



## Work Related Stress Policy

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# Work Related Stress Policy

## 1. Introduction

Worplesdon Parish Council is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees and councillors. The Council recognises that work-related stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing the causes of workplace stress.

The Council recognises its duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to assess and manage risks to employees' health, including risks arising from work-related stress.

The Council will take reasonable steps to identify workplace stressors and implement appropriate control measures to minimise the risk of stress.

This policy applies to all employees of the Council. Councillors share responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively.

The Council also recognises the importance of supporting positive mental wellbeing in the workplace and will seek to foster a supportive working environment in which employees feel able to raise concerns and seek assistance where necessary.

## 2. Definition of Stress

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as:

“The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them.”

This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive and motivating factor if managed appropriately, and stress, which can have an adverse effect on an individual's health and wellbeing.

## 3. HSE Management Standards

The Council will seek to manage workplace stress in accordance with the HSE Management Standards, which identify six key areas of work design that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health, lower productivity and increased absence.

These areas are:

- Demands
- Control
- Support
- Relationships
- Role
- Change

The Council will seek, so far as is reasonably practicable, to identify and manage risks associated with these areas.

## 4. Organisational Change

The Council recognises that periods of organisational change, including changes to staffing structures, roles, responsibilities or working practices, can create additional pressures for employees.

Where such changes are proposed, the Council will seek to manage them in a fair, transparent and supportive manner. This will include providing employees with appropriate information, opportunities to raise concerns, and reasonable support during any transition period.

## 5. Responsibilities

### 5.1 The Council

The Council will:

- Provide appropriate resources and support to enable this policy to be implemented effectively.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and manage risks associated with work-related stress.
- Promote a working environment in which stress is recognised and addressed appropriately.

### 5.2 The Clerk

The Clerk will:

- Assist the Council in identifying potential causes of workplace stress and undertake appropriate risk assessments where necessary.
- Implement and monitor control measures arising from those risk assessments.
- Review stress risk assessments periodically and when significant changes occur.
- Attend appropriate training in good management practice and health and safety where available.
- Encourage open communication so that concerns relating to workload or stress can be raised at an early stage.

### 5.3 Staffing Committee

The Staffing Committee plays an important role in ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively and will:

- Monitor staffing levels, organisational workload and officer capacity to ensure that responsibilities placed upon employees remain reasonable and manageable.
- Respond appropriately if staff advise that they are experiencing excessive workload or workplace stress.
- Respond appropriately if staff advise that they are unable to take their full annual leave entitlement.
- Ensure that bullying, harassment, or unreasonable behaviour in the workplace is not tolerated.
- Consider any recommendations arising from stress risk assessments where appropriate.

## 5.4 Employees

Employees have a responsibility to:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety at work.
- Inform the Clerk, or where appropriate the Chairman of the Staffing Committee, if they believe they are experiencing work-related stress.
- Participate constructively in any risk assessment or support measures implemented by the Council.

## 6. Reporting Concerns

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns about work-related stress at an early stage so that appropriate support or adjustments can be considered.

Concerns may be raised with the Clerk in the first instance or, where appropriate, with the Chairman of the Staffing Committee or the Chairman of the Council.

Where the Clerk considers that work-related stress or excessive workload may arise, the matter may be raised with the Chairman of the Staffing Committee or the Chairman of the Council so that appropriate support or adjustments can be considered.

The Council will seek to deal with such matters sensitively and confidentially wherever possible.

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