



# **Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise (PDSE)**

## **Stress Management Version 2.0**

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Policy will be updated as required in response to a change in national policy or evidence-based guideline.

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# Stress Management

## 1. Principles

- 1.1 Our employees are a valuable resource and their health and wellbeing is important to help us continue to provide high quality service to our patients and students. PDSE is committed to providing, maintaining and promoting a healthy and supportive working environment, to managing stress and risks within its control, and to providing support to employees who are suffering from stress from other sources.
- 1.2 Under the terms of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 PDSE has a duty to provide a workplace that is safe and healthy and, as far as is reasonably practical, ensures employees do not suffer from illnesses caused by work-related stress.
- 1.3 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 place a duty on PDSE to assess and control the degree of stress in the workplace. If there is a 'reasonable likelihood' that stress could cause ill health, employers also have to provide health surveillance for affected staff.
- 1.4 The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the company not to discriminate against employees who suffer from a disability under the act which includes long term ill health caused by stress at work.
- 1.5 This policy and our Health and Safety Policy work together to:
  - ensure the physical and mental health of all employees
  - promote a healthy, safe and friendly working environment and control and reduce risks to mental health
  - help provide and maintain a supportive and non-judgmental working environment
  - provide effective support to all employees in managing stress and other mental health problems, and to encourage better recognition of mental health issues
  - recognise that the prevention of stress is easier than dealing with it once it has arisen.

## 2. Recognising Stress

- 2.1 Stress is a natural reaction to excessive pressure that is experienced by everybody. In the short term our normal response to stress helps to improve performance. When stress is experienced consistently over a period of time its effects can become harmful and lead to psychological and physical illnesses. Stress itself can be caused by an infinite number of factors, which will vary enormously in different individuals. Personal factors like family problems can

easily affect an individual's work, while work-based factors like bullying, lack of training or poor working conditions can just as easily spill over into the home.

2.2 Recognising stress can be difficult as its effects will vary from person to person but the following signs can sometimes indicate that someone is experiencing difficulty:

- Changes in behaviour
- Indecisiveness
- Absenteeism
- Increase in the use of tobacco or alcohol.

2.3 Although PDSE has no control over external factors, which may be more difficult to identify, the Health and Safety Executive has identified 6 main causes of stress at work which PDSE can affect:

1. Demands made on employees;
2. The level of control employees have over their work;
3. The support employees receive from managers and colleagues;
4. The clarity of an employee's role within the Practice;
5. The nature of relationships at work; and
6. The way that changes are managed.

2.4 PDSE aims to reduce and manage stress before it becomes a problem and welcomes suggestions about how an alteration of one or more of these factors might produce a better working environment.

### **3. Procedure**

- Individuals are responsible for their own health, safety and welfare and should explicitly identify any concerns they have about their own welfare or excessive levels of stress, to their line manager or identified individual in the Practice.
- PDSE will always listen to any concerns employees raise. Employees should always speak to their line manager in the first instance, but in the event that this is not possible, please direct concerns to [pdsehr@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:pdsehr@plymouth.ac.uk). All such concerns will be treated with respect and dignity.
- PDSE recognises that stress and other mental health issues may require periods of sick leave or absence in order to recover from their effects. Where possible, and with appropriate medical advice, PDSE may try to keep the employee in work if this is deemed best for their health. This may include reasonable adjustments to work on a temporary or permanent basis.

- The return to work of employees who have been absent due to stress will be appropriately managed.
- All cases will be dealt with in accordance with PDSE's policy on equality and diversity, details of which are available in the policy on the website.
- All discussions, requests for help and advice will be kept strictly confidential and the information gathered will be held in accordance with the National Data Protection Legislation.
- PDSE may provide access to specialist psychological assistance if appropriate as recommended through Occupational Health.