



Yenaa Housing

Stress and Mental Health at Work Policy



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Policy Checklist	
Date of Implementation	Feb 25
Date of Last Review	Feb
Date of Next Review	Feb 27

Purpose and scope

This policy sets out Yenaa Housing's approach to preventing and managing work-related stress and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all employees, agency staff, volunteers and trustees. It applies to all work activities, whether on site, working from home or hybrid arrangements, and reflects current legislation and best practice in England, including the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Equality Act 2010, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Management Standards, and guidance from NHS England and Public Health England. The aim is to reduce work-related stress, provide early support, make reasonable adjustments where needed, and promote a positive workplace culture.

Policy statement

Yenaa Housing recognises that work-related stress and mental health problems can affect any worker. We are committed to:

- Preventing work-related stress so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Assessing and managing risks to mental health through the same risk assessment process used for physical hazards.
- Providing timely support, reasonable adjustments and access to appropriate services for employees experiencing stress or mental health difficulties.
- Promoting a culture of openness, respect and confidentiality, free from discrimination or stigma.
- Ensuring managers have the training and resources to identify, assess and respond to stress and mental health concerns.

Responsibilities

Board and senior management

- Provide leadership and visible commitment to mental health and wellbeing.
- Ensure adequate resources, policies and systems are in place to identify and manage work-related stress risks.
- Monitor performance and review policy effectiveness.

Line managers

- Make risk assessments and take steps to control work-related stressors in their teams.
- Maintain regular one-to-ones and open conversations about workload and wellbeing.
- Respond sensitively to disclosures, facilitate reasonable adjustments, and refer to line manager or other support where appropriate.
- Keep records of actions and agreed support plans, respecting confidentiality.

Employees and workers

- Take reasonable care of their own mental health and seek support early where needed.
- Co-operate with risk assessments and agreed interventions and communicate concerns honestly and promptly.
- Treat colleagues with respect and support a positive working environment.

Risk assessment and prevention

- The organisation will identify stress hazards and vulnerable groups through routine risk assessments, staff surveys, absence and turnover analysis, grievance patterns, and incident reporting.
- The HSE Management Standards (demands, control, support, relationships, role and change) will be used to structure assessments and action plans.
- Typical actions to reduce risks include: workload review and redistribution, clear role descriptions, training, flexible working, sufficient staffing, fair policies, improved communication and change management, and addressing bullying or harassment promptly.
- Risk assessments will be recorded, reviewed at least annually and after significant organisational change.

Early intervention and support

- Employees are encouraged to discuss concerns early with their line manager, they may seek support from line manager directly or via their GP.
- Yenaa Housing will offer:
 - Confidential discussions and agreed short-term adjustments (temporary reduced hours, flexible start/finish times, workload reallocation).
 - Referral to line manager for assessment, recommendations and support.
 - Signposting to external NHS and voluntary sector services and crisis lines when needed.
- Where mental ill-health meets the Equality Act 2010 definition of disability, the organisation will consider reasonable adjustments and follow its equality and absence management procedures.

Sickness absence, return to work and long-term support

- Return-to-work interviews will be conducted after any absence to identify causes, recovery needs and reasonable adjustments. These must be handled sensitively and confidentially.
- For long-term absence, a phased return, adjusted duties, workplace adaptations or redeployment will be considered in line with advice.
- Ill-health retirement or other formal HR processes will be considered only after reasonable adjustments and alternatives have been explored.

Confidentiality and data protection

- Personal information about mental health will be treated as confidential and shared only on a need-to-know basis with consent, or where there is a clear legal duty or safeguarding risk.
 - Records will be kept securely, in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, and retained according to Yenaa Housing's retention schedule.
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Training and capability

- Yenaa Housing will provide training for managers on recognising and responding to stress and mental health issues, conducting supportive conversations, reasonable adjustments and referral routes.
- Mental health awareness training and wellbeing resources will be available for all staff. A number of staff will be trained as mental health first aiders or wellbeing champions.

Bullying, harassment and grievance

- Bullying and harassment are recognised as significant causes of work-related stress. Yenaa Housing has a separate Dignity at Work/Bullying and Harassment policy; complaints will be investigated promptly and impartially with appropriate action taken.
- Employees may use the grievance procedure where informal resolution is not possible.

Equality, reasonable adjustments and non-discrimination

- The organisation will comply with the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for employees whose mental health conditions amount to a disability. Decisions will be evidenced, fair and reviewed regularly.

Health and safety monitoring

- Yenaa Housing will monitor indicators including absence rates, staff turnover, incident reports, accommodation of reasonable adjustments, use of support services and staff survey results.
- Findings will be reported to senior management and the Board with actions agreed and tracked.

Emergency situations and crisis management

- If an individual is at immediate risk of harm to themselves or others, staff should contact emergency services (999) and follow safeguarding procedures.
- For non-immediate but serious concerns, staff should contact occupational health, HR or a senior manager for urgent support and safety planning.

Audit, review and continuous improvement

- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner following significant legislative changes, incidents or learning from practice.
- Regular staff engagement and surveys will inform continuous improvement of mental health measures.

Legal and policy context (key references)

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Management Standards for Work-related Stress
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- NHS England and Public Health England mental health and workplace wellbeing guidance

