

Participative and proactive policies and procedures



Nottingham City Homes, United Kingdom

www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk
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The issue

A stress survey carried out at Nottingham City Homes by union representatives in close cooperation with management found that the three main causes of stress were being set unrealistic targets, a lack of communication within the organisation and insufficient time to do the job. To improve the working conditions, the company aimed to develop a stress policy and a proactive stress and wellbeing risk assessment process, and to boost awareness about the importance of managing stress across the whole organisation.

Action taken

Nottingham City Homes set out to implement an official stress management policy in close cooperation with the trade union. The policy is based on the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Management Standards for work-related stress and it focuses on managing the causes of and tackling work-related stress. Based on the trade union feedback, there is great emphasis on participation and proactive measures.

Proactive stress and wellbeing risk assessments (PSWRAs) are conducted by managers with the help of a health and safety team. The results of the previous union stress survey as well as trade union feedback were used to inform developments where possible. Results of PSWRAs will be used to amend and refresh both the stress management policy and stress management training. Moreover, as part of the PSWRA process, all employees are given stress information sheets focusing on actions related to the main areas included in the HSE's Management Standards (demands, control, support, relationships, role and change).

As part of the stress management policy, training on psychosocial risks and stress was delivered to all line managers to increase their skills to manage stress in their teams. Employees were also provided with wellbeing training, including discussions on how to deal with difficult conversations they may have with customers on issues such as taxes.

A number of mental health awareness-raising activities have been run, including regular 'Tea and Talk' sessions to encourage employees to talk about aspects affecting their health and wellbeing at work. A learning management system has also recently been introduced to give employees easier access to stress awareness training and related materials.

All employees receive an annual personal development review and regular one-to-ones with managers, where performance and potential support needs are discussed and reviewed, including tight deadlines, communication problems and work demands.





Results achieved

- There has been a noticeable rise in stress awareness. There is a greater understanding of stress factors and new ideas are being raised about how they could be managed.
- The stress management policy and associated training contributed to the company being awarded the Investors in People Gold award.
- Sickness absence due to stress, depression and other mental health problems is closely monitored year on year and a downward trend is expected in the next few years.

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