

# Managing Stress and Mental Health in the Workplace Policy

Employee Wellbeing

2020 - 2023

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This document should be used in conjunction with the [Corporate Health and Safety Policy](#)

## Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to provide information on stress and mental health, their possible symptoms and causes, and how they can be managed in the workplace. The Council also has a duty of care to ensure that no employee is knowingly subjected to circumstances in which their ability to maintain their mental and physical wellbeing is compromised. It is therefore a key consideration for the Council, in terms of employee health and safety, sickness absence management, morale of employees and employee relations, that stress and mental health in the workplace are managed effectively.

This policy will assist Managers and Supervisors to acknowledge that stress and mental health-related ill health can seriously reduce employees' ability to contribute fully to the expectations of their role within the Council and will aid in the recognition and management of stress and mental health in the workplace.

## Scope of the Policy

This policy will apply to all employees of Carmarthenshire County Council and members.

## Responsibilities

All line managers have a responsibility under this policy for managing mental health in the workplace and managers should also be aware of and look after their own mental health.

People Management will have responsibility for promoting and monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and guidance. The People Management Division will ensure that the proactive approach to management of mental health is encouraged through timely advice from the Occupational Health Service, Health and Safety Team, and Learning and Development Team, and the provision of timely and accurate data and professional HR advice.

Wider responsibility for the policy rests with Directors, Heads of Service and all senior managers. They are responsible for ensuring that this Policy and accompanying guidance is effectively communicated ensuring that all cases of stress and mental health related issues are managed sensitively and consistently. Senior managers will be responsible for commissioning additional support for managers as appropriate and practicable, and ensuring that managers have adequate training and supervision to carry out their duties.

## Arrangements at Schools

Governing Bodies of all schools are encouraged to adopt this policy, with a recommendation that schools may wish to develop appropriate wording to include pupils or signpost to the appropriate policy or guidelines for pupils.

## Supporting Documentation

Supporting information, guidance and documentation will be available to assist with the management and implementation of this policy.

## Elected Members

Elected Members have a personal responsibility to all staff and members of the public to uphold the values set out in this policy, promote good relations and challenge inappropriate behaviour where required. Elected Members are responsible for ensuring that they support positively, the principle of equality and diversity, in undertaking their public duties and follow the Code of Conduct for Elected Members and associated policies and procedures.

## Ensuring Equality of Treatment

This policy must be applied consistently to all employees irrespective of race, colour, ethnic or national origins (including citizenship), language, disability, religion, belief or non-belief, age, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, parental or marital status, pregnancy or maternity.

If you have any equality and diversity concerns in relation to the application of this policy and procedure, please contact a member of the HR Team who will, if necessary, ensure the policy/procedure is reviewed accordingly.

If you require this information in an alternative format, please contact People Management on [CEHRDuty@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:CEHRDuty@carmarthenshire.gov.uk).

## Definitions

**Mental Health** – Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community. 1 in 4 people will experience a common mental health condition in a given year – harmful levels of stress, anxiety, depression. (*World Health Organisation*)

**Stress** is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them (Health & Safety Executive). This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive if managed correctly, whilst stress which can be detrimental to health. These demands may arise from home or work, or both and can lead to both physical and psychological problems. Stress is now recognised nationally as a major cause of employee ill health and sickness absence and is often linked to musculoskeletal disorders.

## Statement

Carmarthenshire County Council is committed to taking all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of anyone potentially adversely affected by our business as defined under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, section 2 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. This policy is related, and supplementary, to our general health and safety policy, and our commitment to promote good health amongst our employees.

The Council is committed to promoting an open culture in which stress or mental ill health is not seen as a sign of weakness, and that employees can speak freely and access the appropriate help. The council has signed the [Time to Change](#) organisational pledge which shows our commitment to the campaign to end the stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems. All employees will be treated equally with regards to sickness absence management whether they are absent with a mental or a physical health problem.

The Council aims to create an environment where the risk of workplace stress is minimised, and preventative action is taken to reduce the likelihood of ill health. This will be achieved by:

- Confirming the Authority's commitment to management of mental health in the workplace
- Developing a consistent approach to managing workplace stress
- Increasing employees' awareness and understanding of stress and mental health
- Providing guidance and support for Managers/Supervisors and employees to identify the signs and symptoms of stress and mental ill health
- Providing support for managers to undertake risk assessments, implement control measures and reduce the likelihood of stress and the impact it has on physical and mental health
- Promoting the general wellbeing of all employees
- Providing a supportive framework for employees who may be suffering from stress and mental ill health