St Bonaventure's Catholic Primary School

Stress Policy 2017

Arrangements for the Prevention and Management of Excessive Workplace Pressure which can Result in Stress

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1 CONTEXT 1

2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND POLICY 2

3 PURPOSE 2

4 INFORMATION ABOUT EXCESSIVE WORK RELATED PRESSURE 3

5 COMMUNICATIONS 4

6 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS (THE RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS) 4

7 PROACTIVE PRESSURE REDUCTION 5

8 REACTIVELY DEALING WITH EXCESSIVE PRESSURE 6

9 RETURN TO WORK 7

10 DEALING WITH TRAUMA 8

11 MONITORING AND REPORTING 8

APPENDIX 1 - The Management Standards 9

APPENDIX 2 - Potential Causes of Excessive Pressure 12

APPENDIX 3 - Symptoms and Effects of Excessive Pressure 13

APPENDIX 4 - Questions to Ask to Gain an Insight into Potential Excessive Pressure (Stress) in the Work place: 15

APPENDIX 5 - A guide to Advice and Support available to managers and employees internal and external to Bristol City Council 20

APPENDIX 6 - A few practical measures you can do yourself you can try to help reduce the effects of excessive pressure? 21

Medical opinion on Stress

Clinically stress can be sometimes seen as a difficult issue to deal with. There are divergent views as to what is appropriate – some health professionals regard stress as inevitable aspect of life and not a clinical condition warranting time off. The fact is, it could make people feel incapable of going about their normal day-to-day activities. There is little point in these circumstances to force a patient to work and thus potentially worsening their condition. So the main question is, will this condition warrant or benefit from a period off work? Patient motivation and attitudes differ markedly. This needs to be taken in account when discussing return to work options. Case data from occupational physicians and psychiatrists (HSE THOR [2] reporting scheme) show close agreement as to the main causes of work related stress. Work related stress is not necessarily to do with individual vulnerability or predisposition – in this respect it differs somewhat from common mental health problems. (Source: HSE Web site July 2010.)

1 CONTEXT

What is Work Related Stress?

1.1 **The Health and Safety Executive defines 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.*

1.2 Stress is not an illness it is a state. Stress is a natural human reaction to help us deal with the ups and downs of everyday life and is necessary to keep us alert and motivated. At times of pressure a chemical change takes place in the body to enable us to deal with urgent demands placed upon us. However, if pressure becomes excessive and prolonged, mental and physical illness may develop. Work is generally good for people if it is well designed, but it can also be a great source of pressure. Stress is a natural reaction to too much pressure.

1.3 The point at which levels of workplace pressure starts to become harmful varies from person to person depending on a person's life experiences, personality traits and other things taking place in their life at the time. ***The term "stress" in the context of this document means excessive pressure which is harmful.***

1.4 Known factors that are often at the root of harmful workplace pressure have been identified by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) after an extensive period of academic research, and consultation with various stakeholder groups including the use of the standards within a number of "pilot" organisations, this authority being one of them. The standards were subsequently produced, and, six statistically significant aspects of work which if inappropriately managed can contribute to excessive work related pressure, identified.

A Summary of the HSE Management Standards

Demands
Incudes issues like workload, work patterns, and the work environment.

Control
How much say the person has in the way they do their work.

Support
Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

Relationships
Incudes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

Role
Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.

Change
How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

NB: it is strongly recommended that you now read Appendix One for full details of the HSE Management Standards, or follow this link: http:www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/

2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND POLICY

2.1 St Bonaventure's is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees and recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. This policy "Arrangement" will apply to everyone in the school and managers are responsible for its implementation whilst the school is responsible for providing the necessary resources. It is acknowledged that educational establishments may achieve the same standards of care via alternative methods.

