

STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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REVIEW DATES AND DETAILS OF CHANGES MADE DURING THE REVIEW

February 2016 – The Stress Management Policy and Procedure was reviewed to provide greater clarification and additional tools for the management of stress.

April 2019 – The Stress Management Policy and Procedure was reviewed to provide greater guidance on the impact of work-related stress, stress risk assessments and information to support staff health and wellbeing.

March 2023 – The Stress Management Policy and Procedure was reviewed to provide greater on the impact of work-related stress and on the support available to individuals and teams who are experiencing work-related stress. In order to complete this review the People Services, Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity and Health and Wellbeing teams were consulted as well as Staff Side.

KEY WORDS

Stress

Stress Management

Stress Risk Assessment

Wellbeing

1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 1.1 University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL) is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees and workers. UHL recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and therefore acknowledges the importance of preventing, managing, and reducing the causes of stress.
- 1.2 UHL aims to take positive measures to manage stress effectively and takes its legal obligations seriously. UHL will ensure compliance with:
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: To assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities.
 - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Employers have a general duty to ensure the health and safety of their employees at work. This includes taking steps to ensure they do not suffer stress-related illness as a result of their work.
 - National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines on promoting mental wellbeing at work which also provide context for work on stress and should be implemented by NHS organisations (NICE 2022).
 - The Public Sector Equality Duty (2011) has 3 objectives: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to provide managers and staff with guidance on the prevention and management of stress in the workplace.
- 1.4 UHL is committed to implementing and embedding a Just and Restorative Learning Culture to incidents. This involves creating a culture in which employees and the organisation learns from events. Information about the Restorative and Just Learning Culture can be found here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/patient-safety/a-just-culture-guide/>
- 1.5 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have issued “Stress Management Standards” to help organisations prioritise their approach to stress management. They look at six key aspects of work that can lead to work-related stress and help measure the organisation’s performance in these areas. These are Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role and Change. They are currently designed to look at the issues affecting most employees most of the time. They do not tackle individuals’ responses to stress, nor do they address stress arising outside the workplace. UHL will use the advice within this guidance to shape its approach to stress management.
- 1.6 Research has shown work-related stress to have adverse effects for organisations in terms of:
- Employee commitment to work
 - Staff performance and productivity
 - Staff turnover and intention to leave
 - Attendance levels
 - Staff recruitment and retention
 - Service User and Patient satisfaction
 - Organisational image and reputation
 - Potential litigation

- 1.8 The Trust is also a signatory to the Mindful Employer Charter and is therefore committed to being positive about mental health. Information is available here: [Home | Mindful Employer \(dpt.nhs.uk\)](#)

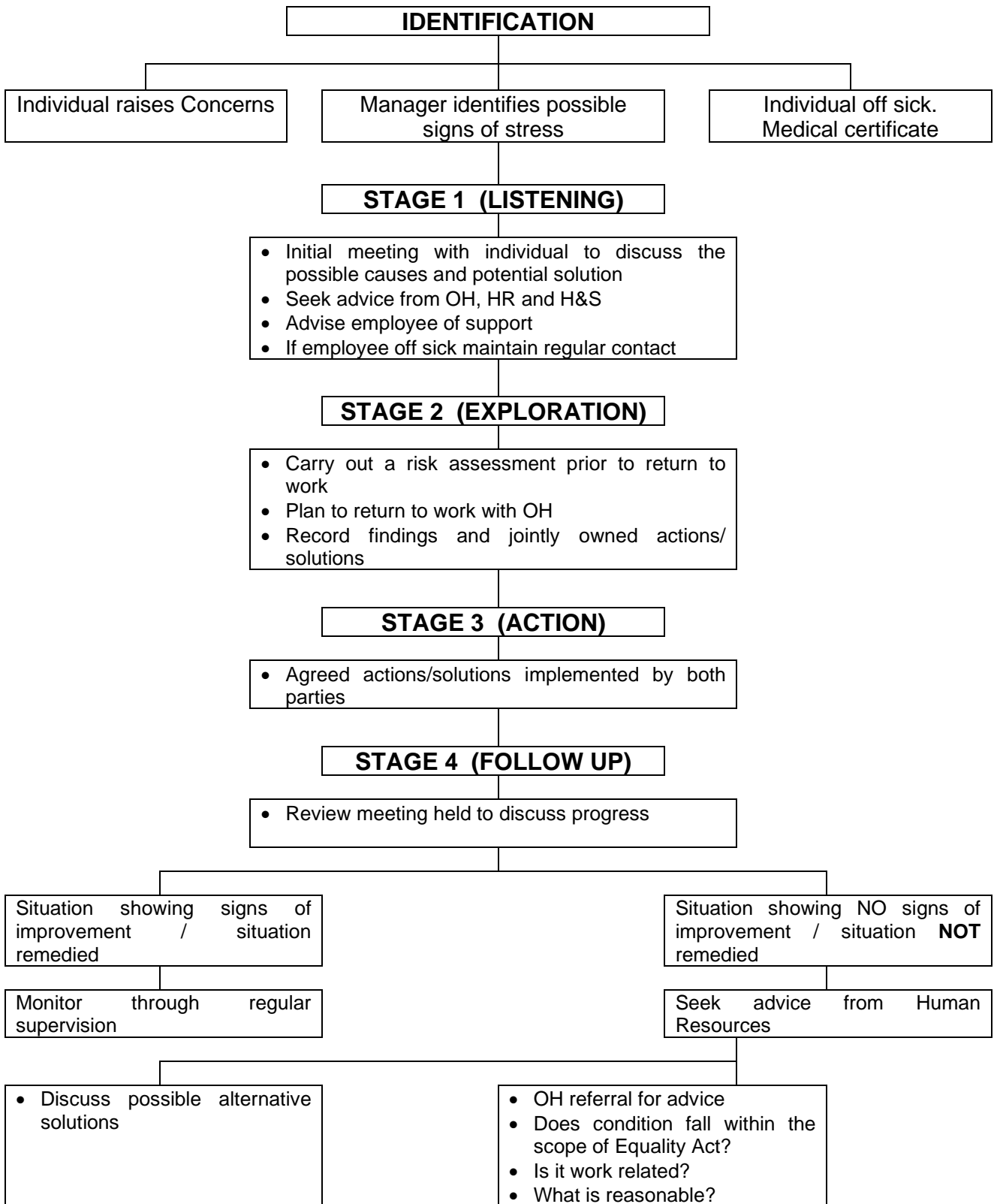
2 POLICY SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff including temporary, bank and volunteer workers and sets out the roles, responsibilities and arrangements for the prevention, reduction and management of work related stress within UHL.
- 2.2 In the case of agency workers and contracted staff, it would be expected that initially on the day of presentation the situation would be appropriately managed and then there would be a referral back to the agency or to the employer as appropriate.
- 2.3 This policy is primarily concerned with work-related stress, but the Trust also recognises that events occurring outside work may also lead to stress that may have an impact on work. Therefore, employees, bank, and workers must be given appropriate and available assistance whatever the cause.

