

Livewell Southwest

## **Stress Management Policy**

Version No. 2.1

### **Notice to staff using a paper copy of this guidance**

**The policies and procedures page of Intranet holds the most recent version of this guidance. Staff must ensure they are using the most recent guidance.**

**Author: Head of Corporate Risk and Compliance**

**Asset Number: 310**

## Reader Information

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<b>Associated documentation</b>	A Guide for Managers is attached – see Appendix 1 which sets out what the line manager can do to prevent and reduce stress.  A Stress Test (self-assessment and self-help) and

	<p>Guide for Staff are attached - see Appendices 2 and 5 both of these documents give advice and guidance for staff on how they can identify and reduce stress.</p> <p>NICE public health guidance 22: Promoting mental wellbeing at work: Recommendations are reproduced as Appendix 4</p> <p>The NHS Health and Well-being Final Report (Boorman) summary or recommendations is reproduced as Appendix 5</p> <p>Further information relevant to work related stress is available as follows:</p> <p>Health and Safety Executive</p> <p>Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development</p>
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2.1	Updated	January 2016	Head of Corporate Risk and Compliance	Update of corporate logo, Stress Risk Assessment

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# Stress Management Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 impose a duty upon Livewell Southwest (LSW) to assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities and take measures to control that risk.
- 1.2 The Health and Safety Executive defines 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. Workplace stress, if not managed effectively, can therefore be regarded as an industrial injury.
- 1.3 Effective stress management is not just intended as a defence against potential litigation. It can also have a number of positive effects, including a reduction in absence and staff turnover, enhanced performance and productivity, greater commitment to work, greater customer satisfaction, and enhanced image and reputation for the organisation.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1 LSW is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of all employees. It recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue, and acknowledges the importance of identifying, reducing and controlling workplace stressors. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety Policy, the Risk Management Strategy and the other relevant policies as listed in Section 4.
- 2.2 Further guidance on promoting mental wellbeing through productive and healthy working conditions was produced by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in November 2009. Also in the same month the Final Report on NHS Health and Well-being was published, authored by Dr Steven Boorman.

## 3. Responsibilities and Duties in relation to Stress Management

This Policy summarises the responsibilities of Directors, Line Managers, the Head of Corporate Risk and Compliance the HR Department, the Occupational Health & Wellbeing Service and individual employees.

### 3.1 LSW Directors are responsible for:

- a) Promoting mental wellbeing at work as set out in the NICE guidance and the Boorman report.
- b) Ensuring that effective processes are in place for conducting risk assessments and identifying workplace stressors and for appropriate escalation of risk assessments if deemed necessary.
- c) Consulting Trade Union representatives in relation to implementation of this policy.

- d) Ensuring good communication with staff, particularly in relation to the implications of organisational change.
- e) Ensuring appropriate training is provided for all managers with responsibility for staff.
- f) Ensuring support systems are in place for all employees, such as access to counselling, mediation, relaxation etc.
- g) Ensuring that staff have the resources they need to perform effectively including physical work space, equipment, and IT support where appropriate.
- h) Ensuring there are enough staff available to undertake the work required on each shift and maintain safe staffing levels.
- i) Monitoring implementation of this policy and ensuring that adequate resources are in place to support it.
- j) Promoting a positive organisational culture, being approachable and visible, listening to feedback.
- k) Ensuring that LSW's performance management, grievance, disciplinary and related policies are handled in ways which minimise stress and distress.

### **3.2 All Line Managers are responsible for:**

- a) Promoting mental wellbeing at work as set out in the NICE guidance and the Boorman report.
- b) Ensuring they have a good understanding of work related stress and the actions required of Line Managers as set out in the NICE guidance, according to the HSE Stress Management Standards and this policy.
- c) Promoting a positive culture within their teams, being approachable and visible, and listening to feedback.
- d) Ensuring that risk assessments are conducted and the recommendations implemented within their area of responsibility. If risks cannot be controlled locally they must be escalated appropriately according to the Risk Management Strategy.
- e) Maintaining an open and constructive dialogue with staff and ensuring good communication at all times, and particularly in relation to the implications of organisational change.
- f) Ensuring they attend appropriate training in relation to good people management practice.
- g) Ensuring that all staff receive the training and development they need to undertake their role effectively.
- h) Monitoring workloads to ensure that staff are not overloaded.
- i) Monitoring working hours, breaks and leave taken to ensure that staff are not becoming exhausted.
- j) Ensuring that all staff are made aware of support systems, such as access to counselling, mediation, relaxation etc. and encouraged to use them if the need arises.
- k) Offering support to any staff member who experiences stress at work carrying out a risk assessment to identify and control stressors so far as is reasonably practicable in order to reduce stress and prevent sickness absence.
- l) Offering additional support to any staff experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement, or returning to work after a period of absence due to stress.

### **3.3 The Head of Corporate Risk and Compliance is responsible for:**

- a) Providing appropriate training for all line managers in relation to management processes for assessing, controlling and managing stress related ill health.
- b) Providing tools for managers and staff to use in order to document risk assessments carried out for both teams and individual staff members.
- c) Providing guidance for managers in relation to this policy and any related topics e.g. Lone Working, Violence and Aggression etc.

