

## STRESS MANAGEMENT AND WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

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The latest version will be accessible via the intranet.  
If the review date has passed please contact the Author for advice.

### Disclaimer

Powys teaching Health Board is the operational name of Powys teaching Local Health Board  
Bwrdd Iechyd Addysgu Powys yw enw gweithredol Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol Addysgu Powys

### Version Control

Version	Summary of Changes/Amendments	Issue Date
1	Initial Issue	Feb 2003
2	Updated Review of Existing Policy	July 2005
3	Updated Review of Existing Policy	August 2006
4	Updated Review of Existing Policy	July 2009
5	Updated Review of Existing Policy	August 2012
6	Updated review of existing policy to reflect organisational changes and responsibilities	August 2015
7	Updated with further information, risk assessment and toolkit	October 2019
8	Move to Environment Directorate and changes in roles and responsibilities.	March 2022
9	Reviewed and updated.  Update of section 5 - "risk assessment" clarifying the type of risk assessment template to be used.	Dec 2022

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## ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

### Key Individuals/Groups Involved in Developing this Document

Role / Designation
Senior Health & Safety Officer.

### Circulated to the following for Consultation

Date	Role / Designation
November 2022	Health & Safety Group.

Evidence Base
See Section 7 for full details (page 13).

## IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Equality Impact Assessment Summary					
	No impact	Adverse	Differential	Positive	Statement
	X				An equality assessment has been undertaken and the results can be seen on the left. PTHB translates all its policies into Welsh.
<b>Age</b>					
<b>Disability</b>				X	
<b>Gender</b>				X	
<b>Race</b>	X				
<b>Religion/ Belief</b>	X				
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	X				
<b>Welsh Language</b>				X	
<b>Human Rights</b>	X				
Risk Assessment Summary					
<b>Have you identified any risks arising from the implementation of this policy / procedure / written control document?</b>					
No risks identified					
<b>Have you identified any Information Governance issues arising from the implementation of this policy / procedure / written control document?</b>					
No risks identified					
<b>Have you identified any training and / or resource implications as a result of implementing this?</b>					
No					

## **1 Introduction**

Powys Teaching Health Board's (PTHB) commitment to the health, safety and welfare of employees is laid down in the general Health and Safety Policy Statement within the Corporate Health & Safety Policy. The health board is also committed to developing the creation of a positive, flexible and sustainable work environment. The aspiration is to take all reasonable and practicable measures to enable its employees to work within a supported, healthier and happier environment.

The law requires that organisations actively manage the workplace to try to prevent accidents and ill health before they happen. The same principles apply to controlling potential causes of work-related stress.

This policy and associated procedures should be read and used in conjunction with other relevant health & safety policies including the following:

- PTHB/ H&S 001 Corporate Health & Safety Policy
- PTHB/ CP 019 Risk Assessment Procedure
- PTHB Stress Management and Wellbeing Toolkit
- PTHB HR027 All Wales Managing Attendance at Work Policy

The organisation recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. PTHB also acknowledges that individuals react and cope in different ways to stressful situations. This can sometimes have a serious effect on people's health, their work efficiency and motivation and can therefore be a cause for concern and action.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define stress as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them" This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress, which can be detrimental to health. As an organisation, it is important that we understand what pressures our staff are under and ensure this does not lead to stress. Therefore, aiming to work with staff through complex situations, for example hearings and investigations etc. will assist to alleviate any concerns.

We are also aware that working culture and conditions can impact on physical health, as well as mental wellbeing. Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD's) are commonly reported in office conditions but may arise from individuals being tense or stressed and adopting strained postures, or not taking sufficient breaks from their sitting positions.

Support will be provided when needed, regardless of the source of the issues, and/or concern, with no differentiation being made to the root cause, should it lie in the home or in the workplace.

## **2 Objectives**

In order to adequately control the risks associated with workplace stress PTHB will:

- Seek to develop a culture where stress is treated as a reasonable response to various influences and one which can be dealt with openly and directly without fear of being judged or labelled by colleagues.
- Cases will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, related discussions and documents will be subject to the provisions of GDPR.
- Seek to identify workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to help eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be conducted in accordance with the risk assessment policy and with the cooperation of staff and be regularly reviewed.
- Consult with Health & Safety Representatives and/or other representatives of Health & Safety on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress.
- Provide training for managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.
- Provide access to confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
- Endeavour to meet its commitment to the Corporate Health Standard.
- Provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the agreed stress management strategy.
- To actively assist members of staff to recognise and proactively manage their own stress.
- Managers will identify workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. The assessments will be regularly reviewed.

