



## STRESS AT WORK: POLICY FOR STAFF

1. Mind in Croydon recognises that stress at work is a health and safety problem and that the organisation has a responsibility to take all reasonable measures to prevent stress at work.

2. Stress suffered by employees may be caused in several different ways:

- It may be directly caused by the **situation** at work, e.g. staff shortages, conflict with another staff member, too much work, a crisis or traumatic event.
- it may result from working with very distressed people
- it may be caused by stresses in the employee's personal life which are unrelated to work but which affect work performance

Mind as employer will need to react in different ways according to the cause of the stress suffered by the employee.

3. Employees have a duty not to endanger themselves or others (**i.e. to look after themselves**) and to co-operate with their employer in meeting statutory requirements.

4. Mind in Croydon will ensure that risk assessments that it undertakes will seek to identify workplace stressors and put in place systems to eliminate or minimise such stressors in accordance with relevant Health and Safety legislation.

### 5. **External Support and Advice Line (ESAL) For Staff**

This service is provided to all Mind in Croydon employees, their partner, spouse and dependant children up to 21 years old. The service is based around a free, confidential telephone link which can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week including Bank Holidays. The service is provided by Focus EAP Limited, an independent, professional organisation with many years experience of providing services of this nature. It is totally confidential and no information of a personal nature will be shared with anyone else within Mind in Croydon, unless staff choose to tell them. A call to the External Support and Advice Line will give immediate telephone counselling help and professional advice on a full range of personal or work related problems.

6. Mind in Croydon employees are expected to report **work-related** stress to their line manager or the Chief Executive. This information will not be passed on to other staff without the permission of the staff member concerned. It may, however, be necessary to bring it to the attention of the Chairman and/or Chief Executive if the stress or its cause has a bearing on the interest of Mind in Croydon as a whole (e.g. if the situation is affecting other staff or service users).

7. The line manager and/or Chief Executive will do everything they reasonably can to offer support to the employee and to deal with the problem reported to them. Attention will be given to assessing the cause of stress at work and introducing measures to reduce or prevent stress. The advice and assistance of the Counselling Service may be sought in this.

8. In the event of a traumatic event occurring at work, e.g. an assault, the opportunity of counselling will be offered and, if required, arranged and funded by Mind in Croydon. Time off work for recuperation will also be offered. Such incidents should be reported to the Risk Committee in order that appropriate action can be considered.

9. Where a member of staff is suffering from stress resulting from their **personal** life and feels that they could benefit from counselling every effort will be made to assist them to arrange counselling. However, in this situation Mind in Croydon does not have the resources to meet counselling fees on behalf of staff although staff can access the **External Support and Advice Line**.

10. Where stress causes deterioration in job performance this will be treated as a health problem and the sufferer will be encouraged to seek help under the terms of this policy. There will be no discrimination against individuals suffering from stress.

11. Information can be made available to employees on the causes and effects of stress.

12. Efforts will be made to offer alternative employment to employees who are unable to continue in their job because of stress-related illness but this may not be possible as Mind in Croydon manages a number of tightly staffed, specialist projects and has limited resources.

13. Efforts will be made to alter working arrangements, including the office environment, hours, type of work etc. to enable employees suffering from a stress related illness to continue in employment. As in paragraph 12, however, this may not be possible because of Mind's limited resources and the specialist nature of its projects.

14. In order to prevent stress related to caring responsibilities, employees are reminded that they are entitled to unpaid parental leave where they have children under a certain age (currently 5 years) and to unpaid leave in respect of emergencies relating to dependents. Full details are available from the Human Resources and Admin. Manager.

15. This policy will be reviewed at three-yearly intervals.

**Reviewed and Updated by the Board of Mind in Croydon April 2011**