3 DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Stress	The Health and Safety Executive define stress as “ the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them at work ”. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress, which can be detrimental to health.
Demands	Includes issues like workload, work patterns and the work environment.
Control	How much say the person has in the way they do their work.
Support	Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, management and colleagues.
Relationships	Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
Role	A "job role" is a description of what a person does.
Change	How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.
Stressor	A stressor is anything that is perceived by the member of staff to cause stress
Hazard	A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm, ie a stressor
Risk	A risk is the likelihood that someone may be harmed by a hazard that has been identified
SRA	Stress Risk Assessment
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	A UK government agency responsible for the encouragement, regulation and enforcement of workplace health, safety and welfare, and for research into occupational risks in Great Britain.

MANAGING STRESS RELATED CASE – FLOWCHART



5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – WHO DOES WHAT

The main Health & Safety Policy (UHL Reference: A17/2002) for UHL sets out the roles and responsibilities for all staff. Additional responsibilities to enable the effective management of work-related stress are detailed below:

5.1 Chief People Officer

The Chief Executive has nominated the Chief People Officer with lead responsibility for strategic management of stress within the organisation, assisted by the Health and Safety Services team. They will:

- a) Ensure that arrangements are in place to develop a strategy for managing workplace stress.
- b) Ensure arrangements are in place to implement, monitor and review the policy.
- c) Provide adequate support to line managers in the implementation of this policy.

5.2 Managers

Managers are responsible for implementing this policy and ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy and adhere to its requirements. When implementing this policy managers should adopt a compassionate and inclusive leadership style in accordance with Just and Restorative Learning Culture.

Managers are required to:

- a) Carry out individual stress risk assessments (SRA) and/or generic team SRAs as necessary.
- b) Wherever possible ensure the SRA is undertaken separately to a return to work discussion.
- c) Ensure there is protected time to complete the SRA either at the earliest opportunity and/or in all cases this should be completed before a return to work to help ensure a successful return.
- d) There may be exceptional reasons for a different manager conducting the SRA e.g. formal management of other HR matters.
- e) Manage implementation of any action plans and specific interventions. Managers should seek advice and assistance from UHL Health and Safety Services and People Services where necessary. Support may also be sought from Occupational Health and the EDI team.
- f) In most circumstances, steps a) to e) should be completed before any referral to Occupational Health is made.
- g) Ensure effective communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes. This includes communication with UHL Staff Side.
- h) Ensure staff are fully trained to carry out their duties.
- i) Monitor workload, working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overloaded or breaching the Working Time Regulations (B19/2014) Monitor and manage annual leave arrangements to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- j) Undertake training or learning as appropriate e.g., sickness absence management training, REACT MH Training, wellbeing conversations training. .
- k) Ensure that bullying and harassment are not tolerated and action is taken to prevent it.
- l) Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work, e.g. due to bereavement or separation.

5.3 Staff

5.3.1 Helping Yourself

Staff have a duty to take care of their own health and safety at work and that of others. Often individuals are the last to recognise they are suffering from the effects of stress. It is therefore important that staff learn to recognise the signs and symptoms of stress in themselves and others.

They should familiarise themselves with the UHL guidance for staff contained in the Stress Management Information Sheet (Appendix 2) which covers identifying stress and where to obtain support including:

- a) Raise issues of concern in relation to stress with their line manager, People Services, Health and Safety Services, the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian or the Occupational Health Department or EDI team if applicable.
- b) Participate in the SRA process
- c) Consider completing a Wellness Action Plan
- d) Participate in support provided to them
- e) Attend all identified training and development opportunities as required;
- f) Consider opportunities for counselling when recommended
- g) Complete a Datix incident report where appropriate

5.4 People Services Team

- a) Provide advice and guidance to managers and employees on this policy.
- b) Assist in monitoring the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating, analysing and reporting sickness absence statistics and staff turnover rates, including reporting any issues and trends.
- c) Advise managers and staff on training and development requirements.
- d) Provide continuing support to managers and individuals and encourage referrals to Occupational Health, for counselling or other support services where appropriate.
- e) Advise and deal with complaints on equality of opportunity, unacceptable behaviour, health and disability issues and discrimination matters and refer to the EDI team as appropriate.
- f) Support and advise on formal complaints or resolutions over treatment.

5.5 Occupational Health Department

- a) Provides confidential and impartial advice to staff on all aspects of the relationship between work and health at any stage of employment.
- b) Assists People Services and Health and Safety Services Team where appropriate in stress related investigations/actions.
- c) Provide medical advice including on the Equality Act 2010.

5.6 Health and Safety Services Team

The Health and Safety Services Team will oversee the generic team stress assessment process and provide support to managers throughout the assessment, analysis and action planning processes. They will also assist managers with assessments and action planning for individuals where requested.