As an organisation, St Bonaventure's will:

(a) ensure an organisational commitment to managing work related pressure at Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) level. This commitment must be translated into departmental action plans via departmental senior management teams;

(b) demonstrate a commitment to identifying all workplace stressors via an agreed risk assessment process;

(c) ensure once stressors are identified, suitable control measures will be implemented to reduce any risks to an acceptable level (based upon the test of reasonableness and the nature of the business); this will include consideration in any significant organisational "change" processes;

(d) ensure that trade unions safety representatives and employees are fully engaged in the stress risk assessment process;

(e) ensure all managers/Headteachers are suitably informed and trained in the mechanism of undertaking a stress risk assessment;

(f) publish information on the school's website relating to arrangements for the management of excessive workplace pressure and risk assessment protocols;

(g) ensure all managers/Headteachers and employees are aware of the role of Bristol CC occupational health team, and how this service can be accessed; highlight the fact that a counselling service is available for assisting Headteachers in dealing with excessive work related pressure (and non-work related if there is a substantial impact upon the workplace);

(h) ensure the work related stress management policy is adequately funded;

(i) recognise that outside pressure has an impact upon employees whilst at work, and where possible these pressures will be considered in the stress risk assessment process; and

(j) there is an expectation on all employees to raise issues of concern firstly with their line manager or Headteacher (or safety advisor or trade union representative if the issue is with their manager); the employee should be willing to consider opportunities for counselling when recommended, or other medical interventions.

3 PURPOSE

3.1 Our aim is to promote good management practice so that we will be able to demonstrate compliance with the HSE Management Standards. **See Appendix One: http://www.hse.gov.uk/stressistandards/**.

3.2 To achieve compliance this arrangement aims to:

- improve understanding that excessive pressure can be harmful;
- establish a positive climate for addressing harmful levels of excessive pressure at work;
- provide managers, Headteachers and employees with a framework for action to recognise and reduce the development of harmful levels of excessive pressure which may exist within the work force; and
- provide a mechanism through which employees may seek support if they feel that they cannot cope, or that they are being put under undue pressure through their work. This could include bullying or harassment.

4 INFORMATION ABOUT EXCESSIVE WORK RELATED PRESSURE

4.1 It is important that all staff, Headteachers and managers are aware of the symptoms of excessive pressure in order to control it, and, hopefully eliminate it from the workplace at the earliest stage, to prevent it leading to health problems.

4.2 When an individual or work group suffers from the effects of excessive pressure, or whether it is caused by work or not, it is likely to show in their work. This can be recognised by many factors including reduced quality of work and reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and, sometimes increases in accidents. Often, there are also changes in how a person relates to others in the work group. These issues are dealt with in **Appendix Two: "Potential Causes of Excessive Pressure" and Appendix Three: "Excessive Pressure Symptoms and Effects": Self-Awareness**

4.3 All employees have a responsibility to take reasonable care so that they do not expose themselves or others to harm, this includes mental harm. This principle also applies to all managers and Headteachers. As individuals our levels of tolerance to different types of pressure may vary due to our unique perception of life, by our life experiences, and, our personality traits. It is not a reasonable expectation for us to know every-one's personality trait, but as an organisation there are certain standards of behaviour expected of all of us. As individuals we may also be unaware of how certain stressor(s) or combinations of stressor(s) will affect us until they actually occur.

4.4 Similarly, over commitment to challenging work projects for extended periods of time, or continuous series of high priority or urgent projects and/or challenges can have a sudden and devastating impact on a person's mental and physical health. It is often the person that believes they thrive on pressure and challenges that suffer this type of breakdown. It is very important to be aware of your own work life balance and ensure you factor in periods of quality relaxation to counter workplace challenges. Employees are expected to advise their managers/Headteachers (or other appropriate person in writing) when they consider they may be suffering from harmful effects of excessive work related pressure. Remember reporting such "feelings" is not a sign of weakness, it is a positive way of managing your own health and wellbeing. Individuals are often unaware that they are suffering from excessive pressure.

Awareness of Others

4.5 Those most likely to notice changes caused by excessive pressure in individuals are their family and their immediate work colleagues. Close colleagues are often in a position to be aware of both home issues and work issues. They are well placed to encourage and support their colleague in bringing the matter to the attention of the Headteacher /manager and help identify suitable measures to reduce the risk of ill health. However, it is part of a manager/ Headteacher normal supervisory role to seek to identify, address and if possible, reduce levels of excessive pressure within the workplace.

