



Fèisean nan Gàidheal
Risk Management and Policies

Date: 15 June 2010.

Policy: Stress Management Policy and Procedure

This policy forms part of: Risk Management Policy, Health & Safety

Related Policies: Risk Management, Lone Workers, Staff Handbook, Equal Opportunities

Purpose of Policy: Concerned with the negative aspects of stress. To reduce the likelihood of stress-related conditions in the workplace and to indicate procedure should stress-related conditions be identified in individuals or groups of employees.

Summary of Policy: To recognise the need for preventative action, and to encourage at-risk staff to seek assistance early. The policy also encourages a supportive, healthy and safe working environment which fosters a culture of trust, co-operation and mutual respect. The policy seeks to develop a culture that is supportive and non-judgmental of mental health problems and to reduce or prevent where possible the risks to mental health in relation to work.

Policy drafted by: Iona MacDonald, Training & Policy Officer

Submitted to Executive Group (date): 01 February 2010.

Approved by Board (date): 18 February 2010.

Last Reviewed (date): February 2013.

This policy should be reviewed by (date): February 2014.

Catriona MacIntyre – 18 February 2010.

Fèisean nan Gàidheal Stress Management Policy and Procedure

1 Introduction

This document does not form part of your contract of employment and may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements, and to ensure that organisational needs are met. You will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made, unless the change is required by statute.

This organisation is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

This policy will apply to everyone in the organisation. Managers are responsible for implementation and the organisation is responsible for providing the necessary resources. Employees are responsible for raising issues of concern with their line manager, CEO or Chair, and should also accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.

2 What Is Stress?

Stress is what we experience when we feel we cannot cope with the pressure and demands placed upon us. All work has different pressures, and we vary in our capacity and ability to cope with different types of pressure. Some levels of pressure can be motivating and challenging, and pressures that we respond to effectively are likely to lead to job satisfaction. However, pressures at a level we cannot cope with, or in some cases too little pressure or challenge, are likely to result in stress for the individual. When stress is intense, repeated or continuous, ill health can result. This policy is concerned with the negative aspects of stress.

3 Policy Aims

- To recognise that action to prevent stress is far more effective than dealing with it once it has arisen.
- To establish guidelines for managers on the prevention and identification of work-related stress, and to encourage members of staff that are experiencing unacceptable levels of stress to seek assistance and receive the advice and support they need.
- To encourage the creation of a working environment in which employees and managers actively identify opportunities to enhance employee well-being.
- To promote a healthy and safe environment which fosters a culture of trust, co-operation and mutual respect, and within which all members of staff treat each other with dignity.
- To develop a culture that is supportive and non-judgemental of people with mental health problems.
- To reduce as far as reasonably practicable and, where possible, prevent risks to mental health in relation to work.

4 Risk Assessment

Managers will consider stress when assessing possible health hazards in the workplace. Where stress is identified as a problem, it will be taken seriously as an organisational issue, and not seen as a personal problem. Individuals will not be made to feel guilty about their stress problems, and will be encouraged to seek support and advice. When assessing risk, Managers will consider all aspects of the job that have the potential to cause harm, including:

- Job content
- Work organisation
- Management style
- Training and development
- Social, environmental and organisational conditions

5 Responsibilities

Directorate/ Chief Executive Officer

The Board of Directors and CEO have a responsibility for ensuring that this policy and the guidelines referred to are implemented in their area of responsibility.

Line Managers

All Managers are required to take an active role in implementing this policy by taking positive steps to prevent or reduce the occurrence of work stress in their areas. Line Managers will provide on-going support to individual members of staff, to other Managers in the work environment, and will encourage referral to counselling support when appropriate.

Managers are encouraged to give personal thanks and recognition for individual and group achievements, to show that the hard work and effort of employees is recognised.

Individual employees

Employees are encouraged to recognise both their own individual training needs, and the responsibility they have for their own well-being and development within the post. Employees will be encouraged to discuss any concerns with their manager as soon as possible to enable early support and intervention. We recognise that stress at home may also affect work. Employees may wish to discuss these outside factors with their Line Manager, who will be able to give advice on outside agencies which can provide support / counselling.

If employees do not wish to approach their Line Manager, they may choose to go directly to the next level of management. All discussions will be treated in the strictest confidence.

All employees have a role in identifying early signs of stress in their colleagues, and offering support.

6 Actions to minimise workplace stress

The organisation aims to prevent workplace stress arising by:

- Following good principles of job design, allowing individuals some control over their work and the ability to call upon support and advice when necessary.
- Providing a safe and healthy environment in which to work.
- Providing a workplace free from harassment, bullying and victimisation.
- Sound management practice based on equality of treatment and respect for diversity.
- Effective planning, workload allocation and feedback on performance.
- Encouraging staff to maintain and improve their physical and psychological health.
- Offering support to staff through effective support and supervision, and through other relevant services, including those run by external agencies, where appropriate.
- Ensuring good communication.
- Providing information and training to enable staff to develop their skills and confidence and hence maximise their contribution to the success of the organisation.

7 Management style

The attitude and style of management should be encouraging and supportive rather than blaming and critical. Managers will endeavour to provide clear lines of communication and ensure that all employees have the opportunity to contribute their ideas and be involved in planning their work. Senior managers have responsibility for ensuring that they do not pass unrealistic demands, deadlines and unnecessary stress down through the organisation.

8 Bullying and Harassment

The organisation recognises that bullying, intimidation and harassment at work can be a source of stress. If an individual believes that they are experiencing bullying or harassment at work then they should take this up with their Line Manager as soon as possible. If the Line Manager is not the appropriate person, then the employee should approach the next level of management. The matter will be treated in strict confidence and without delay. No staff member will be victimised as a result of raising legitimate concerns about work-related stress.

9 Medical Reports and Occupational Health Referrals

When required, a manager may need to obtain medical opinion from an employee's doctor or an occupational health adviser. Under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1998, an employee has the right to withhold consent to their employer obtaining a report from their GP. However, decisions about an employee's employment are better made with the benefit of medical opinion.

New guidance which took effect on 12 October 2009 places doctors under enhanced duties when acting as independent medical advisors preparing reports for employment purposes. It states that they must:

- Be satisfied that the employee is fully informed of the purposes and likely results of disclosing a report to the employer.
- Point out that relevant information cannot be concealed or withheld.
- Disclose only facts that are relevant to the employer's request.
- Offer to show the employee any report on their condition before it is sent.
- Obtain the employee's written consent before passing on the report.

The rule applies to all doctors. While independent or occupational health doctors who haven't treated the employees are not covered by this Act, they can no longer supply medical reports without following the above steps.

10 Related Policies and Documents

- Equal Opportunities
- Grievance Procedure
- Staff Handbook
- Staff Appraisal
- Health and Safety Policy
- Flexible Working
- Sickness Absence Management
- Family Care Leave