The Health and Safety Manager's role is to provide guidance and support to managers and individuals, including but not restricted to the following:

- a) Provide independent advice, guidance and assistance to managers on the process of team SRA and action planning.
- b) Oversee and advise on use of the HSE stress analysis tool and analysis of the results of staff surveys.
- c) Assist managers to undertake confidential stress audits within departments when requested.
- d) Providing advice on best practice and standards to be achieved.
- e) Provide coaching and support to managers and staff to enable them to identify, assess and manage work-related stress.
- f) Undertake an annual Health & Safety Environmental Audit and report findings, recommendations, and action plans to the Health & Safety Committee.

5.7 UHL Health and Safety Committee

The UHL Health and Safety Committee will:

- a) Oversee the implementation of this policy and other measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and safety.
- b) Receive the findings from the annual Health & Safety Environmental Audit and associated action plans.
- c) Discuss and consider stress management issues and performance and make appropriate recommendations for further action.
- d) Oversee monitoring of the policy and other measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and safety. This will be undertaken by agreed means that are likely to include consideration and tracking of key indicators such as:
 - i. Sickness absence levels due to stress-related symptoms
 - ii. Adverse incidents/personal injury reports
 - iii. Patient complaints
 - iv. Staff survey results
 - v. Patients survey results
 - vi. Team stress audit results
 - vii. Staff complaints regarding bullying
 - viii. Staff resolution agreements
 - ix. Staff resolutions

5.8 UHL Staff Side Representatives' roles include, but are not restricted to:

- a) To provide support to individual members of staff.
- b) To work in partnership with relevant parts of the organisation to ensure effective implementation of this policy
- c) Help promote and support stress initiatives in the workplace and encourage full participation.
- d) Make employees aware of support mechanisms available to them.
- e) Support the monitoring and review of this policy (e.g. via Health and Safety Committees).
- f) Be meaningfully involved in SRA and action planning processes.

5.9 Amica will provide:

- a) Confidential staff counselling and psychological support services to all UHL Staff, to include individual and departmental support
- b) Access to a confidential telephone counselling line
- c) Self-referral to face-to-face counselling sessions on all 3 sites
- d) Psychological debriefing
- e) Support groups
- f) Training and education
- g) Adverse incidents support

6. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

6.1 Stress Risk Assessment

The principles of a risk assessment for stress are the same as for any other hazard. However, it is recognised that it may be more difficult for managers to identify psychological hazards and that a slightly different approach may be required from that used when assessing physical hazards.

Line managers play a vital role in identifying and managing stress within the organisation. They are likely to see the problems which cause stress first hand and will often be the first point of contact when an individual is feeling stressed and this should be dealt with in a compassionate and inclusive manner. Line managers should also complete a team SRA when signs of stress have been identified within the team.

An individual stress risk assessment should be undertaken at the earliest appropriate opportunity to identify actions and support to keep the employee at work and identify any support the employee may require during any absences to facilitate a successful and earlier return to work.

It is essential that managers know how to access development available within the Trust and when to seek advice from People Services or Health and Safety Services.

The individual SRA tool and action sheet can be found in Appendix 7 and 8.

6.2 Access to Information on the Management of Health and Wellbeing

Information relating to the health and wellbeing including stress can be accessed through the UHL Health and Wellbeing pages of Insite <http://insite.xuhl-tr.nhs.uk/homepage/health-and-wellbeing>

The MIND Wellness Action Plan (WAP) guide for employees and managers is available through the Health and Wellbeing pages and is designed for anyone in employment or a voluntary role who would like to use the plan to support and promote their mental health and wellbeing at work. The guides are available through the following links:

http://insitetogether.xuhl-tr.nhs.uk/Divisions/Corporate/LiA/Documents/mind-guide-for-employees-wellness-action-plans_final.pdf

<https://www.mind.org.uk/media/12145/mind-wellness-action-plan-workplace.pdf>

[Get your Guide for people working remotely](#)

[Get your Guide for people who are hybrid working](#)

http://insitetogether.xuhl-tr.nhs.uk/Divisions/Corporate/LiA/Documents/mind-guide-for-line-managers-wellness-action-plans_final.pdf

Many existing UHL policies and arrangements relate, directly and indirectly, to the management of stress. These include:

Policy, Procedure and Supporting Information / Documents	Trust Reference:
Health and Wellbeing at Work http://insite.xuhl-tr.nhs.uk/homepage/health-and-wellbeing	
Just and Resorative Learning Culture Implementing a just and learning culture NHS Employers	
MIND Wellness Action Plan – Guide for Employees http://insitetogether.xuhl-tr.nhs.uk/Divisions/Corporate/LiA/Documents/mind-guide-for-employees-wellness-action-plans_final.pdf	
MIND Wellness Action Plan – Guide for Line Managers http://insitetogether.xuhl-tr.nhs.uk/Divisions/Corporate/LiA/Documents/mind-guide-for-line-managers-wellness-action-plans_final.pdf	
Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	B29/2006
Disability Policy	B31/2011
Reasonable Adjustments Guide	ID: UHLSP-606-227
Resolution Policy	B39/2020
Flexible Working Policy	B7/2010
Management of Change Policy	A1/2009
Improving Performance (Capability) Policy	B12/2014
Appraisal and Pay Progression Policy	B16/2015
Health and Safety Policy	A17/2002
UHL Policy for the Support of Staff Involved in Incidents, Inquests Complaints and Claims	
Incident & Accident Reporting Policy	A10/2002
Freedom to Speak up: Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy	A15/2001
Agile Working (Including Home Working) Policy	B46/2020

7 EDUCATION AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The policy will be available on Insite for all UHL Staff and reflected within the UHL Sickness Absence Training.

