

## Stress Policy

### 1. Introduction

The organisation is committed to support the physical and mental health, safety and wellbeing of all staff. Whilst stress is not a diagnosed illness, it can have a significant impact on physical and mental wellbeing. The organisation notes the HSE defines stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”.

The organisation is committed to developing a work environment and culture where staff can be open about their experiences of stress and are supported in managing its effects and causes in order to minimise impact.

The organisation recognises excessive and sustained pressures at work can have a detrimental impact and we will encourage and actively promote a supportive environment and working culture to help minimise, control and manage negative stress at work.

We will take reasonable steps to ensure staffs health is not placed at risk through excessive and sustained levels of stress arising from the way work is organised, from the way people deal with each other or from the day-to-day demands placed on the workforce. Equally, all staff have a responsibility to contribute to this positive way of working.

Where it is not possible to hold a face-to-face meeting under this procedure, the process will be conducted remotely. The organisation will ensure staff and their representatives have access to the necessary technology for participating. Staff rights will not be affected, and the organisation will ensure the procedure remains fair and reasonable.

This document does not form part of a contract of employment and may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements, and to ensure business needs are met. Staff will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made, unless the change is required by law.

### 2. Policy Aims

- To ensure all are treated with respect and support during any times of stress.
- To ensure all are made aware of this policy and the support available to those experiencing stress.
- To ensure staff and managers understand their roles in identifying and acting to reduce stress.
- To highlight what stress is and what can cause stress.
- For the organisation to be proactive in support physical and mental wellbeing, identify stressors and make changes wherever reasonably practicable.

### 3. Responsibilities

#### Staff Responsibilities

Any staff member experiencing excess pressure or stress should speak to colleagues or their line manager in the first instance.

If the line manager is considered to be a stressor, they should speak to another manager.

Staff must participate in any meetings, programmes, training or otherwise relating to stress management and awareness.

Staff must take responsibility for their stress including identify stressors and considering changes to lifestyle to improve their wellbeing. Staff must take responsibility for the management of their own work/life balance and methods for reducing stress. Deafblind Scotland will supply all staff with the relevant details for the organisation's employee assistance programme – health assured, which provides 24/7 support to all staff and their immediate families. Health assured offers support with a variety of life matters whether they be related to work or personal. It is staff responsibility to make use of this service to reduce stress and build coping skills for dealing with stress.

### **Manager Responsibilities**

Managers should actively discuss stress with staff regularly, identify signs of stress and take steps to manage and support staff experiencing stress.

Managers should attend all training provided by the organisation relating to stress management to maintain understanding of stressors and how to manage them.

If any staff are identified as experiencing stress, to carry out a stress questionnaire as soon as is reasonably practicable to help identify and manage stressors.

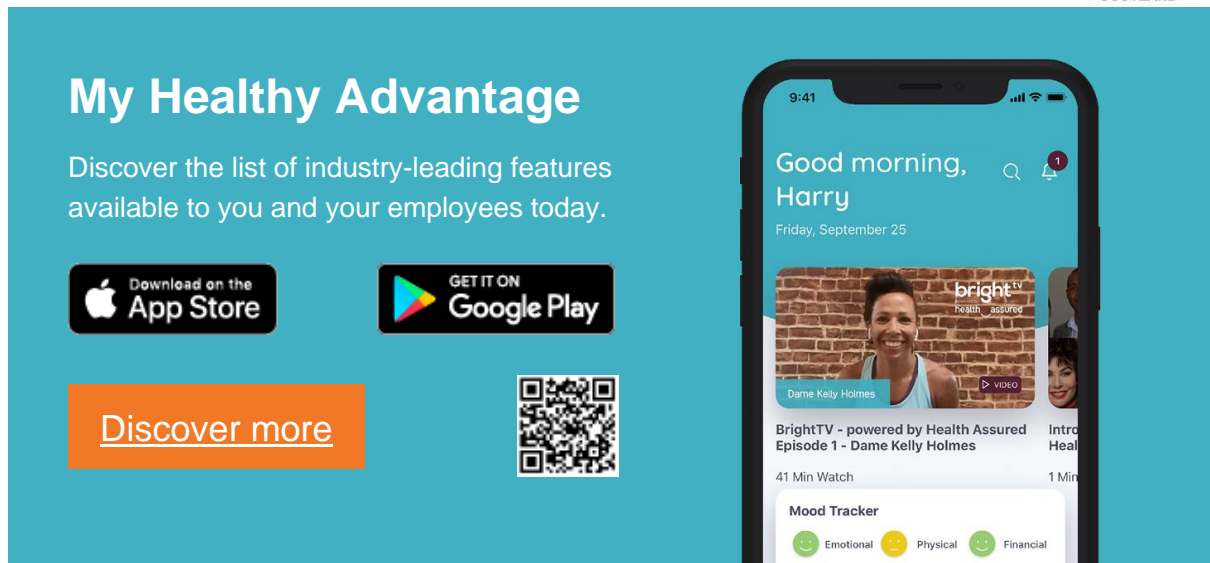
Managers must ensure staff use their annual leave entitlement and are encouraged to lead an active lifestyle.