### **3.4 The (Human Resources) HR Department is responsible for:**

- a) Providing guidance and training for managers for any issues related to this policy that may be HR issues e.g. Bullying, Harassment and Violence (see Bullying & Harassment policy), Grievance Policy, Appraisal and Line Management Policy etc.
- b) Supporting managers and staff in relation to return to work after any period of sickness absence related to stress.
- c) Liaising with the Occupational Health & Wellbeing service provider in order to monitor and reduce the incidence of work related stress.
- d) Promoting flexible working options which may help to support individuals through stressful life events.
- e) Promoting mental wellbeing at work as set out in the NICE guidance, HSE Stress Management Standards and Boorman report.

### **3.5 The Occupational Health & Wellbeing Service is responsible for:**

- a) Providing advice and assistance to Managers and Employees in relation to work-related stress and facilitation of return to work.
- b) Providing therapeutic counselling services including information and coaching with respect to stress management and coping strategies.
- c) Liaison with specialist support agencies on an organisational and individual basis.
- d) Promoting mental wellbeing at work as set out in the NICE guidance and Boorman report.

### **3.6 All Employees are responsible for:**

- a) Looking after their own physical and mental wellbeing, and taking action to prevent stressful situations developing wherever possible.
- b) Treating all their colleagues with respect, and being willing to engage in processes to resolve conflict if it occurs.
- c) Maintaining an open and constructive dialogue with their line manager about any issues which may affect their work, including any relevant personal issues.
- d) Taking a positive approach to organisational change.
- e) Being aware of the signs of stress in themselves and colleagues, and being willing to seek, receive or offer support as appropriate.
- f) Use the tools provided by the organisation in order to identify and control risks related to stress. See Appendices 2 and 3 (The Stress Test and Individual Stress Risk Assessment).
- g) Ensuring their own personal effectiveness including good time management, assertive communication with others and maintaining a support network.

- h) Raising any issues of concern with their line manager (if possible) in the first instance. If not resolved, raising issues with other colleagues or Trade Union Representatives as appropriate.

## **4. Policies and Procedures**

4.1 LSW has a number of policies and procedures which are there to support managers and staff and can contribute to reducing stress, if properly implemented. This list is not exhaustive (a full list of all policies can be found on the intranet).

- a) Appraisal and Management Supervision Policy.
- b) Bullying & Harassment Policy.
- c) Health & Safety Policy.
- d) Risk Management Strategy.
- e) Violence and Aggression Management Policy.
- f) Lone Working Policy.
- g) Domestic Abuse Employee Support Policy.
- h) Sickness Policy.
- i) Performance Management Policy.
- j) Recruitment & Selection Policy
- k) Serious Incidents Requiring Investigation (SIRI) policy.
- l) Substance Misuse – Drug and Alcohol Employment Policy.

## **5. Identification of Stressors and the HSE Stress Management Standards**

The Health and Safety Executive has published Management Standards for work-related stress (2005). The standards are reproduced below and cover six key areas of work design that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence.

### **5.1 Demands**

#### **5.1.1 Includes issues like workload, work patterns, and the work environment**

The standard is that:

- a) Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and
- b) Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

#### **5.1.2 What should be happening / states to be achieved:**

- a) The organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work.
- b) People's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands;
- c) Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees; and
- d) Employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed.

## **5.2 Control**

### **5.2.1 How much say the person has in the way they do their work.**

The standard is that:

- a) Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work; and
- b) Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

### **5.2.2 What should be happening / states to be achieved:**

- a) Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work.
- b) Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work.
- c) Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work.
- d) The organisation encourages employees to develop their skills.
- e) Employees have a say over when breaks can be taken; and
- f) Employees are consulted over their work patterns.

## **5.3 Support**

### **5.3.1 Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.**

The standard is that:

- a) Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors; and
- b) Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

### **5.3.2 What should be happening / states to be achieved:**

- a) The organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support employees.
- b) Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff.
- c) Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues.
- d) Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it.
- e) Employees know how to access the required resources to do their job; and
- f) Employees receive regular and constructive feedback.

## **5.4 Relationships**

### **5.4.1 Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.**

The standard is that:

- a) Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work; and
- b) Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

#### **5.4.2 What should be happening / states to be achieved:**

- a) The organisation promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness.
- b) Employees share information relevant to their work.
- c) The organisation has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour.
- d) Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour; and
- e) Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour.

### **5.5 Role**

#### **5.5.1 Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.**

The standard is that:

- a) Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities; and
- b) Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

#### **5.5.2 What should be happening / states to be achieved:**

- a) The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible.
- b) The organisation provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities.
- c) The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon employees are clear; and
- d) Systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.

### **5.6 Change**

#### **5.6.1 How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.**

The standard is that:

- a) Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change; and
- b) Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- a) The organisation provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes.
- b) The organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals.

- c) Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs.
- d) Employees are aware of timetables for changes.
- e) Employees have access to relevant support during changes.

Further information is available on the Management Standards website [www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards).

## **5.7 Personal Factors**

- 5.7.1 Staff should be given the opportunity to discuss any issues outside of the work environment which may have an impact on their ability (either in the short or longer term to undertake their job role).
- 5.7.2 Managers should consider making reasonable adjustments according to the relevant policies and should consult HR or Head of Corporate Risk and Compliance for further information.

