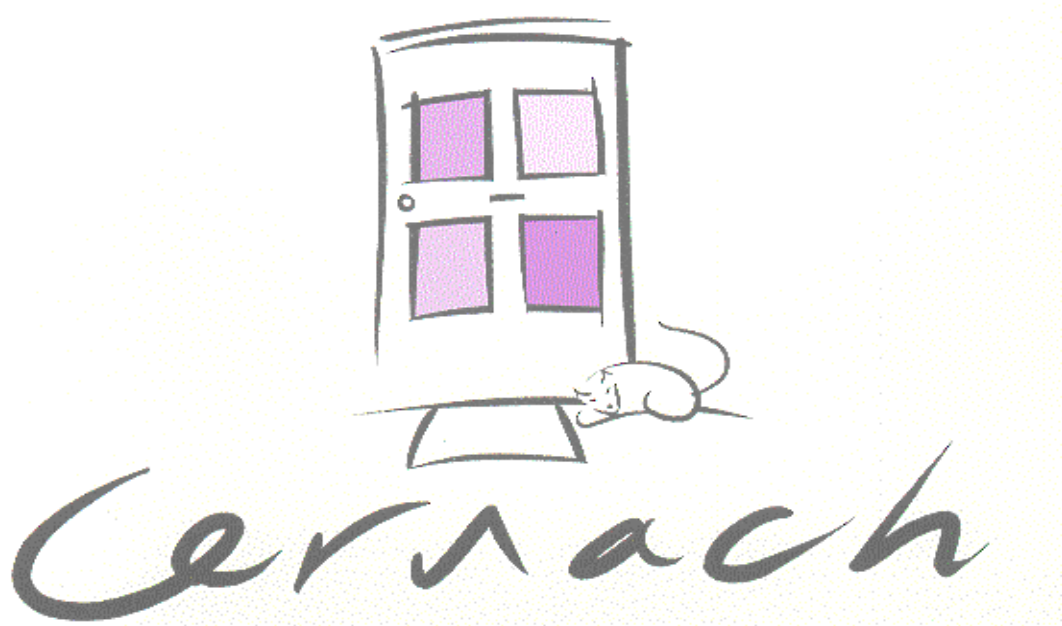




Stress Management policy (model EVH policy)

Date approved
Next review:

August 2026
August 2029

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cernach is committed to reducing, and where possible, eliminating stress for its employees. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines 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.
- 1.2 Stress can result in poor mental health of employees even if the effects are not severe enough to result in a medical diagnosis. Cernach 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.

2. Background

- 2.1 Employers have a legal duty to create a safe working environment for their employees. The HSE set stress management standards which focus on six main areas of work design which can affect individual stress levels. The management standards are:

• Demands	• Control
• Support	• Role
• Change	• Relationships

- 2.2 Full descriptions of the standards and typical behaviours which can be a sign of stress are available from the HSE website at the following link - [Work-related stress and how to manage it - HSE](#).
- 2.3 It is important to distinguish the difference between stress and pressure. In most work situations some pressure is healthy, but stress is when an employee experiences too much pressure, and the effect of the pressure becomes negative.

3. Policy Aims

- 3.1 This policy aims to:
- Promote a culture of mental and physical wellbeing for all employees.
 - 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 whether this is work related or personal.
 - Provide details of the proactive measures Cernach will implement to help reduce and, where possible, eliminate stress and its causes.

3.2 Legal Framework

3.2.1 Although there is no specific legislation on stress the following pieces of legislation are relevant:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010

3.3 Definitions

3.3.1 The following are definitions which will be applied in the context of this policy:

- **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 taking action 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.

4. Line Manager and employee responsibilities

4.1 Line managers play a key role in promoting a positive workplace environment. It is vital to the success of a stress policy that managers have a thorough understanding of what stress is, what the causes and early signs are so they can work to reduce this within their teams. The line manager's responsibilities include:

- Attending stress awareness training.
- To be aware of the signs of stress and intervene where necessary.
- Promote the organisations culture of a physically and mentally healthy organisation.
- To manage employees effectively to minimise them experiencing stress.
- To ensure employees within their teams are trained to carry out their duties and provided with development opportunities.
- To monitor workload, working hours and holidays of employees within their teams.
- 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 to the organisation's stress questionnaires (appendix 1) when necessary.

- To take steps to assist employees to maintain a state of good mental health e.g. encourage rest breaks, fresh air, and holidays.

