

Management of Stress at Work Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Managers are directly responsible for health and safety within their own organisational units or for specified operational areas within the remit of the job role.
- 1.2 The unit or area of responsibility for the manager may be varied from time to time, but this variation will always be clarified and agreed in advance with the University of Manchester Conferences (UMC) Ltd ('the company').
- 1.3 All managers, supervisors and other employees are expected to uphold the requirements of the company's Health and Safety policies and procedures, in all areas of the workplace.
- 1.4 The company is committed to providing a supportive working environment that maintains and promotes the health and wellbeing of all its employees.
- 1.5 The company has a duty to manage work-related stress in the same way that it manages more tangible risks such as working at height, with chemicals or using display screen equipment.

2. Aims

- 2.1 Appropriate measures should be in place for the prevention and monitoring of work-related stress.
- 2.2 To ensure the early detection and management of stress where it occurs, whatever the cause, including the need to manage individuals who are experiencing stress from causes that are not related to work but which impact on performance at work.
- 2.3 Whilst recognising that the causes of stress may be beyond the control or influence of the company, ensuring that managers attempt to assist through an appropriate approach towards helping the individual cope.
- 2.4 Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for managing stress should be clearly defined and understood, with managers, employees and relevant support services developing good working practices and co-operating effectively.

- 2.5 Managers and their employees should be provided with information, guidance and support, to enable them to manage situations where employee stress is experienced.
- 2.6 Factors which contribute to work-related stress are identified and assessed, and relevant measures are introduced to reduce the risk of work-related stress and to control the risk to health.
- 2.7 The company measures, monitors and reviews the effectiveness of managing cases of stress amongst the workforce.

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1 The UMC Ltd Board of Directors has overall responsibility for Health & Safety, and is duly advised on all such matters by the Directorate of Estates & Facilities Health and Safety Office. The Estates Health and Safety Office will support the Head of Hospitality and Events in developing and implementing Health and Safety arrangements and in monitoring compliance with these including 'managing stress'.
- 3.2 The UMC Ltd Health & Safety Policy Statement and its organisational arrangements set out the principles of how Health and Safety is managed within UMC Ltd, and should be referred to for full details.
- 3.3 Line managers have the following responsibilities in relation to the 'management of stress at work':
 - i. To identify and respond appropriately to stress issues within their team, in accordance with this policy and supporting guidance;
 - ii. To take steps to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that their own style of management and how they operate within their job roles do not contribute to work-related stress;
 - iii. To be aware of factors which contribute to stress and, where possible, take reasonable actions to reduce or prevent the impact of work-related stress on themselves and others in work;
 - iv. To take appropriate action when they notice changes in employee behaviour or sickness absence that may indicate a stress related problem;
 - v. To arrange an early referral to Occupational Health.
- 3.4 An employee has the responsibility to:
 - i. Be aware of factors which contribute to stress and take reasonable actions to reduce or prevent the impact of work-related stress on themselves and others in work;

- ii. Bring to the attention of their line manager, at the earliest opportunity, any concerns they have about work-related stress; and...
- iii.to inform their line manager if they believe that they are suffering from stress.

4. What is Stress?

- 4.1 The Health and Safety Executive define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them”.
- 4.2 This makes a distinction between pressure, which can be stimulating and motivating, and stress, which occurs when pressures become too great and people feel they cannot cope.
- 4.3 Excessive and/or prolonged pressure can have a significant negative impact on work performance and can lead to mental and physical illnesses.
- 4.4 People can also experience stress when too few demands are placed on them, for instance if they are bored or feel under-valued.

5. Prevention

- 5.1 The main emphasis should be on preventing stressful working conditions from arising in the first place, by having effective management policies, procedures and practices fully integrated into day to day operations.
- 5.2 However, it is recognised that whilst reasonable steps to prevent or minimise stress will be taken, some legitimate, unavoidable and reasonable management interventions and/or working practices or pressures may still be stressful for the employees concerned.
- 5.3 The company will provide appropriate information, guidance and training to support managers and employees in dealing with stress.
- 5.4 The University of Manchester uses an analysis of the biennial employee survey to carry out a stress assessment across the whole organisation, and this is also applied to UMC Ltd as a subsidiary company of the University.
- 5.5 The analysis is consistent with the HSE’s stress management standards, and The University of Manchester ‘Stress Assessment tool’ is based on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) management standards which describe the main factors that are recognised as having the potential to lead to work-related stress
- 5.6 In addition, local stress assessments may be carried out as necessary by line managers to identify potential causes of stress and reasonable steps which could be

taken to reduce or prevent stress; The University's *Guidance for Managers on the Management of Stress* is a useful guide and provides more details:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=23854>

- 5.7 The University provides a range of other measures to prevent stress including:
- i. Staff development programmes designed to help employee work effectively and to build the skills and ability to cope with the demands of their roles;
 - ii. Employee network groups to help identify potential causes for concern;
 - iii. The promotion of wellbeing awareness and a host of fitness and mental health activities provided across campus.

6. Support

- 6.1 The following University services will co-operate to effectively support UMC management and/or the employee to manage incidences of stress:
- i. [Occupational Health Services](#);
 - ii. [Counselling Service](#);
 - iii. [Human Resources](#);
 - iv. [Disability Advisory Support Service \(DASS\)](#);
 - v. [UNISON](#).

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