



Stress Management Policy

Policy for the Management of Stress in the workplace.

1. Stress: A Definition

1.1 Statement of Recognition

Detectamet Pocklington recognises that 'stress' is an everyday part of business life but that it needs to be managed effectively.

As a Company we need to ensure that the health and well being of employees is not adversely affected by their work or working environment.

1.2 Understanding Stress

All work has its pressures.

We all vary in our capacity to cope with different types of pressure.

Some pressure, even when high, can be motivating and a challenge.

Pressures that we can respond to effectively are likely to lead to job satisfaction.

However, pressures at a level we cannot cope with, even in some cases too little pressure or challenge, are likely to result in stress for the individual.

This document is concerned with the negative aspects of stress.

1.3 What is Stress?

'Stress' is an individual matter,

what constitutes stress for one individual, may well not be stress for another.

Essentially stress is what we experience when we cannot cope with the pressures and demands placed upon us.

1.4 Scope of Policy

Whilst the scope of this policy is to cover work place induced stress,

the Company does recognise that sources external to work may be a significant factor in causing stress for people.

When identifying and dealing with stress the Company shall endeavour, if the individual is willing to discuss these matters.

2. Signs and causes of Stress

2.1 Possible signs of Stress

Persistent or recurrent moods –

anger, irritability, detachment, worry, depression, guilt, and sadness.

- Physical sensations/effects – aches and pains, raised heart rate, increased sweating, dizziness, blurred vision, skin or sleep disorders.
- Changed behaviours – difficulty concentrating or remembering things, unable to switch off, loss of creativity, making more errors, double checking everything, loss of interest in sex, eating disorders, increasing use of tobacco, alcohol, coffee, drugs.

When stress is experienced over long periods other signs can develop, for example, high blood pressure, heart disease, ulcers, anxiety, long-term depression.

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2.2 Possible causes of Stress

Be aware of the following signs:

- **Increases in overall sickness absence** – particularly frequent short absences
- **Poor work performance** – less output, lower quality, poor decision making
- **Relationships at work** – conflict between colleagues, poor relationships with clients
- **Staff attitude and behaviour** – loss of motivation or commitment, poor timekeeping, working longer hours but with diminishing effectiveness

3. Responsibility

3.1 Self Awareness

If you believe you are suffering from stress or are struggling with your work-based duties then try to contact your manager to discuss the issues with him/her.

If this is not possible then individuals should be aware of who they can turn to.

Whilst the Company will make every effort to help employees, often the first step must come from the individual.

3.2 Colleague and Managerial support

Managers have a particular responsibility to be aware of the legal duty as an employer and also to be aware of how to recognise early signs of stress in their employees.

It is important for the success of this policy that managers play an active role in its implementation. The responsibilities include:

- To observe and evaluate work performance
- To provide information on the policy and where possible help individuals to overcome their problems before job performance is affected
- To become familiar with this policy, to attend any stress management training that is available
- To ensure that absences which may have been caused by stress are acted upon sympathetically and with understanding

All employees and colleagues of those affected by stress, have similar responsibilities as above. To enable the Company to provide a good working environment it is essential that all employees act with sensitivity and tact when dealing with individuals either they suspect of suffering from stress, or who have been diagnosed.

3.3 Occupational Health and HR

The Occupational Health resource on site will have information available regarding stress.

The Occupational Health person will be able to provide further support and if necessary arrange for outside counselling.

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3.4 Health & Safety

It will be health and safety's responsibility to include an analysis of stress/health risks within the overall audit of a site. This information must be kept up-to-date and should be available to interested and relevant parties within the Company.

4. Action Points

4.1 Implementation of the policy

In order to ensure the implementation of the policy, the Company shall endeavour to provide relevant training and/or access to relevant information regarding stress.

4.2 Impact on day-to-day activities

In order to ensure that the correct identification of potential stress issues occurs, the following areas must include an element related to 'stress management'. The HR department, the Health & Safety Officer and the Occupational Health Officer will provide support for these actions.

