

Heritage Care at Home Ltd

Stress Management Policy and Procedure

Policy reviewed and valid from: 01/01/20

Introduction

Heritage Care at Home Ltd has a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) to ensure the wellbeing of its staff and Customers. Heritage Care at Home Ltd recognises that workplace hazards or stress may pose a risk to the psychological health of staff as well as to their physical health. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations Heritage Care at Home Ltd is required to implement a formal system of risk assessment where there is a significant risk of these stress occurring. A copy of this risk assessment template is attached to this policy.

Within this process of identification, evaluation and control, staff should remember that stress is not a weakness and they should not be afraid to ask for advice or support.

Definitions

Stress: The adverse reaction of people to the excessive pressures or other types of demands placed on them.

Stress: Anything with the potential to cause stress. The main sources of workplace stress defined by the Health and Safety Executive are:

- Excessive demands - issues of workload, work pattern and work environment
- Lack of personal control - how much say the person has in the way they work and how their career develops
- Lack of support - encouragement by line manager, provision of resources
- Poor relationships - promoting positive working to avoid conflict
- Unclear role and responsibilities - is their role defined
- Change - how change is managed and communicated

Other sources of stress include home, family, friends and personal health. Any of these may also contribute a feeling of 'not coping' at work. Heritage Care at Home Ltd recognises that non-workplace factors may impact on staff wellbeing while at work, thereby having an adverse impact on their ability to do their job.

Purpose

This policy applies to all employees (permanent or temporary). Heritage Care at Home Ltd is committed to ensuring staff wellbeing at work. It aims to do this by:

- i. Providing a healthy working environment which, as far as is reasonably practicable, reduces the likelihood of stress occurring.
- ii. Provides guidance on the causes and symptoms of stress.
- iii. Implements a system of risk assessment to identify where stress may exist and the need to remove or manage them.
- iv. Provides guidance to management and staff on implementing adequate control measures.
- v. Identifies further areas of support for staff, confidential counselling, occupational health etc.

Responsibilities

Directors/Managers - They have an individual responsibility for reducing and managing stress in their own areas and a collective responsibility to minimising work related stress across the organisation, ensuring the wellbeing of their staff.

They are aware of the contents of this policy and the need to consider stress as a workplace hazard. This includes monitoring workplace stress within the workforce and ensuring risk assessments are undertaken to control these stress where necessary.

They should be aware of what constitutes stress, the signs and symptoms. This should be encouraged through open communication with their teams. Directors/Managers should monitor staff training and instruction, sickness absence and ensure effective supervision of their staff.

Where staff are already affected, directors/managers should adhere to HR policies and utilise support from the Peninsula Employee Assistance Programme in order to support staff members.

Employees - All staff have a responsibility to take care of their own health and safety at work and that of others. They should understand what causes stress and be aware of the signs and symptoms of stressful behaviour. It is important that staff feel able to raise issues associated with stress to their Manager before they begin to escalate.

Staff should attend all relevant workplace training and be involved in any risk assessment process to identify measures of reducing or managing workplace stress. They should take all reasonable steps at an early stage to notify someone about any problem. This may be through their Manager or through accessing the Peninsula Employee Assistance Programme.

On a day to day basis, staff should be conscious of their own wellbeing, and therefore take any break entitlement, use any flexible working to best effect and plan annual leave. They should be aware of their work responsibilities but not take on more work than they can handle i.e. if unrealistic demands are made on staff, then be assertive and explain why something may not be possible to achieve.

Risk Assessment

Heritage Care at Home Ltd is required to assess the risks to staff wellbeing that may be caused by workplace stress, and outline the control measures to remove this risk or reduce it as much as possible. It is therefore important for an assessment to be undertaken proactively to identify any workplace stress and also whenever an employee reports that they are experiencing work related stress.

The principle of a stress risk assessment is to identify what stress are impacting upon staff, how significant the risk of harm is to their psychological wellbeing, and evaluate whether existing control measures need to be improved to reduce the risk of harm. A copy of Heritage Care at Home Ltd's Stress Management Risk Assessment template is attached to this policy.

Signs of Stress

Signs of stress can vary between individuals. Any number of the examples below may be a symptom of a larger issue outside of the workplace or a set of circumstances relating to their employment i.e. the job itself, the work environment, working relationships, organisational culture or contractual issues. The list below is not exhaustive. One of the key things to look out for is a change in an individual's normal personality and/or behaviour. These changes can be on a short term or a long term basis.

Behavioural	Physical	Emotional
Sickness absence	Head aches	Lack of motivation
Impulsive behaviour	Hypertension	Neurosis
Poor work performance	Nausea/dizziness	Difficulty in concentrating/boredom
Poor time-keeping	Panic attacks	Mental breakdown
Increase in accidents/errors	Indigestion/Ulcers	Low self-esteem
Loss of friendships/interpersonal relationships	Disturbed sleep patterns/tiredness/insomnia	Anxiety or depression/chronic depression
Increase smoking/drinking	Chest pain	Irritability
Decline in appearance/hygiene	Weight loss	Suicidal tendencies

Risk Reduction Measures

Following the completion of a risk assessment, there are a number of measures that are in place to reduce the risk of stress occurring in the workplace.

- Preventative Measures - These are designed to prevent stress occurring and include:
- Promoting a culture of participation and open communication across the whole workforce of Heritage Care at Home Ltd.
 - Raising awareness of stress via appropriate training courses and during induction for new employees.
 - A good organisational structure that defines responsibilities, job roles interactions across the workforce of Heritage Care at Home Ltd.

- Protective Measures - These are designed to provide staff with the skills and understanding to manage stress that exist within the workplace. Some examples include:
- Ensuring that all staff are trained in stress awareness during their induction.
 - Recognising likely problems and being proactive about reporting them so that necessary procedures can be implemented.
 - Encouraging formal and informal support networks between management and staff.
 - Ensuring that sickness absence is managed and investigated thoroughly by managers.
 - Ensuring that managers follow necessary policies.

- Rehabilitative Measures - These are designed to help restore the health and wellbeing of any staff member who has been affected by stress and could include:
- Identifying internal and external support agencies and publicising these across the organisation.
 - Providing staff with access to support both “in house” within the organisation and externally through the Peninsula Employee Assistance Programme.
 - Providing all employees with instruction on return to work arrangements, including reasonable adjustments to the job or environment following the policies and procedures set out by Heritage Care at Home Ltd.

Managing Staff with Stress Related Illness

Some stress can be cumulative and unpredictable and may only appear as a result of sickness absence. In these cases it is important for the manager to follow the Absence Management Policy and Return to Work interview documents.

Managers maintain regular contact with staff as a means of support, particularly during periods of extended absence. A manager’s referral to Occupational Health should be made as soon as possible if it deemed necessary otherwise contact with the Peninsula Employee Assistance Programme should be made. When appropriate, a rehabilitation plan will need to be discussed with Occupational Health, as well as return to work arrangements with the staff member and any ongoing support required should be identified. Once these have been implemented it is essential to have regular one to one meetings with the member of staff so that their progress can be monitored.

References

- Heritage Care at Home Ltd policy documents.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.
- HSE – Stress Management Standards.
- Peninsula Employee Assistance Programme documentation.

Policy documents are available online through the Heritage Care at Home Ltd website (www.heritagecareathome.co.uk) staff pages. All staff have access to these documents through the internet and if internet or computer access is unavailable, other methods are in place for those individuals.

Policies are subject to review annually or if there are changes to health and safety legislation, technology, processes or practice. The review of policies will also be based on the prioritisation of risk within the organisation and as a consequence of any serious incidents.