Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Stress Policy for School Based Staff

Contents

Introduction

This policy has been developed in consultation with Education and Lifelong Learning Senior Management Team, Head Teachers, and Trade Unions. (Teaching and Non Teaching)

The Executive Director of Education and Lifelong Learning is committed to protecting and promoting the well being of all school based employees and in conjunction with other initiatives seeks to support those colleagues experiencing mental ill health, including anxiety, stress and depression.

It is important that stress is not seen as a personal problem, but an issue which managers, staff and the organisation as a whole are committed to addressing. We all have a role to play in managing stress.

To address any problem you need to understand it. However, it is this lack of understanding, which is one of the causes of the ever-increasing level of concern about stress for the employee and the manager. Many employees are unsure as to what to do for themselves and many managers are unsure as to what actions to take. This is particularly important when tackling work related stress – it requires a partnership between the employee, the Head Teacher, Governing Body and the LEA, a partnership based on honesty and trust where you can express your feelings.

Policy Statement and Commitment

Education and Lifelong Learning recognises that stress can be a considerable risk to both physical and mental health. This policy explains the actions that the LEA will take as an employer with regard to stress related issues in the workplace.

The aims of the policy are:-

- To promote a good, open and supportive climate and working culture, where stress is not seen as a personal weakness.

- To increase general awareness of stress and methods to prevent and combat harmful workplace stress.

- To take action to combat and prevent workplace stressors.

- To assist Head Teachers and employees in managing pressure overload in others and themselves.

- To provide appropriate training at all levels in identification and coping techniques.

- To manage problems that occur and provide a confidential counselling service and other support services.

- To manage the return to work of those who have had stress related problems.

- To monitor and evaluate stress indicators.

Stress and the Law

Ill health resulting from stress caused at work has to be treated in the same way as ill health due to physical causes in the workplace. This means that employers have a legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that health is not put at risk through excessive and sustained levels of stress arising from the way work is organised, or from the day to day demands placed on their workforce.

There is no specific law on controlling stress at work, but broad health and safety law applies:

- Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 employers, have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health safety and welfare at work of all their employees. This includes taking steps to ensure they do not suffer stress related illness as a result of their work.

- Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers have a duty to assess the health safety and risks to which their employees are exposed at work. Stress can be one of those risks.

- Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, employers have a duty not to discriminate against employees on account of their disability as defined under the act. This involves making reasonable adjustments to the work place or to the way the work is done, if the existing working relations or physical features place the disabled person concerned at a substantial disadvantage. Ill health arising from, or exacerbated by, stress at work may constitute to a disability under the Act.

- Other key legislation includes the Employment Rights Act 1996, Working Time Regulations 1998, Sex Discrimination Act 1995, The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and Case Law.

The Court of Appeal has found, in a landmark judgment (Sutherland v Hatton 2002), that the prevention of psychiatric injury at work does not solely depend upon what an employer does or does not do and that the employee has a role to play.

The Court of Appeal's ruling does not allow the employer to ignore the issue of work related stress. Further, the ruling gives employers and employees useful pointers on dealing with stress:

- The employer cannot be expected to know what is going on in the employee's private life or their mind and does not have to make searching enquires about such matters. Signs of stress in an employee must be obvious to management before the organisation can be successfully sued for negligence.

- Employees have a responsibility for deciding whether to carry on and risk their health, leave, or step down.

- Employers are usually entitled to assume that the employee can withstand the normal pressures of the job unless they know of some particular problem or vulnerability.

- Any employer who offers a confidential counselling service with access to treatment is unlikely to be found in breach of duty.

- Stress has many causes besides work. The employer should not be held responsible for all the consequences of an illness if it is only partly due to work.

- An employee must show that his or her illness has been caused by a breach of duty, not just occupational stress. Damages will be reduced to take account of pre-existing disorders or the chance of a claimant would have fallen ill any way.

- Each employee has to be considered separately.

What is Work Related Stress?

The Health and Safety Executive defined work related stress as: -

"The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them". HSE June 2001

"Stress" is not the same as "pressure". Every job brings its own pressures and demands, these are an unavoidable part of working life. Some pressures are a good thing, keeping employees motivated and providing a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. However, people's ability to deal with pressure is not limitless; excessive workplace pressure can cause stress, which may be harmful.

