



STRESS STEERING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

December 2017

1. Overview and Purpose

1.1 The Council recognises that stress and other mental health concerns can be as a result of both internal and external triggers but that either can lead to, or exacerbate, a work-related problem. The Council is committed to promoting positive mental health and protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees by:

- Reducing problems by minimising, with a view to eliminating, work-related stressors and mental ill health triggers at source, as far as reasonably practicable;
- Managing work-related stress effectively within the Council;
- Minimising the effects of work-related stress and mental ill health; and
- Supporting employees to maintain good mental health.

1.2 The purpose of the Stress Steering Group (hereinafter referred to as the “Steering Group”) is to oversee and facilitate the implementation of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Management Standards, which are:

- **Demands** – includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the working environment;
- **Control** – how much say the employee has in the way they perform their work;
- **Support** – includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the Council, line management and colleagues;
- **Relationships** – includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour;
- **Role** – to determine that employees understand their role within the Council and that the Council ensures that they do not have conflicting roles; and
- **Change** – how change (both large and small) is managed and communicated in the Council.

2. Composition of the Steering Group

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2.1 Membership of the Steering Group will be as follows:

- Senior management representatives (comprising 2 Council senior management representatives, 1 representative from Primary schools and 1 representative from Secondary schools and 1 Special schools representative.)
- Line management representatives (comprising 1 line management representative from the Council and 1 line management representative from schools)
- The Professional Lead for HR and Development
- 1 Health and Safety Adviser
- 1 Trade union representative (Teaching)
- 1 Trade union representative (Corporate / School Support Staff)
- 1 County Councillor from the Employment and Appeals Committee

3. Key roles

3.1 There are 2 essential roles to fulfil within the steering group:

- The Project Champion will represent the Steering Group at Cabinet (“Board”) level, update the Management Team and Cabinet on progress and ensure the Steering Group is adequately resourced; and
- The Day-to-day Champion will assume the role of project manager, organising and facilitating meetings, documenting decisions to provide an audit trail and keeping the project on schedule and on budget.

4. Responsibilities of the Steering Group

- 4.1 This steering group is not solely an advisory or consultative group but a working group, which will produce actions aimed at identifying triggers and minimising the effects of work-related stress and other mental health issues, by conducting an appropriate Management Standards risk assessment.

5. Key Activities of the Steering Group

- 5.1 *Project naming* - it is vital that the Steering Group has buy-in from all employees in the Council, so the Steering Group should select a name that accurately reflects the structure and culture of the Council.

- 5.2 *Securing resources* – it is essential that the Steering Group members are fully briefed in the Management Standards approach so that they are able to drive the agenda. Members of the Steering Group must have the capacity and willingness to make a contribution.
- 5.3 *Establishing a project plan* – project preparation is vital to the successful implementation of the initiative. It ensures that senior managers are committed to acting upon the results of the Management Standards risk assessment. The project plan will assist in the Steering Group in:
- Identifying whose input is needed and when resources can be allocated;
 - Enabling managers to release time for their employees to attend focus groups or complete surveys;
 - Maintaining the momentum of the project;
 - Understanding the scale of stress in the Council;
 - Managing senior management and employee expectations as to outcomes;
 - Identifying other initiatives that can be linked to the project
- 5.4 *Progress* – the Steering Group will monitor and approve the progress of the project and any actions arising from the risk assessment.

6. Communication

- 6.1 The Steering Group members shall work together to develop an effective communication strategy, which will be applied through the life of the Group.
- 6.2 Effective communication will be two-way and should employ multiple communication channels with feedback being given to employees at all stages. Information can be provided in a number of ways, such as:
- Printed: memos, articles in the staff magazine *Cyswllt:Connect*, notices, etc.
 - Electronic: e-mails, bulletin boards, intranet home page articles, etc.
 - Active and participatory exercises, including training, drop-in sessions, meetings, focus groups and discussions.
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