Managers should ensure all staff are made aware of the organisation's employee assistance programme through Health Assured. Details of which are below:

Health Assured - We'd like to help you make the most of our services - especially our comprehensive ***My Healthy Advantage*** smartphone app. The health and wellbeing app provides an enhanced set of wellbeing tools and engaging features. The features are designed to improve the user's mental and physical health by using personal metrics to set goals and measure achievements.

Our app will also give you access to **BrightTV** - an exclusive series featuring well-known personalities sharing their personal experiences with mental health.

Including **Dame Kelly Holmes, Ruby Wax OBE, Andy Reid MBE, Sally Gunnell OBE, Gemma Oaten** and **Carrie & Clarke Carlisle**.



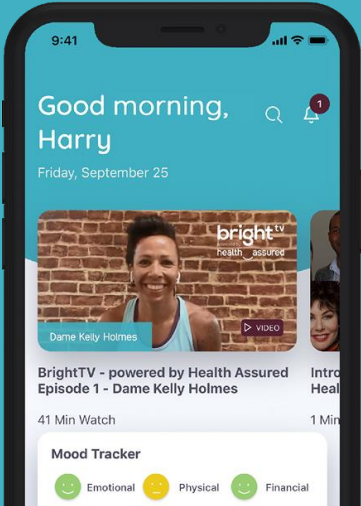

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Discover the list of industry-leading features available to you and your employees today.

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The smartphone screen shows a personalized greeting: "Good morning, Harry" for Friday, September 25. It features a video player for "BrightTV - powered by Health Assured Episode 1 - Dame Kelly Holmes" with a "41 Min Watch" indicator. Below the video is a "Mood Tracker" section with three categories: Emotional (green smiley), Physical (yellow smiley), and Financial (green smiley).

To access our **My Healthy Advantage** app you will need your employer code - share this code with your employees, along with the "How to download" guide, so that they can register.

**Employer code:** MHA211456

#### **Organisation Responsibilities**

To ensure fair, equal, reasonable and consistent treatment of all staff regarding any aspect of the implementation of this policy.

To ensure all those with line management responsibility are reasonably trained in the practical application of this policy.

To regularly review and update this policy in line with legislation and best practice.

#### **4. Health & Safety Executive Management Standards**

The HSE introduced Stress Management Standards which address six key areas:

- Demands – workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- Control – how much say staff have in the way they do their work.
- Support – encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- Relationships – promotion of positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- Role – ensuring staff understand their role and the organisation ensures there are not any conflicting roles.

- Change – how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated throughout the organisation.

## **5. Supporting Excessive Stress**

The steps staff and managers should actively participate in when excessive stress is identified are:-

- The manager becomes aware staff are experiencing stress by either the manager observing changes in behaviour such as mood, attitude, performance, attendance, diet, exercise etc or staff speaking to the manager.
- The manager should arrange to meet with the staff member as soon as possible to discuss their concerns and situation including any personal circumstances they are willing to disclose which may be adversely affecting them.
- The manager will give the staff member a stress questionnaire to complete and return to the line manager.
- A second meeting will then be arranged to discuss the questionnaire, identify ways of managing any stressors identified.
- At the end of the meeting, an action plan will be completed to summarise discussions and what actions will be taken by the organisation, line manager and staff.
- If the staff member is on sick leave as a result of the stress, the absence will be managed in line with Absence Management Policy.

## **6. External Support**

### **Occupational Health**

Staff or their manager may consider input from an Occupational Health Professional as beneficial. The line manager can make a referral to OH for an assessment to take place, following the assessment, staff and their manager will meet to discuss the report and consider what, if any, reasonable adjustments could be considered in the short or long term to support mental wellbeing and reduce the impact of stress.

### **Counselling Service**

Staff or their manager may consider input from a Counselling Professional as beneficial. Staff can refer themselves to counselling services via their GP or their line manager can provide information about any local or employee counselling services.

## **7. Data Protection Act 2018**

The organisation will treat all personal data in line with obligations under the current data protection regulations.