By "stress" we mean something that is negative, a response to too much pressure or too many demands, which the person has difficulty in coping with.

It is important to remember that work related stress is not an illness but if it is prolonged or intense it can lead to increased problems with ill health both physical and psychological:- (also see Appendix 1)

Physical effects

- Heart disease;
- Back pain, gastrointestinal disturbances and various minor illnesses;

Psychological effects

- Anxiety and depression

You are not alone if you feel stressed, in the country as a whole as many as one in five people could be feeling the same way. Work related stress is a symptom of an organisational issue for both employer and employee, not an individual weakness.

Roles and responsibilities

Executive Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

The Executive Director of Education and Lifelong Learning is responsible for:

- Ensuring that adequate systems of monitoring, risk assessment and auditing are in place to ensure compliance with the policy;

- Providing head teachers with the appropriate training and guidance and to ensure they are competent to fully undertake their role and are able to comply with the policy;

- Reviewing and revising the policy on a regular basis.

Governing Body

The Governing Body has a responsibility to:

- Recognize and accept their role and responsibilities in providing a safe and healthy workplace for school based employees;

- To be aware of the impact of their decisions and how they effect school based employees;

- To endorse and adopt this policy and receive regular reports to enable them to monitor, evaluate and review the stress policy;

- Ensure that school based employees are provided with the opportunity and facilities to receive adequate information, instruction and training to ensure compliance with the policy;

- Monitor and review workloads and take steps to ensure that they do not become excessive. The Governing Body should manage poor performance and attendance in order to prevent unnecessary pressure on other members of staff;

- Ensure the Head Teacher has received the appropriate training and guidance so they are competent to fully undertake their role;

- Has a role in managing the pressure levels of the Head Teacher and refer the Head Teacher if need access to other support systems.

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring there are adequate systems of monitoring, risk assessment and auditing in place to ensure compliance with the policy within their school;

- Having a role in offering support to employees and referring them to other support systems;

- Ensuring all members of staff (teaching and non teaching) receive the appropriate training;

- Be able to identify any employees who may be showing the symptoms and of pressure overload;

- Not to regard stress as a weakness and to encourage open discussions of "sources of pressure" at staff meetings;

- Monitoring levels of absenteeism in accordance with the School's Management of Absence;

- Bringing issues to the attention of the Governing Body or the Executive Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, which require action beyond their control;

Personnel Officers

Personnel Officers will:

- Be receptive to the needs of individual employees who refer matters directly to them and offer relevant support where needed;

- Ensure schools are aware of the need for employees to have access to the Employee Counselling Service or a similar support service.

- Arrange referrals to the Occupational Health Service;

- Discuss matters of concern with employees as an alternative to line management;

- Monitor levels of absenteeism in accordance with the Management of Absence and provide relevant information to Heads of Service/Senior Management Team within the Education and Lifelong Learning Theme.

LEA Health and Safety Officers

The LEA Health and Safety Officers will:

- Provide risk assessment advice when requested;

- Advise on continuous development of policy and practice.

Employees

Employees have:

- A personal responsibility to be aware of their own levels of stress and to take action to prevent deterioration in their health;

- Identify the early signs of stress in colleagues and offer support;

- Recognise their own training and development needs with the assistance of their line manager;

- To seek professional help/support at the earliest time.

What are the Causes of Stress?

It is very difficult to predict how or when a particular person will be adversely affected by stress, we all respond differently depending upon our upbringing, training and personal life events. What may cause panic to one individual can be a source of stimulation to another. One of the most important factors in helping a colleague through a time of stress is to ensure they have support, both in the workplace and outside.

Some causes are: - (also see Appendix 2)

Workplace

- Poor working conditions;

- Poor job design and organization;

- Unrealistic targets and workload;

- Insufficient resources;

- Long working hours;

- Rapid change or numerous changes;

- Conflicting priorities;

- Uncertainty/insecurity;

- Poor communication;

- Lack of involvement or empowerment;

- Poor delegation;

- Lack of trust;

- Management style;

- Poor working relationships;

- Harassment and bullying

Domestic

- Marital breakdown;

- Caring responsibilities;

- Illness in the family,

- Financial problems.

