

Horrabridge Parish Council

Workplace Stress Management Policy

Introduction

Horrabridge Parish Council is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of employees. Horrabridge Parish Council recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 puts a duty of care on employers to protect their employees from the risk of stress at work and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires all employers to make a 'suitable and sufficient assessment' of their employees at work. This means that by law employers must identify any risks to their employees' health, for example by carrying out a risk assessment and taking steps to prevent or reduce work related stress.

This policy is based on an example provided by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and applies to everyone within the organisation. The Clerk is responsible for its implementation and the council is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

What is Stress?

The HSE define 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 state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

The HSE have produced Management Standards that look at the six main causes of stress or 'stressors' at work that, if not managed, can lead to work-related stress. These are:

- **Demands** made on employees.
- **Control** employees have over their work.
- **Support** employees receive from their managers and colleagues.
- **Role** clarity of an employee with the organisation.
- The nature of **relationships** at work
- The way **change** is managed.

Policy

The Council will:

- Identify workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate or control the risks from stress.
- Provide training for managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.
- Provide appropriate and confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by work factors.
- Provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the stress management policy.

Responsibilities

Councillors/Clerk

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risk assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Conduct specific risk assessments on employees who have been medically diagnosed as suffering from work related stress.
- Ensure job descriptions are up to date.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisation and procedural changes and monitor the effect of change in individual roles.
- Consider the demand placed on their team, the way the job is designed and levels of training.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Monitor workloads to ensure people are not overloaded.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to people experiencing stress outside of work, e.g., bereavement or separation.

Clerk

- Provide appropriate stress awareness training.
- Review effectiveness of the measures to address stress through use of sickness absence statistics.
- Provide continuing support to managers in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational counsellor where appropriate.

Employees

- Raise issues of concern with the Clerk or a Councillor.
- Accept opportunities for counselling when offered or recommended and seek advice from General Practitioner when appropriate
- Follow policies and procedures designed to minimise stressful situations.
- Assist managers develop risk assessments, receive and co-operate with their implementation.
- Support colleagues who are experiencing stressful situations.