



Committee Approver	OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
Stakeholder Consultation	
Date Approved	23 February 2023
Classification	Policy (sitting as an appendix to H&S Policy)
Title	Stress, Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
Revision Date	February 2023
Revised by	Director of Business Support Health & Safety Advisor Human Resources Team
Next Revision Date	February 2026
Related Documents	H&S Policy
Location of Electronic Copy	F:/LIVE POLICIES

## 1. Policy Statement

Viewpoint places a high importance on ensuring a safe and healthy working environment for all employees and recognises the need to protect our employees from the risks associated with stress.

Viewpoint has a responsibility to protect workers from stress at work. By recognising the signs of stress, Viewpoint will be able to take steps to stop, lower and manage stress in our workplace.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

To take reasonable steps to assess the risks and reduce the likelihood of employees suffering from work-related stress and other adverse mental health conditions.

To help staff to understand the wider issues associated with mental health, its management, the identification of problems (including the possible effects of health on work and work on health) and appropriate coping mechanisms.

To develop and promote an open culture of mental health and physical wellbeing awareness, communication and risk management.

### Definitions

- 1) **Health:** "A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not just the absence of disease or infirmity." (World Health Organisation)
- 2) **Occupational Health:** "...the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations by preventing departures from health, controlling risks and the adaption of work to people and people to their jobs". (International Labour Organisation ILO/WHO 1950)
- 3) **Wellbeing:** "...a state of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one's goals, and where one enjoys a satisfactory quality of life." (Economic and Social Research Council)
- 4) **Stress** "In a medical or biological context [stress](#) is a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stresses can be external (from the environment, psychological, or social situations) or internal (illness, or from a medical procedure)." ([William C. Shiel](#), MD)

- 5) The HSE's formal definition of work-related stress is "The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work".
- 6) Sutherland -v- Hatton (2002) pronounced that the legal test for cases of alleged ill-health caused by occupational stress is "*whether this kind of harm to this particular employee was reasonably foreseeable*".
- 7) Barber -v- Somerset Council (2004) concluded that an employer was only fulfilling [their] duty of care if [they] "*kept actively and reasonably up to date with developments in Health & Safety and guidance on stress*".

## Procedures

- 1) Viewpoint operates an 'Occupation Health' regime and this is defined in our Human Resources Policies. Whereas the Occupational Health policy deals primarily with health surveillance and the management of occupational illnesses and absences, this 'Stress, Mental Health & Wellbeing' Policy is intended to proactively manage mental health and general wellbeing amongst employees.
- 2) Viewpoint recognises that certain employees may suffer ill-health as a result of undue stress at work or from external factors. However, Viewpoint will generally assume that an employee can withstand the normal pressures of the job for which they are employed unless the employee indicates otherwise or there are plain indications (e.g. from colleagues or other initiatives detailed within this policy) of occupational stress or other mental health considerations. All information provided by an employee in terms of their ability to cope with the demands of the job will be taken at face value, unless there is good reason to think to the contrary.
- 3) Viewpoint will aim to develop a system and culture of supervision, teamwork and staff interaction which aims to support and protect all employees and take a proactive approach to reducing stress and promoting mental health and wellbeing awareness in the workplace. To this end, all Managers and staff will be made aware of the following indicators of mental health issues (including stress) within individuals and groups:

Indicators of mental health issues in individuals	Indicators of stress or conditions not conducive to good mental health within groups / departments
<p>1) Emotional - Negative or depressive feelings, disappointment with self, increased emotional reactions, loneliness or withdrawn, loss of motivation commitment and confidence, mood swings.</p> <p>2) Mental - Confusion, indecision, inability to concentrate, poor memory, significant decrease in productivity, decrease in motivation, decrease in enjoyment of life.</p> <p>3) Changes from normal behaviour - Changes in eating habits, increased smoking, drinking or drug taking 'to cope', mood swings effecting behaviour, changes in sleep patterns, twitchy nervous behaviour, changes in attendance.</p>	<p>1) Disputes and disaffection within the group</p> <p>2) Increase in staff turnover</p> <p>3) Increase in complaints and grievances</p> <p>4) Increased sickness absence</p> <p>5) Increased reports of stress</p> <p>6) Difficulty in attracting new staff</p> <p>7) Poor performance</p> <p>8) Customer dissatisfaction or complaints</p>