4.6 Being aware of the typical symptoms of stress can help to prevent problems developing at an early stage, it can then be dealt with before ill health occurs. Some of the signs

and symptoms of stress are listed in **Appendix Three: "Excessive Pressure symptoms and effects".** Information on some **"practical measures you can do yourself you can try to help reduce the effects of excessive pressure" can be found in Appendix Six.**

5 COMMUNICATIONS

5.1 To catch excessive pressure build up before it becomes a problem, it is essential that staff should feel they can discuss concerns with their Headteacher or manager. Managers or Headteachers must not judge reports of excessive pressure on the basis of their personal perception of excessive work pressures or other situations. Every individual affected by stress must have the opportunity to express their concerns, either in group discussion or in 1:1 talks. It will normally be the role of the manager/Headteacher to talk to the individual(s), consider the facts and decide on appropriate action. Headteachers and managers must treat any interview confidentially and not use the information to influence management of change, disciplinary, attendance or capability issues. In a situation where the Headteacher is a contributing factor to excessive workplace pressure then the designated governor and the Chair of Governors should be informed as set out in Stage 1, clause 6 of the Grievance Policy Procedure.

5.2 However, excessive pressure can be caused by poor interaction or relationships with the manager or Headteacher. In these circumstances the individual or individuals may seek help through their safety representatives, safety advisor or trade union. Managers/ Headteachers will then engage work groups in discussion and explain the purpose and process of stress risk assessment and methods for remedial actions. Employers and employees have a joint responsibility to co-operate in matters of health and safety and good communication will help to prevent problems.

5.3 Where employees have genuine concern about the well-being of a colleague and they feel unable to approach them, they should raise the matter in confidence with that person's Headteacher/ manager or trade union safety representative, who should investigate the situation in a sensitive manner.

5.4 The Headteacher/ manager must monitor identified excessive pressure factors and indicators, from time to time; for example, sickness levels, staff turnover, and the level of formal or informal employee or other complaints. The issue of excessive pressure should periodically be raised at staff meetings especially at times of heavy workloads, change in work patterns or types of work. An ideal opportunity to raise the issue is during one to one's, supervision sessions or PMDS interviews. Actions can then be planned and realistic, achievable targets set.

5.5 When new initiatives are introduced, it is essential that Headteachers time budget appropriately and review stress risk assessments.

6 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS (THE RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS)

6.1 St Bonaventure's should appoint a senior manager to establish appropriate formal lines of communication to enable them to "champion" the reduction of excessive work related pressure throughout the school. It is highly recommended that this role falls to the School Business Manager.

What does the risk assessment process look like?

6.2 All teams need to have a work related stress risk assessment undertaken on them. This risk assessments forms part of the normal risk assessment profile which managers/ Headteachers already undertake. This assessment can be undertaken at a team meeting and take the form of a group discussion around excessive work related pressure issues in the workplace. A few key points to be considered:

- individual issues can be raised in private;

- Managers/Headteachers should be aware that they may be the cause of excessive pressure; and

- all employees need to be aware that the abuse of the stress risk assessment process can result in disciplinary action against them.

6.3 Using the template in **Appendix 4 Stress Risk Assessment Matrix Proforma** and in consultation with the staff and trade union safety reps, each team or staff group, will complete a preliminary stress matrix to determine the areas where stress issues may exist for the work group as a whole. This method can also be used for individual stress risk assessment either pre or post absence. This forms the basis of the workplace stress risk assessment. As with all workplace hazards the Headteacher/ manager must consult with all the staff and safety representatives or roving reps to establish reasonable control methods by which stress can be reduced and develop an action plan to achieve this. To check the effectiveness of the stress reduction methods Headteachers/ managers should follow preliminary analysis within a specified timescale (not longer than 24 months). Managers/ Headteachers are expected to conduct this process in a low key sensitive manner.

