



Stress in the Workplace Policy 2020/21

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1. Statement of Policy

- 1.1 The policy sets out the NMITE's aim and objectives for the management of health and wellbeing in relation to stress at work.
- 1.2 NMITE is committed to promoting a healthy and supportive working environment. To this end, NMITE believes that its employees are its most important asset and their wellbeing is essential to effective work performance.
- 1.3 Whilst NMITE has no control over external or personal factors, it is committed, where possible, to manage risks which are within its control. It is also committed to develop procedures, employee development measures and support systems to assist all employees understand and recognise the nature a cause of stress and to take positive steps to manage stress effectively. It is essential that NMITE encourages employees to achieve a good work life balance in order to enhance their wellbeing.

2. Definition of Stress and its effects

- 2.1 Stress may be defined as the adverse reaction people have to pressure or other types of demand placed on them. What triggers stress and the capacity to deal with stress varies from person to person. Individuals react in different ways to similar situations. Work related stress occurs where people perceive they cannot cope with what is being asked of them at work. No one is immune to work related stress.
- 2.2 Stress is not an illness, but, if experienced for a prolonged period, can result in psychological issues, such as anxiety, depression or physical symptoms such as headaches and, if particularly severe, it is thought to contribute to physical illnesses such as high blood pressure or heart disease and susceptibility to frequent minor problems. Developing coping strategies such as taking exercise and finding ways of relaxing can help combat the effects of stress. Regrettably, people experiencing stress often adopt negative coping strategies such as



drinking too much alcohol and caffeine, skipping meals and smoking, of which can compound the problem.

- 2.3 At an organisational level, stress can result in deterioration of morale, performance and staff turnover. Sickness absence due to stress can cause a domino effect where increased workload due to sickness absence of a colleague can in turn lead to increased workload pressures and stress in other members of the team.

3. Responsibilities of all Employees

Employees have a responsibility to take reasonably practical steps to minimise their own stress levels and those of their fellow colleagues who may be affected by their acts or omissions. They also have a legal responsibility to comply with the Health & Safety at Work legislation and other statutory regulations to take reasonable care of their health and safety and that of other persons with whom they work. Employees should, therefore, draw to the attention of the SLT or HR Department any concerns about work related stress which might present a health hazard to themselves or other persons.

4. Responsibilities of Managers

To enable Managers to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of instances of excessive and sustained work-related stress which are brought to their attention, they will receive information about the basic physical and psychological symptoms of stress (as referred to in [A Guidance for Managers – Stress at Work](#)) to take appropriate and reasonable action to avert this. The Manager is neither expected nor presumed to have specialist knowledge in this area and should seek assistance accordingly from the HR Department.

5. What to do if you believe you may be experiencing Work Related Stress

There is a self-help leaflet available, offering several coping mechanisms for stress. However, if none of these measures are effective or appropriate in your situation, then the following steps should be taken:

- If you notice symptoms of stress in yourself or experience health issues which affect your work, you should discuss them with your Manager in the first instance.
- If you decide this is not appropriate, or you feel that the matter requires additional professional guidance, you should contact the HR Department who may, depending upon circumstances, suggest that you are assessed by your GP.
- NMITE may contact your GP, with your permission, to seek support regarding future management.



- If information is required from your GP, you have a right to view and comment on the report prior to it being sent to the HR Department.
- The release of medical information from your GP requires your specific consent in accordance with the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988.