



WORK RELATED PRESSURES POLICY

We will provide this policy on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille, on tape or in another non written format.

WORK RELATED PRESSURES

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The organisation and employees have a responsibility to ensure that the levels of work related pressure are monitored, and any issues in the first instance should be brought to the attention of the employee's Line Manager.

This may be part of regular meetings, or sooner, depending on the severity. Under the "Duty of Care", Line Managers have a responsibility to ensure that the organisation monitors issues relating to pressure and undue pressure, and if it is confirmed that an employee is under consistent or excessive pressure, the Line Manager must put forward appropriate strategies to combat issues, such as counselling and workload monitoring.

This procedure details the measures that Line Managers and employees need to take in order to prevent/reduce the causes of pressure within the workplace. It also details actions to be taken by managers and employees when employees report symptoms of pressure.

As part of the organisation's commitment to promoting healthy working, this document is designed to be used as a support mechanism; but does not over-ride the principles of the Attendance Management Procedure/Resolution of Difficulties Procedure.

REPORTING PRESSURE AT WORK

Any employee who feels under constant or excessive pressure at work, or is exhibiting pressure related symptoms should inform their Line Manager as soon as possible, in order to get appropriate support and the matter be fully reviewed. Symptoms may include:

- Absenteeism – increased levels of absence, patterns to absence i.e. when deadlines are due, non-specific absence reasons such as nausea, headaches, excessive tiredness
- Presenteeism – continuous excessive hours worked in and outside the workplace and, not taking contractual breaks.
- Punctuality – employee late for work or appointments, or inability to meet deadlines
- Prone to accidents – either at work or away from work, due to drowsiness or poor concentration
- Poor performance – inability to concentrate or remember instructions, poor attention to detail or ability to complete tasks
- Conduct – aggressive behaviour, drinking or drug taking (prescribed or not), poor time keeping
- Mood swings – irrational behaviour, irritable disposition, depression

On being made aware of an employee feeling under pressure, the Line Manager should meet with the employee, usually within 24 hours, to discuss the potential causes. The Line Manager should follow the Pressure Risk Assessment Flow Chart (Appendix 1). The discussion should seek to establish:

- The nature of the pressure factors involved e.g. environmental, workload, harassment, professional relationships etc

- Whether existing organisation procedures need to be utilised e.g. Attendance Management or Resolution of Difficulties
- Whether other colleagues are likely to be affected
- Whether pressure factors are still at a level likely to cause further injury/distress
- Whether any steps have been put in place to eliminate or reduce the pressure factors to an acceptable level
- Whether the individual requires training on how to deal with pressure factors
- Whether the individual requires counselling sessions
- What steps the individual has taken to alleviate unnecessary pressure, and whether the issue is due to work or personal, or a combination of both.

However, irrespective of the cause(s) of work related pressure, the Line Manager needs to be supportive and offer options that could be taken within work or externally. Examples being temporary changes to working patterns or duties, mediation or support via the organisation's counselling service. All agreed actions should be documented in the form of an action plan and discussed with the Employee Relations team.

If it is inappropriate for the employee to discuss pressure reasons with their Line Manager they should contact their Director. If this is also inappropriate, they should contact the Employee Relations team.

The Line Manager will review the employee's progress at agreed intervals to determine whether the agreed measures are effective. Should the measures not be working the Line Manager should contact the Employee Relations team for advice, or referral to Occupational Health.

Reporting Absence due to Work Related Pressure

The employee should follow the Attendance Management Procedure when phoning in to report their absence, and should inform their Line Manager that their absence due to work related pressure.

The Line Manager should inform the Employee Relations team immediately if an employee states work related pressure as the reason for absence.

The Line Manager will contact the employee within 48 hours of notification to discuss the absence and any support mechanisms that may be required. The discussion should establish:

- To what extent the absence is related to pressure in the workplace
- The nature of the pressure factors involved e.g. environmental, workload, harassment, professional relationships etc
- Whether other colleagues are likely to be affected
- Whether pressure factors are still at a level likely to cause further injury/distress to the employee or colleagues
- What the individual feels the organisation can do to help assist with their return to work
- What the individual can do to alleviate the pressures .

At the end of the discussion the Line Manager will produce a file note and may seek further information from appropriate sources e.g. Line Manager or referral to Occupational Health. Other

measures such as looking at reasonable adjustments that can be made to the role or working environment may also be considered especially noting any suggestions outlined on the GP issued "Fit Notes", such as phased returns.

Once the employee returns to work, the Line Manager will hold a return to work interview with the employee to discuss how the employee currently perceives the identified causes of the pressure and confirm that any agreed actions are in place.

Further meetings should be organised with the employee to monitor their progress and to determine whether the agreed measures are reducing the employee's pressure related symptoms. Should the measures not be working then the Line Manager should consult with the Employee Relations team for further advice. The Health and Safety officer should be involved should the undue pressure be highlighted to Health & Safety.

Where reasonable adjustments have not worked, consideration of alternative work may be recommended to prevent the employee being subject to further pressure.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If an employee has any queries, they should speak with their Line Manager in the first instance.