REACT MH Training: [Insite - REACT Training \(xuhl-tr.nhs.uk\)](http://insite-xuhl-tr.nhs.uk)

Health and Wellbeing Information is also available on Insite: [Insite - Health and Wellbeing \(xuhl-tr.nhs.uk\)](http://insite-xuhl-tr.nhs.uk)

8 PROCESS FOR MONITORING COMPLIANCE

Element to be monitored	Lead	Tool	Frequency	Reporting arrangements
Audit of Stress management policy	Health and Safety	HR / Health and Safety/ Occupational Health and Amica data	Annually	The results will be analysed by the Trust Audit team and Health and Safety Team and a report of the findings and recommendations provided to the health and safety committee. This will take into account: adverse incidents/personal injury reports, patient complaints, staff survey results, and patient survey results.
Monitoring of Stress in the Trust	People Services	ESR/SMART Absence reporting mechanisms	Monthly/ Quarterly	Information to be provided to CMG's / Directorates and the executive team regarding staff sick absence episodes and reasons
Monitoring of Stress Management at CMG / Directorate level	CMG / Directorate Leads / Managers	Sickness Absence data	Monthly / Quarterly	Seeking assurance from their reports on the robust and supportive management of stress
Organisational Change	People Services	UHL Health and Safety Committee	As required	Risk assessments to be completed as appropriate and implemented

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 The Trust recognises the diversity of the local community it serves. To ensure we remain focused on equality of outcome and purpose. Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights encompass all our aims, objectives and actions addressing inequalities and promoting diversity in health care and employment. The key principle of diversity and Inclusion is that it belongs to everyone and that every individual has the right to be treated with respect and dignity as aligned to our core values.9.2 As part of its development, this policy and its impact on equality have been reviewed and no detriment was identified.

10 SUPPORTING REFERENCES, EVIDENCE BASE AND RELATED POLICIES

This section contains the details of reference materials reviewed in the development of this policy, and documents you may wish to refer to when managing stress at work.

- Equality Act (2010) [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/equality-act-2010) Public Sector Equality Duty (2011) [Public sector equality duty - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/public-sector-equality-duty)
- NHS Employers Emotional Wellbeing Toolkit
- <http://www.nhsemployers.org/howareyoufeelingnhs>
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: To assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities.
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE). (2004f). *Working Together to Reduce Stress at Work: A Guide for Employees*. Available at: www.hse.gov.uk.
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE). (2007d). *Overview: The Management Standards and the 5 Steps to Risk Assessment*. Available at: www.hse.gov.uk.
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE). (2007c). *Management Standards for Work-related Stress*. Available at: www.hse.gov.uk.
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE). (2004a). *Action plan template* available at www.hse.gov.uk.
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE). (2004b). *Demands: Are You Doing Enough?* Available at: www.hse.gov.uk
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE). (2007f). *Step 1 - Identify the Hazards*. Available at: www.hse.gov.uk.
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE). (2004d). *HSE Management Standards Analysis Tool*. Available at: www.hse.gov.uk.
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE). (2004e). *Securing Management Commitment*. Available at: www.hse.gov.uk.
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE). (2005). *Tackling stress: The Management Standards Approach*. Available at: www.hse.gov.uk.
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE). (2007a). *An example of a stress policy*. Available at: www.hse.gov.uk.
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE). (2007b). *HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool*. Available at: www.hse.gov.uk.
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE). (2007g). *Work-related Stress*. Available at: www.hse.gov.uk.
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines on promoting mental wellbeing at work (NICE 2022). Available At: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng212>

11 PROCESS FOR VERSION CONTROL, DOCUMENT ARCHIVING AND REVIEW

The updated version of the Policy will then be uploaded and available through INSite Documents and the Trust's externally-accessible Freedom of Information publication scheme. It will be archived through the Trust's share point.

PART A – LINE MANAGER AND EMPLOYEE STRESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Procedure/Guidance	Appendix
Part A – Line Manager and Employee Stress Management Information	
Identifying the signs of stress in self and others	1
Employee and Management Stress Management Guidance	2

IDENTIFYING SIGNS OF STRESS IN YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Identifying Stress in Yourself

Physical
Headaches, Tension, Indigestion, Breathlessness, Sleep disturbances, Rashes, Frequent Colds, Dry mouth, Dizziness, Stomach Problems, Raised blood pressure, Nausea, Recurrence of previous illness etc

Mental Health
Inability to concentrate, Worrying, Making Mistakes, Muddled thinking, Persistent negative thinking, Nervousness, Struggling to make decisions, Feeling overwhelmed, Being forgetful



What to look for in yourself



Behavioural
Unsociability, Restlessness, Lying, Reckless driving, Increased drinking or smoking, Change in appetite

Emotional
Irritability, Tension, Moodiness, Withdrawal, Alienation, Dissatisfaction, Tearful, Anxious

Identifying Stress in Others

Poor performance at work, including
Uncharacteristic errors, Memory lapses, Indecisiveness

Withdrawal of interest or commitment for e.g.: Arriving late, leaving early

Aggressive behaviour such as
Bullying
Criticising others

Stress Management Guidance for Employees and Managers

1. Introduction

This document contains general information and guidance for employees on the management of stress at work.

2. What is work-related stress?

There is a difference between stress and pressure. We all experience pressure on a daily basis, and need it to motivate us and enable us to perform at our best. It's when we experience too much pressure without the opportunity to recover that we start to experience stress. The HSE definition of stress is 'the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them'.

We can all feel stressed at times when we feel as though everything becomes too much, when things get on top of us, or when we feel as though we are unable to cope. It affects us in different ways at different times and is often the result of a combination of factors in our personal and working lives.

Work-related stress can be tackled by working with the employer to identify issues at source and agreeing realistic and workable ways to tackle these.

3. Indicators of Stress

Stress indicators can be recognised by the following changes at an individual, team and organisational level.

It is important that these indicators are recognised in order for managers to take any action necessary and for employees to seek assistance and apply any self-help techniques.