## **6. Risk Assessment**

- 6.1 LSW has a duty to ensure that risks arising from work activity are adequately assessed and controlled. Where stress caused by or made worse by work could lead to ill health, managers must assess the risk. A risk assessment for stress involves:
  - a) Looking for pressures at work that could cause high and long lasting levels of stress (using the 6 HSE Stress Management Standards, described in section 5 of this policy).
  - b) Looking for additional pressures outside of the working environment which may have an impact on the individual
  - c) Deciding who might be harmed by these, and
  - d) Deciding whether you are doing enough to prevent that harm.
  - e) Completing the risk assessment paperwork detailed in Appendices 3 and 4
  - f) Taking reasonable steps to deal with those pressures.
  - g) Creating an action plan and documenting any actions taken.
  - h) Recording and reviewing risk assessments according to the Risk Management Strategy.
- 6.2 For further information, please refer to “Making the Stress Management Standards Work” produced by the International Stress Management Association for the Health and Safety Executive, 2005. HSE website: [www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards)

## **7. Training and Development**

- 7.1 Stress Management for Managers training provided by the Head of Corporate Risk and Compliance is provided in order to help managers understand their responsibilities relating to Stress Management. Training can be booked via the Professional Training and Development Department.

7.2 The HR Department also provide “HR Toolkit Training” sessions for managers to assist them understand other responsibilities related to staff management.

## **8. Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness**

8.1 The Safety Quality and Performance Committee will take the lead on monitoring sickness, including work-related stress.

8.2 Business Intelligence publish figures on a monthly basis related to sickness absence.

8.3 The HR Department monitors the results of the annual staff survey each year. Staff satisfaction levels including levels of workplace stress are analysed and reported in the Staff Survey Report and Action Plan, including workplace stress.

**All policies are required to be electronically signed by the Lead Director. Proof of the electronic signature is stored in the policies database.**

**The Lead Director approves this document and any attached appendices. For operational policies this will be the Locality Manager.**

**The Executive signature is subject to the understanding that the policy owner has followed the organisation process for policy Ratification.**

Signed: Director of Professional Practice Safety & Quality

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015

### Guide for Managers

Managers have a huge impact on the work-related stress of their employees.

Managers can prevent (or conversely cause) stress by the way that they behave towards their staff, including their style of management. Managers need to act as role models, and be aware of the impact of their behaviour.

The manager's influence may mean that staff can be protected from (or exposed to) stressful working conditions, for instance negotiating an extension to a deadline in a team that is already working to full capacity.

If staff raise concerns about aspects of work which they find stressful, it is the responsibility of the manager either to address those concerns directly, or to seek a resolution by discussion with a more senior manager.

By working closely with their team, and being available for support, managers are well positioned to identify signs of stress in others at an early stage. Early warning signs might include:

- Uncharacteristic behaviour such as withdrawal from people or activities, arguments with colleagues, poor work performance, making mistakes, lateness / very early starts / absenteeism.
- Physical symptoms such as tiredness, sleep disturbance, headaches, migranes, diarrhoea, nausea.
- Emotional distress such as anxiety, depression, irritability, tearfulness.
- Problems with memory, concentration, and decision making.

If a member of staff experiences work-related stress, the manager is likely to be involved in supporting them and identifying possible solutions.

Managers 'hold the key' to the successful implementation of organisational change initiatives.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that risk assessments for work-related stress take place within their team or department, and that the recommendations are implemented.

Research jointly funded by the HSE and the CIPD aimed to clarify the specific behaviours required by managers to prevent, tackle and identify stress effectively.

The behaviours were then compared with the six key areas of work identified by the HSE Management Standards. The resulting 'Management competencies for preventing and reducing stress at work' framework therefore sets out the behaviours needed to manage stress effectively.

The full document "Line management behaviour and stress at work: guidance for line managers" and other resources can be found on the HSE or CIPD websites:

HSE website: [www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards)

CIPD website: [www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)

## **What do line managers need to do to prevent and reduce stress?**

Good people management practices can help to reduce the incidence of work related stress. The following areas are particularly relevant:

- **Recruitment and Selection**  
Jobs should be well designed with a clear job description and realistic workload. Recruiting the wrong person into a job can lead to a very stressful situation for the whole team. If a job is known to involve exposure to stressful situations, then this needs to be clear to job applicants and taken into account during recruitment.
- **Staff Induction**  
Starting a new job can be exciting, but also stressful, and a good induction programme in the workplace can help a new team member to settle in more quickly and reduce stress within the team.
- **Workload Management**  
All staff should have manageable workloads. Team work and work re-allocation should be considered, particularly where peaks and troughs of work demand occur. Systems should be in place for re-prioritising work at times of high demand or high staff absence. If workload increases above a manageable level, senior managers should be made aware of this.
- **Supervision and Appraisal**  
All staff must receive regular line management supervision, and an appraisal at least once a year. In addition, staff must be offered opportunity to raise issues with their manager as and when they arise. Where appropriate, staff should also participate in caseload management supervision and/or clinical supervision.
- **Management Style**  
Managers need to be aware of their own personal style, and whether they are perceived as approachable and supportive by staff. 360-degree feedback can help to increase self-awareness. Some staff are very self-motivated and require minimal supervision. Others require more support and guidance.
- **Training and Development**  
All staff should have a personal development plan detailing the training and development they need to perform their role effectively. Lack of training can be a cause of poor performance and stress, and so managers must ensure that protected time for learning, and appropriate resource, is provided.
- **Change Management and Communication**  
Managers should ensure effective two-way communication with staff, to include proper consultation processes and listening to feedback. Communication should include one to one meetings and team meetings. Staff should be involved in decisions which affect them. Prolonged uncertainty for staff can be very stressful and good leadership is required at these times.
- **Conflict between staff**

Where there is conflict within the team, this needs to be actively addressed by the manager. Support and advice is available from the workforce development team, and external mediation is a possible option. Bullying and harassment can be a major stressor, and will not be tolerated.

