

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY ON STRESS

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is committed to identifying and reducing any levels of harmful stress experienced by its employees at work. In introducing such a policy the Council:-
- (a) acknowledges its responsibilities under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), including the recognition that under the legislation managers have a duty of care to employees for both their physical and mental well-being, and
 - (b) commits itself to helping its employees and their managers identify and deal with harmful levels of stress, whether or not employees are in or off work.
- 1.2 Evidence of stress manifests itself in a number of ways and the introduction of a programme to alleviate stress will bring benefits to both the Council and the employee.
- 1.3 This policy has been endorsed by the joint trade unions that represent employees within the Council and is put forward as a joint initiative.
- 1.4 Counselling within this policy will be conducted by an independent Professional Counselling Service.

2.0 Eligibility

- 2.1 The provisions of this policy are open to all employees.

3.0 Confidentiality

- 3.1 The service will be highly confidential. Any information that is required to be fed back to the Council will be subject to the client's consent. Such communications will be directed to the Personnel Manager (Advice & Consultancy) only who will consider the most appropriate response.
- 3.2 Where the professional Counsellor feels that there is a serious risk to the health, safety and/or welfare of the employee and/or another, the Counsellor may breach confidentiality subject to compliance with the United Kingdom Council of Nursing and Midwifery Code of Conduct. Breach of confidentiality will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and will always be taken with the regard to the best interests of the client.
- 3.3 Reference to serious risk in this policy is defined to mean physical and/or mental harm to an employee themselves, a client, a colleague or a member of the public
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4.0 **Helpline**

4.1.1 A free helpline is provided to all employees who feel they are in need of urgent counselling. A telephone number will be made freely available to employees for this purpose.

4.2 **Publications**

4.2.1 All employees will be provided with a booklet on Stress Management.

4.2.2 A supply of resources, such as books and videos will be kept in each Directorate Personnel Unit for reference by employees. Any requests to use these resources will be treated on a confidential basis.

4.3 **Stress Awareness Workshops**

4.3.1 The Council will periodically run Workshops on both Stress Awareness and the Management of Stress. These Workshops will cover the symptoms of stress, how to recognise stress in yourself and others and relaxation techniques which employees can practice on their own. Nominations for these Workshops will come from individual requests.

4.3.2 All information divulged during the course of the workshop will be treated in the utmost confidence.

4.3.3 If it is felt there is a need to refer an individual to expert help, this will be done by the qualified trainer on a one to one basis.

4.4 **Trauma and Incident Debriefing**

4.4.1 An employee involved in an unpleasant/distressing incident in the course of their work will be encouraged to meet with a professional Counsellor who will conduct a debriefing exercise. This may be on either a group or individual basis.

4.4.2 Any counselling that is carried out under 4.4 or 4.5 will be offered at a venue suitable to the employee and is at the individual's own choice.

4.5 **Counselling**

4.5.1 Any employee who feels they have a stress related problem or who have experienced a personal trauma, may avail themselves of the services of the counselling package provided under this policy.

4.6 **Relaxation Techniques**

4.6.1 Periodically the Council will invite experts in relaxation techniques into the offices to demonstrate their expertise to staff.

4.6.2 Publicising of the events will be carried out and no formal nominations taken. Employees who wish to attend, may do so during a lunchtime convenient to themselves.

5.0 Sickness Absence Procedure

- 5.1 The provisions of the Council's Sickness and Absence procedure will apply to all forms of illness including stress related illnesses.
- 5.2 Where stress related problems are identified, the Head of Service/Headteacher should agree a course of action with the employee to alleviate these problems. This may include referral to the Counselling Service or the Council's Occupational Health Adviser.
- 5.3 It is the responsibility of the Head of Service/Headteacher to make the employee aware of the facilities that are available under the provisions of this policy.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Council in producing this policy has stated its intention to fulfill its responsibilities in respect of its employees' Health and Safety but also stated its intention to be a good employer.
- 6.2 All the above remedies which are in place are open to all employees of Caerphilly County Borough Council.
- 6.3 It is hoped that any employee who feels that they are suffering from stress or a stress related ailment will avail themselves of these facilities as all requests/referrals will be treated in the utmost confidence.

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