



**THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM**

Health and Safety Policy

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS MANAGEMENT

UHSP/11/OSM/01

This document sets out in more detail the arrangements for compliance with University Health and Safety Policy at Budget Centre level and it gives guidance on how these requirements may be met. This document forms a part of the University Health and Safety Policy. It has been approved by the Environment, Health and Safety Executive Committee, in consultation with the Joint Safety Advisory Committee, and it will be subject to review.

**Reviewed October 2001
UHSP/11/OSM/01**

Occupational Stress Management

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- 1 This Health and Safety Policy Statement sets out the University's aims and objectives for the management of health and safety in relation to harmful stress at work.
- 2 The University of Birmingham, as an employer, places a high value on maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all its employees. The University recognises that this duty of care extends to mental health as well as physical health at work. Mental health problems have many causes, including stresses in the workplace and in the life of employees away from work. Whilst the University has no control over external factors it is committed to identifying sources of stress in the workplace and taking action to eliminate or reduce them.
- 3 In order to achieve this the University has the following key aims and objectives:
 - to increase general awareness of stress and methods to combat it;
 - action to combat workplace stressors;
 - assist staff in managing stress in others and themselves;
 - managing problems that do occur and providing a confidential referral service;
 - managing the return to work of those who have had problems.
- 4 The University will publish a strategy for stress management that is intended to achieve the objectives above. This strategy will be subject to regular review to monitor progress and to consider the efficacy of action taken.

ORGANISATION AND ARRANGEMENTS

Any strategy to eliminate sources of stress in the workplace has to be a partnership between the management of The University, the management of its constituent parts and individual members of staff.

UNIVERSITY LEVEL

At University level the Environment, Safety Executive Committee, in consultation with the Joint Safety Advisory Committee, have oversight of the management of health and safety risks, which includes risks to mental and physical health. This policy will be monitored by these groups on behalf of the University Council.

The University Staffing Committee has policies on harassment and equal opportunities and has the responsibility to monitor their implementation.

The Health and Safety Unit is responsible for managing the provision of a referral service for members of staff, either in-house or provided by contractor. This service will provide for an assessment of individuals by trained and accredited counsellors and where appropriate short term intervention to assist staff. Where longer term assistance is required staff may be referred to other providers. Access to the service will be by referral from the Occupational Health Physician or Occupational Nursing Adviser in the Health and Safety Unit or be self-referral. The service will be strictly confidential and information on the service provided and availability will be widely publicised in The University.

The Staff Development Unit will provide awareness sessions for managers and facilitate training for all levels of staff. The training programme will be published as part of the strategy for stress management.

BUDGET CENTRE LEVEL

Heads of Budget Centres are responsible for ensuring good communications within their budget centre and for fostering a supportive environment in which stress can be discussed.

All persons in a management role, such as supervisors of staff, research group leaders and managers should take the opportunities provided to make themselves aware of stress, its identification and causes and ways to eliminate or control it. Such persons should identify the training needs of individuals under their

control and ensure that they match individual's abilities to the tasks committed to them. They should also provide support to staff who are undergoing difficulties and encourage referral to the referral service.

INDIVIDUALS

Individuals have a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and that of others that might be affected by their actions. Staff are strongly encouraged to discuss their own stress-related issues with either their manager, or occupational health professionals in the Health and Safety Unit or the referral service.

Individuals are also encouraged to support colleagues showing early signs of stress.

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