

HSE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS for Stress and Work

The HSE produce excellent material to support managers in considering elements which can be considered concerning stress and work and these are available on this HSE site:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/> .

Employers have a duty of care under Sections 2 and 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974). They must ensure the health and safety of their employees **and** anybody else who might be adversely affected by their work processes. This includes both physical and mental health ill-effects. Undertaking appropriate risk assessments is the starting point in fulfilling this duty.

Organisations benefit from effective management to reduce work-related stress. Such gains include:

- maintaining performance, productivity and thus the business output
- reducing staff turnover and enhancing staff recruitment, retention, attendance levels and the image and reputation of the business
- reducing the chance of litigation

The first step managers can take is to ensure they have undertaken a general risk assessment which identifies all the hazards with the potential to impact on physical and mental health. The effectiveness of the control measures in place should be evaluated. This link [HERE](#) provides introductory information.

This link provides further advice and includes sector-specific templates with consideration of factors which could impact on both physical and mental wellbeing: [HERE](#)

The HSE management standards for stress at work are available on this website: [HERE](#)

These standards highlight:

- a risk assessment approach which demonstrates good practice
- the importance of working in partnership with employees and their representatives in deciding on possible practical improvements
- simplify the risk assessment for work-related stress by:
 - identifying the main risk factors
 - focusing on the underlying causes and how they can be controlled or prevented
 - guiding organisations to deal with the key causes of stress in their workplaces.

The HSE standards focus on six key areas:

- **Demands** –job requirements, workload, work patterns and the work environment. **Further information click here: [Demands](#)**
- **Control** -how much control does the worker have in the way they perform their work. **For further information click here: [Control](#)**
- **Support**– use a macro to micro-approach. What support is available within the organisation including departmental and line managers, supervisors and colleagues. Does the organisation have appropriate policies such as those covering: dignity at work, equality and diversity, substance misuse, flexible working, support for staff with caring responsibilities. Are all employees aware of these policies and are they applied consistently? Is there an appraisal system in place? When undertaking an appraisal an important question to ask is “How are

you?” then have the confidence to explore the answer. This is of particular importance if there is a work-related issue which impacts on the health and wellbeing of the staff member(s).

For further information click here: [Support](#)

- **Relationships** - this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict. It is important to be proactive in dealing with unacceptable behaviour promptly. Well written organisational policies can play an important part in this respect.

For further information click here: [Relationships](#)

- **Role** - do employees understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures they do not have conflicting roles.

For further information click here: [Role](#)

- **Change**– how all organisational change is managed and communicated to employees.

For further information click here: [Change](#)

In short, develop a well thought out and effective strategy. Ensure that the necessary resources, support and organisational infrastructure is in place. Further support is available on this link: [Before you start](#).

Additional resources

1. SOM/RC Psychiatry [Return to Work Webinar – mental health considerations](#)
2. SOM website resources
 - <https://www.som.org.uk/som-webinars>
 - <https://www.som.org.uk/unreasonable-adjustments-difficulty-accessing-reasonable-adjustments-mental-illness>
3. SOM: [Sustaining Work Relevant Mental Health Post COVID-19 tool kit](#)