

STRESS & MENTAL WELLBEING POLICY

JULY 2021

C&R

CAPITAL &
REGIONAL

INTRODUCTION

Capital & Regional Property Management Limited (the Company, we) is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of all of its employees and aims to create a workplace environment that promotes positive mental health and wellbeing.

We will provide appropriate support for employees who are suffering from stress or mental ill health, on a confidential basis where appropriate, regardless of its source.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time. It applies to all employees across our business.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

We understand and comply with our legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that our employees' health is not put at risk by excessive pressures or demands arising from the way work is organised.

This policy takes account of our obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Employment Rights Act 1996, Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Working Time Regulations 1998, and the Equality Act 2010.

In addition, we will monitor the development of good practice in approaches to work-related stress and mental health at work and will keep our practices and the effectiveness of this policy under review.

UNDERSTANDING STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Stress can be an adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or demands placed on them.

Stress is not an illness but sustained over a period of time, it can lead to mental and/or physical illness.

Mental health is a term to describe our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing; it affects how we think, feel and act and how we cope with the normal pressures of everyday life.

There is an important distinction between working under pressure and experiencing stress. Certain levels of pressure are acceptable and normal in every job. They can improve performance, enable individuals to meet their full potential and provide a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. However, when pressure becomes excessive it can produce stress and undermine mental health.

Pressures outside the workplace, whether the result of unexpected or traumatic events such as accidents, illness, bereavement, family breakdown or financial worries, can also result in stress and poor mental health. They can also compound normal workplace pressures.

We recognise that individuals react to similar situations in different ways and that what triggers stress and poor mental health varies from person to person.

PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR THE POLICY

All employees across the business have a role to play in ensuring the effectiveness of this policy. All those with line manager duties are encouraged to recognise potential issues of work-related stress or mental ill health in employees. The Company will endeavour to provide managers with training to support them in this. In any event, line managers should seek advice from HR at carterhr@capreg.com in the event that they have concerns.

Managers are encouraged to:

- a) Promote a culture of open communication.
- b) Provide fair and constructive feedback on performance.
- c) Support employee training and development.
- d) Monitor workloads and reallocate work where necessary.
- e) Monitor holidays and rest breaks, encouraging employees to take their entitlement.
- f) Ensure that employees understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and others, and act on behaviour that falls below those standards.

In addition, all employees should ensure that they are familiar with this policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives.

All employees are encouraged to:

- a) Plan and organise their work to meet personal and organisational objectives.
- b) Co-operate with support, advice and guidance that may be offered by the business.
- c) On becoming aware of a situation that may result in work-related stress or undermine mental wellbeing at work, speak to a manager or source alternative support (see point 5 below).
- d) Comply with the rules on working time.
- e) Understand and comply with our workplace policies and procedures.

COMPANY COMMITMENT

The Company is committed to preventing the causes of work-related stress and supporting positive mental wellbeing in the workplace.

As a business, we aim to:

- a) Promote a culture of open communication. We want our employees to feel confident that any concerns they raise about their work or working environment will be addressed. We will provide both formal (i.e. during performance reviews) and informal (i.e. catch-ups/discussions with managers and team meetings) means for them to raise concerns.
- b) Reduce stigma around mental health and raise awareness about health and wellbeing through initiatives such as our 'it's all about you' campaign, Town Hall guest speakers, and the provision of support information on staff notice boards.
- c) Embed our commitment to health and wellbeing and provide details of our support services within our employee induction and onboarding processes.
- d) Take account of stress and mental wellbeing when planning and allocating workloads.
- e) Monitor working hours and overtime to prevent overworking and monitor holidays to encourage employees to use their entitlement.
- f) Consider applications for flexible working.
- g) Take steps to minimise uncertainty and stress during any workplace reorganisation or change management processes.
- h) Maintain policies and procedures to address factors that can cause stress at work, or add to personal stress, in an aim to provide a workplace free from harassment, bullying and victimisation and address inappropriate behaviour through disciplinary action.

