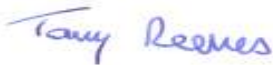


Bradford Council Stress Policy

The HSE have calculated that stress costs the UK economy some £3.7bn each year and accounts for 13 million lost working days.

This means that public money, which should be used to improve the quality of life for our citizens, is having to be used to pay for the cost of stress in the workplace.

I fully support this policy as a part of improving our performance as a Council and as an employer.



Tony Reeves
Chief Executive

Stress Policy

Bradford Metropolitan District Council places a high value on providing a supportive working environment and on maintaining the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work. It recognises that their wellbeing is important to the Council's performance and service delivery. The Council therefore, takes positive measures to encourage employees to be in the best health that they can be, both physically and mentally. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

Primarily this policy is concerned with stress problems arising from the working environment, but we recognise that an employee's personal life may also lead to stress. The Council is committed to implementing a Stress Policy for all employees in order to enable individuals to cope successfully with the demands and pressures in their lives, whatever the cause of their stress, by providing appropriate support to employees.

For the purpose of this policy, health and wellbeing is taken to include the promotion of positive mental health of all staff, and the prevention and management of mental health problems such as stress, anxiety and depression.

Definition of stress

Stress is experienced when people cannot cope with the pressures and demands placed upon them. All work has its pressures and people vary in their capacity to cope with different types of pressure. Some levels of pressure, even when high, can be motivating and challenging. Pressures that can be responded to effectively are likely to lead to job satisfaction. However, pressures at a level where an individual cannot cope, or even too little pressure or challenge, are likely to result in stress.

The Council will deliver this policy through:

1. Improving the organisational environment through effective and sensitive management; developing working practices and procedures that reduce the factors which may lead to stress in the workplace
2. Promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees, including the use of risk assessments to identify and reduce hazards impacting on the health of the workforce.
3. The use of Health and Wellbeing Steering Groups to monitor and identify areas of the Council to implement interventions to prevent or reduce health problems.
4. Providing consistent, equitable and effective procedures to prevent and manage workplace health and well-being problems.
5. Providing opportunities for employees to maintain and promote their health and well-being.

This policy should be seen as overarching other policies that are in place and can be considered as part of the Council's positive approach to health and wellbeing.

These include:

- Equal rights policy
- Harassment policy
- Health and safety policy
- Family friendly policies
- Worklife balance

Principles

Ensuring that all employees who experience health problems are treated fairly, sensitively, with respect and in accordance with the Council's equal opportunities policy.

The Council will aim to promote a positive and preventative rather than punitive approach

The Council will consult with Trade Union Representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of ill health, stress and mental health problems.

Open communication will be encouraged and promoted.

The Council will provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.

Shared Responsibility

- Progress can only be achieved through recognising that the promotion of positive health is a shared responsibility.
- Bradford Council is a major employer and has a responsibility to ensure the continual development of a safe and healthy work environment and to create the conditions that enable staff to maintain and improve their health.
- Management in the Council has a responsibility to ensure that the promotion of the health of staff becomes a key part of the organisations culture and that this is reflected in day-today work practices.
- Staff have a responsibility in promoting their own health, developing an awareness of the factors that contribute to ill health and participating fully in the efforts to raise health standards.

Responsibilities

Senior Managers and elected members are expected to:

- Demonstrate their commitment and support to this policy by ensuring that the principles and approaches to managing health and wellbeing are implemented.
- Reflect the policy's principles and approaches within their own management practice.
- Ensure that resources are available so that stress-reducing strategies can be implemented.

Line managers are expected to:

- Reflect the policy's principles and approaches within their own management practice.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure that staff are provided with clear and realistic objectives and that performance is managed effectively and fairly.
- Conduct and implement recommendations of risk assessments/health needs analysis within their areas and provide modification of work where it is known employees are stressed.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within the workplace.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking. Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Follow the Council's procedures and use appropriate support where necessary.

Employees are expected to:

- Support the Council's Health and Wellbeing policy and initiatives.
- Raise issues of concern with your line manager, Safety Representative or Health and Wellbeing Service.
- To seek to be in the best health they can be.

Support

In order to support this policy, the following Human Resources services are available to managers and employees.

- Employee Health and Well-being Service: to provide advice and guidance on health and wellbeing issues and what steps the Council and/or employee can take.
- Support Services: to provide support and guidance to managers and employees in dealing with stress and in the use of the Council's related policies and procedures.
- Occupational Safety: to provide support and guidance on the risk assessment process and what steps can be taken to minimise risks.
- Mediation Service: to assist managers and employees to resolve conflict at work.