- **Absence management and Return to Work**

Returning to work after a period of absence can be stressful, and extra support from the manager and colleagues may be required to integrate the individual back into the team. In many cases, a phased return to work following long term sickness absence would be advisable. Return to Work interviews should always be carried out following any absence and recorded on the paperwork contained within the Sickness Policy.

- **Support for staff**

Managers are expected to support their staff in dealing with stress and to actively manage and minimise any stressors within the workplace. It is recognised that individuals respond differently to pressures, and that different strategies will be needed for different individuals.

LSW's flexible working policies can help to support staff through stressful situations at home. The occupational health & wellbeing service can help with work related issues.

- **Serious Incidents Requiring Investigation (SIRI)**

Support should be provided to any staff involved in such incidents.

# The Stress Test And Self-Help Guide

**Please note:**

This self-assessment must be completed by individual employees and must be shared with either their immediate line manager, or if this is inappropriate, with their line manager's manager. It must remain confidential at all times and must not be shared without the individual employee's permission. A copy should be held in the employee personal file and the employee should retain a copy for their own records.

Employee Name:

Employee Signature:

Date:

Manager Name:

Manager Signature:

Date:

## **How stressed are you really?**

In this fast paced, constantly changing work environment, stress is an ever-increasing problem. Undue stress wears down our immune system and leaves us susceptible to all types of physical ailments. The following simple test is designed to see how stressed you are and to give you some ideas as to how to 'take control' if necessary. Read the following statements and select as many of the ones you feel **often** or **always** apply to you and enter a total number:

### **A. Your mood and feelings:**

- I am often angry and irritable
- I have big mood swings
- I often fail to see the funny side of things
- I get angry when I'm kept waiting
- I spend a lot of time complaining about the past
- I often feel guilty
- I find it hard to make decisions and get frustrated by this
- I often keep everything bottled up inside
- I blow up easily or pick fights
- I am constantly tired
- I feel unable to cope with all I have to do

Total: /11

### **B. Your lifestyle**

- I find it hard to eat healthily or I regularly over or under-eat
- I do not exercise regularly
- I consume large quantities of caffeine or alcohol
- I have trouble sleeping or wake up still feeling tired
- I get too little rest
- I don't fit relaxation into every day
- I tend to race through the day
- I often ignore the symptoms of stress

Total: /8

### C. At work

- I am unable to take sufficient breaks
- I feel unsupported by my colleagues
- I feel unsupported by management
- I have to work very intensively
- I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do
- There is friction or anger between colleagues
- I have to work very fast
- I don't have a choice deciding what I do at work
- Different groups at work demands things from me that are hard to combine
- I am subject to bullying at work
- I have unrealistic time pressures
- I cannot rely on my line manager to help me with a work problem
- Staff are not consulted about change at work
- Relationships at work are strained

Total: /14

### D. In general

- I have few supportive relationships
- I always say yes when I am asked to do more by friends, family or at work
- I tend to put things off
- I complain that I am disorganised
- I try to do everything myself
- I set unrealistic deadlines
- I am working longer and longer to achieve the same or less
- I find it hard to concentrate

Total: /8

**Overall Total: /41**

### Your score:

Total up the number of statements you have selected in each section and this represents your overall total score. This will give you an indicator of how stressed you are and which aspects of your life are causing you the most stress.

## **How stressed are you?**

### **If you scored less than 10 – you have few hassles**

Congratulations! There are few hassles in your life right now. Make sure, though, that you are not trying so hard to avoid problems that you don't challenge yourself – some stress is actually good for you.

### **If you scored 11 - 20 – you are in pretty good control**

Well done! You have your life well balanced. Make sure you keep an eye on your choices and lifestyle to avoid unnecessary stress and keep yourself both physical and mentally fit and healthy.

### **If you scored 21 - 30 - you are approaching the danger zone**

You may well be suffering some stress-related symptoms and your relationships could be strained. You need to think carefully about the choices you make and your lifestyle and find ways to reduce your stressors and/or improve your coping mechanisms and find time to relax.

### **If you scored 31 or more – Emergency!**

You must stop now, rethink how you are living, change your attitude and pay careful attention to your diet, exercise and relaxation. This may seem selfish but you need to look after yourself and take some action or your health will suffer. Talk to your manager to see how you can be helped in work; make an appointment to discuss with your family doctor.

## **Ideas which may help reduce stress or help you manage the stress in your life**

### **If you scored high in section A: You're letting it all build up**

You must be exhausted carrying around all that tension. You hate letting people down and often ask too much of yourself. You may find yourself having a lot of arguments, even picking fights. Practice smiling more and don't take things as seriously – more fun is needed right now! Talk to your friends and family about what's on your mind instead of bottling things up. Make time to relax but also find a way to vent your frustrations – try a martial art, writing a journal or a long walk.

### **If you scored high in section B: You need to look after yourself more**

Our lifestyles choices drastically affect the way we cope with stress. Your body is fighting a battle both from the inside and out. Whilst you rely on sugar and caffeine to keep you going and alcohol and cigarettes to help you unwind, your body is not getting the nutrients it needs to repair the damage these toxins are causing. Make sure you get your five portions of fruit and veg a day, try to reduce smoking, drink plenty of water, take a five minute relaxation break as often as you can and take some form of exercise every day – try walking or cycling to work, or from the park and ride, taking the stairs or attend an exercise class – your body and mind will thank you for it.