## **3 Definitions**

Work related stress is not an illness, but it can lead to increased problems with ill health if it is prolonged or particularly intense. For example:

Psychological Effects:

- Depression
- Anxiety

Physical Effects:

- Heart Disease
- Back Pain
- Gastrointestinal Disturbances
- Various Minor Illnesses

Recent research has provided examples of those issues that cause workplace stress. They include:

- Lack of control over work.
- Work/life imbalance.
- Rigidity of hierarchy.
- Increase of patient expectations.
- Staff doing tasks below their grade.
- Not having the right means or resources to do the job properly
- Organisational confusion.
- Lack of management support and/or relationship with the manager.
- Colleagues not understanding each other's roles and competencies Isolation from other team members.

In addition, there are of course external and personal factors which impact on workplace stress and any assessment and subsequent action must take account of these factors.

## **4 Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Executive Responsibilities**

- Demonstrate their commitment and support to this policy, by ensuring that the principles and agreed approaches/interventions for managing work-related stress are implemented.
- Ensure that resources, for example management time and commitment, are available to ensure that stress management principles and strategies are implemented.
- Receive the recommendations and advice of appropriate groups.
- Monitor compliance and implementation of this policy.
- Support managers when identifying and dealing with stress related cases.
- Ensure that training on stress awareness is available to managers and individuals.

### **4.2 Line Managers' Responsibilities**

Managers have a key role in demonstrating and promoting the importance of the health and wellbeing of the team that they lead. They must have a proactive approach so any issues may be identified at an early stage and staff can be supported with early interventions, and reasonable adjustments. They should be able to talk to staff about difficult issues with sensitivity, and respond appropriately when they have concerns about individuals, and/or when illness is evident. Above all, managers should

demonstrate a proactive approach, defined by the responsiveness of their actions. Key actions for managers include:

- Risk assessments that include workplace stress are carried out, when required and recommendations acted upon within their area of control.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- They attend all relevant training courses in good management practice and health and safety. This should include training on recognising signs of their own and others' stress.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking.
- Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Act proactively, when the first possible signs of stress have been recognised, to support their employees to overcome problems before job performance is affected wherever possible and practicable.
- Where stress is identified encourage the employee to seek help and support without discrimination.
- Where a mental health condition has caused deterioration in job performance, treat it as any other health problem.
- Where stress has caused deterioration in job performance seek to identify the causes of stress and try to eliminate them as far as is reasonably practicable through changing duties or the work environment. Relocation to another post will be the last resort. Should an employee be unable to remain in their post due to stress, attempts will be made, as far as possible, to find an alternative suitable post. This will be subject to the relevant Human Resources Policies.
- Ensure that sickness absence is recorded and monitored, a return-to-work interview is undertaken both effectively and sensitively. Should it be required, a referral will be made to Occupational Health personnel.
- Ensure that staff are aware of this policy and all other relevant Occupational Health policies and other relevant Health and Safety Policies.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g., bereavement or separation.
- Zero tolerance of discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- Be familiar with the stress management toolkit and ensure that staff have access to this policy and the toolkit.
- Ensure staff are aware of the support available.

### **4.3 Employee Responsibilities**

Staff have a responsibility to identify potential causes of stress for themselves or colleagues before they become a problem, and to raise them with their manager. If managers are not aware of a problem, it is difficult for action to be taken, and to enable the most appropriate support to be identified. As defined in the managers responsibilities, staff should also demonstrate a proactive approach to raising issues, whether their own or a colleague.

- Work within procedures, which have been agreed by their Line Manager.
- Protect their own well-being by working in a manner which does not pose further risk to themselves or their colleagues.
- Take appropriate advice from suitably qualified professionals, when advised.
- Raise issues of concern which they feel could lead to excessive level of stress with their line manager, Health & Safety Representative, WOD representative or Occupational Health Department as appropriate.
- Report all accidents/incidents/ill health relating to their work, which has evolved from stress or which has the potential to cause extraordinary levels of stress.
- Zero tolerance of discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- Be supportive to colleagues.
- Accept opportunities for training and encourage others to do the same.
- Be able to recognise that stress can exacerbate and/or lead to MSD's

### **4.4 Occupational Health Department Responsibilities**

Occupational Health will provide support to managers and staff in the management of a range of conditions, from signposting to relevant sources of information, to the provision of individualised care.

- Critical role to provide specialist advice on stress, including early interventions.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- Provide necessary support for both employees and managers.
- Provide statistics to the health and safety group.
- Ensure the staff counselling provision, remains fit for purpose.
- Give clear advice in relation to participation in investigations and the employees ability to participate in such events.

## **4.5 Workforce and OD - HR Operations Responsibilities**

- Give HR guidance to managers on workplace stress, and where required signpost to other resources
- Assist in monitoring the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- Advise managers and individuals on training requirements.
- Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to Occupational Health Department/ Staff Counselling Service where appropriate.
- Where required carry out investigations.