Environmental

- Poor housing;

- Overcrowded transport;

- Noise;

- Threat of crime;

- War reports.

Personal

- Gender

- Sexual

- Addiction;

- Bereavement;

- Past abuse.

The pressures a person encounters at work should not be viewed in isolation from their domestic and personal life. By being aware of an employee's normal approach to life and work, together with any changes in their situation, a manager, while not able to change these factors, can make a timely intervention and provide the necessary support.

The Effect on the School

Work related stress can have consequences for the school environment.

It may lead to:-

- An increase in sickness absence, which may have a "domino effect" – one person goes off sick, which leads to their workload being shared among the remaining staff.

- Staff in turn may exceed their own abilities and be unable to cope, which could affect their health, and lead to greater sickness absence;

- Reduced staff morale;

- Reduced staff performance,

- Staff seeking alternative employment or leaving the teaching profession altogether;

- Fewer entrants from higher education;

- Early retirement of experienced members of staff;

- Budgetary pressures, the cost of cover staff.

It is important that sickness absence levels are constantly monitored and that all Head Teachers accept responsibility for their school absentee levels and take positive, preventative steps in line with current Council policies and procedures.

Stress Prevention and Well Being Management

All the information and data that is collected, monitored and evaluated ie through audit, risk assessment, sickness absence can be used to identify trends, patterns, causes etc and to develop strategies to prevent and manage the issue of stress in the workplace.

The school should consider adopting a proactive approach to enhance "well being". It is based on the view that it is in everyone's best interest to maximise employee well being. This approach identifies ways to create a healthy workplace rather than waiting until a problem has occurred.

There are a number of tools that can be adopted within a well being approach and these could include:

- Promote a climate in which it is acceptable to think and talk openly about stress;

- Provide opportunities to discuss proposals for change within the school environment;

- Ensure there is planned provision to be accessible for staff to discuss problems;

- Be seen to provide appropriate support to teachers experiencing difficulties with pupils or who have been victims of verbal or physical assault by pupils and/ or parents;

- Use staff appraisal and other opportunities to discuss individuals job performance, skills development, job enrichment and career path planning,

- Develop effective induction programmes for all new staff, (not just newly qualified teachers)

- Consider training issues specifically for stress awareness, relaxation techniques, assertiveness, anger management etc.

Positive measures to reduce stress

All employees can help at work by: -

- Talking to your line manager, if they don't know there's a problem, they can't help;

- If you feel unable to talk directly to your employer or manager, ask a trade union representative or other employee representative to raise the issue on your behalf;

- Discuss with the Head Teacher/Governing Body whether it is possible to alter your job to make it less stressful for you, but also recognise your colleague's needs;

- Seeing if the Employee Counselling Service can help;(see Appendix 3)

- Speaking to your GP if you are worried about your health;

- Teacherline, telephone number 0800 0562561 a free confidential 24 hour help line, which offers counselling, support and advice. (Further information can be obtained from their website **www.teacherline.org.uk**)

Confidentiality

Strictest confidentiality will be observed by all persons involved at all times, when dealing with stress related issues. It is important that employees are provided with an environment where they feel free to discuss their problems with their immediate line manager/Head Teacher or with the Employee Counselling Service.

Training

Education and Lifelong Learning recognises its responsibilities under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations1999 and will therefore provide members of staff with suitable and sufficient training to help them to understand stress, recognise its causes, and reduce stress within the school environment.

Risk Assessments

Increasing demands made upon the school to achieve higher education standards and targets has placed an increased burden upon all employees.

Head Teachers/governing body should already be aware of the requirement to undertake risk assessments for their school. How and when to carry out a risk assessment for work related stress involves the same basic principles and processes (see appendix 4). In order to assist with this undertaking, Education and Lifelong Learning will provide suitable and sufficient training.

