Community Counts
Milnbank
Housing Association
53 Ballindalloch Drive, Glasgow G31 3DQ

TO:	Management Committee
PREPARED BY:	Linda Sichi (Deputy CEO)
SUBJECT:	Stress Management Policy
DATE OF MEETING:	08 September 2024
DATE SUBSEQUENT REVIEW	09 March 2026
APPROVED BY:	Paul Martin (CEO)

STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY



If you have difficulty with reading this policy, including any difficulties with sight or hearing, or if you require this document translated into another language, please contact us and we will be happy to provide this information in a format that suits your needs.

LS/MARCH.2026/REF: P47

STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

CONTENTS

1. MHA's Strategic Objectives
2. MHA's Values
3. Regulatory & Legislative Compliance
4. Policy Introduction
5. Principles Training & Development Policy
6. Definitions of stress
7. Confidentiality
8. Line Managers Responsibilities
9. Employee Responsibilities
10. Managing Stress – Proactive measures
11. Managing Stress – Reactive measures
12. Additional sources of information
13. Equality & Human Rights
14. Data Collection
15. Monitoring & Review of Strategy

Appendices

1. MILNBANK HOUSING ASSOCIATION (MHA) STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

MHA's mission is to provide excellent homes and services in a thriving community. We believe that people living in the MHA community should:

- Have warm, safe, and affordable homes, and receive excellent services from MHA.
- Live in neighbourhoods that are clean and well cared for, with real community pride.
- Have access to opportunities and services that promote a good quality of life.

2. MHA's VALUES

Working as 'One Milnbank' so that we offer the same quality of services, support and housing to all tenants and residents.

3. LEGAL & REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

3.1 Although there is no specific legislation on stress the following are relevant through case law.

Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 - Under section 2 (1), employers have a duty to 'ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees'

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 - Requires that employers make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the H&S of its employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work, and this includes stress.

Equality Act 2010

3.2 The Board of Management leads and directs MHA to ensure good outcomes for its tenants and other service users. The Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework Financial & Regulatory, Standard 4 states that the governing body bases its decisions pf good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose. MHA adheres to all relevant legal employment requirements associated with this policy and the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 plus all subsequent legislation and guidance.

4. POLICY INTRODUCTION

4.1 Milnbank Housing Association (MHA) is committed to reducing and where possible eliminating stress for its employees. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define stress as the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them. Stress is not an illness; however, it can be a contributory factor to many conditions and can cause both physical and mental illnesses.

4.2 Stress can result in poor mental health of employees even if the effects

are not severe enough to result in a medical diagnosis. MHA recognises the need to promote a culture of good mental and physical health in its duty of care under the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

4.3 Stress in the workplace is not new. Employers have a legal duty to create a safe working environment for their employees. The HSE introduced Stress Management Standards several years ago and implemented tools to accompany them which have continued to develop.

The management standards cover six key areas of (1) Demands (2) Support (3) Change (4) Control (5) Role and (6) Relationships. Full descriptions of the standards and typical behaviours which can be a sign of stress are available in Appendix A below and from the HSE website Work-related stress and how to manage it - HSE.

4.4 It is important to distinguish the difference between stress and pressure. In most work situations some pressure is healthy, but stress is when a person experiences too much pressure, and the effect of the pressure becomes negative.

5. PRINCIPLES OF THE STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

MHA's Stress Management Policy aims to:

- Promote a culture of mental and physical wellbeing.
- Increase awareness of stress and what contributes to this.
- Provide managers with a clear process to use should an employee report that they are experiencing symptoms of stress.
- Provide details of the proactive measures MHA will implement to help reduce and, where possible, eliminate stress and its causes.

6. DEFINATIONS

The following are definitions which will be applied in the policy context.

- **Stress** - the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them.
- **Proactive measures** - aims to prevent the harm caused by stress by acting before it occurs.
- **Reactive measures** - actions which will respond to any stress related situation to minimise harm once it has occurred and assist in preventing it occurring again.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

MHA will ensure that employees experiencing stress are dealt with in the strictest of confidence. MHA will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current GDPR.

