



Stress Management Policy

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CORPORATE FIT	
Internal Management Plan	✓
Risk Register	✓
Business Plan	✓
Regulatory Standards	✓
Equalities Strategy	✓
Legislation	✓



On request, the Association will provide translations of all our documents, policies and procedures in various languages and other formats such as computer disc, tape, large print, Braille etc. and these can be obtained by contacting the Association's offices.

1. Introduction

Tollcross Housing Association is committed to reducing and where possible eliminating stress for its employees. Although stress in itself is not an illness, it can be a contributory factor in many conditions and can cause both physical and mental illnesses. Stress on its own can also result in poor mental health of employees even if the effects are not severe enough to result in a medical diagnosis. Tollcross Housing Association recognises the need to promote a culture of good mental and physical health in its duty of care under the requirement of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

2. Background

Stress in the workplace is not new. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) introduced Stress Management Standards a number of years ago and implemented tools to accompany them which have developed over the years.

The management standards cover six key areas :

- Demands
- Support
- Change
- Control
- Role
- Relationships

Full descriptions of the standards and typical behaviours which can be a sign of stress are available from the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk.

It is important to distinguish the difference between stress and pressure. In most work situations some pressure is healthy, but, stress is when a person experiences too much pressure and the effect of the pressure becomes negative.

3. Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote a culture of mental and physical wellbeing
- Increase awareness of stress
- Provide managers with a clear process to use should an employee report that they are suffering from stress
- Provide details of the proactive measures Tollcross Housing Association will implement to help reduce and, where possible, eliminate stress and its causes.

4. Legal Framework

Although there is no specific legislation on stress the following are relevant through case law.

- ***Health & Safety at Work Act 1974***

Under section 2 (1), employers have a duty to 'ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare at work of all...employees'

- ***Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999***

Requires that employers make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the H&S of its employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work and this includes stress.

5. Definitions

The following are definitions which will be applied in the context of this policy:

- **Stress**: the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them
- **Proactive measures** : aims to prevent the harm caused by stress by taking action before it occurs
- **Reactive measures** : actions which will respond to any stress related situation to minimise harm once it has occurred and assist in preventing it occurring again.

6. Confidentiality

Tollcross Housing Association will ensure that employees experiencing stress are dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

The Association will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Data Protection policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Tollcross Housing Association's employee transparency statement.

7. Equalities

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out when reviewing this policy. In line with good practice the completed EIA will be published alongside the Stress Management Policy.

Where there is a need for follow-up action, the tasks and timeframe for achieving them shall be noted in the Equality and Human Rights Action Plan to ensure they are addressed.

We do not see this policy as having any direct impact upon the protected characteristics contained within the Equality Act 2010.

8. Line Manager Responsibilities

Line Managers play a key role in managing stress within the workplace. It is vital to the success of this Stress Policy that Managers have a thorough understanding of what stress is, what the causes are and what to be aware of to help identify early signs.

Line Manager's responsibilities include:

- Attending stress awareness training
- To be aware of the signs of stress and intervene where necessary
- Promote the organisations culture of a physically and mentally healthy organisation
- To manage staff effectively to minimise them experiencing stress
- Where issues of stress arise, intervene as early as possible
- To ensure that a stress risk assessment is conducted with their staff
- Ensure staff contribute to the organisation's stress questionnaires
- To take steps to help employees maintain a state of good mental health e.g. encourage rest breaks, and holidays.

9. Employee Responsibilities

- To raise any concerns regarding stress at the earliest opportunity
- To participate in Tollcross Housing Association's measures to assist in reducing or eliminating stress
- To be aware of the HSE Risk Management standards and the signs of stress
- To raise any concerns they may have for their colleagues in regards to stress with a Manager.

10. Managing Stress

- **Proactive Measures**
To support the organisation's commitment in reducing the risk of stress occurring, Tollcross Housing Association will ensure that the following initiatives will be implemented and adopted.
- **Managers training**
Tollcross Housing Association will ensure that all line managers attend stress awareness training and subsequent refreshers at appropriate intervals.
- **Employee Questionnaires**

Tollcross Housing Association Stress Management Policy

Tollcross Housing Association will commit to conducting a stress questionnaire among staff on a periodic basis to help inform the team/department risk assessment. This will assist in identifying any 'at risk' areas within the organisation.

