

STRESS MANAGEMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

SecureCare (the “Company”) are committed to protecting your health, safety and well-being and that of all those who work for us. We will endeavour to maintain a working environment in which everyone treats one another with dignity and respect and is able to co-operate with and trust their colleagues.

The Company believes that its employees are its most valuable resource and that their wellbeing is vital to effective performance at work and the continued provision of high quality services. To this end, the Company is committed to providing maintaining and promoting a healthy and supportive working environment.

We recognise that, whatever its source, stress is a health and safety issue in the workplace. We acknowledge the importance of a supportive environment and working culture and of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

We are committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective and to bring it to everyone's attention. However, this policy can only be effective if everyone co-operates to achieve its aims.

Although the Company has no control over external or personal factors, it is committed to managing stress and risks within its control, and to providing support to employees who are suffering from stress.

What is Stress?

Stress is a natural reaction to excessive pressure that is experienced by everybody. When stress is experienced consistently over a period of time, its effects can become detrimental and lead to further and more serious psychological and physical illnesses.

Stress itself can be caused by an infinite number of variables which will vary enormously in different individuals. By way of example, personal factors like family problems can easily affect an individual's work, while work based factors like bullying, lack of training or poor working conditions can just as easily spill over into the home.

Recognising stress can be difficult as its effects will vary from person to person but the following signs can sometimes indicate that someone is experiencing difficulty:

- Changes in behaviour;
- Indecisiveness;
- Absenteeism; or
- Increase in the use of tobacco or alcohol.

Although the Company has no control over external factors which may be more difficult to identify the Health and Safety Executive has identified 6 main causes of stress at work which the Company can affect:

- Demands made on employees;
- The level of control employees have over their work;
- The support employees receive from managers and colleagues;
- The clarity of an employee's role within the organization;
- The nature of relationships at work; and
- The way that changes are managed.

The Company is aware that stress is easier to manage before it becomes a problem and with that in mind will endeavour to operate in a fashion that takes all of the above factors into account. The Company will also always be open to discuss how an alteration of one or more of these factors might produce a better working environment.

Legal Obligations

We have a legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that your health is not put at risk by excessive pressures or demands arising from the way work is organised.

- Under the terms of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Company has a duty to ensure the health and safety of its employees as far as is reasonably practical.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 place a duty on the Company to assess and control the degree of stress in the workplace.
- The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the Company not to discriminate against employees who suffer from a disability under the Act, which includes long term ill health caused by stress at work.

Scope and Purpose of the Policy

We are committed to identifying, tackling and preventing the causes of work-related stress and to providing appropriate support and consideration to staff suffering from stress, on a confidential basis where appropriate. We seek:

- To ensure the physical and mental health of all employees;
- To promote a healthy, safe and friendly working environment and control and reduce risks to mental health;
- To help provide and maintain a supportive and non judgmental working environment;
- To provide effective support to all employees in managing stress and other mental health problems, and to encourage better recognition of mental health issues; and
- To recognise that the prevention of stress is easier than dealing with it once it has arisen.

We are committed to:

- Promoting a culture of open communication, participation and encouragement. Through training, effective planning and allocation of workloads and ensuring feedback is provided on performance, we want you to develop your skills and confidence and to feel able to raise any concerns you have about your work or working environment
- Using staff development, staff support systems and policies reflecting current good practice to help you understand and recognise the causes of stress and to address work-related stress and the impact of external stressors at work
- Providing a workplace free from harassment, bullying and victimisation
- Addressing violence, aggression and other forms of inappropriate behaviour through disciplinary action
- Providing support should you be affected by or absent by reason of stress

Principles

The Company will conduct an annual assessment of the risks to employees' health, both mental and physical, based on data collected from staff at work including absence data, staff turnover, grievance cases, accidents and exit interviews.

The Company will always listen to any concerns that employees may have. If employees believe that their work is putting their mental health or wellbeing at risk, they should speak to their line manager. All such concerns will be treated with respect and dignity, and employees will be provided with the necessary information to make informed decisions.

The Company recognises that stress and other mental health issues may require periods of sick leave or absence in order to recover from stress.

Where necessary the Company will facilitate the managed return to work of employees who have been absent due to stress.

All cases will be dealt with in accordance with the Company's policy on equality and diversity details of which are available in the Company handbook.

All discussions, requests for help and advice will be kept strictly confidential and the information gathered will be held in accordance with the Company's Data Protection Policy.

Personnel Responsible for Implementation of the Policy

Recognition of stress as a genuine problem requires management support and action. You are also responsible for the success of this policy and must ensure that you:

- Familiarise yourself with the policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives
- Plan and organise your work to meet personal and organisational objectives
- Speak to your Line Manager if you experience or are aware of a situation that may lead to a stress problem
- Co-operate with support, advice and guidance that may be offered

Resolving Cases of Stress at Work

If you believe you are suffering from stress you should discuss this with your Line Manager in the first instance. Once an issue affecting your health comes to our attention steps will be taken to address that issue. Those steps may include any of the following:

- A workload review, reallocation of work, monitoring of future workload or possible redeployment. Our Capability Procedure may be applied
- Where appropriate, investigation under our Disciplinary and/or Grievance Procedures
- Referral for medical advice and/or a medical report to be provided by our medical advisers

If you are on sickness absence, discussion of an appropriate return to work programme. Our Sickness Absence Policy may be applied.

Absence due to Stress

If you are absent due to stress you should follow the sickness absence reporting procedure contained in our Sickness Absence Policy.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important part of this policy. Every member of staff is responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required, whether they are suffering from stress, supporting a colleague who is suffering from stress or because they are otherwise involved in the operation of a policy or procedure dealing with stress.

Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action.

There are occasions when matters reported by a member of staff suffering from stress may have to be put to third parties. For example, where duties need to be reallocated within a team or where, as the result of reported bullying or misconduct, a disciplinary investigation and/or proceeding take place. If this is the case, matters will be discussed with the member of staff concerned before any action is taken.

This Policy will be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. The management team endorses these Policies and is fully committed to their implementation.

This Stress Management Policy has been approved & authorised by:

Signature:

Signed by: ROBERT STEVENSON
Position: DIRECTOR

Date:
Review date: