

STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Responsibility	Director of Organisational Development and Facilities	Helen Pedley
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STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Dumfries and Galloway College places a high value on maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all its employees and it recognises its duty of care extends to mental health as well as physical health at work.
- 1.2 The College acknowledges HSE research that stress is a major occupational concern nationally and recognises its employees as whole people acknowledging that problems in someone's domestic life may affect them at work.
- 1.4 The College will consider, where appropriate, the work life balance need to give staff working options that fit into the College's needs in delivering the mission statement.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out a strategy, linked to the College Risk Assessment Policy, to prevent Work Related Stress (WRS) and so comply with Health and Safety Law (Health & Safety at Work Act 1997 and Management Regulations 1999).
- 2.2 Ill health resulting from stress caused at work requires to be treated in the same way as ill health due to physical problems in the workplace.

3. DEFINITION

- 3.1 There are many definitions of stress but the most commonly referred to is that offered by the HSE and accepted for the purpose of this policy: "Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures of other types of demand placed upon them".
- 3.2 Stress occurs when there is a mis-match between the pressures and demands of a situation and the person's ability to cope. The effects of stress may be short-term, such as anxiety, headaches, sleeplessness but it can also result in long-term physical or psychological conditions.

4. STRATEGY

- 4.1 The College Stress Strategy involves the same five basic principles undertaken for risk assessment of physical hazards to discover/investigate whether existing control measures preventing harm are reasonably practical or sufficient.
- 4.2 The seven broad categories of risk factors, as listed below, will be identified by respective line managers. Advice and support will be offered by the Health & Safety Officer and HR Department.

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- Factor 1: Culture - of the College and how it approaches WRS
- Factor 2: Demands – such as workload and exposure to physical hazards
- Factor 3: Control – how much say staff have in the way they do their work
- Factor 4: Relationships – covering issues such as bullying and harassment
- Factor 5: Change – how organisational change is managed and communicated throughout the College
- Factor 6: Role – whether individual staff understand their role within the College, ensuring that the person does not have conflicting roles
- Factor 7: Support, training and factors unique to the individual: Support – from peers and line managers
 Training – for the member of staff to be able to undertake the core functions of the job
 Factors unique to the individual – catering for individual differences

5. SUPPORT

5.1 The College will fulfil its commitment by promoting a working environment where stress is not seen as a sign of weakness or incompetence. This should help ensure that where there are members of staff who feel they are suffering from the negative effects of stress, then they can raise the issue in confidence and the necessary support mechanisms can be put in place.

5.2 In the event of a staff member recognising the negative effects of stress in themselves or others, then he/she should make this known to one of the following persons who may be able to offer some practical support. These include:

- Senior Manager
- Line Manager
- Health & Safety Officer
- Director of Organisational Development and Facilities

Any of the above staff will treat an approach in complete confidence. Stress counselling sessions will be available to any members of staff suffering from stress together with paid time off to attend.

5.3 Staff will be supplied with; information, coping mechanisms and health promotion activities.

5.4 Training will be made available to staff on how to recognise and deal with symptoms of negative stress in themselves and others.

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6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The following data will be used by line managers to assess stress within their respective areas of responsibility:

- Qualitative Methods:
 - Informal talks to their staff during their work or regular team meetings
 - One to one discussions relating to work i.e. Career review
 - Focus groups held by a facilitator
 - Managing attendance and return to work interviews
- Quantitative Methods:
 - Sickness/absence data analysed for trends
 - Productivity data through PI system
 - Turnover – exit interviews
 - SHAW questionnaire and Communication questionnaire

6.2 Reporting. The results of this assessment will be reported in the following format to Health and Safety Committee on an annual basis. For each of the seven hazards at para 4.2 answer the following questions:

- What action is already being taken?
- Is this enough?
- What more needs to be done?

7. DISTRIBUTION LIST

All Staff
AdminNet

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