6.4 If the situation does not improve after a previously defined period managers/Headteachers will arrange, as soon as possible, for each of the work groups to meet an independent manager/ facilitator (as appropriate) to jointly identify, so far as possible, the precise source(s) of excessive pressure and what controls and arrangements are required to reduce the risk of the effects of excessive pressure. The local or roving Trade Union Safety Representative should be invited to attend these discussions. Every effort must be made to ensure effective communication and understanding of the relevant issues within the work group and to allow adequate opportunity for the whole work group to take part in establishing the controls and arrangements. **NB: it is vital that a shared understanding of the issues is achieved at this point. Often both parties fail to reach this stage of shared understanding.**

6.5 This "Risk Assessment" should ensure a "Risk Action Plan" for the work group is completed. At this stage an individual may find factors not indicated by the group analysis cause them to feel stressed. In these circumstances it may be useful for them to look at the self-awareness section (4.3 above) to see if any personal changes are required that may reduce the levels of stress felt. **NB: this process aims to achieve what is reasonable. It is unrealistic to expect everyone to be happy all of the time. We all have to face situations which take us out of our comfort zone, the aim of this process is to help manage the situation.**

6.6 Occasionally excessive pressure may be caused by non-work related issues. Where possible, managers or Headteachers should seek to ascertain from the employee concerned, what he/she considers may be the underlying cause for the excessive pressure. When this is the case active referral to the individual's GP may be the most appropriate approach.

6.7 The School Business Manager is responsible for establishing an overview of excessive workplace pressure.

Training

6.8 Training course details and information are available on Bristol City Council's "the Source" to help managers/ Headteachers complete stress risk assessments. Formal training courses are run regularly to give managers the skills and confidence to undertake these risk assessments.

7 PROACTIVE PRESSURE REDUCTION

Recruitment

7.1 All posts have certain elements that are likely to be more stressful than others and this will be known through the preliminary analysis. When interviewing applicants these

elements must be emphasised and practical scenarios presented to candidates. The interview panel must ensure that responses and answers to questions regarding the person's aptitude and ability to cope with these stresses are realistic. All new employees and new job entrants must receive relevant induction into their new roles and the demands of these roles to ensure that they understand the tasks required. Adequate support must be made available throughout their employment.

Development

7.2 A key method of combating excessive pressure is through adequate development/ training and awareness raising. Schools and teams must take account of information provided by risk assessments when identifying development needs and preparing and delivering development plans. (Refer to PMDS agreements and SMART targets.)

7.3 Normal good management practice will help address excessive pressure in the workplace. It cannot be emphasised enough that managerial behaviour has a major impact upon stress in the work place. Sound management practice is vital in the management of work related stress, e.g. regular supervision, advice on priorities, employee development and time management will help ensure employees can do their jobs competently. Also, it may be necessary to develop the capability of employees to deal with difficult situations at work, e.g. those which involve significant exposure to potentially violent or threatening situations or work which involves continuous or exceptional exposure to experiences outside the normal range.

8 REACTIVELY DEALING WITH EXCESSIVE PRESSURE

Support

8.1 In all cases of suspected or identified stress, colleagues and managers/ Headteachers should remind employees affected of the support available, **(see appendix 5 "Guide to Advice and Support available to managers and employees internal and external to Bristol City Council")** and the procedures below.

Individual Stress Risk Management Action

Risk Assessment

8.2 If the presence of the harmful effects of excessive pressure has been identified in an employee(s) the manager/ Headteacher must carry out an individual stress risk assessment as soon as possible, with the co-operation of the affected person(s) and a safety representative or work colleague to support them and to seek suitable measures to reduce it. The aims of the stress risk assessment process are to identify areas of concern and assess possible causes of the excessive pressure, to discuss these with individual and their representatives, and, to implement a jointly formulated action plan aimed at addressing / reducing any identified work- related excessive pressure levels to a reasonable level, that will ensure the ill effects are removed.

