



"Offering our community more than a home"

Stress Policy

Management Committee submission:	26 May 2020
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CHA Objectives:

- To ensure that our resources are adequate to deliver our objectives by investing in our people, demonstrating value for money and through robust procurement practices.
- To promote social inclusion by applying principles of equality and diversity to everything we do.

Regulatory Standards:

- The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford to pay.
- The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.
- The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.
- The governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.

Any breach or non-compliance with legislation/regulatory requirements in relation to this Policy constitutes a Notifiable Event and the Regulator will be informed via the SHR Portal.

This policy can be made available on request in a variety of different formats, such as on CD, in large print and translated into other languages.

1. Introduction

Clydebank Housing Association is committed to reducing and where possible eliminating stress for its employees. Although stress in itself is not an illness, it can be a contributory factor in many conditions and can cause both physical and mental illnesses. Stress on its own can also result in poor mental health of employees even if the effects are not severe enough to result in a medical diagnosis. Clydebank Housing Association recognises the need to promote a culture of good mental and physical health in its duty of care under the requirement of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

2. Background

Stress in the workplace is not new. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) introduced Stress Management Standards a number of years ago and implemented tools to accompany them which have developed over the years. The management standards cover six key areas:

- Demands
- Support
- Change
- Control
- Role
- Relationships

Full descriptions of the standards and typical behaviours which can be a sign of stress are available from the HSE website [www.hse.gov.uk].

It is important to distinguish the difference between stress and pressure. In most work situations some pressure is healthy, but, stress is when a person experiences too much pressure and the effect of the pressure becomes negative.

3. Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote a culture of mental and physical wellbeing
- Increase awareness of stress
- Provide managers with a clear process to use should an employee report that they are suffering from stress
- Provide details of the proactive measures Clydebank Housing Association will implement to help reduce and, where possible, eliminate stress and its causes

4. Legal Framework

Although there is no specific legislation on stress the following are relevant through case law: -

- *Health & Safety at Work Act 1974*

Under section 2 (1), employers have a duty to 'ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare at work of all...employees'

- *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*

Requires that employers make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the H&S of its employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work and this includes stress.

5. Definitions

The following are definitions which will be applied in the context of this policy

- Stress : the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them
- Proactive measures : aims to prevent the harm caused by stress by taking action before it occurs
- Reactive measures: actions which will respond to any stress related situation to minimise harm once it has occurred and assist in preventing it occurring again.

6. Confidentiality

Clydebank Housing Association will ensure that employees experiencing stress are dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

The Association will treat all personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Data Protection and Management of Information Policy. Information regarding how an individual's data will be used and the basis for processing the data is provided in Clydebank Housing Association's employee privacy notice.

7. Line Manager Responsibilities

Line managers play a key role in managing stress within the workplace. It is vital to the success of a stress policy that managers have a thorough understanding of what stress is, what the causes are and what to be aware of to help identify early signs.

Line manager's responsibilities include:

- Attending stress awareness training
- To be aware of the signs of stress and intervene where necessary
- Promote the organisations culture of a physically and mentally healthy organisation
- To manage staff effectively to minimise them experiencing stress
- Where issues of stress arise, intervene as early as possible
- To ensure that a stress risk assessment is conducted with their staff on a routine basis

- Ensure staff contribute to the organisation's stress questionnaires when necessary
- To take steps to help employees maintain a state of good mental health e.g. encourage rest breaks, and holidays.

8. Employee Responsibilities

- To raise any concerns regarding stress at the earliest opportunity
- To participate in Clydebank Housing Associations measures to assist in reducing or eliminating stress
- To be aware of the HSE Risk Management standards and the signs of stress
- To raise any concerns they may have for their colleagues in regards to stress with a manager or one of Clydebank HA's Stress Mentors

9. Managing Stress

9.1 Proactive Measures

To support the organisation's commitment in reducing the risk of stress occurring, Clydebank Housing Association will ensure that the following initiatives will be implemented and adopted.