3.1. Staff members

Some staff members may:

- a) Increase their sickness absence
- b) Become short tempered
- c) Become hostile or aggressive
- d) Have difficulty sleeping or winding down
- e) Find their concentration and logic are affected
- f) Increase their smoking and/or drinking
- g) Work longer and longer hours in a desperate effort to cope
- h) Cancel holidays
- i) Keep on 'working' even when they are off sick due to ill health
- j) Find that they just can't seem to get going and 'molehills turn into mountains'
- k) Give up leisure activities or sports
- l) Fail to meet work standards
- m) Become unable to organise their workload
- n) Become unable to meet deadlines/targets

- o) Arrive for work later
- p) Loss of motivation, commitment, and confidence
- q) Increased emotional reactions – being more tearful, sensitive, or aggressive

3.2 Teams

Some teams may show signs of:

- a) Poor morale
- b) Negative attitudes
- c) Decline in quality and/or quantity of outputs
- d) Lack of enthusiasm
- e) Increase in hostility and aggression
- f) Not participating in discussions

3.3 Organisation

At the organisational level:

- a) Sickness absence may rise.
- b) There may be an increase in reports of violent or aggressive behaviour on the part of staff.
- c) Work performance may be affected; this may show up as a decline in output, as poorer quality of work or as a decline in efficiency.
- d) There may be an increase in referrals to the Occupational Health Department.
- e) There may be an increase in complaints received from patients.
- f) Local union representatives may become aware of members with difficulties.
- g) Higher staff turnover

4 Identifying the Causes of Stress

Identifying and assessing stress-related hazards and risks are not as easy as it is for identifying physical hazards and risks. With stress it is more difficult because:

a) *Different People Find Different Things at Work Cause them Stress*

There needs to be a good match between the person and the job. Therefore interview panel members need to ensure that they have been on the appropriate recruitment training days. Training and support are important and can reduce or eliminate stress altogether.

b) *People Change and the Things that Cause them Stress Change*

Because someone does the same thing many times, enjoyment and interest can fade. A task, which was once a source of satisfaction can become a burden and a source of stress.

c) *Problems at Home Can Make Work Stressful and Vice Versa*

Excessive pressures and problems can occur in an employee's personal life as well as at work. For example, If an employee is facing a relationship breakdown, financial problems, difficulties with neighbours, difficulties with caring responsibilities, or

bereavement, it is possible that these problems may affect the employee's ability to work effectively.

d) *Causes can be Single Major Events or the Accumulation of Less Dramatic Irritations*

Single events could include being present at or investigating a serious incident, being violently attacked, or a personal bereavement. Sometimes lots of relatively minor things pile up and as the person (or team) finds it harder to cope, more and more things become sources of irritation and stress. The trigger event, which pushes people over the edge, is rarely the main cause.

e) *It is Often Difficult to 'See' what is Going On*

Work situations and people are constantly changing and evolving. There may also be sensitivities about the personal nature of some relevant information. This can make individuals, or teams, reluctant to open up about how they feel and the things that are getting to them.

5. **How can I help tackle workplace stress?**

As an employee, you have a duty to take reasonable care of yourself and others with regard to health and safety at work.

You should:

- a. Familiarise yourself with the signs and symptoms of stress
- b. Communicate openly and honestly with your manager and colleagues.
- c. Attend appropriate training which can help you recognise and manage pressure and stress in yourself and others, for example the Human Factors – Emotions, Stress & Wellbeing elearning on HELM.
- d. Support your colleagues if they are experiencing work related stress and encourage them to talk to their manager, HR Advisor or trade union representative.
- e. Identify causes of stress in the workplace and report them appropriately to your line manager.

6. **What should I do if I'm becoming stressed?**

- a) Try to identify the causes and what you can do to make things better.
- b) Ideally, speak up if you're experiencing a problem, and talk to your manager to find a solution. If your stress is work-related, this will give them the chance to help and prevent the situation getting worse. Even if it isn't work-related, they may be able to do something to reduce some of your pressure.
- c) Help your manager to help you. To put effective plans in place, your manager will need information from you, so take an active part in any discussions, and complete stage one of the Stress action plan (Appendix 7) to aid any discussions.

If the source of pressure is your line manager, you can talk to someone you feel confident in talking to, or ask someone to mediate. Other alternatives may be via People Services, another manager, the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, or a trade union representative.

You may be reluctant to talk about stress at work from fear that you may be seen as weak, but stress is not a weakness, and it can happen to anyone.

A free, confidential counselling service is available to employees. The service is provided by AMICA. They provide telephone and face-to-face counselling and can be contacted by ringing 0116 254 4388 <http://www.amica-counselling.uk/>

It is important to take action at a personal level and to review your lifestyle to see if you can identify any contributing factors. These might include:

- a) eating on the run;
- b) smoking, or drinking excessively;
- c) rushing, hurrying, being available to everyone;
- d) doing several jobs at once;
- e) missing breaks, taking work home with you;
- f) having no time for exercise and relaxation.

In some cases, prolonged stress can lead to physical and/or mental ill health. If you think you are currently experiencing stress-related ill health you may benefit from a discussion with your GP.

FINDING SOLUTIONS

7.1 Employees

Employees have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and of others who may be affected by their actions.

Employees should:

- a) Inform their employer if they feel the pressure of the job is putting them or anyone else at risk of ill health.
- b) Suggest ways in which the work might be organised to alleviate the stress.
- c) Inform their employer if they are suffering from a medical condition that appears to be longterm and is affecting their ability to carry out day-to-day tasks, including those involving memory and learning.
- d) Discuss any reasonable adjustments that could be made to assist them in performing their job.

7.2 Line Managers

7.2.1 Understanding Potential Work-Related Causes of Stress

Line managers have a role to play in identifying potential causes of stress at work. You may identify that an individual could be suffering from stress or a condition caused by stress in three ways:

- a) The individual raises a work related stress issue with you
- b) You raise concerns that an individual may be showing signs of stress at work
- c) The employee is off sick with a potential stress related condition

Because this is more difficult than identifying other sorts of risk in the workplace, it is essential to talk and listen to employees and to your own line managers.

