



St Mary's  
University  
Twickenham  
London

## **Stress at Work Policy**

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## **1. Introduction**

The University is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of staff members. The University recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 the University has a general duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health of their staff members at work.

## **2. Definition of Stress**

The Health and Safety Executive 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.

## **3. Context**

The University is committed to identifying workplace stressors; in 2017/18 stress accounted for 44% of all work related ill health cases and 57% of all working days lost due to ill health (HSE 2018 Stress Statistics). Organisational risk assessments are conducted when required to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. This will be monitored and reviewed through future organizational risk assessments.

Through the Governors Health and Safety Sub-committee the University has consulted with Trades Unions Safety Representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress.

The University will provide training/resources for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices and to enable them to implement the agreed stress policy.

The University provides confidential counselling for staff members affected by stress caused by work or external factors.

## **4. Responsibilities**

### **Line Managers:**

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risk assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff members, particularly where there are organizational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff members are trained to discharge their duties.

- Avoid coercing staff members to work additional hours and ensure that staff members are not overworking.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that staff members are not overloaded.
- Monitor holidays to ensure that staff members are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated and allegations are managed in line with the Dignity at Work Policy.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a staff member who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.

### **Human Resources:**

- Provide regular training opportunities to line managers on the stress policy.
- Collate and provide details of sickness absence statistics to the Health and Safety Operational Sub-committee.
- Advise managers on training requirements.
- Provide support to managers and staff members and where appropriate make referrals to the Occupational Health.

### **Staff Members:**

- Raise issues of concern with their Safety Representative (Union Representative or Health and Safety Co-ordinator and / or line manager).
- Agree to attend appointments with their GP and/or the Occupational Health.

### **Union Representatives**

- Must be able to consult with members on the issue of stress.
- Must be involved in the risk assessment review process through the Health and Safety Committee.
- Given access to collective and anonymous data on sickness absence data.
- Allowed paid time away from normal duties to attend Trade Union training relating to workplace stress.

## **5. Resources and Guidance**

Health & Wellbeing: Staff and line managers can find Health & Wellbeing guidance and resources on the HR and OD pages of [Staffnet](#).

Employee Assistance Programme (Validium): The Employee Assistance Programme is a confidential counselling and information service to assist you with any personal or work-related problems that may be affecting you. The EAP service offers a wealth of services 24 hours a day, 365 days per year including

access to telephone counselling, information services and face to face counselling with a professional counsellor, close to where you live or work. Further information can be found via Staffnet.

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