



Policy on the management of work related stress

Contents

2. Policy statement.....	1
3. Stress management standards.....	2
4. Trade unions and other employee representatives.....	2
5. Training and development.....	3

- 1.1. The University of Leeds, recognising that staff are its most important asset, is committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment for all staff and recognises that excessive levels of work-related stress are a potential cause of ill-health.
- 1.2. The University has a duty in law to ensure that the health of its employees is not adversely affected by their work, and is committed to managing staff to enable so far as is reasonably practicable, the avoidance of work related stress but where it does occur, to ensure its effective management.
- 1.3. The University defines work related stress as “a person’s reaction to an actual, or perceived, imbalance between the demands of a job and an individual’s capabilities (or more simply, the psychological and physical reactions when an individual feels that he/she cannot cope with the demands of a job)”.
- 1.4. It is the state of affairs that exists when the problems and challenges to which a person is exposed tax or exceed his/her coping resources, an individual needs to be helped to deal with these problems or pressures.
- 1.5. Work related stress is distinct from the feeling of being under reasonable pressure and experiencing challenges at work. Such pressure and challenges can help keep us motivated.

2. Policy statement

- 2.1. It is the policy of the University of Leeds to take all reasonable and practicable steps to safeguard the health and safety of employees while at work. The University recognises that excessive levels of stress, especially if endured for long periods, can lead to ill health. Harmful levels of stress can arise as a result of factors both in the workplace and from employees’ personal and family lives. While it has no control over external factors, the University’s objectives are to:
 - identify workplace sources of harmful levels of stress;
 - prevent, as far as is reasonable and practicable, employees being exposed to harmful levels of stress at work;

- enable managers, supervisors and individual employees to recognise, at an early stage, problems which might be related to harmful levels of stress and the appropriate actions to take to reduce the levels of stress;
 - provide central and local support for those who are suffering ill health due to work related stress and provide assistance to enable employees to recover their full potential as soon as possible;
 - define responsibilities of all managers and supervisors in relation to the identification and control of workplace stress.
- 2.2. The University will provide guidance and tools to enable all managers, supervisors and individual staff members to recognise and respond to workplace stressors and their potential impact.

3. Stress management standards

- 3.1. The Health and Safety Executive has developed six management standards¹ to help assess and tackle the main causes of stress. The University commits to using these HSE Management Standards in any investigation into the causes of stress. The standards focus on six aspects of work as follows:
- 3.1.1. Demands – Includes issues like workload, work pattern and the work environment.
 - 3.1.2. Control – How much say the person has in the way they do their work.
 - 3.1.3. Support – Includes the encouragement and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
 - 3.1.4. Relationships – Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
 - 3.1.5. Role – Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.
 - 3.1.6. Change – How organisation change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.
- 3.2. The University will use the management standards to help identify sources of harmful levels of stress at work.
- 3.3. External factors, for example difficulties in an employee's personal life, can also make it difficult for an individual to cope with the demands of their job. The guidance for individual staff members will provide details of support processes for non-work related stress.

4. Trade unions and other employee representatives

- 4.1. The University of Leeds recognises that Trade Unions and other employee representatives have a positive role to play in all areas of health and safety, including work related stress. The University welcomes the part played by the Trade Unions in the development of this policy and the part it will continue to play in the monitoring of progress.

¹ HSE/ ACAS: "Making the Stress Management Standards Work" :2005 – International Stress Management Association UK.

5. Training and development

- 5.1. An awareness of the symptoms of stress and learning how to recognise and reduce individual stress levels will be incorporated into manager and staff training where appropriate. Training will recognise that a certain amount of pressure will always be present and will focus both on preventing excessive stress and on coping strategies when the pressure becomes too much.