- i) Help educate employees to understand and recognise the causes of work-related stress and mental ill health, the impact of stress from factors in everyday life and the steps they can take to protect and enhance their own mental wellbeing and that of their colleagues.
- j) Provide opportunities for learning, development, and career progression where appropriate and possible.
- k) Encourage involvement and feedback from our employees on our business practices, including via Pulse Surveys and Employee Voice 24/7.
- l) Provide access to support services including occupational health and an employee assistance programme (which includes confidential counselling), for employees affected by or absent by reason of stress or their mental health, through our membership of the Retail Trust and through our Employee Assistance Programme.

SUPPORTING MENTAL WELLBEING AT WORK

We encourage all employees to speak openly with **their manager**, or HR if unable to speak with their manager for any reason, should they be experiencing stress or have concerns about their mental health, so that appropriate assistance and support can be provided.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDERS

{Insert Information}

We also have the following services in place to assist employees who may be suffering from stress or poor mental health;

A confidential **Employee Assistance Programme** (EAP) helpline. This is staffed by independent advisers with access to specialist counsellors. The helpline provides help with physical, mental, and social issues or concerns. It is available 24 hours a day. Details of how to access the EAP helpline are set out within the benefits section of this Guide.

Following a referral from HR, employees may also have access to an **Occupational Health** professional, whose services are designed to help employees stay in work, or to return to work, after experiencing health problems.

Help and information can also be obtained from Retail Trust www.retailtrust.org.uk, Mind, the mental health charity, www.mind.org.uk or the Samaritans, www.samaritans.org. There are also other support, groups and resources that may be accessible via mental health charities, NHS 111 or your GP.

The business has also trained a number of employees to become Mental Health/Wellbeing Champions. There are Mental Health/Wellbeing Champions in place across the business and, although not Mental Health First Aiders, they help to increase mental health awareness, support colleagues and customers, and encourage open communication.

ADDRESSING WORK-RELATED STRESS

If you are absent due to work-related stress or mental ill health, you should follow the sickness absence reporting procedure contained in our Sickness Absence Policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information about stress, mental health and mental wellbeing is highly sensitive. Every employee is responsible observing the high level of confidentiality that is required when dealing with information about stress or mental health whether they are supporting a colleague or because they are otherwise involved in the operation of a workplace policy or procedure.

Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action.

However, there are occasions when information about stress or mental wellbeing needs to be shared with third parties. For example:

- a) Where steps need to be taken to address work-related stress such as reallocating work within a team.
- b) Where medical advice is required on how to support an employee, address issues raised by work-related stress or address issues raised by mental ill health.
- c) Where allegations of harassment, bullying or other misconduct require a disciplinary investigation or proceedings to take place.
- d) Where an employee presents an immediate danger to themselves or others.

In these circumstances, wherever possible, matters will be discussed with the individual concerned before any action is taken.

RISK OF IMMEDIATE DANGER

If any employee is considered by a manager or colleague to be at serious risk of self-harm, or of harming others, action must be taken straight away.

The matter should be referred to HR or a Mental Health and Well-Being Champion or First Aider who will seek medical advice if that is reasonably practicable.

Where appropriate, every effort will be made to contact any person nominated by the employee as an emergency contact, and/or the emergency services will be contacted.

If there is an urgent or immediate risk identified, the emergency services must be contacted, without delay.

The wellbeing of the individual and those around them will at all times be our first concern.

PROTECTION FROM VICTIMISATION

Employees who report that they are suffering from stress, who support a colleague in making such a report, or who participate in any investigation connected with this policy in good faith, will be protected from any form of intimidation or victimisation.

Any employee who considers that they have been subjected to any such intimidation or victimisation should seek support from their manager or, if feel unable to do so, HR. They may alternatively or additionally raise a complaint in accordance with our Grievance Procedure.

Any employee who is, after investigation, found to have acted in bad faith or to have provided false information will be subject to action under our Disciplinary Procedure.