- **Managers training** - Clydebank Housing Association will ensure that all line managers attend stress awareness training and subsequent refreshers at appropriate intervals
- **Employee Questionnaires** - Clydebank Housing Association will commit to conducting a stress questionnaire among staff on a periodic basis to help inform the team/department risk assessment. This will assist in identifying any 'at risk' areas within the organisation.
- **Analysing Information** - Commitment will be given that Clydebank Housing Association will review appropriate data e.g. absence, employee concerns, employee questionnaires to identify areas where stress is or could be a risk.
- **Risk Assessments** - Stress risk assessments will be conducted on a periodic basis (whether these are carried out organisation wide or at department level will depend on the size of the organisation).
- **Promoting the Wellbeing of Employees** - Clydebank Housing Association is committed to facilitating a culture of promoting physical and mental health in the following ways:
 - Provide stress awareness sessions for staff.
 - Ensure that staff take any allocated breaks

- Manage staff holiday entitlement in order that leave is taken throughout the year at reasonable intervals.
- Promote the benefits of physical activity for both physical and mental health.
- Ensure that staff are not working excessive hours on a regular and prolonged basis.
- Provide opportunities for employees to be active throughout their working day where possible and appropriate.
- Provide access to Stress Mentors within the organisation

9.2 Reactive Measures

Stress is a much individualised condition and, as a result, it is unfortunate that even with the above measures being put in place some employees may nonetheless find themselves experiencing a stressful period in their lives. This may be caused by work or personal circumstances, or a combination of both.

9.3 Managing Individual Stress Concerns

The following details the process that will be used by Clydebank Housing Association should an employee raise concerns of stress.

- Manager becomes aware that an employee is experiencing stress
- The manager should arrange to meet with the staff member within 3 days to discuss the issues.
- The line manager will give the employee a stress questionnaire to complete (Appendix 1).
- The employee completes the questionnaire and returns this to the line manager.
- The line manager completes any appropriate sections.
- A second meeting is arranged to discuss the questionnaire, identify ways of managing the issues, and any support or interim arrangements that may assist the employee's recovery.
- If appropriate the employee may be referred to an occupational health specialist, Employee Counselling Service or any other appropriate service.
- At the conclusion of the meeting an action plan will be completed to summarise discussions and what actions will be taken by the organisation, line manager and employee.
- If the employee is absent as a result of stress the absence will continue to be managed in line with Clydebank Housing Association's absence management procedures.

NB: If the employee's line manager is a contributing factor to the employee's stress, another appropriate manager e.g. a manager one level above will conduct the meetings.

If it is identified that the stress is being caused by another employee then appropriate investigations may be required in line with Clydebank Housing Association's Disciplinary/Grievance Policy.

If through discussions with an employee a line manager becomes aware of a stress risk they will raise this in the appropriate way to ensure it is addressed at an organisational level. This will be done while maintaining the employee's confidentiality.

9.4 Occupational Health

If deemed appropriate an employee may be referred to an occupational health specialist to assist in the absence management and help identify any actions that could be taken to assist in the employee's recovery.

9.5 Employee Counselling Service

All employees have access to the Employee Counselling Service. The details of this are displayed on the staff notice boards, the Intranet or can be sought from the employee's line manager.

10. Equal Opportunities

Our commitment to equal opportunities and fairness will apply irrespective of factors such as gender or marital status, race, colour, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin or other personal attributes.

11. Additional Sources of Information

Healthy Working Lives <http://surveys.healthyworkinglives.com/>

HSE <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/>

For Office Use Only – Actions

Customer Consultation Required/Arranged	No
Intranet Update	Yes
F Drive Update	Yes
Website Update	Yes
Leaflet change required?	No
Newsletter Promotion?	No
Other information updated, e.g. posters, automatic email responses, post cards, answering machine messages, etc.	No
Equality Impact Assessment completed	Yes



Individual Employee Stress Questionnaire

You have been given this questionnaire to complete as it has been highlighted to your line manager that you are or may be feeling stressed. The purpose of this questionnaire is for you to identify what factors may be contributing to you feeling stressed, and for you to think about, and detail what you feel would help you manage your current situation. Once you have completed the form, please return it to your line manager who will then arrange a meeting with you to discuss your stressors and what support may be available. If, due to the circumstances it would be better to discuss your current situation with an alternative manager this can be arranged.

Stressors

Please list the factors that you feel are contributing to you feeling stressed, once you have done this, please rank them from 1-10 with 10 having the biggest impact on you and 1 the least. The factors detailed may be within or out with the workplace.

Stressor	Stress Factor Rating (1-10)
Workplace factors – e.g. Workload/working relationships/work/life balance	

Moving Forward

Taking each stressor in turn please complete the below section prior to the meeting. Section 3 & 4 will be completed at the meeting with your line manager.

Stressor 1 – Outline the background

Stressor 1 - How do you see the situation being resolved

Stressor 2 – Outline the background

Stressor 2 - How do you see the situation being resolved

Stressor 3 – Outline the background

Stressor 3 - How do you see the situation being resolved

This section below will be completed with your line manager at the meeting

Section 3 - Agreed Actions

Section 4 – Review Date/Further comments if any

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Employee signature

Date

Line managers signature

Date