### **If you scored high in section C: Work is getting you down**

You are struggling at work and don't feel that you have the support necessary to cope with the high demands put on you. Look at your workload – can you delegate any? Are you saying yes to more work because you daren't say no? Talk to your manager about your workload, it may be that work can be redistributed or time set aside for you to catch up. Try saying I am not able to do this right at this moment, can it wait? Can anyone else help you? Look at your time management strategies – prioritise your work into 'urgent and important, important, less important and can wait' then block out slots in your diary to deal with the most urgent ones first. Don't let anyone fill these slots in - imagine they are an important meeting that you can't avoid. Make sure your line manager knows the pressure you are under. If you continue to struggle, find someone else to help you e.g. Your Line Manager, Staff Health and Wellbeing, Human Resources these are all people that can help you deal with your worries so don't suffer in silence if you need help.

### **If you scored high in section D: You're taking on too much**

I know it's hard but you need to trust others to take the strain and ask for help. You feel unsupported and take more and more on but you're not a superhero and need to look after yourself too. Support is out there but you must take the time to find it. Be realistic about what you can achieve and use time management strategies to schedule time for your commitments and responsibilities but also for your health and wellbeing. Learn to prioritise effectively and don't be too hard on yourself.

### **For Further Advice and Support Contact:**

LSW Livewell Team – for dietary, health advice, exercise classes available  
LSW Stop Smoking Service  
Occupational Health and Wellbeing Department – for counselling, relaxation classes, mediation

# INDIVIDUAL STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

Please take some time consider the questions in each section of this assessment and try to think about what might help to improve things. There is guidance listed which may help.

The assessment focuses on possible stressors both at work and outside of the work environment. It is intended that the responses you give in each section are used as a framework for discussion with your line manager to explore your concerns further and negotiate a way forward to try and reduce stressors.

Your personal information will not be shared with anyone other than your manager in the first instance, unless you give permission to share with other people. The general themes from individual may be used to inform team or organisational learning in order to make improvements.

*(Note – If appropriate, the assessment may be shared as part of an HR Investigation Process)*

A copy of this assessment will be held in your personal file and you should also retain a copy for your records.

## 1. Relationships

Give details / examples for each issue where it is relevant	Poor	Satisfactory	Good
Relationship with your supervisor			
Relationship with your workmates			
Communication from management			
Other issues? (Bullying, Harassment, Impersonal Treatment etc)			

Controls – any actions identified must go into the action plan
How can you help improve team relationships?
How could communication in the team be improved?
If you feel that you are experiencing bullying or harassment at work, can you use the Bullying and Harassment Policy?
Other controls identified

Guidance	Resources/Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appraisal and Line Management Policy</li> <li>• Bullying and Harassment Policy</li> <li>• Violence and Aggression Policy</li> <li>• Grievance Policy</li> <li>• Whistle Blowing Policy</li> </ul>	Line Manager HR Occupational Health & Wellbeing Wellbeing Team Plymouth Options & Psychotherapy Service

## 2. Change

Give details / examples for each issue where it is relevant	Not at all	A little	Well informed and involved
How much do you feel involved in changes at work?			
How informed do you feel regarding changes in your workplace?			
Other issues?			

<b>Controls – any actions identified must go into the action plan</b>
What support can you access during periods of change at work?
How could your line manager better support you during change at work?
How could the organisation better support you during change at work?
Other controls identified

<b>Guidance</b>	<b>Resources/Support</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational Change Protocol</li> <li>• Redeployment Policy</li> <li>• Stress Management Policy</li> <li>• Travel and Subsistence Expense Claims Procedure</li> <li>• Mobile Working Policy</li> </ul>	Line Manager HR Trade Union Representatives Occupational Health & Wellbeing Wellbeing Team Plymouth Options & Psychotherapy Service

### 3. Support

Give details / examples for each issue where it is relevant	Poor	Satisfactory	Good
Access to supervision			
Being able to approach your manager / alternative manager if you have concerns			
Being able to talk to your colleagues about concerns			
Access to appropriate training to do your job			
Are there any parts of your job you find especially difficult? (e.g. increased risk of violence and aggression / caring for vulnerable people)			
Other issues?			

Controls – any actions identified must go into the action plan
What supervision could you request which would help support you?
How could your line manager / alternative managers support you?
How could your colleagues better support you?
If you have identified any particular parts of your job above, what do you need to support you?
Other controls identified?

Guidance	Resources/Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical Supervision Policy</li> <li>• Appraisal and Line Management Policy</li> <li>• Redeployment Policy</li> <li>• Leave Policy</li> <li>• Flexible Working Policy</li> <li>• Mobile working Policy</li> <li>• Grievance Policy</li> <li>• Bullying and Harassment Policy</li> <li>• Stress Management Policy</li> <li>• Sickness Policy</li> </ul>	Line Manager HR Occupational Health & Wellbeing OH Mediation Service Trade Union Representatives Plymouth Options and Psychotherapy Service

#### 4. Demands

Give details / examples for each issue where it is relevant	Not concerned	Somewhat concerned	Very concerned
Consider the amount of work you have to do (too much / too little?)			
Ability to take your breaks during your work shift			
Your shift / work patterns			
Having to work very intensively			
Any problems with your work environment?			
Other issues?			

#### Controls – any actions identified must go into the action plan

What support do you feel you need in order to do your work?

How can you ensure you take appropriate breaks?

How do you feel your work environment can be improved?

Other controls identified?

