

## STRESS AT WORK POLICY

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy describes how ARK will respond to work related stress and the circumstances surrounding stress, the definition of stress, the relationship between work and non-work related stress and how these are often combined.

1.2 We are committed to providing a supportive working environment that maintains and promotes the health and well-being of all our employees. This includes the organisational environment through effective and sensitive management, enabling individuals to cope successfully with the demands and pressures of work, and providing support for employees whose health and well-being are affected by work related stress.

1.3 This policy has the following sections:

- Section 1 - Introduction
- Section 2 - Scope of policy
- Section 3 - Legislation
- Section 4 - Definition and background
- Section 5 - Implementation
- Section 6 - Roles, responsibilities and duties
- Section 7 - Procedures
- Section 8 - Implementation and review
- Appendix 1 - Related policies and procedures
- Appendix 2 - Quick guide to stress procedure
- Policy Part Two - Guidance

1.4 This policy complies with the Scottish Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management 5.3 and 5.4.

### 2.0 SCOPE OF POLICY

2.1 The policy applies to all ARK employees, Board Members and to all people using and/or visiting the workplace e.g. relief employees, agency staff, service users etc. as applicable.

### **3.0 LEGISLATION**

#### **3.1 Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**

Stress and the management of stress at work does not have specific legislation. The legislation which will apply is the general duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This Act's general duty on employers includes health as well as safety and welfare.

#### **3.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**

These Regulations require the employer to make a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the significant risks to the health and safety of their employees and third parties, resulting from work tasks and locations.

With regard to stress, the risk assessments should include any situations where there is a foreseeable significant risk of work related stress e.g. working with a service user who, due to a medical or other condition, exhibits challenging behaviour (see 4.1 below).

### **4.0 DEFINITION AND BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Well designed, organised and managed work is good for us, but when there is insufficient attention to job design, work organisation and management, it can result in stress related illnesses.

Stress develops because a person is unable to cope with the demands being placed on them (either at work or at home). Work Related Stress can be a significant cause of illness and is known to be linked with high levels of sickness absence, staff turnover and other issues such as errors.

- 4.2 Pressures can also arise from an individual's personal life as well as from work. People vary in their capacity and ability to cope with different types of pressure. Some individuals will recognise that their health is affected and will seek help. Others will not recognise or acknowledge that they are stressed, although this may be apparent to their manager and work colleagues. In itself, stress is not an illness. However, there is evidence that if stress becomes too excessive and prolonged this can lead to mental and physical ill health.
- 4.3 The nature of our work can sometimes mean that we are working with service users who cannot always manage their behaviour due to a medical or other condition. For some employees this can induce work related stress. We have a responsibility to manage the exposure of employees to such situations.

### **5.0 IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 This policy and guidance will be implemented in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy which details the responsibilities of the organisation, managers and employees. The Health and Safety Manual provides additional information and guidance on responsibilities.
- 5.2 Any breaches of the policy should be reported to an employee's manager.
- 5.3 Breaches of this policy will be viewed seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. The severity of discipline will reflect the fact that non-compliance breaches not only this policy but also the Health and Safety Policy and the law.

## **6.0 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES**

### **6.1 Directors and Senior Managers**

Directors and Senior Managers should ensure that:

- they are aware of the causes and signs of work related stress;
- all establishments have copies of the written procedures in respect of Management of Stress at Work and that these are made known to all employees;
- all work practices and arrangements are made with reference to the Health & Safety Policy requirements and HR procedures; and
- there are suitable arrangements to provide information, instruction, training and supervision in all aspects of this section of the safety manual to employees.

### **6.2 ARK Managers**

ARK managers are responsible for the implementation and operation of this policy in respect of all premises within their remit. ARK managers should ensure that:

- they are aware of the signs and symptoms of work related stress;
- they follow relevant procedures, both Health and Safety and HR, if any employee advises them they have stress or they notice any employee showing the symptoms of stress;
- employees are reassured that any situation will be handled confidentially in a sensitive and supportive manner;
- all employees they manage are informed of the detail of this section of the Health and Safety manual;
- the requirements of this section of the Health and Safety manual are complied with by employees;
- any breaches of these requirements are handled in accordance with HR policies;
- all necessary extra duty of care risk assessments are completed and available for relevant employees to view; and
- any procedures developed for the ease of implementing this policy are followed.

### **6.3 Employees**

All employees have a responsibility to ensure that they are complying with the health and safety procedures and requirements appropriate to their job. To achieve this employees should:

- advise their ARK manager if they are experiencing work related stress or feel that they cannot cope with any work activity that they have been asked to do;
- attend any training courses or briefing sessions arranged for them; and
- advise their ARK manager if there are any circumstances affecting their life which may lead to extra pressure at work, where appropriate.

## **7.0 PROCEDURES**

- 7.1 Employees should advise their ARK manager if they feel they have work related stress. This may also overlap into non-work related stress.
- 7.2 The ARK manager should carry out an investigation into the potential causes and aim to alleviate these wherever possible.
- 7.3 For assistance contact should be made either with the H&S Adviser or HR who can advise of steps which can be taken. This may involve referral to Occupational Health – even if there has not been any sickness absence – to gain a perspective on the situation.
- 7.4 The ARK manager should advise the employee of ARK’s Employee Assistance Programme and where to get details of this either from the manager, HR or the general drive.
- 7.5 An extra duty of care risk assessment to be completed with the employee, noting what extra control measures are required while the employee is at work (see policy HS21 for further information).
- 7.6 The ARK manager should regularly monitor the situation to avoid any escalation or recurrence, as appropriate, and update the assessment at agreed intervals.
- 7.7 For a quick guide flowchart to managing stress at work, see Appendix 2

## **8.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**

- 8.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that this policy, and the procedures that support it, are followed by all Board of Management Members and employees.
- 8.2 The Chief Executive will ensure that this policy is reviewed at least every three years, and that any amendments required are submitted to the Board of Management for approval.

**Approved by the Senior Leadership Team: June 2017**

**Approved by the Board of Management: June 2017**

**Next review due by: June 2020**

**Complies with: Scottish Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management 5.3 and 5.4.**

**Policies**

HS21 Extra Duty of Care

**Procedures**

[HS20 Stress at Work – Part 2 - Guidance](#)

**Briefing Sheet**

[HS20 – Stress at Work](#)

## Quick guide to stress procedure

