



## **SHEPTON MALLET TOWN COUNCIL**

### **STRESS AT WORK POLICY**

**Policy Reference Number: 1910**

**AUTHOR: Town Clerk**

**RESPONSIBILITY: Policy and Resources Committee**

**GRADE: Three – Low**

**DATE ADOPTED: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**REVIEW DATE: Every 3 years - 2022**

**AMENDMENTS**

## 1.0 **Introduction**

1.1 Shepton Mallet Town Council recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. Whilst the emphasis is mainly concerned with causes of stress in the workplace, it is recognised that it is difficult to separate personal and work-related problems as each will tend to impact on the other. There will be no discrimination against employees suffering from stress. The impact of stress and stress related illnesses are also factors to be considered under other relevant Council policies.

## 2.0 **Scope of the Policy**

2.1 The policy applies to all employees of Shepton Mallet Town Council (herein referred to as "the Council"), whether they are on full time, part-time, fixed term or permanent contracts of employment.

## 3.0 **Review Statement**

3.1 This policy has been prepared considering prevailing legislation and recognised good practice. New legislation requirements or changes in current legislation may necessitate the review of this policy document. The Council will continue to review and amend all / part of this policy on a regular basis. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that the copy of the policy being referred to is the most up-to-date version.

## 4.0 **Equality**

4.1 In putting the strategy into practice, no aspect of the strategy will discriminate on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, religion, politics, marital status, disability, politics, caste and/or union membership or any other grounds likely to place any particular employee at a disadvantage.

## 5.0 **Definition of Stress**

5.1 The Health and Safety Executive define stress as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

5.2 The Health and Safety Executive have produced Management Standards that look at the six main causes of stress or 'stressors' at work that, if not properly managed, can lead to work-related stress.

5.3 These are:

1. Demands made on employees
2. Control employees have over their work
3. Support employees receive from their managers and colleagues
4. Role clarity of an employee within the organisation
5. The nature of relationships at work
6. The way change is managed

## 6.0 **Key Principles**

6.1 The Council will take all reasonable steps to reduce health and safety risks from stress in the workplace to as low a level as reasonably practicable.

6.2 The Council will:

- Identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate or control the risk from stress.
- Consult with recognised trade unions on proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress.
- Provide stress awareness training for all employees and specific training for managers in good management practices.
- Provide appropriate and confidential counselling for employees affected by stress.
- Provide adequate resources to enable staff to implement the agreed stress management strategy.
- Any reports of stress at work will be investigated and individuals will be provided with appropriate support.
- Ensure that individuals' personal data, including information about their mental health, collected when managing stress is handled in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy.

## 7.0 **Responsibilities**

### 7.1 **Town Clerk**

- Conduct risk assessments and implement recommendations for activities within their jurisdiction
- Conduct specific risk assessments on employees who have been medically diagnosed as suffering from work related stress. The rehabilitation of the employee and the effectiveness of the risk assessment to be appropriately reviewed
- Ensure job descriptions are accurate and up to date
- Ensure that organisational and procedural change is managed and communicated
- Consider the demand placed on the team, the way the job is designed, levels of training and the possible benefits of flexible working arrangements
- Review their management style and its impact on the people they manage
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of control measures to reduce stress
- Inform the organisation of any developments or good practices in the field of stress at work
- Monitor the effect of change on individual roles
- Ensure workloads and working hours are regularly reviewed
- Attend training as requested in good management practices and health and safety
- Develop skills to minimise stress in the workplace and to take appropriate actions should it arise
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to people experiencing stress outside of work, e.g. bereavement, separation, etc.

## 7.2 **Employees**

- Attend training sessions and become aware of stress factors
- Follow policies and procedures designed to minimise stressful situations
- Share concerns with your Town Clerk
- Request or be encouraged to accept opportunities for counselling when offered or recommended, or seek a General Practitioners advice where appropriate
- Assist staff to develop risk assessments, receive a copy and cooperate with its implementation
- Support colleagues who are experiencing stressful circumstances

## 8.0 **Further Information**

8.1 For further information or clarification on any part of this policy, please contact your line manager.