#### Guidance

- Workplace Adjustments Policy
- Leave Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Appraisal & Line Management Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

#### Resources/Support

Line Manager  
 HR  
 Occupational Health & Wellbeing  
 Trade Union Representatives  
 Professional Training and Development Dept.

## 5. Control

Give details / examples for each issue where it is relevant	Never	Sometimes	Always
Ability to plan your own work			
Ability to participate in decision making for your own job			
Ability to control the pace / content of your job			
Other issues?			

### Controls – any actions identified must go into the action plan

How could you have more say about how your job is done?

How could you be more included in the decision making for the team?

How could you be supported to use your skills to greater effect at work?

Other controls identified

Guidance	Resources/Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible Working Policy</li> <li>• Whistle Blowing Policy</li> <li>• Roster Policy</li> <li>• Appraisal &amp; Line Management Policy</li> <li>• Performance Management Policy</li> </ul>	Line Manager HR Occupational Health & Wellbeing Trade Union Representatives Professional Training and Development Dept.

## 6. Role

Give details / examples for each issue where it is relevant	No	Somewhat	Yes
Are you clear about what is expected of you in your role?			
Can you approach your manager / alternative manager with any concerns regarding your role?			
Other concerns?			

### Controls – any actions identified must go into the action plan

Roles and responsibilities should be clearly identified in job descriptions and person specifications; you can be supported by your manager to review these if appropriate.

If you feel there is ambiguity or confusion (role conflict) in your job, you could request support from your manager to review your job description?

Other controls identified

Guidance	Resources/Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appraisal &amp; Line Management Policy</li> <li>• Redeployment Policy</li> <li>• Flexible Working Policy</li> </ul>	Line Manager HR Occupational Health & Wellbeing Trade Union Representatives Professional Training and Development Dept.

## 7. Personal Factors

Give details / examples for each issue where it is relevant	Never	Occasionally	Frequently
Are there any issues outside of the work environment which may be affecting your ability to cope with your work?			
Other issues?			

### Controls – any actions identified must go into the action plan

What support do you feel you would benefit from at this time from your manager or others?

Other controls identified

Guidance	Resources/Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical Supervision Policy</li> <li>• Appraisal and Line Management Policy</li> <li>• Redeployment Policy</li> <li>• Leave Policy</li> <li>• Flexible Working Policy</li> <li>• Mobile working Policy</li> <li>• Grievance Policy</li> <li>• Bullying and Harassment Policy</li> <li>• Stress Management Policy</li> <li>• Sickness Policy</li> </ul>	Line Manager HR Occupational Health & Wellbeing OH Mediation Service Trade Union Representatives Plymouth Options and Psychotherapy Service Refer to other agencies e.g. Al Anon, Relate etc Domestic Violence Helpline

**ACTION PLAN**

Action Number	Action	Who Is Responsible	Date Action Completed
<b>Relationships</b>			
<b>Change</b>			
<b>Support</b>			
<b>Demands</b>			
<b>Control</b>			
<b>Role</b>			
<b>Personal Factors</b>			

<b>Assessment Date</b>	
<b>Employee Name</b>	
<b>Employee Signature</b>	
<b>Manager Name</b>	
<b>Manager Signature</b>	
<b>Date Review Due</b>	
<b>Review 1</b>	<i>Date and Signature of Reviewing Manager</i>
<b>Review 2</b>	<i>Date and Signature of Reviewing Manager</i>
<b>Review 3</b>	<i>Date and Signature of Reviewing Manager</i>

**Team Stress Risk Assessment**

**Team:**

**Job Roles in this Team:**

**Location:**

**Date:**

<b>Possible Causes of stress and associated risks</b>	<b>People likely to be affected</b>	<b>Existing controls</b>
<b>Demands:</b>		

<b>Control:</b>		
<b>Support:</b>		

<b>Relationships:</b>		
<b>Change:</b>		

<b>Role:</b>					
<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Level of risk</b>	<b>Controls adequate Y/N</b>	<b>Further Action Required/ Could be Improved</b>	<b>Date Actions Complete</b>

**Date of Assessment:**

**Completed by:**

**Date Reviewed:**

**Reviewed by:**

### Guide for staff

You have a responsibility to look after your own physical and mental wellbeing, and to take action to prevent stressful situations developing wherever possible.

Complete The Stress Test (see Appendix 2) this can help you identify any stressors which may be affecting your health and there is also some guidance within this document that can help you to reduce stress in your working and home life.

#### Prevention of stressors includes:

- Maintaining an open and constructive dialogue with your line manager about any issues which may affect your work, including any relevant personal issues.
- Treating all your colleagues with respect, and being willing to engage in processes to resolve conflict if it occurs.
- Taking a positive approach to organisational change.
- Ensuring your own personal effectiveness including good time management, assertive communication with others, and maintaining a support network.
- Raising any issues of concern with your line manager (if possible) in the first instance. If this is not appropriate then you can raise issues with your line manager's manager, other colleagues or Trade Union Representatives.

You also need to be aware of the signs/symptoms of stress in yourself and colleagues, and being willing to seek, receive or offer support as appropriate.

We each react differently to life's challenges, and what one person may find stressful, another person may not.

#### Early warning signs might include:

- Uncharacteristic behaviour such as withdrawal from people or activities, arguments with colleagues, poor work performance, making mistakes, lateness, earliness in order to "get things done" or absenteeism.
- Physical symptoms such as tiredness, sleep disturbance, headaches, migraines, diarrhoea, nausea.
- Emotional distress such as anxiety, depression, irritability, tearfulness.
- Problems with memory, concentration, and decision making.