In order to understand what work activities could give rise to stress-related problems and plan to control them you should:

- a) Involve individuals and teams in ideas for solutions, informally and formally.
- b) Consider the implications for employees and others of any changes to working practices, ways of working, technical changes etc.
- c) Resolve work related issues at the level of the individual and at the level of the team as appropriate, involving others outside the team as necessary.
- d) Ensure that senior management are aware of key issues over which line managers have no direct control so that the need for action at an organisational level can be considered.
- e) Avoid overloading employees under stress with extra work or responsibility or unreasonable deadlines.
- f) Keep in touch with any employees who are on prolonged sick leave and agree with the individual how to support their return to work.
- g) Encourage individual employees and managers to discuss with Occupational Health staff their concerns about employees either by the self-referral or management referral route before they go off sick. Prior to a return to work (if not already done) arrange an appointment for medical advice to agree action appropriate to the employee's health needs.

7.2.2 Communicate

Communicate with individuals regarding workload, standards, variations and expectations and your role in providing support. Be positively appreciative of people and their efforts. Show genuine concern for people. Listen without judging. Let people know if you are up against a deadline and find a mutually convenient time for the conversation. Respect confidentiality. Give constructive feedback. Encourage people to say what they think and generate their own ideas for change where possible. Make sure people take notice of positive things not just problems.

Opportunities for communication include:

- a) During a wellbeing conversation
- b) First day absence reporting
- c) Appraisal/Personal Development Plan
- d) One-to-One and Team meetings
- e) Health and Safety Risk Assessments
- f) Referral to the Occupational Health Department
- g) Notification of a chronic/serious illness
- h) Notification of a disability under the terms of the Equality Act 2010
- i) Return to work discussion
- j) Completion of a Wellness Action Plan and discussion with manager
- k) Liaison with trade union representative

7.2.4 Assess Individuals

Through regular one-to-ones and don't rely solely on the annual appraisal process. Use regular one-to-ones to actively manage and provide positive support to staff to be fair.

7.2.5 Support: Training and Direction

Ensure that these are in place at the beginning and throughout the period of intensified workload or new responsibilities. Constantly review this and keep a record. Encourage people to develop their abilities

7.2.6 Monitor

Make this regular, positive and be prepared to revise any working arrangements in the short term. Be aware of periods of high and sustained workload

7.2.7 Action

If things are not improving then take appropriate action to alter the work responsibilities or if there appears to be no reasonable alternative then consider The Improving Performance (Capability) Policy, the Trust's Promoting Wellbeing and the Sickness Absence Management Policy and the Disciplinary UHL Policy after discussion and consultation with the HR Advisor.

8. Support for managers and employees

The following support mechanisms are available:

- **HR Advisor**– To provide support and guidance to managers and employees in dealing with stress, and in the use of related policies and procedures.
- **Health & Safety Services** – To provide support and guidance on risk assessment processes.
- **Occupational Health (OH)** – To provide medical advice and guidance on the impact of stress on individuals' health and their work, and what steps UHL and/or the employee may take.
- **Health and Wellbeing** - There are a variety of wellbeing activities available to staff. More information is available on Insite.
- **UHL Staff Side-** to provide support & guidance to employees/members in dealing with stress and the use of related policies & procedures.

Confidential Counselling and Psychological Support– AMICA

A free, confidential counselling service is available to employees, provided by Amica. As well as support to individuals, Amica are also able to provide support and advice to managers, including how to deal with a critical incident / adverse event.

Work-life Balance and Flexible Working Options

Personal or home issues may reduce the individual's ability to cope with normal work pressures and vice versa. Therefore, even if the primary cause is not thought to be work-related, appropriate support should be provided to the employee. This support may include looking at how the organisation can help the employee achieve a better work-life balance, either on a temporary or permanent basis. The Trust's Flexible Working Policy provides staff with further information on options to work flexibly. Available At: <http://insitetogether.xuhl-tr.nhs.uk/pag/pagdocuments/Flexible%20Working%20Policy.pdf>

Physical/environmental factors

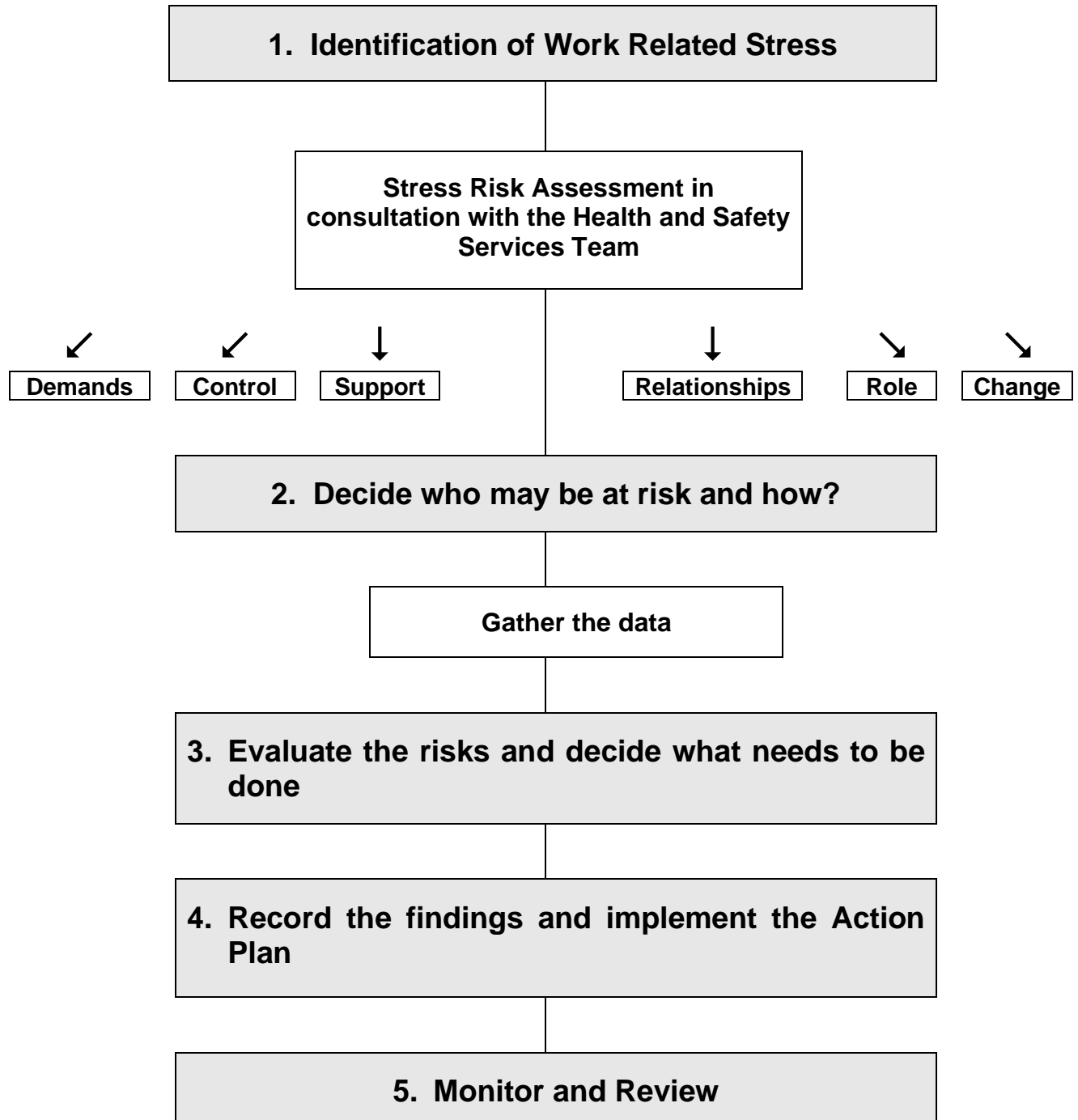
Employees should report any physical or environmental factors that are a potential cause of stress to their immediate Line Manager or Supervisor. Issues of this type should be addressed through the relevant UHL Health and Safety related policies and/or with further advice from the Health and Safety Services team.

