

Title	Stress Management Policy
Purpose	<p>Maryhill Housing are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that stress is a health and safety issue and we acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing these workplace stressors. Every year, more than 400,000 of us suffer from stress-related illnesses linked to our work. The impacts on our physical and mental health can be severe. The reasons cited as the causes of work-related stress involve workload, lack of managerial support and organisational change as the main contributing factors.</p> <p>ACAS reported (May 2019) that two-thirds of employees surveyed had felt stressed about work in the past 12 months and 60% of those employees stated workload was the reason for their stress.</p> <p>At Maryhill we recognise although stress is not in itself an illness, it can be a contributory factor in many conditions and can cause both physical and mental illnesses. Maryhill Housing therefore, recognises the need to promote a culture of good physical and mental health and its legal duty to protect employees from stress at work under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.</p>
Scope	<p>This policy applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All MH employees
Definitions	<p>The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define stress as:</p> <p>“the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them”</p> <p>Work related stress is defined as:</p> <p>“a harmful reaction that people have to undue pressures and demands placed on them at work”.</p> <p>Proactive measures: actions which aim to prevent the harm caused by stress by taking action before it occurs</p> <p>Reactive measures: actions which will respond to any stress related situation to minimise harm once it has occurred and assist in preventing it occurring again</p>
Policy Statement	<p>Policy Aims</p> <p>This policy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training available for all managers and supervisors in good management practices for managing stress • Promote a culture of mental and physical wellbeing • Increase awareness of stress

- Provide managers with a clear process to use should an employee report that they are suffering from stress
- Provide details of the proactive measures we will implement to help reduce and, where possible, eliminate stress and its causes
- Provide the opportunity to benefit from a confidential employee counselling service
- The policy will link to our organisation Stress Risk Assessment, to ensure we are eliminating stress and/or controlling the risk of stress.

We all experience some form of pressure on a daily basis, and need it to motivate us and enable us to perform at our best. It's when we experience too much pressure without the opportunity to recover that we start to experience stress.

The HSE developed 6 management standards to help identify and support stress in the workplace.

They are as follows:

- **Demands**-includes issues like workload, work patterns and the work environment
- **Control**- how much say the person has in the way they do their work
- **Support**- includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
- **Relationships**-includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- **Role**-whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles
- **Change**- how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation

Further details of the standards are available from the HSE website (www.hse.gov.uk)

Legal Framework

Although there is no specific legislation on stress the following are relevant through case law:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
Under section 2 (1), employers have a duty to 'ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare at work of all...employees'

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

This requires that employers make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the H&S of its employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work and this includes stress.

Confidentiality

MH will ensure that employees experiencing stress are dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Line Manager Responsibilities

Line managers play a key role in managing stress within the workplace. It is vital to the success of a stress policy that managers have a thorough understanding of what stress is, what the causes are and what to be aware of to help identify early signs.

Line manager's responsibilities include:

- Where issues of stress arise, intervene as early as possible
- Attending stress awareness training
- To be aware of the signs of stress and intervene where necessary
- Promote the a culture of a physically and mentally healthy organisation
- To manage staff effectively to minimise them experiencing stress
- To ensure that a stress risk assessment is conducted with their staff
- Ensure staff contribute to the organisation's stress questionnaires
- To take steps to help employees maintain a state of good mental health e.g. encourage appropriate rest breaks and holidays

Employee Responsibilities

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

Employee's responsibilities include:

- To raise any concerns regarding stress at the earliest opportunity
- If the source of your stress is your Line Manager, speak to your Line Manager's manager or HR at your earliest opportunity

- To participate in MH's measures to assist in reducing or eliminating stress
- To be aware of the HSE Risk Management standards and the signs of stress
- To raise any concerns with a manager they may have for their colleagues in regards to stress

Managing Stress

Proactive Measures

To support the organisation's commitment in reducing the risk of stress occurring, MH will ensure that the following initiatives will be implemented and adopted.

- **Managers' training**
MH will ensure that all line managers attend stress awareness training and subsequent refreshers at appropriate intervals.
- **Employee Stress Awareness**
MH will commit to ensuring staff who have raised that they are experiencing stress are given support and the necessary resources to identify potentially where this stress is coming from.
To provide this support any staff member who highlights they are experiencing stress will be recommended to carry out a Stress Questionnaire.

