

# AGILIO STRESS AND MENTAL WELLBEING POLICY

V1. November 2022



## About this policy

- 1.1 We are committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees. We recognise the importance of identifying and tackling the causes of work-related stress. We also recognise that personal stress, while unrelated to the workplace, can adversely affect the wellbeing of employees at work. We want to support the mental wellbeing of all our employees and 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.
- 1.2 We will:
- (a) Promote a culture of open communication. We want employees to feel confident that any concerns they raise about their work or working environment will be addressed. We will provide both formal and informal means for them to raise concerns.
  - (b) Provide training for managers in good management practices.
  - (c) Take account of stress and mental wellbeing when planning and allocating workloads. We will provide opportunities to discuss these through our performance management processes.
  - (d) Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that employees are not overworking and monitor holidays to ensure that employees are using their entitlement.
  - (e) Ensure risk assessments include or specifically address work-related stress, for office based, hybrid and remote working.
  - (f) Facilitate requests for flexible working where reasonably practicable in accordance with our Flexible Working Policy.
  - (g) Implement policies and procedures to address factors that can cause stress at work, or add to personal stress, in particular so that we can:
    - (i) provide a workplace free from harassment, bullying and victimisation; and
    - (ii) address inappropriate behaviour through disciplinary action.
  - (h) Provide training to help all employees 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.
- 1.3 Provide support services such as an employee assistance programme using the Agilioflex Benefits Portal you can contact Health Assured on 0800 028 0199 or you can log on to the website [www.healthassured.com](http://www.healthassured.com).
- 1.4 This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, casual workers and agency workers.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

## **2. Legal obligations**

- 2.1 We have a legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that your health is not put at risk by excessive pressures or demands arising from the way work is organised.
- 2.2 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 Equality Act 2010.

## **3. Personnel responsible for the policy**

- 3.1 Our Chief Human Resources Officer has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. The Divisional MDs and CFD's have specific responsibility for ensuring that it is properly implemented.
- 3.2 We will monitor the development of good practice in approaches to work-related stress and mental wellbeing at work and will keep our practices and the effectiveness of this policy under review to ensure it is achieving its stated objectives.
- 3.3 All managers have a responsibility to recognise potential issues of work-related stress or mental ill health in the employees they manage. They will be given training to support them in this and should seek advice from the Central Group HR team in the event that they have concerns.
- 3.4 We have appointed a number of mental health first aiders whose details are available from the Central Group HR team and Agilio Hub and whose role is to ensure the effectiveness of this policy. Employees can contact a mental health first aider to discuss any concerns they have about work-related stress or any other issue affecting mental health at work.
- 3.5 All employees should ensure that they are familiar with this policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives. Employees should plan and organise their work to meet personal and organisational objectives and co-operate with support, advice and guidance that may be offered by line managers, Divisional MDs/CFDs and the Group HR team. Anyone who experiences or is aware of a situation that may result in work-related stress or undermine mental wellbeing at work should speak to a manager or Divisional MD/CFD in the first instance.

## **4. Understanding stress and mental health**

- 4.1 Stress is the 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.
- 4.2 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. Positive mental health is rarely an absolute state since factors inside and outside work

affect mental health, meaning that we move on a spectrum that ranges from being in good to poor mental health.

- 4.3 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 produces stress and undermines mental health.
- 4.4 Pressures outside the workplace, whether the result of unexpected or traumatic events such as accidents, illness, bereavement, family breakdown or financial worries, can result in stress and poor mental health. They can also compound normal workplace pressures.
- 4.5 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.

## **5. Supporting mental wellbeing at work**

- 5.1 We want to ensure that our workplace supports good mental health for all employees. However, we recognise that there may be occasions when events at work or outside work result in employees feeling that their mental health is suffering. Anyone who feels that they are suffering from work-related stress should follow the steps set out in paragraph 6 in addition to making use of the support services referred to in this policy which all employees are encouraged to access if they ever feel they need support or assistance.
- 5.2 All managers should work with the Central Group HR team to provide support to employees. In particular, they need to:
  - (a) Promote a culture of open communication.
  - (b) Effectively plan and provide feedback on performance.
  - (c) Ensure that employees receive necessary training.
  - (d) Monitor workloads and reallocate work where necessary.
  - (e) Ensure that employees understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and others, and act on behaviour that falls below those standards.
- 5.3 We have the following services in place to assist employees who may be suffering from stress or poor mental health:
  - (a) Training and workshops on stress management and mental wellbeing, to assist employees and managers in recognising and coping with stress and take care of their mental health.
  - (b) Stress risk assessments and audits to identify and provide a plan of action to address signs of work-related stress
  - (c) Health Assured can be contacted 24/7 365 days per year on 0800 028 0199. They can:

