

Individual Stress Risk Assessment Guidance



Supporting mental
wellbeing in the
workplace

Individual Stress Risk Assessment Guidance

Where a manager is concerned about an employee's wellbeing, a supportive discussion should take place with the employee to outline concerns and ascertain the nature of any problems being experienced by the employee.

When signs of stress have been identified in an employee, line managers should undertake a personal risk assessment with them using the perceived workplace stressors listed in Appendix 1. If not already done, a referral to Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service may be appropriate.

Appendix 1 outlines some of the areas which should be considered when undertaking assessments, this is not an exhaustive list but an example for guidance. The [Individual Stress Risk Assessment Template](#) can be found on the link.

Carrying Out the Risk Assessment for Mental Wellbeing

When undertaking risk assessments it is important to adhere to the principles of risk assessment laid down by the [Health and Safety Executive](#). These are:

- Identify hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risk by identifying what action you are already taking. Decide whether it is enough. If not decide what more needs to be done
- Involve the individual
- Record the findings of the assessment
- Review the assessment at appropriate intervals

Defining the issues for the purpose of a risk assessment

Some possible causes of stress in the workplace, which managers might need to consider when undertaking a risk assessment, are:

- The physical working environment
- Training needs
- Work level demands
- Job stability
- Working relationships
- Remote management
- Management style
- Levels of communication
- Equipment breakdown
- Violence in the workplace

What to do and how to do it:

- Find somewhere private, quiet and relaxed, with no interruptions to conduct the assessment with the employee
- Explain the purpose of carrying out a risk assessment and give the employee the opportunity to ask questions

- Do not conduct the assessment like a formal interview or sit behind a desk
- Remember that the employee may already be suffering from stress and feeling very anxious so keep the discussion as informal as possible.
- Do not rush the assessment, give the employee adequate time to express themselves and let them know you are listening to them
- Do not complete the form during the discussion. Take appropriate notes and complete afterwards
- You must record your findings and share these with employees. You must use this record to monitor progress and to help you keep sight of particular hazards.
- Set a review date, however, review your assessment and revise where necessary whenever significant changes occur with the individual, in the City Council or in the unit/section. Do this in consultation with the employee.
- Review regularly.

Possible actions and solutions following risk assessment

After a joint discussion between the manager and employee a range of options to help manage the situation should emerge. These may include:

- More effective communication
- Training or retraining
- Prioritising or reviewing of workloads
- Further clarity of role and responsibilities
- Relationship mediation managers and/or colleagues
- Professional support from the Human Resources
- Health and Wellbeing Team, and/or Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service.
- Suggest a buddy system
- Flexible breaks
- Use of Remploy/ TESS – Carriers Close

This list is not exhaustive, but a thorough assessment of the situation will determine the action to be taken.

If remedial action is beyond the authority of an individual manager the matter should be referred to a more senior manager.

Action plan and solutions following risk assessment:

- Agree measures to be taken and be sure these are understood
- Provide a copy of the risk assessment to the employee in question
- Monitor progress continuously with regular reviews
- Agree boundaries for confidentiality with the employee

If there is any doubt that the proposed actions are reasonably practicable then a discussion should take place with a senior manager.