Rehabilitation

It is important to ensure that arrangements are put in place for staff to have an early return to work interview. At the interview it is important to focus on the person rather than any work problems that have arisen due to an absence. The line manager should consider: -

- Ensure the member of staff who have been off with a stress related illness feel they are welcomed back;

- Ensure that the member of staff is not placed in a situation, which contains the same factors that led to the illness;

- If it is considered that work caused, or was part of the cause of the ill health leading to absence, address the problems and make alterations,

- Be aware that staff are likely to feel uncomfortable if they think they are receiving special treatment or they are not being given enough to do. It is important to consider the range of duties expected of the employee, but reduce the elements of work that were excessive and contributed to the illness;

- Reduce responsibilities in the short term, consider alternative work patterns or gradually phase the employee back to work.

For members of staff who have been on long term sick leave as a result of a stress related illness, contact through the rights of absence procedures identifies the possibility of a return to work plan, this should be carried out prior to the return to work interview. This enables both employer and employee to obtain clear objectives and time frames, and will in the medium to long term have considerable benefits for both parties. The employee should be consulted by the Head Teacher (or representative) about their wishes and should have the opportunity to discuss them with their trade union representative present.

The Return to Work Plan should include:-

- The rehabilitation programme;

- A phased return;

- The time scales and dates for review;

- The possibility of specific support on return to work;

- The management of reduced duties/responsibilities, taking into account that it does not increase the workload of other employees.

- Any financial implications for the employee;

- Any other concerns.

Benefits to the Employer:-

- The potential to reduce the period of absence of the employee;

- Retains the employee's skills and experience;

- Financial savings in the medium and long term;

- Demonstrates commitment to duty of care and is evidence of action to avoid putting the employee at risk of further stress;

- Builds staff morale.

Benefits to the Employee:-

- Supports the return to work;

- Contributes to the recovery process;

- Continuing support of colleagues/working relations

- Maintenance of self esteem;

- Addresses financial worries/crises;

- Continuation of employment.

Appendix 1

Signs of Stress

The first signs that indicate employees may be suffering from excessive pressure or stress are changes in behaviour or appearance. A guide on the kinds of changes that may occur is given below.

Work performance	Regression
- declining/inconsistent performance - uncharacteristic errors - loss of control over work - loss of motivation/commitment - indecision - lapses in memory - increased time at work - lack of holiday planning/usage	- crying - arguments - undue sensitivity - irritability/moodiness - over-reaction to problems - personality clashes - sulking - immature behaviour
Withdrawal	**Aggressive behaviour**
- arriving late to work - leaving early - extended lunches - absenteeism - resigned attitude - reduced social contact - elusiveness/evasiveness	- malicious gossip - criticism of others - vandalism - shouting - bullying or harassment - poor employee relations - temper outbursts
Other behaviours	**Physical signs**
- out of character behaviour - difficulty in relaxing - increased consumption of alcohol - increased smoking - lack of interest in appearance/hygiene - accidents at home or work - reckless driving - unnecessary risk taking	- nervous stumbling speech - sweating - tiredness/lethargy - upset stomach/flatulence - tension headaches - hand tremor - rapid weight gain or loss - constantly feeling cold

Sources of Stress

There are a number of possible causes of a change in the employee's performance. These may or may not lead to Stress and/or behavioural changes:

Organisational problems	Physical problems
- a training need - a relationship problem - workload or pace - loss of motivation	- physical illness - design of workstation - noise/lighting - violent attack at work
Psychological problems	**Social problems**
- anxiety/depression - phobias/panic attacks - anger management - addictive behaviours eg alcoholism, gambling	- housing problems - relationship difficulties - financial problems - legal problems eg divorce, custody or crime

Appendix 3

Counselling Service for Employees

Employee Counselling Service

The Service

The Council has contracted the Sandwell Psychology and Counselling Service to provide an independent service. Counsellors come from a mixture of Professional Counselling and Chartered Clinical Psychology backgrounds and are answerable to their professional societies for their ethics and practice.

Where possible they will try and provide a counsellor of a particular sex, religion or ethnic background to make employees more comfortable.

What their Counselling Offers

This service offers a chance to talk about problems or periods of crisis with a person who is outside the normal work, social or family group. A counsellor will listen and may ask questions to help the employee think more clearly about the situation but will not give direct advice. The aim is to assist the employee find and gain confidence in their own resources to deal with problems in a new way; perhaps helping them to accept a situation better or regain a perspective and sense of humour.