8.3 Having established there are excessive pressure issues present and the actions to be taken, it is essential to implement and formalise them without undue delay in an agreed "Risk Management Action Plan". The employee may identify some remedial actions which the manager/ Headteacher feels are not reasonably practicable. It may be necessary, to involve an independent person to assist the manager/ Headteacher and employee to identify suitable actions and/or agree a timetable. Safety Representatives may request managers carry out "Work Related Stress Risk Assessments" in the workplace where these have not been undertaken or not repeated either before or after significant change. **(See Appendix 5 Guide to Advice and Support available to managers and employees internal and external to Bristol City Council.)**

8.4 It is recognised that dealing with potential excessive work related pressure issues can be very challenging to managers/ Headteachers. Managers/ Headteachers should ensure they follow good management practice and utilise HR procedures for dealing with employee relations issues fairly and consistently. If a manager feels a situation is

beyond the range of their competence or comfort zone, they should seek assistance available through the Bristol City Council Corporate Safety team, or the Occupational Health service if the issue is predominantly medical in its nature. **NB: Employees may present themselves to managers with stress issues which need GP input, these cases should be referred without delay.**

8.5 Managers/ Headteachers should consider the following:

- referral to the Occupational Health Service;
- a temporary change of duties;
- job re-design;
- reasonable adjustment under DDA;
- reduced workload temporarily;
- flexible working arrangements, e.g. revised hours or duties, job share or part time working;
- medical redeployment (exceptional circumstances only and on advice from Occupational Health);
- security measures;
- redeployment; and
- voluntary redundancy.

Where the proposed actions are likely to raise issues of service delivery or budget pressures it may be necessary to involve a senior manager in discussion with the work group at this stage.

Implementing the Stress Risk Management Action Plan

8.6 Having reached agreement on a "Risk Management Action Plan", this must be implemented to an agreed time table. The Headteacher/ manager may need to involve their Second Tier Safety Coordinator so that a check may be made to see that the relevant supportive processes associated with the Management Standards are in place and to enable progress to be monitored at the appropriate level.

8.7 As with other causes of sickness absence, managers/ Headteachers must maintain contact with the absent employee(s). On return to work sickness absence discussions must be carried out (and where appropriate, referral to the Occupational Health Service). It is very important that the above processes are carried out quickly to avoid compounding the issues with uncertainty. **NB: managers must refer to and use the school's Absence Management policy and guidance.**

9 RETURN TO WORK

9.1 After stress/ anxiety/ depression related absence whether work related or not and prior to a return to work, managers/ Headteachers should meet the employee to plan the return to work and identify control measures, taking advice from the Occupational Health Service as appropriate. A phased return to work (or in exceptional circumstances medical redeployment) should be considered. The manager/ Headteacher should at the Return to Work Discussion or shortly after complete the **Appendix 4 Stress Assessment Risk Matrix Proforma.** The employee can request that a safety representative is involved in this element of the Return to Work Discussion.

9.2 Employees must be given the opportunity of referral to the Occupational Health Service if this is requested, although it is recognised that they may prefer to access other support agencies especially their own GP. Where excessive pressure is identified as a problem in the workplace, managers must make a referral to the Occupational Health Service. Where excessive pressure is reported by an employee through a medical certificate during a formal employment process such as disciplinary action, referral to the Occupational Health Service should be made at the earliest opportunity.

10 DEALING WITH TRAUMA

10.1 It is recognised that some areas of work may be distressing at times and some form of trauma may result. Trauma is a condition of extreme distress induced by a major incident or series of incidents, which are particularly stressful. Employees who may have been subjected to traumatic experiences will be offered and strongly encouraged to take up a referral to the Occupational Health Service for critical incident debriefing. Managers must handle these cases sensitively and any referral should take place as soon as possible, ideally within 72 hours.

10.2 Sometimes employees may suffer post-traumatic stress disorder at a later date and should be referred to the Occupational Health Service for counselling. Where the referral offer to the Counselling service is refused by the employee concerned, managers/ Headteachers should record this and advise the employee that the opportunity will remain available. In some cases, management may consider that the employee's condition is such that he/she cannot remain at/ return to work without referral to the Occupational Health Service.

11 MONITORING AND REPORTING

11.1 The Occupational Health Service Manager will provide quarterly statistical reports to Corporate Safety Committee (CEHSCC) covering work-related stress referrals to the Occupational Health Service. The Council introduced procedures and systems for recording sickness absence including situations where stress may be a significant factor. Periods of sickness absence is classified by managers/ Headteachers according to type. These classifications are fed into the HR Vision System to obtain monitoring data which is reported quarterly to Directorate and Corporate Health and Safety Committees.