4.2 **Employee Responsibilities**

- To raise any concerns, they may have regarding stress at the earliest opportunity
- To participate in measures to assist in reducing or eliminating stress
- To be aware of the HSE Risk Management standards and the signs of stress
- To raise any concerns, they may have for their colleagues in regard to stress with a manager.

5. **Managing Stress**

- 5.1 To support the organisation's commitment to reduce the risk of stress occurring, Cernach will ensure that the following initiatives are implemented and adopted.
- 5.2 Managers training - all line managers will attend stress awareness training and subsequent refreshers at appropriate intervals. Training will also be provided that is supportive of promoting a culture of mental and physical wellbeing across the organisation.
- 5.3 Stress Risk Assessments - stress risk assessments will be carried out among employees on annual basis to help inform the team risk assessment. This will assist in identifying any 'at risk' areas within the organisation.
- 5.4 Analysing Information - Commitment will be given to review appropriate data e.g. absence, employee concerns, exit questionnaires to help identify areas where stress is or could be a risk.

5.5 **Promoting the Wellbeing of Employees** The following initiatives will be in place to promote a culture of physical and mental wellbeing:

- Promote stress awareness sessions for employees and encourage attendance
- Encourage employees take allocated breaks
- Manage employee 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.
- Address any excessive working patterns at 1-2-1s and arrange ad hoc catch ups where appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for employees to be active throughout their working day where possible and appropriate.

5.6 Reactive Measures

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

5.7 Managing Individual Stress Concerns

Cernach will use the process below if an employee raises concerns of stress.

- Once a manager becomes aware that an employee is experiencing stress, the manager should arrange to meet with the employee within 3 days to discuss the issues.
- The line manager will give the employee a stress questionnaire to complete and agrees when the employee should return the questionnaire by (appendix 1).
- The employee completes the questionnaire and returns this to the line manager.
- A second meeting is arranged 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 the organisation, line manager and employee.
- If the employee is absent as a result of stress the absence will continue to be managed in line with the absence management procedures, as well as providing the employee with the questionnaire to complete.

5.8 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.

5.9 If it is identified that the stress is being caused by another employee and the employee raises a grievance, then appropriate investigations may be required in line with the grievance policy.

5.10 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.

5.11 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.

5.12 Counselling Service

EVH is partnered with Rowan, which is a professional counselling service offering confidential and impartial support to employees. Rowan's contact details are as follows: Phone: 01738 562005 Email: rowan@rowan-consultancy.co.uk. Further information is available on their website - www.rowan-consultancy.co.uk

Please note sessions are completely confidential. Your name or contents of the session will not be shared with EVH or Cernach Housing.

6. General Data Protection Regulations

- 6.1 Cernach will ensure that employees experiencing stress are dealt with sensitively and in confidence. We will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Cernach's employee privacy notice.
- 6.2 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 1

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

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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

Cernach Housing Association Equality Impact Assessment Tool

Name of the policy / proposal to be assessed	Whistleblowing Policy	Is this a new policy / proposal or a revision?	New policy
Person(s) responsible for the assessment	Lindsay Crawford, Corporate Services Officer		
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy / proposal	To define the Association's stress management.		
2. Who is intended to benefit from the policy / proposal? <i>(e.g. applicants, tenants, staff, contractors)</i>	Staff		
3. What outcomes are wanted from this policy / proposal ? <i>(e.g. the benefits to customers)</i>	The policy aims to set out a principles and guidance for line managers and employees to manage when stress impacts the workplace..		

4. Which protected characteristics could be affected by the proposal? <i>(tick all that apply)</i> ☐ Age ☐ Disability ☐ Marriage & Civil Partnership ☐ Pregnancy/Maternity ☐ Race ☐ Religion or Belief ☐ Gender ☐ Gender Reassignment ☐ Sexual Orientation		
5. If the policy / proposal is not relevant to any of the protected characteristics listed in part 4, state why and end the process here. All groups are impacted by the policy in the same way and there is no obvious effects of the policy on any group more than another. The policy is an EVH model policy, which is in line with best practice.		
6. Describe the likely positive or negative impact(s) the policy / proposal could have on the groups identified in part 4	Positive impact(s)	Negative impact(s)
7. What actions are required to address the impacts arising from this assessment? <i>(This might include; collecting additional data, putting monitoring in place, specific actions to mitigate negative impacts).</i>		

Signed: *L Crawford* (Job title): Corporate Services Officer, Date the Equality Impact Assessment was completed: July 2026