Pineview
Housing Association Ltd

Putting People 1st

Stress Management Policy

S.15

Reviewed: 20 September 2023

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This policy document can be produced in various formats, for instance, in larger print or audio-format; and it can also be translated into other languages, as appropriate.

Our equality and diversity policy statement describes our key equality commitments that we use to develop all organisational services; this includes employment services and services to tenants and other customers.

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HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

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1. Introduction

Pineview is committed to reducing and where possible eliminating stress for its employees. Stress in itself is not an illness, however it can be a contributory factor to many conditions and can cause both physical and mental illnesses.

Stress can result in poor mental health of employees even if the effects are not severe enough to result in a medical diagnosis. Pineview recognises the need to promote a culture of good mental and physical health in its duty of care under the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act etc 1974.

2. Background

Stress in the workplace is not new, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) introduced Stress Management Standards several years ago and implemented tools to accompany them which have developed over the years.

The management standards cover six key areas:

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

Full descriptions of the standards and typical behaviours which can be a sign of stress are available from the HSE website https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/

It is important to distinguish the difference between stress and pressure. In most work situations some pressure is healthy, but stress is when a person experiences too much pressure and the effect of the pressure becomes negative.

3. Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- 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 experiencing symptoms of stress
- Provide details of the proactive measures Pineview will implement to help reduce and, where possible, eliminate stress and its causes

4. Legal Framework

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

- *Health & Safety at Work Act etc 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*

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.

5. Definitions

The following are definitions which will be applied in the context of this policy

- **Stress** - the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them
- **Proactive measures** - aims to prevent the harm caused by stress by taking action before it occurs
- **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.

6. Confidentiality

Pineview will ensure that employees experiencing stress are dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

The organisation 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 Pineview's Employee Transparency Statement.

7. 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 and early signs are.

The line manager's responsibilities include:

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

8.   Employee Responsibilities

- To raise any concerns, they may have regarding stress at the earliest opportunity
- To participate in Pineview'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, they may have for their colleagues in regard to stress with a manager

9.   Managing Stress

9.1 Proactive Measures

To support the organisation's commitment to reduce the risk of stress occurring, Pineview will ensure that the following initiatives are implemented and adopted.

- **Managers training**

Pineview will ensure that all line managers attend stress awareness training and subsequent refreshers at appropriate intervals.

- **Stress Risk Assessments**

Pineview will commit to conducting a stress risk assessment among staff on a periodic basis to help inform the team/department risk assessment. This will assist in identifying any 'at risk' areas within the organisation.

- **Analysing Information**

Commitment will be given that Pineview 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 (whether these are carried out organisation wide or at department level will depend on the size of the organisation).

- **Promoting the Wellbeing of Employees**

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

- ⇒ Provide stress awareness sessions for staff.
- ⇒ Ensure that staff take any allocated breaks.
- ⇒ Manage staff holiday entitlement in order that leave is taken throughout the year at reasonable intervals.
- ⇒ Promote the benefits of physical activity for both physical and mental health.
- ⇒ Ensure that staff are not working excessive hours on a regular and prolonged basis.
- ⇒ Provide opportunities for employees to be active throughout their working day where possible and appropriate.

9.2 Reactive Measures

Stress is a very individualised 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 work or personal circumstances, or a combination of both.

- **Managing Individual Stress Concerns**

Pineview will use the process below 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 within 3 days to discuss the issues.
- ⇒ The line manager will give the employee a stress questionnaire to complete and agrees when the employee should return the questionnaire by. (Appendix 1).
- ⇒ The employee completes the questionnaire and returns this to the line manager.
- ⇒ 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, for counselling or to any other appropriate service.
- ⇒ During this meeting an action plan will be developed to summarise discussions and lay out actions that 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 Pineview's absence management procedures, as well as providing the employee with the questionnaire to complete.

NB: If the employee's line manager is a contributing factor to the employee's stress, another appropriate manager e.g. a manager 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 Pineview's Grievance 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 help identify any actions that could be taken to assist the employee.

- **Counselling Service**

The details of the service available to employees are displayed on the staff notice boards or can be sought from the employee's line manager.

10. Additional Sources of Information

HSE
http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/

Mind
https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/workplace-mental-health/work-and-stress/

Healthy Working Lives
https://www.healthyworkinglives.scot/Pages/default.aspx**COPE**
www.cope-scotland.org

Employee Counselling Service
T: 0173 856 2005   Website Details
9am-4pm on Monday to Friday   www.rowan-consultancy.co.uk

EVH
General Enquiries   Website Details
T: 0141 352 7435   www.evh.org.uk

Email: Enquiries@evh.org.uk
ACS Health and Safety Helpline
General Enquiries   Website Details
Email info@acsrisk.com   www.acsrisk.com
T: 0141 427 5171

NHS Inform Website   Website Details
T: 0800 22 44 88   https://www.nhsinform.scot/

Five Steps to Mental Wellbeing
https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing

SAMH
General Enquiries   Website Details
T: 0141 530 1000   www.samh.org.uk