This questionnaire will encompass a series of questions relating to the HSE 6 Management Standards (see Appendix 1). This questionnaire will ask you to self-assess based on these questions using a scale from 1 to 10 (further explanation is detailed within the Stress Questionnaire). It is classed under a RAG (Red, Amber and Green) status. GREEN being positive, AMBER signals a potential area of concern and RED is an area of serious concern which needs action.

If you self-assess and it is identified that there are areas in RED we will ask you to provide some more detail around where you think this stress is coming from. Once this questionnaire is completed it would allow you to have a conversation with your Line Manager (or the most appropriate manager) as to what actions/solutions can be put in place to alleviate this stress.

By completing this Stress Questionnaire it will allow MH to review current working practices and recommend improvements. All information would be confidentially

retained within HR.

- **Analysing Information**

Commitment will be given that MH will review appropriate data e.g. absence, employee concerns, employee questionnaires to identify areas where stress is or could be a risk.

- **Risk Assessments**

Stress risk assessments will be conducted on a periodic basis (carried out either organisation wide or at department level as appropriate).

- **Promoting the Wellbeing of Employees**

MH is committed to facilitating a culture of promoting physical and mental health in the following ways:

- Provide stress awareness sessions for staff
- Healthy Working Lives- to increase awareness of stress in the workplace
- Ensure that staff take any allocated breaks
- Manage staff holiday entitlement in order that leave is taken throughout the year at reasonable intervals
- Ensure that staff are not working excessive hours on a regular and prolonged basis

Reactive Measures

Stress is a very individual condition and, as a result, it is unfortunate that even with the above measures being put in place, some employees may nonetheless find themselves experiencing a stressful period in their lives. This may be caused by personal circumstances or work, or a combination of both.

Managing Individual Stress Concerns

The following list details the process that will be used by MH if an employee raises concerns of stress:

- Manager becomes aware that an employee is experiencing stress
- The manager should arrange to meet with the staff member ASAP and or no later than within 3 days to discuss the issues
- The line manager will give the employee a stress questionnaire to complete (Appendix 1)
- The employee completes the questionnaire and returns this to the line manager
- The manager completes any appropriate sections

- A second meeting is arranged to discuss the questionnaire, identify ways of managing the issues, and any support or interim arrangements that may assist the employee
- If appropriate, the employee may be referred to an occupational health specialist, Employee Counselling Service or any other appropriate service
- At the conclusion of the meeting, an action plan will be completed to summarise discussions and what actions will be taken by the organisation, line manager and employee
- If the employee is absent as a result of stress the absence will continue to be managed in line with MH's absence management procedures

NB: If the employee's line manager is a contributing factor to the employee's stress, another appropriate manager, e.g. another manager on a similar level or one level above, will conduct the meetings.

If it is identified that the stress is being caused by another employee then appropriate investigations may be required in line with MH's Disciplinary Policy.

If through discussions with an employee a line manager becomes aware of a stress risk they will raise this in the appropriate way to ensure it is addressed at an organisational level. This will be done while maintaining the employee's confidentiality.

Occupational Health

If deemed appropriate an employee may be referred to an occupational health specialist to assist in the absence management and help identify any actions that could be taken to assist the employee.

Employee Counselling Service

All employees have access to the Employee Counselling Service.

The details are as follows:

- Legal and General EAP- Number: 0800 197 0655 (quoting Strathclyde/Stratclyde Pension Fund)
- Website information: www.legalandgeneral.com/eap
- The access code/username and password for website access is 'worklifeeap'.

You can also avail of face to face counselling through a management referral. This referral is arranged confidentially via HR. If you require

	<p>this referral please speak to the HR Manager in the first instance.</p> <p>Additional Sources of Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIND www.mind.org.uk • Healthy Working Lives http://surveys.healthyworkinglives.com/ • HSE http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/ • Trained Mental Health First Aiders, details of which are signposted on the notice board around the offices. <p>General Data Protection Regulations MH will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Data Protection policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in MH's employee privacy notice.</p> <p>Review</p> <p>This policy shall be reviewed every 3 years and/or updated in line with changes in legislation.</p>
Approval	Senior Management Team- 1 October 2019
Policy Owner	Marie Murphy-HR Manager
Review	This policy will be reviewed every 3 years and/or updated in line with changes in legislation.