11.2 For some absences, mangers/Headteachers may have to make a judgement based on the employee's self-certification form and any return to work discussion. These figures should be considered as indicators rather than scientifically precise, but will provide useful information as to trends and to highlight areas of concern which will be subject to further investigation.

11.3 Divisional risk assessment will be carried out when necessary as an indicator of risk management performance. For this purpose the HSE questionnaire (indicator tool) could be used and performance will be measured against the Management Standards.

Appendix 1

The Management Standards

In each of the Standards the 'What should be happening/States to be achieved' section defines a desirable set of conditions for organisations to work towards.

The *"Six Management Standards"* are:

Demands

Includes issues like workload, work patterns, and the work environment.

The standard is that:

employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/States to be achieved:

- the organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work;
- people's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands;
- jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees; and
- employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed.

Control

How much say the person has in the way they do their work.

The Standard is that:

employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work; and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/States to be achieved:

- where possible, employees have control over their pace of work;
- employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work;
- where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work;
- the organisation encourages employees to develop their skills;
- employees have a say over when breaks can be taken (within the confines of service delivery or timetables); and
- employees are consulted over their work patterns.

Support
Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

The standard is that:
employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors; and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/States to be achieved:

- the organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support employees;
- systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff;
- systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues;
- employees know what support is available and how and when to access it;
- employees know how to access the required resources to do their job; and
- employees receive regular and constructive feedback.

Relationships
Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

The standard is that:
employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work; and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/States to be achieved:

- the organisation promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness;
- employees share information relevant to their work;
- the organisation has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour;
- systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour
- systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour.

Role
Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.

The standard is that:

employees indicate that they understand their roles and responsibilities; and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/States to be achieved:

- the organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible;
- the organisation provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities;
- the organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon employees are clear; and
- systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.

Change
How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

The standard is that:
employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change; and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/States to be achieved:

- the organisation provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes;
- the organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals;
- employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs.
- If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs;
- employees are aware of timetables for changes; and
- employees have access to relevant support during changes.

The Management Standards provide a framework for managing the risk of work-related stress and the 'States to be achieved' provide more detail.

Appendix 2

Potential Causes of Excessive Pressure

As a manager/ Headteacher you have a duty to ensure that work does not make your team ill. Understanding how to spot the signs of stress in your team, and then know what to do to reduce stress, will help you achieve this. There is no simple way of predicting what will cause harmful levels of stress.

People respond to pressure in different ways. An exciting challenge to one person may be a daunting task to another. A repetitive job may be viewed as boring or monotonous by some, but others feel comfortable with routine. Much depends on personality, experience and motivation and the support available from managers, colleagues, friends and family. Some possible causes could be:

- Workload (too much too little)
- Pace of work
- Conflicting or unclear priorities
- Employment uncertainty (potential redundancies)
- Organisational style (blame culture, bullying style)
- Change (restructuring, new technology)
- Working conditions (cramped space, threat of violence, no safe systems of work)
- Shift patterns
- Unreliable, poorly maintained or unsafe equipment
- Working relationships (harassment, racism, bullying)
- Poor communication and decision making
- Un-supportive line management
- Being the subject of disciplinary action
- Poor work performance by the individual concerned
- Personal circumstances (not work related)
- Other demands both in and outside work
- Their background and culture
- Their personality
- Their skills and experience
- Their health status

Appendix 3

Symptoms and Effects of Excessive Pressure

Work Performance

- Reduction in output or productivity
- Increase in wastage and error rate
- Change in ability to make decisions
- Deterioration in planning and control of work

Relationships at Work

- Increased tension and conflict between colleagues
- Deteriorating relationships with clients, pupils or others
- Submission of formal employee or other complaints

Staff Attitude and Behaviour

- Loss of motivation and commitment
- Staff working increasingly long hours for diminishing returns
- Increased smoking, drinking or (prescribed) drug taking
- Deterioration in personal appearance
- Increased or inappropriate risk taking: deliberate or through lack of concentration
- Increasingly erratic or poor time keeping
- Mood changes, deviation from norm