Time Off

Staff who require time off during working hours to attend Counselling sessions should liaise with their Head Teacher/Line manager so that the appropriate arrangements can be made. If staff, do not want their managers to know that they are using this service, appointments will need to be made in their own time.

Confidentiality

The counselling takes place in confidence and although funded by the Council, individual information is not provided to the employer.

The Counsellor will keep some brief notes but these are only seen/used by Counsellors. The only time they are legally obliged to divulge information is when they believe there is a risk to the employee's or someone else's safety or welfare and this would always be discussed first. If the problem is affecting health, they may ask if they can liaise with the Doctor over treatment. If the referral came from a Manager or Occupational Health then any feedback would be discussed with the employee first.

Employee Counselling Service: 0121-580 2715

Carrying out a Stress Risk Assessment

The purpose of carrying out a risk assessment is to find out whether existing control measures preventing harm are sufficient, or if there is more that should be done. Completing a risk assessment will not in itself reduce workplace stress. However, the actions you take as a result should do so.

Step 1
Looking for the hazards – the main type of hazards can be grouped into seven broad categories.

Factor 1: Culture
Organisational culture is key in determining how successful you will be in managing work related stress. A positive culture is when work related stress and health issues are treated seriously and the organization responds positively to any concerns.

Factor 2: Demands
This could be work overload, working excessive hours, working to unrealistic dead lines, in adequate training for the job, work under load.

Physical environmental demands, could be where staff work in situations where there is risks associated with noise, temperature, ventilation, humidity, lighting and hygiene.

Psychological environmental demands, where members of staff may be subjected to the risk of violence or aggressive behaviour, coping with difficult pupils.

Factor 3: Control
Control is the amount of say the individual has in how their work is carried out.

Factor 4: Relationships

There are two particular aspects of relationships that could lead to work place stress – bullying and harassment. These are two forms of behaviour that are unacceptable in organisations and almost inevitably generate stress and can lead to stress related illnesses.

Factor 5: Change

Many schools have undergone significant changes and they have to adapt the way they work to accommodate for example, requirements of Ofsted and Central Government. Poor management of change can lead to individuals feeling anxious about their employment status.

Factor 6: Role

Ensuring that a person's role in the organization is clearly defined and understood and that the expectations placed upon them do not conflict.

Factor 7: Support, training and factors unique to the individual

Staff need to feel confident and comfortable doing their jobs and should be provided with the appropriate skills and training. New members of staff make sure they receive induction and are aware of your policy on work related stress. Social support at work is also important.

Step 2
Decide who can be harmed and how.

Any of your staff, regardless of age, status, gender, ethnicity, or disability, can be affected by work related stress.

Step 3
Evaluate the risk and decide if enough is being done.

Consider how likely it is that each hazard mentioned in step 1 could cause harm to your school.

In taking action ask yourself:
- What action is already being taken?
- Is it enough?
- If not, what more will you do?

Remember that you should try to eliminate risks as far as possible. You should try to combat risks at an organizational level before considering the training (in terms of pressure management) or the counselling needs of the individual member of staff. You should try to take action that protects everyone, rater than just a few individuals.

Step 4: Record Your Findings
You must record your main findings of your risk assessment and share the findings with employees. You should use this document to monitor progress and help you keep an eye on particular hazards.

Step 5: Review your risk assessment and revise where necessary
Review your assessment whenever there are significant changes, do this in consultation with your employees.

Useful Addresses

Health and Safety Executive
HSE Information, Broad Lane
Sheffield S3 7HQ
Tel: 08701 545500
Website: www.hse.gov.uk

International Stress Management Association^{UK}
PO Box 348, Waltham Cross
Hertfordshire, EN8 8ZL
Tel: 07000 780430
Website: www.isma.org.uk

Teacher Support Network
Hamilton House
Mabledon Palace
London, WC1H 9BE
Tel: 020 7554 5200
Teacher Support Line 08000 562 561
Website: www.teachersupport.info

Sources of Support

Below is a list of organisations and sources of information that may be helpful.