Appendix 1

Mental Wellbeing Risk Assessment Check List

Perceived Hazard	Risk	Possible control measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Environment - Noise - Over-crowding - Excessive heat/cold - Poor lighting - Poor ventilation - Inappropriate/defective equipment - Constant interruptions - Dealing with aggression/confrontation 	<p>Stressful environment leading to physical and/or psychological ill health.</p> <p>Increases potential of assaults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure all managers are aware of Mental Wellbeing Policy, Guidelines and relevant legislation. - Where reasonable and practicable assess environment and make appropriate changes; i.e. introduce screening/improve lighting. - Evaluate working practises. - Monitor and review risks regularly - Maintain health and safety checks. - Encourage staff to assist in identifying potentially stressful situations - Line manager to identify risks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Organisation - Unclear/ambiguous job descriptions - Lack of clarity of role - Excessive workloads - Unreasonable/unrealistic deadlines - Ineffective communication - Performance issues - Pressure of work - Increase in sickness absence - Increased in complaints - Job security/stability - Lack of control over work - Lack of resources 	<p>Stressful work situation leading to physical/psychological ill health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regularly review workloads and deadlines to avoid unreasonable pressure. - Ensure job descriptions are clear and understood. - Ensure employees are aware of the policy for dealing with violent/difficult service users. - Ensure there are clear lines of communication with staff and that it is a two way process. - Encourage an environment where employees can openly talk about what is causing them to feel stressed. - Line managers should be aware of signs that employees are under pressure and take action to ascertain the causes and implement processes to deal with it. - Explore training needs - Where appropriate refer to Human Resources or the Occupational Health and Counselling Service

Perceived Hazard	Risk	Possible Control Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment - Lack of clarity about the pressure inherent in particular posts. - Ineffective induction. 	<p>Stressful work situation leading to physical and/or psychological ill health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At interview outline the potential causes of stress in the job - At interview assess candidate's potential for coping with stressful elements of post. - Ensure new employees are given a clear and planned induction. This should include an awareness of the Mental Wellbeing policy and procedures. - New staff should be regularly monitored and reviewed as part of the induction process. - Offer regular support to employees. - Provide feedback.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training - Ineffective training to do the job. - Lack of training in times of change 	<p>Stressful situations leading to physical and/or psychological ill health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees should advise managers of their training needs. - Ensure employees have received effective training to do their job e.g. skills, technical, professional. - Managers identify training needs of staff. - Ensure supervision is provided throughout training, feedback given and progress discussed. - During periods of change identify what further training is needed.

Perceived Hazard	Risk	Possible Control Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing change - Employees do not understand the reason for change. - Employees do not feel they have been communicated with about the changes, which affect them. - Employees do not feel they have been included in the consultation process. 	<p>Stressful situations leading to physical and/or psychological ill health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include employees in the consultation process and keep them informed. - Ensure employees understand what change is happening and the likely impact this will have on their job. - Identify changes of their roles, line management and tasks. - Provide the opportunity for employees to clearly talk about the pressures, challenges and coping strategies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work relationships - Employees feel under valued. - Lack of effective management. - Non-supportive management style. - Bullying. - Harassment. - Disciplinary/grievance procedures being protracted. - Interpersonal relationships. - Remote management. - Equal opportunities issues 	<p>Stressful situations leading to physical and/or psychological ill health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure employees feel valued by providing one-to-one sessions where their personal well being is considered. - Ensure staff development reviews are undertaken. - Identify that employees are being managed effectively, making changes where appropriate. - Ensure employees are not subjected to bullying and harassment. Ensure they are aware of the Harassment Policy. - Ensure that disciplinary/grievance procedures are dealt with promptly. - Ensure staff are given support through the process - Refer to Human Resources and the Occupational Health and Counselling Service where appropriate.

Perceived Hazard	Risk	Possible Control Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence - Staff assaulted, threatened, intimidated. - Staff subjected to ongoing verbal abuse which can be cumulative in its effect. 	<p>Stressful situations leading to physical and/or psychological ill health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that all employees are aware of The Anti-Violence Policy. - Undertake risk assessment to ensure that procedures are in place for employees dealing with potentially abusive/violent service users. - Debrief staff involved in violent incidents. - Offer support to employees involved in violent incidents. - Employees should be offered counselling through the Occupational Health and Counselling Service.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal problems - Life crises e.g. bereavement, family illness or difficulties. - Relationship breakdown. 	<p>Stressful personal situations impacting on work and leading to potential physical/psychological ill health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good management practice dictates that employees should be offered support in a crisis e.g. compassionate leave/time off to attend appointments, this is a management decision.