Sickness Absence

- Increase in overall sickness absence
- Deterioration of sleeping patterns and a greater frequency of other physical symptoms: headaches, tiredness
- Erratic behaviour identified in return to work sickness absence interviews

Short Term Physical

- Raised blood pressure
- Increased heart rate
- Excessive sweating
- Dizziness
- Skin rashes

Long Term Physical

- Any or all of the short term effects
- Heart malfunction
- Stroke
- Respiratory and other infections through - lowered resistance to infection
- Suicide

Short Term Behavioural

- Significant departures from normal behaviour
- Tendency to drink and smoke more
- Sleep disturbances
- Increased anxiety and irritability- Violence
- Tearfulness, being withdrawn

Long Term Behavioural

- Depression
- Chronic lack of confidence
- Extreme sensitivity/paranoia
- Confusion
- Tendency to take risks out of character

HSE state that such effects are usually short lived and cause no lasting harm. When the pressures recede there is a return to normal. However where the stress effects are intense and go on for some time more serious long term ill health may result.

Appendix 4

Questions to Ask to Gain an Insight into Potential Excessive Pressure (Stress) in the Work place:

This form can be used for individuals or groups.

The form is designed to be used for the proactive assessment of excessive pressure also as a reactive tool where a member of staff is returning to work following a period of absence due to a stress related condition.

IMPORTANT NOTE STOP HERE: This document should be used in conjunction with the HSE Stress Management Standards (This document is based upon information from www.hse.gov.uk August 2010)

Methodology of assessing Excessive Pressure in the workplace, based upon a traffic light system (RAG):

Stage One: What is your response to each question? Answer Yes or No.
Stage Two: Once you have decided your response "Yes" or "No"; how does it affect you? Then score using the RAG system.

STATUS	Personal Feelings and how it makes you feel
Green	Every day trials and tribulations of life (situation normal)
Amber	Irritating whilst at work but soon forgotten outside work (Underlying unease at the situation)
Red	Causes distress in and outside of work (Significant impact upon life)

What does it all mean?
The more Reds the greater the potential problem.
What can be done to help?
Use the reference numbers next to the questions to produce a simple stress action plan.

Directorate:	Section:	Individual or Team Assessment
Date of Assessment:	Assessment carried out by:	Carried out on:

Potential Causes of Excessive Work Related Pressure	Ref:	Question *(To be asked of the individual or the group)*	Answer each question Y or N. Then use Traffic Light System (RAG) RED/AMBER/GREEN **Yes or No**	**RAG**	**What can be done about it?** (Produce a simple stress action plan, use ref no to questions to cross reference in report) **Brief note of explanation** (Supply detail on separate sheet)
Demands	D1	Do different people at work demand things from you that are hard to combine?			
	D2	Do you have achievable deadlines?			
	D3	Do you have to work very intensively?			

	D4	Do you have to neglect some tasks because you had too much to do?			
	D5	Are you able to take sufficient breaks?			
	D6	Do you feel pressured to work long hours?			
	D7	Do you feel you have to work very fast?			
	D8	Do you have unrealistic time pressures?			
Control	Cl	Can you decide when to take a break?			
	02	Do you feel you have a say in your work speed?			
	03	Do you feel you have a choice in deciding how you do your work?			
	04	Do you feel you have a choice in deciding what you do at work?			
	05	Do you feel you have some say over the way you do your work?			
	06	Do you feel your time can be flexible?			
Support ***(Local or Senior Manager)***	**SM1**	Does your manager give you enough supportive feedback on the work you do?			
	SM2	Do you feel you could rely on your manager to help you with a work problem?			
	SM3	Do you feel you could talk to your manager about something that upset or annoyed you at work?			
	SM4	Do you feel your manager supports you through any emotionally demanding work?			

