excessive demands placed on them by their job. As stress is also caused by bullying, harassment and violence, we are required by law to provide a working environment which is, as is reasonably practicable, free from these influences. However, we are legally entitled to assume that all staff can cope with the normal day-to-day pressures of their job. If this is not the case, staff have a duty to inform us.

1. Definition of Stress

The Health and Safety Executive has defined stress as follows: *"The reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demands placed on them. It arises when they worry that they cannot cope."* In other words, stress occurs when the pressures on a person exceed their ability to deal with them.

2. Procedures

Should any member of staff feel that they are suffering from an unacceptable level of work-related stress; the following procedures should be implemented:

- At first instance, the employee should inform their line manager. He or she will treat the matter with sympathy and in confidence.
- If necessary, we will carry out a stress risk assessment. This will include a review of the employee's actual duties against those described in their job description.
- The findings of the risk assessment will be discussed with the employee. If appropriate, changes will be made to their role in order to reduce the levels of stress experienced.
- If appropriate, the employee will be referred to a doctor of the company's choice for a medical assessment. Alternatively, the employee may be offered counselling.

It is the Company's intention to deal constructively and sympathetically with stress. Stress will not be treated as a sign of weakness.

3. Non-Work Problems

Whilst we are not responsible for causes of stress outside the working environment, we recognise that it can impact on an employee's attendance and work performance. Therefore, we would encourage employees to make us aware of any problems which are causing them concern.

This policy has been approved by Chris Tobin, managing director