- (i) provide specialist advice on work-related stress and mental wellbeing;
  - (ii) support individuals who have been off sick and advise on return to work plans, including phased returns and adjustments to support a return to work.; and
  - (iii) make referrals to workplace counsellors or specialists, either face to face or over the phone
- (d) Health and lifestyle screening. This is a screening service, which helps advise employees on their general health including their mental health. Available from the Agilio flex, flexible benefits Health Screening options. For more information contact the central HR team.
- (e) Health Cash Plan cover is provided for employees by Agilio, employees can claim back for treatments that can help with stress related illnesses.
- (f) My Healthy Advantage app, provided by Agilio as a benefit, for employees to use to help track their mood, encourage wellbeing, mental and physical exercises to have a positive impact on stress.
- (g) Members of our Human Resources Department are trained to support employees suffering from work-related stress or mental health issues and they can be contacted confidentially through [central.hr@agiliosoftware.com](mailto:central.hr@agiliosoftware.com)
- 5.4 Help and information can also be obtained from Mind, the mental health charity, [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) or the Samaritans, [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org).
- 5.5 If any member of employees is considered by their manager or colleagues to be at serious risk of self-harm, or of harming others, action must be taken straight away. The matter should be referred to the Central Group HR team who may seek medical advice. Every effort will be made to contact any person nominated by the member of employees as an emergency contact. Where necessary the emergency services will be called. The wellbeing of the member of employees and those around them will at all times be our first concern.

## **6. Addressing work-related stress**

- 6.1 If you believe you are suffering from work-related stress you should discuss this with your manager or Divisional MD/CFD in the first instance. If you feel unable to do so you should contact the Central Group HR team. You should also access the support services referred to in paragraph 5.
- 6.2 Once an issue affecting your health comes to the attention of your manager, or Divisional MD/CFD we will discuss with you what steps can be taken to address that issue. Those steps may include any of the following:
- (a) A stress audit to review your current job role, responsibilities, workload and working hours. Adjustments may be agreed to these, on a temporary basis and subject to further review, where appropriate, assessed by a stress risk assessment.

- (b) Where it appears that stress has been caused by bullying or harassment, investigation under our Disciplinary and/or Grievance Procedures.
  - (c) Referral for medical advice, treatment and/or a medical report to be provided by our medical advisers or any specialist or GP who has been treating you.
  - (d) If you are on sickness absence, discussion of an appropriate return to work programme. Our Sickness Absence Policy may be applied.
- 6.3 Counselling services will continue to be used appropriately to help employees overcome problems associated with work-related stress as well as other stress and the impact that has on their ability to do their duties.

## **7. Absence due to stress or mental ill health**

- 7.1 If you are absent due to work-related stress or mental ill health, you should follow the sickness absence reporting procedure contained in your contract and/or our Sickness Absence Policy.
- 7.2 In cases of prolonged or repeated absence it may be necessary to apply the procedure set out in our Sickness Absence Policy and Capability Procedure.

## **8. Confidentiality**

- 8.1 Information about stress, mental health and mental wellbeing is highly sensitive. Every member of 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.
- 8.2 Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action.
- 8.3 However, there are occasions when information about stress or mental wellbeing need 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 a member of employees, 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 employees concerned before any action is taken.

## **9. Protection for those reporting stress or assisting with an investigation**

- 9.1 Employees who report that they are suffering from work-related stress or mental ill health, 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.
- 9.2 If you feel you have been subjected to any such intimidation or victimisation, you should seek support from your line manager and/or MD/CFD and the Central Group HR team. You may also raise a complaint in accordance with our Grievance Procedure.
- 9.3 If you feel you need to escalate a serious concern over wrongdoing at work, you can contact Safecall, an independent organisation working with Agilio, contact details: 0800 915 1571, or report online at: [www.safecall.co.uk/report](http://www.safecall.co.uk/report).
- 9.4 If, after investigation, you are found to have provided false information in bad faith, you will be subject to action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the Agilio Company Handbook and useful guides that can help support employee mental wellbeing, i.e. Personnel organisation at work and Financial Wellbeing Guide**