- **Analysing Information**

Commitment will be given that Tollcross Housing Association will review appropriate data e.g. absence, employee concerns, employee questionnaires to identify areas where stress is or could be a risk.

- **Risk Assessments**

Stress risk assessments will be conducted on a periodic basis. Managers will coordinate these within their team/department and provide feedback via the action plan to the Corporate Services Director. Management Committee will be given a report on the findings, whilst maintaining confidentiality, and providing a global action plan.

- **Promoting the Wellbeing of Employees**

Tollcross Housing Association is committed to facilitating a culture of promoting physical and mental health in the following ways:

- ⇒ Provide stress awareness sessions for staff.
- ⇒ Encourage an 'open door' policy for discussing issues with senior staff.
- ⇒ Manage staff holiday entitlement in order that leave is taken throughout the year at reasonable intervals.
- ⇒ Ensure that staff are not working excessive hours on a regular and prolonged basis.

- **Reactive Measures**

Stress is a very individualised condition and, as a result, it is unfortunate that even with the above measures being put in place some employees may nonetheless find themselves experiencing a stressful period in their lives. This may be caused by work or personal circumstances, or a combination of both.

- **Managing Individual Stress Concerns**

The following details the process that will be used by Tollcross Housing Association should an employee raise concerns of stress:

- ⇒ Manager becomes aware that an employee is experiencing stress.
- ⇒ The manager should arrange to meet with the staff member within 3 days to discuss the issues.

Tollcross Housing Association Stress Management Policy

- ⇒ The line manager will give the employee a stress questionnaire to complete (Appendix 1).
- ⇒ The employee completes the questionnaire and returns this to the line manager.
- ⇒ The line manager completes any appropriate sections.
- ⇒ A second meeting is arranged to discuss the questionnaire, identify ways of managing the issues, and any support or interim arrangements that may assist the employee's recovery.
- ⇒ If appropriate the employee may be referred to an occupational health specialist, counselling or any other appropriate service.
- ⇒ At the conclusion of the meeting an action plan will be completed to summarise discussions and what actions will be taken by the organisation, line manager and employee.
- ⇒ If the employee is absent as a result of stress the absence will continue to be managed in line with Tollcross Housing Association's absence management procedures, as well as providing the employee with the questionnaire to complete.

NB: If the employee's line manager is a contributing factor to the employee's stress, another appropriate manager e.g. a manager one level above will conduct the meetings.

If it is identified that the stress is being caused by another employee then appropriate investigations may be required in line with Tollcross Housing Association's Grievance Policy.

If through discussions with an employee a line manager becomes aware of a stress risk they will raise this in the appropriate way to ensure it is addressed at an organisational level. This will be done while maintaining the employee's confidentiality.

- **Occupational Health**

If deemed appropriate an employee may be referred to an occupational health specialist to assist in the absence management and help identify any actions that could be taken to assist in the employee's recovery.

- **Counselling Service**

All employees have access to the counselling services. The details of this are displayed on the staff notice boards or can be sought from the employee's line manager.

11. Policy Review

Whilst the policy shall be reviewed every 3 years or earlier as required by the Management Committee, Staff shall periodically complete a Stress Management Risk Assessment Questionnaire and the Action Plan shall be updated to reflect outcomes.

12. Additional Sources of Information

- Healthy Working Lives
[Home - Healthy Working Lives](#)
- HSE
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/>
- MIND
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/workplace-mental-health/work-and-stress/>

Tollcross Housing Association
Stress Management Policy

SAMPLE STRESS AWARENESS QUESTIONNAIRE

Cooper's Life Stress Inventory (© Professor C. Cooper, 1988)

Cooper's Life Stress Inventory can help measure life change and susceptibility to stress related illness. Place an (X) in the 'Yes' column for each event which has taken place in the last two years. Then circle a number on the scale which describes how upsetting the event was to you, e.g. 10 for the death of a husband or wife.

