

STRESS POLICY

1. Purpose and scope

QRS is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees and to promoting a positive work environment. The organisation recognises that work-related stress can affect mental and physical health and that work-related stress is a health and safety issue which the organisation will address by identifying and reducing workplace stressors and developing good working practices.

This organisation recognises its duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees. This includes taking reasonable steps to prevent them from suffering a stress-related illness as a result of their work.

This policy will apply to everyone in the organisation including temporary and freelance staff.

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 organisation understands that the HSE clearly links work-related stress to factors such as: excessive work demands, overwork, lack of control over work, bullying and harassment, lack of support from colleagues, managers and supervisors, lack of adequate training, unclear job roles or job role conflict and change.

3. Effects of Stress

This organisation recognises that stress can have a number of negative effects on an individual, including:

- fatigue;
- anxiety and depression;
- low self-esteem;
- adverse effects on performance;
- problems sleeping;
- other health problems, such as migraine, raised blood pressure, increased alcohol use, etc;
- “burnout” — physical and emotional exhaustion caused by severe or prolonged stress.

Stress can also have the following effects on the organisation:

- high levels of absenteeism and staff sickness;
- increased staff turnover;
- low staff morale;
- increased number of accidents and mistakes;
- high levels of conflict;
- increased incidence of accidents.

4. Policy

In order to combat work-related stress in this organisation:

- a positive workplace culture will be encouraged where staff wellbeing is prioritised and both staff and managers develop an increased awareness and understanding of stress at work issues;
- HR Director will regularly monitor and review sickness absence rates and data to look for trends that could indicate stress as a contributory cause;

5. Responsibilities

Managers

Managers will:

- ensure good two-way communication between themselves and staff;
- ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their area of responsibility (refer to bullying and harassment policy);
- monitor workloads and working hours to ensure that staff are not overloaded or overworking;
- monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement;
- ensure staff have adequate opportunities for rest, meals and refreshments;
- ensure staff are fully trained to carry out their duties;
- ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities;
- ensure that staff experiencing stress are guided to appropriate external sources of advice and support;
- ensure lone workers are provided with effective supervision and support;
- offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work, should it be appropriate;
- support staff who have been off work due to stress and advise them and their heads of department on a planned return to work.

Human Resources

Human resources will:

- assist in monitoring the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics and any other relevant data;
- conduct risk assessments on an individual basis where appropriate and review regularly;
- support staff who have been off work due to stress and advise them and their managers on a planned return to work.

Employees

Employees will:

- report issues of concern to their line manager or to the HR Director.

6. Implementation, review and monitoring

The senior management/ board of this organisation will:

- monitor the implementation of this policy;
- maintain an overview of its effectiveness;
- review it as required.

These policies supplement your terms of employment but are not of contractual effect. Their purpose is to explain the Company's current policies and procedures but they may be subject to change without notice if changes are considered appropriate by the Company or if there are changes in relevant legislation.