Information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on mental health can be found here: <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus-mental-health>

**PART B – GENERIC STRESS ASSESSMENT AND
MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE**
(To be used for Team / Staff Group Assessments)

Procedure/Guidance	Appendix
Part B – Generic Stress Management Procedures (To be used for Team / Staff Group Assessments)	
Generic Stress Management Flow Chart	3
Generic Stress Assessment and Management Standards	4

Generic Stress Risk and Action Flow Chart
(To be used for Team / Staff Group Assessments)



Generic Stress Assessment and Management Standards

1.Introduction

The principles of a risk assessment for stress are the same as for any other hazard. However, it is recognised that it may be more difficult for managers to identify psychological hazards and that a slightly different approach may be required from that used for the assessments of physical hazards.

Line Managers play a vital role in identifying and managing stress within the organisation. They are likely to see the problems which cause stress first hand and will often be the first point of contact when an individual is feeling stressed. It is essential that they have the skills and behaviours to be able to manage these situations.

2.Definitions

Stressor

A stressor is any event, experience, or environmental stimulus that causes **stress** in an individual

Hazard

A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm, i.e. a stressor

Risk

A risk is the likelihood that someone may be harmed by a hazard that has been identified

3. Management Standards

The Management Standards define the characteristics, or culture, of an organisation where the risks from work-related stress are being effectively managed and controlled.

The following six Management Standards cover the primary sources of stress at work:

1. **Demands** – this includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.
2. **Control** – how much say the person has in the way they do their work.
3. **Support** – this includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management, team and colleagues.
4. **Relationships** – this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
5. **Role** – whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures they do not have conflicting roles.
6. **Change** – how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.



HSE Management Standards

As outlined in HSE guide for employers on ‘*How to tackle work-related stress: A guide for employers on making the Management Standards work*’ the risk assessment process involves the following 5 steps:

Step 1: Identify the risks- Understand the Management Standards

There are six areas of work (stressors) that can have a negative impact on employee health if not properly managed. These are outlined in the Appendix 4: Management Standards, along with descriptions of good practice. The HSE analysis tool should be used and the Health and Safety team contacted to support and advise managers. The Health and Safety Services team can be contacted on Ext. 3386.

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how- Gather data

Information may already exist in a variety of forms which can assist in identifying areas of good and poor practice. It is better to use data from a number of sources and look for relationships within the data to get a more accurate view of the current state.

Annual staff surveys and/or the Organisation’s Health Audit can be used to gather the views of employees. These can be used as a source of data, **but should not be the only data used** to assess those at risk. The analysis of your data will help to understand the organisation’s current situation. This can be used as a starting point, working with employees to improve health, well-being and performance.

Typical data available includes:

- Surveys
- Sickness absence data
- Staff turnover rates
- Number of referrals to occupational health
- Information from existing staff forums

Step 3: Evaluate the risks- Explore Problems and Develop solutions

The results from Step 2, along with the Management Standards, should be used to decide what to do in this step. Managers should identify hot spots and priority areas. Results of this should be discussed with employees so that work can commence to determine how to address the gap between current performance and the 'states to be achieved' within the Management Standards. It is important to involve employees and staff side representatives in discussions as they are often the ones closest to the issues and best placed to suggest improvements.

Step 4: Record findings- Develop and Implement Action Plans

It is often the case that the actions from Step 3 are aimed at different levels of the organisation such as team, department, or directorate and will deliver in different timescales (short, medium or long). So, when compiling an action plan, managers should consider how they intend to evaluate each action and how they will know whether it has been successful. When complete the action plan should be communicated to employees. Some examples of popular actions are:

- Giving specific groups of employees more control over aspects of their work.
- Ensure that the tools used to measure performance in line with policies.
- Improving communication up and down the management chain, and between groups.
- Management development, particularly in interpersonal skills.
- Job reviews/task analysis using the Management Standards as a framework.
- Updating a specific policy or procedure shown to have failings.

Step 5: Monitor and review

Monitor the actions in the plan to ensure they are having the desired effect in the appropriate timescale.

At this stage managers should reflect on the outcomes. In particular, they should consider what can be done in the future to prevent problems occurring again so that they are able to deal with them in a proactive It should be noted that good stress management is not about a survey, but is an ongoing process of continuous improvement. As with all risk assessments, managers must record what they have done.