National

Addictions

Alcoholics Anonymous Tel: 01904 644026
Website: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Al-Anon Tel: 020 7403 0888
Website: www.hexnet.co.uk/alanon
E-mail: www.alanouk@aol.com

Gamblers Anonymous Tel: 020 7384 3040
Literature helpline Tel: 076 2694 7800

Narcotics Anonymous Tel: 020 7730 0009
Website: www.ukna.org

Bereavement

Compassionate Friends Tel: 0117 953 9639
Cruse Tel: 020 8331 7227
Still Birth and Neonatal Death Association
Tel: 020 7833 2851

Counselling

British Association for Counselling Tel: 01788 578 328
The British Psychological Society Tel: 0116 254 9568
Website: www.bps.org.uk
The Samaritans Tel: 0345 909090

Depression

Fellowship of Depressives Anonymous Tel: 01802 433 838
Manic Depression Fellowship Tel: 020 8974 6550
Website: www.mdf.org.uk

Association for Post-Natal Illness Tel: 020 7386 0868
Mind Tel: 0845 7660163 (outside London)
Tel: 020 8522 1728 (London)
Regarding work Tel: 020 8215 2444

Eating problems

Anorexia Aid Tel: 01603 621414
Website: www.edauk.com

Fears and phobias

The Phobics' Society Tel: 0870 7700456

Health

National Health Information Line Tel: 0800 665 544
National AIDS Helpline Tel: 0800 567 123

Road traffic accidents

RoadPeace Tel: 020 8964 1021
Website: www.roadpeace.org.uk

Sexual matters

Lesbian and Gay Switchboard Tel: 020 7837 7324

Local

Alcohol Abuse -
   Alcoholics Anonymous: **0121-212 0111**
   Aquarius: **0121 525 9292 (office hours)**
   Aquarius Women's Alcohol Project: **0121-415 5963**
   Aquarius Asian Counselling: **0121-525 6900 (office hours)**

Bereavement -
   Cruse Bereavement Care The Bereavement Centre,
   Popes Lane, Oldbury, B69 4PJ: **0121-544 4510**
   Cot Death Society: Warrington **0845 6010234**

Carers -
   CARES, The Carers Centre, Edward Cheshire House,
   2 Bearwood Road, Smethwick, B66 4HH: **0121-558 7003**
   Sandwell Young Carers: **0121-555 6144**

Disability -
   Sandwell Disability Living Centre: **0121-558 5555 (office hours)**

Domestic Violence -
   Sandwell Health Care Trust: **0121-607 3043 (office hours)**
   Sandwell Housing Action: **0121-569 5236 (office hours)**
   Police Domestic Violence Unit (North): **0121-626 9142**
   Police Domestic Violence Unit (South): **0121-626 8100**
   Women's Aid National Helpline: **0845 7023 468**
   Sandwell Women's Aid: **0121-552 6448 (24 hours)**
   Humdard (Asian Women): **0121-559 9000 (24 hours)**
   Emergency Social Services: **0121-561 3704**
   Childline: **0800 1111**
   NSPCC: **0800 800 500 (24 hours); 0121-553 1665 (office hours)**

Emergency Legal Domestic Violence Helpline:
02476 526450 (24 hours)
Sandwell Against Domestic Violence Project: **0121-569 3983 (office hours)**

Drug Abuse -
Anchor Project (Sandwell Community Drug Team):
0121-500 5852 (office hours)
Drugline: Dale House, New Meeting Street, Birmingham, B4 7SX: **0121-632 6363**
National Drug Helpline: **0800 776 600 (24 hours)**

Education and Lifelong Learning Support -
Child Psychology Service: **0121-553 7411 (office hours)**
Education and Lifelong Learning: **0121-569 2200 (office hours)**

Ethnic Women's Support -
Hamara Project (Young Asian Women): **0121-544 2112 (office hours)**
Sandwell Asian Resource Project: **0121-558 5648 (office hours)**
SACDA: **0121-553 4264 (office hours)**
Afro-Caribbean Resource Centre (Health Promotion Unit):
0121-525 9177
Bharosa: **0121-303 0368/9**
Refocus (African/Caribbean): **0121-772 4326**
Birmingham Chinese Community Centre: **0121-685 8510**
Turkish Cypriot Women's Project: **0181-340 3300**
Women Acting in Today's Society (WAITS): **0121-440 7000**
Muslim Women's Project: **0208 9048193 (Mon 10.00 am - 4.00 pm)**
Black Sisters: **01922 616996**