## **4.6 Staff Counselling Service Responsibilities**

Access to the counselling service is through the occupational health department, the staff counselling service will:

- Offer counselling within work time.
- Advertise the service so that staff can make contact easily and provide easy access in order to promote confidentiality.
- Provide confidential support to those who refer themselves for counselling.
- Offer face-to-face contact with the member of staff seeking counselling.
- Offer telephone contact and counselling if needed.
- Provide professional advice for policy review.
- Provide quarterly statistics, giving no indication of who has been seen by the service.
- Advise clients on external support/services available for their use and referral to other counsellors if necessary.

## **4.7 Health & Safety Representatives/Departmental or Ward Representative with Health & Safety Responsibilities**

Will ensure compliance with the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations, Code of Practice on Safety Representatives and supporting legislation within the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

This will include the following:

- Safety Representatives will be meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress.
- Safety Representatives will be able to consult with members on the issue of stress including conducting workplace surveys.
- Safety Representatives will be meaningfully involved in the risk assessment process.

- Safety Representatives will be allowed access to relevant collective and anonymous data from HR.
- Safety Representatives will be provided with paid time away from normal duties to attend any Trade Union or other training relating to workplace stress.
- Safety Representatives should conduct regular inspections of the workplace to ensure that environmental stressors are properly controlled.

#### **4.8 Specialist Advisors**

Advice may be sought from specialist advisors from within the organisation and from elsewhere their role will be to:

- Train and support managers in implementing stress risk assessments.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- Inform the employer and the health and safety committee of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.

### **5. Risk Assessment & Training**

The health board has a legal duty under the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to assess the risks of all hazards at work this includes the risks to the health of staff from work related stress. The template provided in the stress management and wellbeing toolkit can be used for an individual member of staff, however for a team risk assessment the blank standard generic risk assessment template should be used.

The Stress Management and Wellbeing Toolkit gives clear guidance on the process of risk assessment and also gives details of the management processes. Stress Management training will be provided for managers, and information will be provided for staff, both electronically and face to face.

### **6. Monitoring Compliance, Audit & Review**

Managers should remain vigilant and consistently monitor their work environment, and staff in order to anticipate the potential for work related stress, using the risk assessment as a guide.

This document will be reviewed every three years or earlier should audit results; incident reports; risk assessments; changes to legislation/ practice; sickness absence and/or staff counsellor's advice indicate otherwise. Feedback on wellbeing matters, of which stress is an integral part, will be through the wellbeing at work group. Matters from the group will be reported in to the by the Health & Safety Group, where Compliance will be monitored. The health and safety team will also conduct audits, which will include stress

management, reports will be forwarded to the health and safety group, and will form part of the compliance process.

## **7. References**

**The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999** (SI 1999 No: 3242). H.M. Stationary Office, London.

Accessed at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999/3242/contents/made>

**Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992** (*the Workplace Regulations*) (SI 1992 No: 3004). H.M. Stationary Office, London.

Accessed at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1992/3004/made>

**The Health and Safety Executive** has a comprehensive guide to Stress. This information can be accessed online at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/index.htm>

**Powys Teaching Health Board:** PTHB/ H&S 001 Corporate Health & Safety Policy

**Powys Teaching Health Board.** PTHB/CP 019 Risk Assessment Procedure

**Powys Teaching Health Board:** Stress Management and Wellbeing Toolkit.

**The International Stress Management Association** exists to promote knowledge and best practice in the prevention and reduction of human stress - [www.isma.org.uk](http://www.isma.org.uk)

**Mindful Employer** - <http://www.mindfulemployer.net/support/links-library/>

**Depression Alliance** Information about depression and access to self-help groups [www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org)

**Hafal** Principal organisation in Wales working with individuals recovering from serious mental illness and their families. Tel: 01792 832400 Email: [hafal@hafal.org](mailto:hafal@hafal.org)  
<http://www.hafal.org/>

**Gofal** Leading Welsh mental health and wellbeing charity: support and Information

<http://www.gofal.org.uk/> [Wales 18/12/15 Version1](#)

### **MIND**

Mental health charity providing advice and information.

Telephone: 0300 123 3393 or text 86463  
Email: [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk) [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

**Royal College of Psychiatrists**

Leaflets and expert advice on mental health  
<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/expertadvice.aspx>

**Cruse Bereavement Care**

Daytime helpline: 0844 477 9400, or email: [helpline@cruse.org.uk](mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk)  
Online advice and information: [www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

**Samaritans**

24/7 helpline number:116123 Email:  
[jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**RCN Stress and you**

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/pub-004967>