



# Stress Management Policy

Richard Huish Trust



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<b>Lead reviewer</b>	Chief People Officer
<b>Approving board/ committee</b>	People & Performance Committee
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<b>Next review due</b>	October 2025

## Stress Management Policy

### **Introduction**

This policy aims to provide an overall framework for the way in which Richard Huish Trust will proactively manage and attempt to prevent work related stress and assist staff employed by Huish who may be suffering from work related stress. The Policy should be read in conjunction with other HR Policies and Procedures.

### **Purpose**

Richard Huish Trust is committed to the principle of ensuring, as far as is reasonably practicable, that no member of staff is subject to a level of stress due to work that is detrimental to their health. The purpose of this Policy is to inform all staff of the Trust's commitment to preventing and/or minimising the harmful effects of stress and the procedures that should be followed.

### **Scope**

All employees of Richard Huish Trust

### **Policy Statement**

The Health and Safety Executive's definition of stress is:

*"The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them."*

This definition can be used as the basis for any activity to prevent, control or manage stress in the workplace. It recognises that staff may have to work to deadlines or be stimulated by a degree of pressure in their work but it is when the pressure becomes 'excessive', or goes on for too long, that staff become exposed to stress. The severity of the stress will depend on the mismatch perceived by the individual between the demands and their ability to satisfactorily respond to them and their perception of the possible consequences of failing to do so. It may also be affected by their fitness and resilience at the time.

Richard Huish Trust recognises the statutory requirements and responsibilities of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and other relevant legislation, Regulations, Guidance and Codes of Practice.

Richard Huish Trust is committed to providing a working environment and management practices, which promote the best health of all employees. It is anticipated that the deployment and implementation of the following approaches will minimise the risk of the harmful effects of stress. Many of the processes and approaches to managing stress at Huish are based upon research carried out by the HSE (Health & Safety Executive) in conjunction with CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development) and their subsequent recommendations. This research

describes 6 key areas that if not properly managed are associated with poor health, lower productivity and increased accident and sickness absence rates.

Demands – this includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.

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

Support – this includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

Relationships – this includes 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 they do not have conflicting roles.

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

## **Stress Risk Assessment**

Huish take a proactive approach to stress risk assessment, utilising the research described above to work with colleagues, managers and leaders to ensure that all key areas described above are considered and assessed and where practicable and reasonable control measures put in place.

The HR team at Huish are trained to support line managers and leaders where it is anticipated that a person or even group of people may be negatively impacted or struggling with one or more of the key areas and will then instigate the stress risk assessment process. The Stress Risk Assessment captures the perceptions of the staff member in relation to the associated Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role and Change, of their working environment. This then informs a discussion between the staff member and their line manager (supported by HR) to highlight the specific control measures to be put in place to mitigate against the likelihood that the member of staff suffers (continues to suffer) with work related stress. The same process can be instigated in the future to ensure the control measures have been implemented.

## **Management and Leadership Support**

The HR team also work with Line managers and leaders, encouraging them to consider their own behaviour, and to assess whether the behaviours identified by the HSE and the CIPD as being impactful for preventing and reducing stress at work, are being demonstrated. The Huish HR Team use a variety of tools and support guides when working with managers and leaders in this area.

## **Staff Satisfaction Surveys**

Richard Huish use Staff Satisfaction surveys, at least annually to provide a better understanding of the extent to which staff are satisfied working at Huish, and how the 'ways of working' at Huish impact upon Staff Satisfaction.

The surveys are conducted by an external impartial company which provides anonymity to those staff contributing to the survey responses. Whilst being mindful of overall satisfaction, the surveys also ask for feedback in relation to Huish caring about staff welfare, communicating effectively, consulting with staff on 'change', being treated fairly and with respect, the quality of line management, feeling safe at work, work/life balance, quality of technical and specialist support and the demands of their job.

Whilst the results are reviewed and scrutinised by the Leadership teams in the schools and the College. They are also reviewed by; the HR team and the Huish Executive Team, checking for themes and indicators across Huish which may require some intervention. The survey results can also be split (maintaining anonymity) by role and staff groups which provides further incite and precision as to levels of satisfaction across Huish. The results from the Staff Surveys are considered by the People & Performance Committee prior to the presentation of a summary report to the Board of Directors.

## **Staff Absence**

Whilst we believe that we have measures in place to proactively prevent Huish staff being negatively impacted by stress at work, we do acknowledge that there will be times when people do suffer with work related stress which might result in some time away from work. The HR team continually monitor the absence information from across Huish paying particular attention to instances of work-related stress, looking for patterns and themes which might provide incite on where intervention could be required.

Also, when HR are notified that a member of Huish staff is absent from work due to work related stress, the HR team will contact that person to offer an early intervention through the Employee Assistance Programme. The early intervention facility allows an Occupational Health professional to make contact with the Huish employee to conduct an initial assessment and provide management guidance on how best to support the member of staff whilst they are off work and in readiness for a return to work.

On every occasion of someone returning to work after a period of absence due to work related stress, the HR team will recommend a Return to Work interview is carried out by the line manager to ensure that the person is fit to return and that any workplace concerns can be discussed and addressed. Where these concerns might be complex the line manager will always be supported by the HR Team and if appropriate further Occupational Health advice.

## **Employee Assistance Programme**

Huish provide all employees with access to an employee Assistance Programme. This programme is currently offered by Health Assured who also provide the Occupational Health guidance and advice to Huish.

Huish staff can access the EAP confidentially, either online, over the phone or via the App which can be downloaded to any phone or tablet, providing access to confidential welfare support services for any staff whose physical and / or mental health may have been injured by stress.

## **Quality Management**

It will be the responsibility of the Chief People Officer to review and monitor the effectiveness of the Policy and to recommend change where necessary.

The effectiveness and usage of the Policy will be reported to the People & Performance Committee.

## **Other Related Policies / Documents**

Absence Management Policy

Health and Safety Policy