As part of the monitoring process, they may need to repeat the Management Standards approach again. During this process they may wish to include additional service specific questions to the staff questionnaire as a result of previous survey findings

PART C – INDIVIDUAL STRESS ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

Procedure/Guidance	Appendix
Part C – Individual Stress Assessment and Management Procedures	
Handling Individual Cases of Stress	5
Individual Stress Risk Assessment Template	6
Individual Person Stress Action Plan	7

Handling Individual Cases of Stress

1 Introduction

- 1.1 As with any health problem, stress needs to be handled with sensitivity. Individuals may be concerned that telling their manager that they feel stressed may amount to an admission that they are not 'up to the job'. You should reassure the individual and arrange to speak to them privately about their concerns. If a member of staff is uncomfortable discussing the problem with you, a recognised staff representative or work colleague can accompany them.
- 1.2 ***A stress-related case can be brought to your attention in one of the following ways:***
- a) The individual raises a stress related issue with you
 - b) You raise concerns that an individual may be showing signs of stress
 - c) The individual is off sick with a potential stress related condition
- 1.3 The managing 'stress related cases' flow chart attached at **Appendix 5** outlines the process you should follow when a case of stress has been identified. The form attached at Appendix 7 allows meetings, actions and review meetings to be recorded and agreed.

2. Stages of Managing an Individual Case of Stress

2.1 Stage One: Listening

Listening to the individual's concerns, offering a sympathetic ear and giving reassurance may be all that is needed in some cases. Alternatively, you may become aware that the problem is more serious, in which case you need to take advice from the appropriate person such as People Services.

2.2 Stage Two: Exploration and Risk Assessment

Exploring the areas that are causing stress, focussing in the first instance on performance at work – your legitimate role as a manager.

Talk to the individual about any suggestions he/she has to address the situation in relation to work and discuss the options. It is possible that this may lead on to issues outside work if the individual feels able to raise them.

Listen and be supportive. In some cases you may feel that a specialist professional would be better able to help and it may be appropriate to refer the individual to Occupational Health Service or advise them to see their GP. Staff members also have the option to self-refer to Amica Counselling Service and/or Occupational Health.

The risk assessment format (see Appendix 7) can help you to explore the situation in more detail and record findings, actions and review details.

2.3 **Stage Three: Actions**

You may discuss and agree a number of actions with the individual to help remedy the problem. These may include action such as:

- a) Renegotiating work deadlines
- b) Reassigning pieces of work
- c) Training
- d) The individual seeing their GP
- e) Contact with the Occupational Health Department
- f) More management contact
- g) A period of leave

It may be the case that temporary or relatively minor changes can help to alleviate the feelings of stress. Any actions or possible solutions should be noted and a date to review progress agreed.

If this does not appear to be the case it may be appropriate to carry out a personal risk assessment (**see Appendices 7**). Health and Safety Services can assist you with this process.

It is important that any agreed actions are realistic and achievable considering the resources available.

2.4 **Stage Four: Follow Up**

Any agreed actions should be followed up and regular progress meetings arranged and recorded. This may be done through regular supervision sessions.

2.5 **Stage Five: What if the Situation Does Not Improve?**

Having gone through the above four stages it may be that the situation is not showing any signs of improving. If this is the case you may need to review the initial solutions and consider alternatives with the individual. Alternatively you may need to consider action under another Trust procedure. Please seek further advice from the Human Resources department.

If it has been determined (by a referral to Occupational Health) that an individual's condition falls within the scope of the Equality Act 2010, or is caused by stress at work, a risk assessment will need to be carried out by yourself in conjunction with the individual to determine what reasonable adjustments need to be considered to the individual's job or workplace.

Any recommendations should be considered and jointly implemented, monitored and reviewed with the individual.

3 Further Advice and Information

3.1 Further advice and information can be obtained from:

- a) Management Guidance Notes on Stress Management
- b) Line Management
- c) People Services Occupational Health
- d) AMICA
- e) Health and Wellbeing Team
- f) Staff Side Representatives
- g) Training and Development
- h) Health & Safety Services Team
- i) QSHE Compliance Team (for Estates and Facilities staff)
- j) HSE Guidelines
- k) Insite

INDIVIDUAL PERSON - STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

Staff Name:

Job Role/Title:

CMG:

Q1: Is the source of your stress work related: YES / NO - if 'NO' move to the additional information section and action plan

SOURCES OF STRESS	QUESTIONS TO ASK	YES/NO	Comments
Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel you have the right amount of work to do? (i.e. not too much or not too little) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you prioritise your workload accordingly? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you had sufficient training to do your job? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any problems with your work environment? 		
Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you able to have any say about how your job is done? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel included in decision making in the team? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel you are using the skills you have got to full effect? 		
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel that you get enough support from your line manager? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel you get enough support from colleagues? 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you take the breaks you are entitled to at work? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you able to balance the demands of work and life outside of work? 		
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you affected by any conflict in the team or other individuals? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you subjected to any bullying or harassment at work? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel the team works well together? 		
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you had sufficient induction/training in order to be able to carry out your role? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you clear about your roles and responsibilities at work? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel that there is any conflict in your role? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you understand others roles in the team? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have the equipment/resources to do your job? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you aware of your lines of reporting? 		
Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you made aware of any changes that are happening at work? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you understand why the change is happening? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you understand the impact on your job of any change? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel well supported during change at work? 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you any concerns on changes that are due to be made? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you able to participate and engage in these changes? 		

Additional Information

Non Work related factors

Manager:	Member of Staff:	Assessor/Advisor present:	Staff Rep present:
Signature:	Signature:		
Date:			
Review date:			

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INDIVIDUAL PERSON STRESS ACTION PLAN

Employee: _____ Manager: _____ Date: _____

1. Stressors identified: (examples on previous pages)

2. Action to be taken by the employee to reduce and manage their stress:

3. Action to be taken by Manager to reduce stress:

Review Date(s) _____

Outcomes:

Signed: Manager _____ Date _____

Employee: _____