	SM5	Do you feel your manager encourages you enough at work?			
Support (Peer) ***(eg Team Meetings, 1:1's, PMDS)***	SP1	Do you feel your colleagues would help you if work became difficult?			
	SP2	Do you get the help and support you need from your colleagues?			
	SP3	Do you get the respect at work you deserved from your colleagues?			
	SP4	Are your colleagues willing to listen to your work-related problems?			
Relationships	RE1	Do you feel personally harassed, in the form of unkind words or behaviour?			
	RE2	Do you feel there is friction or anger between colleagues?			
	RE3	Do you feel bullied at work? (Clarification available in The Bullying & Harassment Policy)			
	RE4	Are relationships strained at work?			
Role **(eg SMART Targets via PMDS)**	R01	Are you clear about what is expected of you at work?			
	R02	Do you know how to go about getting your job done?			
	RO3	Are you clear about what your duties and responsibilities are?			
	R04	Are you clear about the goals and objectives for this department?			
	R05	Do you understand how your work fits into the overall aim of the organisation?			

Change ***(Are BCC procedures followed?)***	**CHI**	Do you have enough opportunities to question managers about change at work?			
	CH2	Do you feel consulted about change at work?			
	CH3	When changes are made at work, are you clear about how they will work out in practice?			
Other Life Events	**LE**	Is there anything else that is a source of stress for you, at work or at home, that may be significant to this assessment?			

Factors outside work

This list of questions has mainly focused on factors at work. However, there may be factors outside work, for example in your family life, which may have contributed to or added to the pressures at work. These may have made it harder to cope with demands at work that you would normally be able to cope with.

Additional Information relating to stress can be found at:

http://www.hse.goy.uk/stress/links.htm - The HSE Stress website **http://intranet.bcc.lan/ccm/navigation/people/health-promotion-and-wellbeing/** . The Bristol City Council Intranet **http://www.nhs.uldlivewell/stressmanagement/pages/stressmanagementhome.aspx** The NHS website

OTHER COMMENTS

Appendix 5

A guide to Advice and Support available to managers and employees internal and external to Bristol City Council

Managers/ Headteachers: good management/employee communication through supportive discussions will allow excessive pressures and stress situations to be discussed and action planned. In some circumstances these discussions may be assisted by the employee/s being accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative if they wish. Managers must conduct regular team meetings and hold PMDS interviews with their staff.

The Occupational Health Service: Pre-employment screening, counselling, stress training input, critical incident debriefing, post-traumatic stress counselling, sickness absence referral.

External Organisations: Relate/Cruse, Samaritans, Bristol Debt Advisory Service etc. confidential listening and counselling help.

Safety Advisor: Help and advice on all matters of Health and Safety particularly risk assessments, including stress issues.

Trade Unions: Confidential advice and information, colleague support, representation.

Trade Union Safety Representatives: Confidential advice and information, colleague support, representation. Plus employees who have received specific health and safety training, and are aware of the HSE Stress Management Standards.

Equalities Unit: Confidential information service (see Integrated Equalities Policy).

HR Advisors: Help and advice regarding employee support services relating to employee life cycle and employment issues (HR - STS).

Appendix 6

A few practical measures you can do yourself you can try to help reduce the effects of excessive pressure?

These are a few suggestions which may help? However, staff may have other alternatives, the key here is that there are many ways to help yourself combat stress, the guiding principle is one size does not fit all. Remember if you dread going to work and you feel depressed then you need to act, what have you got to lose?

- Prioritise your workload. (Use your PMDS meetings and 1:1's with your manager to set realistic targets)
- Complete tasks with a deadline first, then methodically deal with the remainder of your work, leaving low-priority work in your in tray.
- Try to delegate or share your responsibilities. (What is your job? What do you have to do? What do you actually do?)
- Do not strive for perfection. (What are the quantitative and qualitative expectations of your job?)
- Not always succeeding perfectly is a worthwhile trade-off for keeping well. (Your targets must be achievable and sustainable.)
- Accept your limitations and do not pretend to be able to do what you can not.
- Keep your "office door" metaphorically closed and use technology (such as email and answer phones) to protect you from constant interruptions.
- Do not have your work mobile on all the time, particularly evenings and weekends, and avoid being contactable 24 hours a day. (Unless you are on call)
- Limit your coffee consumptions to two to three cups a day. Do not drink alcohol during the day.
- Build in some spare time for unforeseen circumstances into your day (this takes a conscious effort).
- Communicate with your line manager: have informal catch-ups and diary in regular meetings. (Communicate your needs and expectations, are they realistic?)