Family Planning -
Cronehills Health Centre, West Bromwich, B70 8TJ:
0121-533 2820
Brook Advisory Centre, 59-65 John Bright Street, Birmingham, B1 1BL

Gambling -
Gambling Anonymous: **0121-233 1335**

Health Support -
    Akash Project (Ethnic Women's Support): **0121-555 6686 (office hours)**
    Primary Care and Child Health Directorate: **0121-607 3043 (office hours)**
    Social Inclusion and Health: **0121-561 3704 (out of hours)**
    Smethwick/Oldbury: **0121-569 5585**
    Rowley/Tipton: **0121-569 5921**
    Wednesbury/West Bromwich: **0121-569 5412**

Housing -
    Allen House: **01902 677158 (10.00 am - 4.00 pm Mon - Fri)**
    Aven House: **01922 746574 (7.15 am - 11.15 pm Daily)**
    Birmingham Women's Aid: **0121-344 4889**
    Panahghar Asian Women's Refuge (Coventry): **01203 228952 (9am-5pm Mon-Fri)**
    The Haven: **01902 713001 (24 hours)**
    West Bromwich YMCA: **0121-553 4211**
    Sandwell Homeless and Resettlement Project Ltd: **0121-544 0542**

HIV/AIDS -
    Aidsline West Midlands: **0800 555777** (General Number)
    Unity Centre, 6 Unity Place, Oldbury, B69 4DD: **0121-544 3737**

Legal Support -
    Family Law Society: **01527 517141 (office hours)**
    Police Stations: **O845 113 5000**
    UK Immigrants Advisory Service: **0121-742 1221 (9.30 am - 12.00 pm Mon-Fri)**
    Independent Immigration Support Agency: **0121-622 7353 (1.00 pm - 5.00 pm)**

Lesbian/Gay -
    Friend: **0121-622 7351**
    Lesbian and Gay Switchboard, PO Box 221, Birmingham, B4 7AS: **0121-622 6589** (7.00 pm - 10.00 pm)

Mental Health -
    Sandwell MIND, 215 High Street, Smethwick. B66 3AH: **0121-565 2688 (office hours)**
    Black Country Mental Health (BCMH): **0121-553 7676**
    BCMH Primary Care Team: **0121-555 5222**

Money Matters Support -
  Smethwick Benefits Agency: **0121-555 4000**
  West Bromwich Benefits Agency: **0121-331 8200**
  Citizens Advice Bureaux:
        Cradley Heath: 01384 636988
        Oldbury: 0121-552 2022
        Smethwick: 0121-558 8500
        Tipton: 0121-557 7618/556 7750
        West Bromwich: 0121-553 4423

Other Support Agencies -
  Age Concern: **0121-558 7226**
  Shelter Housing Aid Centre: **0121-236 6668 (office hours)**
  Family Mediation Service: **0121-525 4659**
  Birmingham Women's Advice and Information:
  0121-212 1881
  Birmingham Women's Aid Helpline: **0121-685 8550/1**
  Solais Anois (Travelling Women's Support): **0181-664 6289**

Relationships -
  RELATE, Old Municipal Buildings, Freeth Street, Oldbury.
  B69 2AB: **0121-544 7088** (office hours)

Samaritans -
  13 Bow Street, Birmingham, B1 1DW: **0121-666 6644** or
  0345 909090

Victim Support -
  Sandwell Victim Support, 79 Birmingham Road,
  West Bromwich, B70 6PX: **0121-525 4670** (9.30 am -
  4.30 pm Mon - Fri)
  Sandwell Victim Support Bullyline (3.30 pm - 5.30 pm):
  0800 413420
  Sandwell Rape Crisis Centre, PO Box 2223, West Bromwich:
  0121-525 9981
  Sandwell Women's Refuge: **0121-555 6019**

Youth Counselling -
  Open Door, 172 Edmund Street, Birmingham, B3 2HB:
  0121-472 2071