



Stress Policy

All Saints' Church, Walsoken

Please refer to Document S&S_Doc_001 for all Safeguarding and Social requirements.

Specific Policy

This Safeguarding & Social (S&S) sub-policy controls PCC and volunteer stress at church.

All Saints' Church, Walsoken are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our PCC and volunteers. We recognise that stress is a real issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing those items that cause stress.

Definition

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as "The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

Something that causes stress is called a stressor: A stressor is something that causes great worry or emotional difficulty or a negative physical effect on the body.

Church stressors include

- 1) High role demand.
- 2) Low role control.
- 3) Repeated or sustained role effort.

With increasing church role demands and fewer volunteers, stress in church roles will increase.

Policy

All Saints' Church, Walsoken will be vigilant in identifying church stressors and take mitigating actions to eliminate that stress or control the risks from that stress. All Saints' Church, Walsoken has no employees but recognises that stress in the PCC and volunteers can be a significant issue. It is vital that when PCC members or volunteers feel 'under stress' that they communicate this immediately.

Reference Documents

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

NHS Guidance notes (Stress)

Procedure

If you're stressed, whether by your church role or something more personal, the first step to feeling better is to identify the cause. Don't turn to something unhealthy to help you cope, such as smoking or drinking. Not taking control of the situation & doing nothing, can make your problems worse. Some of the keys to good stress management are building emotional strength, being in control of your situation, having a good social network, & adopting a positive outlook.

Stress is not always easy to identify. Some physical and emotional symptoms of stress are.

- 1) Burnout.
- 2) Changes in appetite and digestive issues.
- 3) Emotional changes or moodiness.
- 4) Excessive worry.
- 5) Fatigue.
- 6) Headaches or body pain.
- 7) High blood pressure.
- 8) Increased heart rate.
- 9) Insomnia.
- 10) Uneasiness or restlessness.

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Here is some NHS guidance on what you can do to address stress.

- 1) Identify what is causing the stress. Once identified ask for 'more time', more help' or something else to reduce the stress. You must tell somebody.
- 2) Be active. Exercise won't make your stress disappear, but it can reduce some of the emotional intensity that you're feeling, clearing your thoughts and letting you deal with your problems more calmly.
- 3) Take control. If you think you cannot do anything about your problem, your stress can get worse. That feeling of loss of control is one of the main causes of stress and lack of wellbeing. The act of taking control is empowering, and it's a crucial part of finding a solution that satisfies you and not someone else.
- 4) Connect with people. A good support network of colleagues, friends and family can ease your role troubles and help you see things in a different way. The activities we do with friends can help us relax and relieve stress. Talking things through with a friend may also help you find solutions to your stress.
- 5) Have some "me time". Working long hours, means we often don't spend enough time doing things we really enjoy. It's important to take some time for socialising, relaxation or exercise. You could try setting aside a couple of nights a week for some quality "me time" away from your church role.
- 6) Work smarter, not harder. Working smarter means prioritising your work, concentrating on the tasks that'll make a real difference. Leave the least important tasks to last. Accept that you will not have time for everything!
- 7) Accept the things you can't change. It's not easy but try to accept that there are some things happening to you that you probably can't do anything about. This will help you focus your time and energy more productively.
- 8) Create boundaries and learn to say "No". Being selective about what you take on and saying "No" to things that will unnecessarily add to your load can reduce your stress levels. Creating boundaries, especially with people who add to your stress levels, is a healthy way to protect your well-being.
- 9) Avoid procrastination. Procrastination can cause stress, which negatively affects your health and sleep quality. You may also be more likely to procrastinate in times of stress as a coping mechanism. Give yourself realistic deadlines and work your way down the list in order of priority. Sometimes, adding an item to the list may help you feel better about it, even if it doesn't get done immediately.

Forms

None

Diagrams

None

Appendices

None