#### Learn to help yourself:

Take action to improve your own resilience and personal effectiveness:

- Use your support network. Talk things over with someone you can trust and be prepared to ask for support – do not try to "be strong" all the time.
- Develop good time management skills and set yourself realistic achievable goals – do not try to be a perfectionist.
- Practice effective communication – be assertive, ask for what you want, give and receive constructive feedback.



### **NICE public health guidance 22: Promoting mental wellbeing at work: Recommendations**

#### **Recommendation 1: strategic and coordinated approach to promoting employees' mental wellbeing**

##### **Who should benefit?**

Employees.

##### **Who should take action?**

- Employers in organisations of all sizes. In larger organisations this might include chief executives and board members, human resources directors and senior managers. In micro and small businesses<sup>1</sup> this will usually be the owner-manager and in medium-sized businesses the business manager.
- Trade unions and other employee representatives.

##### **What action should they take?**

- Adopt an organisation-wide approach to promoting the mental wellbeing of all employees, working in partnership with them. This approach should integrate the promotion of mental wellbeing into all policies and practices concerned with managing people, including those related to employment rights and working conditions.
- Ensure that the approach takes account of the nature of the work, the workforce and the characteristics of the organisation.
- Promote a culture of participation, equality and fairness that is based on open communication and inclusion.
- Create an awareness and understanding of mental wellbeing and reduce the potential for discrimination and stigma related to mental health problems.
- Ensure processes for job design, selection, recruitment, training, development and appraisal promote mental wellbeing and reduce the potential for stigma and discrimination. Employees should have the necessary skills and support to meet the demands of a job that is worthwhile and offers opportunities for development and progression. Employees should be fully supported throughout organisational change and situations of uncertainty.
- Ensure that groups of employees who might be exposed to stress but might be less likely to be included in the various approaches for promoting mental wellbeing have the equity of opportunity to participate. These groups include part-time workers, shift workers and migrant workers.

#### **Recommendation 2: assessing opportunities for promoting employees' mental wellbeing and managing risks**

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<sup>1</sup> A micro business employs fewer than 10 people. A small business employs fewer than 50 people and a medium-sized business employs fewer than 250 people.

### **Who should benefit?**

Employees.

### **Who should take action?**

Refer to Recommendation 1.

### **What action should they take?**

- Adopt a structured approach to assessing opportunities for promoting employees' mental wellbeing and managing risks. This approach involves:
- Ensuring systems are in place for assessing and monitoring the mental wellbeing of employees so that areas for improvement can be identified and risks caused by work and working conditions addressed. This could include using employee attitude surveys and information about absence rates, staff turnover and investment in training and development, and providing feedback and open communication. In small organisations systems may be more informal. It is important to protect employee confidentiality and address any concerns employees might have about these processes of assessment and monitoring.
- Making employees aware of their legal entitlements regarding quality of work and working conditions. Employees should be made aware of their responsibilities for looking after their own mental wellbeing. For example, employees need to identify concerns and needs relating to support or improvements in the working environment.
- Using frameworks such as Health and Safety Executive management standards for work-related stress to promote and protect employee mental wellbeing.
- Responding to the needs of employees who may be at particular risk of stress caused by work and working conditions, or who may be experiencing mental health problems for other reasons. Well-implemented policies for managing employee absence are important for ensuring that employees who are experiencing stress can be identified early and offered support. Support could include counselling or stress management training provided through occupational health and primary care support services. Interventions for individual employees should be complemented by organisation-wide approaches that encompass all employees.
- Different approaches may be needed by micro, small and medium-sized businesses and organisations for promoting mental wellbeing and managing risks. Smaller businesses and organisations may need to access the support provided by organisations such as the Federation of Small Business and Chambers of Commerce.

(Employers may also wish to refer to 'Managing long-term sickness absence and incapacity for work' [NICE public health guidance 19](#)).

### **Recommendation 3: flexible working**

#### **Who should benefit?**

Employees.

#### **Who should take action?**

Refer to Recommendation 1.

#### **What action should they take?**

- If reasonably practical, provide employees with opportunities for flexible working according to their needs and aspirations in both their personal and working lives. Different options for flexible working include part-time working, home-working, job sharing and flexitime. Such opportunities can enhance employees' sense of control and promote engagement and job satisfaction.
- Promote a culture within the organisation that supports flexible working and addresses employees' concerns. Managers should respond to and seek to accommodate appropriate requests from employees for flexible working and should ensure consistency and fairness in processing applications. Managers' ability to manage teams with flexible working patterns may need to be developed.
- Consider particular models of flexible working that recognise the distinct characteristics of micro, small and medium-sized businesses and organisations.

### **Recommendation 4: the role of line managers**

#### **Who should benefit?**

Line managers and employees.

(The line manager may be the owner-manager in micro and small businesses.)

#### **Who should take action?**

- Employers in organisations of all sizes. In larger organisations this will probably include human resources directors and senior managers. In many micro and small businesses it will usually be the owner-manager, and in medium-sized businesses the business manager.
- Training and professional organisations concerned with management.

#### **What action should they take?**

- Strengthen the role of line managers in promoting the mental wellbeing of employees through supportive leadership style and management practices. This will involve:
- promoting a management style that encourages participation, delegation, constructive feedback, mentoring and coaching
- ensuring that policies for the recruitment, selection, training and development of managers recognise and promote these skills
- ensuring that managers are able to motivate employees and provide them with the training and support they need to develop their performance and job satisfaction
- increasing understanding of how management style and practices can help to promote the mental wellbeing of employees and keep their stress to a minimum

- ensuring that managers are able to identify and respond with sensitivity to employees' emotional concerns, and symptoms of mental health problems
- ensuring that managers understand when it is necessary to refer an employee to occupational health services or other sources of help and support
- considering the competency framework developed by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, the Health and Safety Executive and Investors in People as a tool for management development<sup>2</sup>.

