Welshpool Town Council

Stress Management Policy

Introduction.

Employers have a legal duty to protect workers from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and acting on it.

Line managers/Town Clerk should assess the risk of stress, and its impact on mental and physical ill-health, in the same way as they assess other work-related health and safety risks.

Spotting signs of stress

If you are stressed you may notice changes in the way you think or feel, for example:

- feeling negative
- being indecisive
- feeling isolated
- feeling nervous
- being unable to concentrate

You may act differently, for example:

- eat more or less than usual
- smoke, drink or take drugs 'to cope'
- have difficulty sleeping

If you are feeling signs of stress at work, it is important to talk to someone, for example, your line manager/Town Clerk. If you talk to them as soon as possible, it will give them the chance to help and stop the situation from getting worse.

If the pressure is due to what your line manager/Town Clerk is doing, find out what policies are in place to deal with this. If there aren't any, you could talk to your:

- trade union representative
- worker representative
- One Voice Wales
- Staffing Committee
- first aider trained to support people experiencing mental health
- GP

Many workers are unwilling to talk about stress at work, because of the stigma stress has. But stress is not a weakness and can happen to anyone.

Causes of stress at work.

There are six main areas that can lead to work-related stress if they are not managed properly. These are: demands, control, support, relationships, role and change.

For example, employees may say that they:

- are not able to cope with the demands of their jobs
- are unable to control the way they do their work
- don't receive enough information and support
- are having trouble with relationships at work, or are being bullied
- don't fully understand their role and responsibilities
- are not engaged when a business is undergoing change

Stress affects people differently – what stresses one person may not affect another. Factors such as skills and experience, age or disability may all affect whether a worker can cope.
By line managers/Town Clerk talking to employees and understanding how to identify the signs of stress, they can prevent and reduce stress in the workplace.

What employers must do.

Employers have a legal duty to assess the risks to your health from stress at work and share the results of any risk assessment with you.

Your employer may follow HSE's Management Standards approach, which helps identify and manage the main causes of stress at work.

Employers must assess and manage all work-related risks. They should act to protect workers, and others, from any identified physical or mental health risks.

Signs of Stress.

If employees start acting differently, it can be a sign they are stressed.

Line managers/Town Clerk should look out for signs of stress.

Acting early can reduce the impact of pressure and make it easier to reduce or remove the causes.

If line managers/Town clerk is worried that a worker is showing some of these signs, they should encourage them to see their GP. These signs can be symptoms of other conditions. If there is something wrong at work, and this has caused the problem, the line managers/Town Clerk should take action.

Signs of stress in teams

Signs of stress in a team include:

- arguments
- higher staff turnover
- more reports of stress
- more sickness absence

- decreased performance
- more complaints and grievances

Employers must assess the risks of work-related stress in the workplace and take action to protect workers.

Signs of stress in a worker

A change in the way someone acts can be a sign of stress, for example, they may:

- take more time off
- arrive for work later
- be more twitchy or nervous

A change in the way someone thinks or feels can also be a sign of stress, for example:

- mood swings
- being withdrawn
- loss of motivation, commitment and confidence
- increased emotional reactions – being more tearful, sensitive or aggressive

Employees can help look after their own stress levels at work - if you think you have a problem talk to your manager, a colleague or your GP.