Event	Yes	Scale
Bought house		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sold house		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Moved house		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Major house renovation		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Separation from loved one		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
End of relationship		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Got engaged		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Got married		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Marital problem		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Awaiting divorce		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Divorce		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Child started school/nursery		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increased care for elderly or ill person		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Problems with relatives		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Problems with friends/neighbours		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Pet-related problems		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Work-related problems		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Change in nature of work		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Threat of redundancy		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Changed job		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Made redundant		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Unemployed		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Retired		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increased or new bank loan/mortgage		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Financial difficulty		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Insurance problem		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Legal problem		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Emotional or physical illness of close family or relative		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Serious illness of close family or relative requiring hospitalisation		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Surgical operation experienced by family member or relative		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Death of a spouse		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Death of family member or relative		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Death of a close friend		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Emotional or physical illness of yourself		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Serious illness requiring your own hospitalisation		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Surgical operation on yourself		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Pregnancy		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Birth of a baby		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Birth of a grandchild		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Family member left home		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Difficult relationship with children		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Difficult relationship with parents		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Suffering from Covid related issues (long-covid)		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Score **Low Stress** **High Stress**
 1 50 100

Appendix 1 - Individual Employee Stress Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine if you are feeling stressed; to identify what factors may be contributing to you feeling stressed, and for you to think about and detail what you feel would help you manage your current situation.

You have been given this questionnaire to complete as either :

- a) It has been highlighted to your line manager that you are or may be feeling stressed – it is not deemed necessary for the outcome of this individual assessment and action plan to be presented to the Management Committee. If this is the case, once you have completed the form, you should return it to your line manager and a meeting will be arranged to go over the form and if necessary, prepare an action plan. If, due to the circumstances it would be better to discuss your current situation with an alternative manager, this can be arranged. **OR**
- b) We are conducting an organisation wide or departmental assessment – Management Committee will receive a report outlining the issues raised and actions agreed within the action plan (this will maintain confidentiality). If this is the case, once you have completed the form, you should place your completed form in an envelope and leave in the tray specified for this purpose.

Question	If yes, please provide brief details
Do different people at work demand that you complete various tasks which are hard to achieve?	
Do you feel you must work very intensively or fast most of the time?	
Do you feel you must neglect some tasks as you have too much to do?	
Do you feel that you are unable to take breaks due to your workload?	
Do you feel pressured to work long hours?	

Question	If yes, please provide brief details
Do you feel you can decide when to take a break from your work?	
Do you feel you have a say in the pace/speed that you work?	
Do you feel you have any choice over how you do your work?	
Do you feel you have any choice in what work you do on a day-to-day basis?	
Do you feel that your work time is flexible?	
Do you feel your manager gives you enough feedback on the work you do?	
Do you feel you can rely on your manager to assist you with a work problem?	
Do you feel you can talk to your manager about something that may upset, annoy or distress you at work or outside of work?	
Do you feel that your manager encourages you at work?	
Do you feel you get the help and support from your colleagues that you need?	

Question	If yes, please provide brief details
Do you feel you are respected by your work colleagues?	
Do you feel that you get on well with your colleagues?	
Are you clear about what your duties and responsibilities are at work?	
Are you clear about the goals and objectives for your team?	
Do you understand how your work fits into the overall aims of your organisation?	
Do you feel you are consulted about changes within your workplace?	
When changes are made in work, do you feel that they are clearly explained as to how they would work in practice?	
Do you feel that there any other factors in work that may be contributing to the way you are feeling just now?	
Do you feel that there is anything outside of work that maybe contributing to the way you are feeling just now?	

Tollcross Housing Association

Stress Management Policy

Stressors

Please list the factors that you feel are contributing to you feeling stressed, once you have done this, please rank them from 1-10 with 10 having the biggest impact on you and 1 the least. The factors detailed may be within or out with the workplace.

Stressor	Stress Factor Rating (1-10)
Workplace factors – e.g. Workload/working relationships/work/life balance	
External factors – e.g. Home life/family/financial	

Tollcross Housing Association
Stress Management Policy

Moving Forward

Taking each stressor in turn please complete the below section prior to the meeting. Section 3 & 4 will be completed at the meeting with your line manager.

Stressor 1 – Outline the background

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How do you see the situation being resolved

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Stressor 2 – Outline the background

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How do you see the situation being resolved

Stressor 3 – Outline the background

How do you see the situation being resolved

Tollcross Housing Association
Stress Management Policy

This section below will be completed with your line manager at the meeting

Section 3 - Agreed Actions

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Section 4 – Review Date

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Employee signature

Date

Line manager's signature

Date