8. LINE MANAGER RESPONSBILITIES

Line managers play a key role in managing stress within the workplace. It is vital to the success of a stress management policy that managers have

a thorough understanding of what stress is, what the causes and early signs are. The line manager's responsibilities include:

●Attending stress awareness training.
●To be aware of the signs of stress and intervene where necessary.
●Promote MHAs culture of a physically & mentally healthy organisation.
●To manage staff effectively to minimise them experiencing stress.
●Where issues of stress arise, intervene as early as possible.
●To ensure that a stress risk assessment is conducted with their staff on a routine basis.
●Ensure staff contribute MHA's stress questionnaires when necessary.
●To take steps to assist employees maintain a state of good mental health (e.g. encourage rest breaks, fresh air, and holidays).

9. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

●To raise any concerns regarding stress at the earliest opportunity.
●Participate in MHAs measures to assist in reducing/eliminating stress.
●To be aware of HSE Risk Management standards & signs of stress.
●To raise any concerns, they may have for their colleagues regarding stress with a manager.

10. MANAGING STRESS – PROACTIVE MEASURES

To support MHA's commitment to reduce the risk of stress occurring, MHA will ensure that the following initiatives are implemented and adopted.

Managers training - MHA will ensure that all line managers attend stress awareness training and subsequent refreshers at appropriate intervals.

Stress Risk Assessments - MHA will commit to conducting a stress risk assessment among staff on a periodic basis to help inform the function risk assessment and assist in identifying any 'at risk' areas within MHA.

Analysing Information - MHA commits to review appropriate data e.g. absence, employee concerns, employee questionnaires to identify areas where stress is or could be a risk.

Risk Assessments - Stress risk assessments will be conducted periodically (this maybe MHA wide or at function level).

Promoting the Wellbeing of Employees – MHA is committed to facilitating a culture of promoting physical and mental health in the following ways:

●Provide stress awareness sessions for staff.
●Ensure that staff take any allocated breaks.

●Manage staff holiday entitlement in order that leave is taken throughout the year at reasonable intervals.
●Promote the benefits of physical activity for both physical and mental health.
●Ensure that staff are not working excessive hours on a regular and prolonged basis.
●Provide opportunities for employees to be active throughout their working day where possible and appropriate.

11. MANAGING STRESS – REACTIVE MEASURES

Stress is a very individualised condition and, as a result, it is unfortunate that even with the above measures being put in place some employees may find themselves experiencing a stressful period in their lives. This may be caused by work or personal circumstances, or a combination of both.

11a Managing Individual Stress Concerns – MHA will use the process below if an employee raises concerns of stress.

- ⇒ Line Manager becomes aware that an employee is experiencing stress.
- ⇒ Line Manager to arrange to meet staff member within 3 days to discuss the issues.
- ⇒ The line manager will give the employee a stress questionnaire to complete and agree when the employee should return this by. (Appendix B).
- ⇒ The employee completes the questionnaire and returns the line manager.
- ⇒ Arrange a second meeting to discuss the questionnaire, identify ways of managing the issues, and any support or interim arrangements that may assist the employee.
- ⇒ If appropriate, the employee may be referred to an occupational health specialist, for counselling or to any other appropriate service.
- ⇒ During this meeting an action plan will be developed to summarise discussions and lay out actions that will be taken by MHA, line manager and employee.
- ⇒ If the employee is absent because of stress the absence will continue to be managed in line with MHAs absence management procedures, as well as providing the employee with the questionnaire to complete.

If the employee's line manager is a contributing factor to the employee's stress, another appropriate manager e.g. a manager one level above will conduct the meetings).

If it is identified that the stress is being caused by another employee, then appropriate investigations may be required in line with MHAs Grievance Policy.

If through discussions with an employee a line manager becomes aware of a stress risk, they will raise this in the appropriate way to ensure it is addressed at an organisational level. This will be done while maintaining the employee's confidentiality.

11b Occupational Health - If deemed appropriate an employee may be referred to an occupational health specialist to help identify any actions that could be taken to assist the employee.

11c Counselling Service - The details of the service available to employees are displayed on the shared teams file under Health, Safety & Wellbeing or can be sought from the line managers.

12. ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/

https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/workplace-mental- health/work-and-stress/

13. EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS

MHA's is committed to equal opportunities, and we will respond to the different needs and service requirements of individuals, and we will not discriminate against any individual for any reason outlined in Equality & Human Rights Legislation.

14. DATA COLLECTION

MHA will manage all personal data in accordance with our obligations under the GDPR regulations and the Association's Policy.

15. POLICY MONITORING & REVIEW

The Managing Stress Policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management every three years or in line with EVH updates, or as otherwise deemed necessary.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, therefore may be updated or withdrawn at any time. If this happens it will be communicated to you accordingly.

APPENDIX A

Managing Stress

The HSE set management standards to help employers deal with and manage stress in the workplace. There are 6 main areas that have been found to contribute to the causes of stress, as shown below. For full details please refer directly to the HSE website.

Possible causes	Managers should	Managers should not
Demands: employees can become overloaded if they feel they cannot cope with the amount of work or type of work they are being asked to do	• Ensure that employees understand what they have to do and how to do it • Assess employees' workload and decide of it is advisable to take on additional work, if they are already under pressure • Review processes on a regular basis to see if they can be improved	• Ask for tasks to be completed under more demanding deadlines without reviewing existing workload • Stick rigidly to rules and procedures
Control: employees can feel disaffected and perform poorly if they have no say over how and when they do their work	• Consult employees where appropriate about decisions • Review performance to identify strengths and weaknesses	• Not listening when employees ask for help • Manage under a 'microscope'
Support: levels of sickness absence often rise if employees feel they cannot talk to managers about issues that are troubling them	• Operate a no-blame culture passing positive feedback about the employee to senior management. • Praising good work and acknowledging the employees' efforts	• Assume that everyone is OK. • Persistently ask employees to tell them what is wrong • Have no consideration of work life balance
Relationships: a failure to build relationships based on good behaviour and trust can lead to problems related to discipline, grievances and bullying	• Treat all employees with the same importance • As a manager, admit your own mistakes • Keep employee issues private and confidential • Have clear procedures for misconduct and poor performance as there are differences in managing them	• Trying to keep the peace rather than sort out problems • Make promises then not deliver • Pass on own stress to others • Pull employees up for talking/laughing during working hours unless this is excessive and affecting work performance
Role: If employees do not know what is expected of them then they may feel anxious about their work and the organisation	• Explain exactly what is required of employees • Maintain and communicate a close link between individual objectives and organisational goals	• Keep employees in the dark and then pull them up for not delivering/performing
Change: Change needs to be managed effectively or it can lead to uncertainty and insecurity	• Keep employees informed of what is happening in the organisation • Involve them in the change process where appropriate	• Withhold information from their staff regarding changes within the organisation.

APPENDIX B

Milnbank Housing Association
53 Ballindalloch Drive, Glasgow G31 3DQ

Individual Employee Stress Questionnaire

You have been given this questionnaire to complete as it has been highlighted to your line manager that you are or may be feeling stressed. The purpose of this questionnaire is for you to identify what factors may be contributing to you feeling stressed, and for you to think about, and detail what you feel would help you manage your current situation. Once you have completed the form, please return it to your line manager who will then arrange a meeting with you to discuss your stressors and what support may be available. If, due to the circumstances it would be better to discuss your current situation with an alternative manager this can be arranged.

Stressors

Please list the factors that you feel are contributing to you feeling stressed, once you have done this, please rank them from 1-10 with 10 having the biggest impact on you and 1 the least. The factors detailed may be within or out with the workplace.

Stressor	*Stress Factor* Rating (1-10)
Workplace factors – *e.g. Workload/working relationships/work/life balance*	
External factors – *e.g. home life/family/financial*	

Moving Forward

Taking each stressor in turn please complete the below section prior to the meeting. Section 3 & 4 will be completed at the meeting with your line manager.

Stressor 1 – Outline the background

How do you see the situation being resolved

Stressor 2 – Outline the background

How do you see the situation being resolved

Stressor 3 – Outline the background

How do you see the situation being resolved

This section below will be completed with your line manager at the meeting

Section 3 - Agreed Actions

Section 4 – Review Date

_____ _____

Employee signature ***Date***

_____ _____

Line managers signature ***Date***