4.21 Recruitment & Selection

- The full range of tasks and demands of the job should be set out clearly in the job description and should be fully discussed in the interview process. Areas of potential pressure should be identified.
- All references must seek information about candidates' sickness and absence records.
- For posts where it is recognised that a higher than normal level of pressure and stress exists, candidates' tolerance to stress should become a more important factor in the selection process. Psychometric testing should be used where appropriate.

4.2.2 Pre-employment health screening

- Detectamet Pocklington is a manufacturer and as such must ensure that no person takes up employment before a health questionnaire has been completed.
- The Company recognises that whilst a pre-employment health screening could be discriminatory and bar those with a history of stress related problems from employment, Detectamet Pocklington will use the process in a positive manner. The use of the information will be used to ensure that people are matched to the requirements of the job and that the Company can identify any support, if any, that the person will need to perform effectively in that job.
- Where in the initial screening process, a potential stress difficulty has been identified and the individual has been employed, the Health and Safety, and Occupational Health Service should

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enquire about the well-being and progress of the employee at regular intervals. This would be on a confidential basis

4.2.3 Induction and Promotion

All new employees must receive induction into their jobs. Starting a new job can be a stressful time and a planned induction should help eliminate any concerns.

- Within the induction programme, the stress policy (along with other employee requirements and Company requirements) should be discussed.

4.2.4 Absence Management

- Managers and supervisors must ensure that all employees' absences are recorded.
- As part of regular supervision processes all absences in the preceding period should be discussed with the employee and underlying reasons identified.
- Managers should arrange to talk with or visit any absent employee within five working days of the first day of their absence to discuss any underlying causes and to arrange support and assistance if the absence is likely to continue.
- Managers should consider making reference to the Occupational Health Officers, Human Resources or Health & Safety (and/or Trade Union representative if appropriate) if an employee's absence continues beyond ten working days.

4.2.5 Return to Work after absence

- After the employee returns to work managers should continue to meet them to discuss their recovery and the factors which may have contributed to the stress. Meetings may be required more frequently than would be normal under the agreed planned supervision system.

4.2.6 Training & Development

- Many employees experience stress through feeling that they are not adequately trained for their existing job and especially when they move into a new or a changed role.

5 Specific Help

5.2 Self Help

Your manager and/or occupational health officer will be able to provide you with relevant information if you request it. A self-analysis form will also be made available following agreement with your manager or occupational health officer.

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5.2 Getting Help

Most of us get help informally from family and colleagues, but sometimes we may need to talk to someone who is outside the situation. If you are feeling under stress, it is better not to wait for the problem to build up but to talk to someone straight away. A number of options are available to you.

- If it is a work problem or a home problem affecting your work discuss it with your manager/supervisor. You may use the regular supervision sessions which you have, but you may need to make a special appointment. Your manager will then know the situation and treat the matter in confidence wherever possible.
On occasions your manager/supervisor may recommend the involvement of the HR contact or Occupational Health Officer.
- If you do not wish to approach your manager you may contact your HR Officer or Occupational Health Officer direct.
- If you are experiencing harassment at work, or have been involved in a stressful incident it is beneficial to talk through the occurrence within 72 hours of the event. Please either speak to your manager, HR officer or Occupational Health Officer.
- If you belong to a Trade Union they may be able to help provide help and advice.

Action Plan:

1. For sites that want to implement this stress policy they must make an undertaking to provide information and training for (at least) the senior management, to enable the policy and responsibilities to be clearly defined and rolled down.
2. Sites must ensure that a stress element is included within the health & safety audit and that it is supported by the correct documentation.
3. The sickness and absence procedures must include recognition of stress as a viable reason for any absence. The precise details of how the information is collated should be left to individual sites and should be specific to their individual procedures.
4. How the information and support services are then co-ordinated is the decision of the individual site and should be related to specific site circumstances. However, the procedures must be supported by health & safety and must be adequate to cover all levels of employee.
5. The content of the stress policy must be communicated to all employees either through specific briefings or as an amendment to a company handbook/health & safety policies.

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