4) Employees will be encouraged to:

- raise any concerns regarding stress or perceived mental health or general wellbeing issues affecting themselves or colleagues at the earliest opportunity
- participate in Viewpoint 's measures to assist in reducing stress and improving the mental health and wellbeing culture
- be aware of the HSE Management Standards on Work Related Stress
- inform Management staff of any work process that appears to be putting undue stress on staff.

5) A 'mental health' training needs analysis will be carried out and appropriate training provided to individuals and groups of employees. This will include consideration of:

- General mental health awareness training for all staff
- 'Mental Health First-Aider' training for a key person(s)

- 6) Viewpoint will conduct and review Stress Risk Assessments on a periodic basis, based on the HSE's Management Standards on Work Related Stress. The risk assessment will incorporate the primary sources of stress at work as defined within the Management Standards:
  - Demands
  - Control
  - Support
  - Relationships
  - Role
  - Change
- 7) Viewpoint will analyse staff absence data and other HR employee reports on a regular basis as a means of early identification of where stress or mental health issues may be a contributory factor to the absences.
- 8) When mental health issues are identified or suspected amongst employees, due consideration will be given to any reasonable adjustments that can be made to the role, workload and responsibilities. Whether an adjustment is reasonable will depend upon the individual circumstances. External specialist advice and support will be sought where appropriate.
- 9) Viewpoint will aim to achieve continual improvement in the area of 'employee wellbeing'. A Wellbeing Management System will be developed, including training programmes, bite-size webinars, awareness raising campaigns and the potential membership of external schemes.

### 3. Legislation/related policies

- Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, as amended
- HSE Management Standards for Work Related Stress
- INDG430 How to Tackle Work Related Stress
- Securing Health Together (Government Strategy for Occupational Health), 2000
- EVH Model Attendance and Absence Management Policy, Jan 2013
- Working for a Healthier Tomorrow, Dame Carol Black 2008
- BS EN ISO 16000:2010 Guidance on Social Responsibility, November 2010

- Absence Management: Annual Survey Report 2015, CIPD and Simply Health
- Sickness Absence in the Labour Market, February 2014, Office for National Statistics
- Health & Safety Statistics (HSE annual publication)

#### 4. Scope

This Policy applies to all Viewpoint employees and Board members.

#### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

##### **Board**

The role of Viewpoint's Board is to ensure that this policy, as well as any associated policies, are regularly reviewed, as required, or in accordance with the usual cycle of policy review.

The Board will, in fulfilling its function, ensure that it complies as necessary with this policy, and the associated policies, procedures and documentation which support it.

##### **Executive and Leadership Teams**

The role of the Executive and Leadership Teams is responsibility for ensuring that this policy, and the associated policies, procedures and documentation which support it, are implemented within Viewpoint.

The Executive and Leadership Teams shall ensure that procedures are in place and operating. The Executive and Leadership Teams shall also ensure that relevant managers and team members familiarise themselves with this policy, and the associated policies, procedures and documentation which support it, and ensure it is fully implemented. Any associated training must be undertaken.

##### **Staff**

All staff are responsible for ensuring that they familiarise themselves with this policy, and the associated policies, procedures and documentation which support it, as well as undertaking any associated training. It is the responsibility of the individual staff member to highlight any concerns to their Line Manager or to the Human Resources Department as soon as reasonably practicable.

#### 6. Monitoring & Evaluation

To ensure this policy remains current and effective it will be reviewed every 3 years or where a need is identified by monitoring methods, for example through audits, inspections or incident reports.