## **Recommendation 5: supporting micro, small and medium-sized businesses**

### **Who should benefit?**

Employees and employers in micro, small and medium-sized businesses.

### **Who should take action?**

- Primary care trusts, primary care services and occupational health services.
- Those working on national initiatives and programmes from government, voluntary, charitable and business sectors to promote mental wellbeing at work.
- Federation of Small Businesses.

### **What action should they take?**

- Collaborate with micro, small and medium-sized businesses and offer advice and a range of support and services. This could include access to occupational health services (including counselling support and stress management training).
- Establish mechanisms for providing support and advice on developing and implementing organisation-wide approaches to promoting mental wellbeing. These could include tools and approaches for risk assessment, human resources management and management training and development.

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<sup>2</sup> Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, Health and Safety Executive, Investors in People (2009) Line management behaviour and stress at work [online]. Available from [www.cipd.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/898B09D3-6F8A-49AF-BD11-66EC76B086D4/0/stress\\_at\\_work\\_updated\\_guidance\\_for\\_line\\_managers.pdf](http://www.cipd.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/898B09D3-6F8A-49AF-BD11-66EC76B086D4/0/stress_at_work_updated_guidance_for_line_managers.pdf)

### **NHS Health and Well-being Final Report (Boorman) November 2009**

The following provides a summary of the recommendations in the Final Report cross-referenced to the paragraph in which they appear.

#### **Improving organisational behaviours and performance**

- We recommend that all NHS organisations provide staff health and well-being services that are centred on prevention (of both work-related and lifestyle-influenced ill-health), are fully aligned with wider public health policies and initiatives, and are seen as a real and tangible benefit of working in the NHS (paragraph 2.4).
- We recommend that all NHS leaders and managers are developed and equipped to recognise the link between staff health and well-being and organisational performance and that their actions are judged in terms of whether they contribute to or undermine staff health and well-being (paragraph 2.4).
- We recommend that all NHS Trusts develop and implement strategies for actively improving the health and well-being of their workforce, and particularly for tackling the major health and lifestyle issues that affect their staff and the wider population (paragraph 2.5).
- All NHS Trusts should implement the guidance both from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) on promoting mental health and well-being at work and from the National Mental Health and Employment Strategy (paragraph 2.8).
- It is essential that all NHS Trusts put staff health and well-being at the heart of their work, with a clearly identified board-level champion and senior managerial support (paragraph 2.9).
- Training in health and well-being should be an integral part of management training and leadership development at local, regional and national levels and should be built into annual performance assessment and personal development planning processes (paragraph 2.9).
- We believe that high priority should be given to ensuring that managers have the skills and tools to support staff with mental health problems (paragraph 2.11).

#### **Achieving an exemplar service**

- We recommend that, when drawing up a staff health and well-being strategy, Trusts undertake a proper assessment of key health priorities and risk factors, which should fully reflect their legal requirements in this area (paragraph 3.4).
- We recommend that there should be consistent access to early and effective interventions for common musculoskeletal and mental health problems in all Trusts, as they are the major causes of ill-health among NHS staff (paragraph 3.4).
- We recommend that, as well as providing core staff health and well-being services to nationally specified standards, all Trusts should provide a range of additional staff health and well-being services targeted at the needs of their organisation. To do this they will need both to assess the specific needs and requirements of their staff and to engage with staff to determine the services they wish to see provided (paragraph 3.5).
- Staff engagement will be critical to ensuring that both the range of services and the way in which they are provided are seen as credible and to addressing staff concerns. Trusts need to go beyond simply meeting their legislative obligations to embrace a wider concept of staff engagement (paragraph 3.7).

- It is essential that staff health and well-being services commissioned following the sort of risk assessment process we have outlined are then properly resourced (paragraph 3.8).
- Core early intervention services should form part of the minimum service specification for staff health and well-being recommended in our earlier report (paragraph 3.11).
- There should also be nationally agreed service standards for early intervention (paragraph 3.11).

### **Embedding staff health and well-being in NHS systems and infrastructure**

- We now recommend that the NHS Operating Framework should clearly establish the requirement for staff health and well-being to be included in national and local governance frameworks to ensure proper board accountability for its implementation (paragraph 4.2).
- We recommend that the Care Quality Commission's annual assessment of NHS organisations and their delivery partners should in future include standards and targets for staff health and well-being. Similarly, Monitor should consider support for staff health and well-being in its assessment process for Foundation Trust status as well as in its in-year monitoring arrangements (paragraph 4.3).
- It is important that the approach to improving support for staff health and well-being is developed in consultation and partnership with staff and trade unions (paragraph 4.5).
- We recommend that all NHS organisations put in place a staff health and well-being strategy developed with the full involvement of staff and staff representatives, and that its implementation is routinely monitored, reported and discussed with staff and their representatives (paragraph 4.7).
- It is essential that staff health and wellbeing strategies, and the services that are subsequently commissioned, are available to all staff on an equitable basis (paragraph 4.9).
- It is also important that delivery of staff health and well-being services is properly monitored and regularly assessed and reviewed (paragraph 4.10).