



# Stress at Work Policy



*Learn for Life*

# STRESS AT WORK

**Strategic Responsibility**

Principal

**Functional Lead**

Health and Safety

**Approval Authority**

Staffing Committee

**Status of this Document:**

Approved May 03

Reviewed May 2006

Reviewed June 2007

Reviewed January 2009

**Next Review:**

January 2010

This Policy sets out the aims, procedures and guidance for how the College seeks to minimise the incidence of stress at work, and supports those having stress-related problems.

## 1 POLICY STATEMENT

### 1.1 Aim

1.1.1 The College is committed to providing

- an environment for staff and students which minimises the incidence of excessive stress,
- staff with access to education on how to handle stress in relation to health, work performance, and to conduct.

### 1.2 Approach

1.2.1 The College seeks to ensure that:

- Excessive stress is eliminated from the work environment;
- Managers and staff follow safe and capable working practice in relation to stress at work;
- Education programmes on how to deal with stress are provided, covering every level of the organisation;
- Appropriate assistance is available to staff having a known/suspected stress-related problem.
- Staff experiencing stress-related problems, seek assistance at the earliest possible opportunity;

## 1.3 Staff Responsibilities

1.3.1 It is the responsibility of all staff and managers to:-

- Minimise the incidence of stress, by how they plan and deliver their work, and in how they relate to each other in the work place;
- Make sure they are fully aware of the requirements of this Policy, and also the relevant aspects of the Harassment policy;
- Keep themselves abreast of changes and revisions to the Policy;

## 1.4 Changes in the Law

1.4.1 The College will comply with relevant changes in the law as they occur, and thereafter will amend this policy statement, its associated procedures, and its operational guidance as soon as is practicable, notwithstanding any review date contained in this document.

# 2 CONTEXT

2.1.1 The College acknowledges that stress in the workplace can be caused by any combination of a number of quite diverse factors, such as:

- job design and lack of control of workload
- working environment
- relationships with others at work
- communication arrangements.

2.1.2 The College also recognises that there may be problems outside the workplace that will cause an individual member of staff to suffer from the negative effects of stress, and that these may affect an individual's health and performance within work. In this situation undue negative stress may occur as a result from both/either work-related, and non work-related, factors.

# 3 RESPONSIBILITIES

## 3.1 Staff Members

3.1.1 **General Standards of Conduct** Individual staff members are responsible for handling themselves at all times in ways that do not generate stress and anxiety on the part of other members of staff, or of students. They should refer to the Policies on Harassment and Staff Code of Conduct respectively, for additional guidance.

3.1.2 **Workload** Staff are responsible for the effective planning of their work, and for carrying out their duties in ways that stimulate them, but that do not lead to excessively stressful situations.

## 3.2 Line Management

- 3.2.1 **Harmonious Relations** As a central part of their leadership role, managers are responsible for encouraging harmonious relations between staff, and between staff and students. They should be continually taking the initiative to head off potential problems as early as possible, and as soon as a possibly difficult situation arises.
- 3.2.2 **Work Planning** Managers have important responsibilities for ensuring that the work programme that they agree with their staff are not excessive (albeit the programmes should be stretching and therefore, demanding), and that additional burdens, should these be necessary, are carefully integrated.
- 3.2.3 **Knowing What Stress is About** All managers should ensure that they know sufficient about stress to be able to make sure that they address the question of stress in how they handle their management responsibilities.
- 3.2.4 **Dealing with Stress** Where stress arises, or is suspected, managers are responsible for ensuring that appropriate action is taken to ameliorate the situation.

### 3.3 Senior Managers

- 3.3.1 In addition to their roles as line managers, set out above, senior managers are also responsible for maintaining a watching brief on how things are going generally for the managers and staff in their Departments; any suspected problems should lead to early intervention, to head off problems before they get out of hand;

## 4 PROCEDURES/REGULATIONS

- 4.1.1 The College:
- encourages a working environment where members of staff who feel they are suffering from the negative effects of stress can approach their managers in confidence, in order that necessary support mechanisms can be put in place.
  - encourages a culture where stress is not seen as a sign of weakness or incompetence
  - provides suitable training and guidance to line managers to enable them to undertake the necessary risk assessments in relation to stress in the workplace, and to arrange for implementation of effective control measures where appropriate
  - provides information for staff in general on the effects of stress at work
  - undertakes general health promotion activities within the workplace
- 4.1.2 Where members of staff are suffering from excessive stress, the College will provide the necessary mechanisms to promote a return to full health as quickly as possible. Members of staff are encouraged to refer themselves to any one of the following:
- line manager
  - senior manager

- human resources manager
- occupational health service\*
- the independent Employee Counselling Service (Freephone 0800 435768 between 8.30am - 4.30pm).

\* where appropriate

4.1.3 All referrals are to be dealt with in complete confidence. Members of staff will be offered any relevant counselling, help with stress reduction techniques, and a full appraisal of their work situation.

## 5 IMPLEMENTATION and REVIEW

### 5.1 Promulgation of New/Revised Policy

The full Policy documentation is available on the College's Intranet at [www.langside.ac.uk/staff/staffres](http://www.langside.ac.uk/staff/staffres). Any modification made to the Policy will be available on the Intranet, so this is the place to find the fully up-to-date version.

The Policy Handbook contains a hard copy version, but this is issued only periodically, and is not necessarily current, so staff should always check the Intranet before using the Policy. Hardcopy versions can also be obtained from Personnel upon request.

When the Policy is updated, all staff will be informed by e-mail to this effect. Managers having staff who do not have access to e-mail, should make appropriate arrangements to cover this shortfall.

### 5.2 Training and Briefing

5.2.1 Detailed knowledge of the Procedures is essential for their effective carrying out; improper application could have serious legal consequences for the College.

#### 5.2.2 All staff

5.2.3 Revisions to the Policy will be the subject of a team briefing by the Section Head, supported by Health and Safety if necessary. The emphasis will be on explaining what it means for the individual staff member, how they can access a copy of the Policy, and who they should contact for more information.

5.2.4 Appropriate explanation is to be given at induction for new staff.

### **5.2.5 Managers**

- 5.2.6 The SMT will be briefed by Health and Safety, and in turn, SMT members will brief their managers on the revisions and how they operate.
- 5.2.7 Briefing is to be provided for all managers at the appropriate points in their management development programmes.

### **5.3 New In-post Staff**

For staff taking on management responsibilities for the first time, the line manager will discuss this Policy and how it operates, with the new manager as a part of their induction into the new role.

### **5.4 Monitoring**

- 5.4.1 Quarterly, and annual, reports to the SMT and to the Staffing Committee are to be provided, relating to the incidence of stress. These data are to be analysed by sex, disability, and by ethnic origin.

### **5.5 Review**

- 5.5.1 The next scheduled review of this Policy will be carried out by Health and Safety, and is to be completed by May 06. However, the Policy will be adapted to meet changes in the law as soon as is reasonably practical.

## **6 OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE**

(This section is the place for information, advice, and guidance; unlike the procedures, this material is not mandatory, but is included to help achieve good practice in the implementation of the policy. In some cases, it may be sensible to have separate sections respectively for staff, management, and staff in the relevant function.)

# Learn for Life



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