



Management of Work-Related Stress and Wellbeing Policy Statement and Code of Practice

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1. Stress and Wellbeing Policy Statement

Liverpool Hope University acknowledges its important duty of care to provide a safe and healthy working environment for people at work. The University is therefore committed to:

- fostering positive psychological and physical well-being among staff,
- promoting procedures to provide job satisfaction, positive work performance, work motivation and creativity among staff,
- The prevention and mitigation of work-related stress among staff through suitable and sufficient risk assessment procedures,
- the promotion of good health and wellbeing and the provision of support to any member of staff who may suffer from stress.
- ensuring that health is not put at risk through excessive and sustained levels of stress arising from adverse pressures, in the way work is organised and from the day-to-day demands placed on University staff,
- Ensuring that staff suffering from excessive and sustained levels of work-related stress are supported in accordance with the Work-Related Stress and Wellbeing Code of Practice and related policies and procedures.

2. Introduction

This Code of Practice provides guidance to promote effective management of work-related stress and wellbeing in all University schools and departments and provides a source of reference material for all staff dealing with stress at work.

Managing stress is challenging, it can be difficult to identify and to deal with, impacting both on the stressed person and those around them, seriously affecting quality of working lives and effectiveness in the workplace. It is therefore important to take action to prevent, minimise and manage stress among staff at the University.

This Code of Practice applies to all members of staff employed by Liverpool Hope University. In cases where staff are absent due to stress, the University will follow procedures under the Sickness Absence and Monitoring Policy. Students are outside of the scope of this Code of Practice with existing procedures and support for their health and wellbeing led by Student Life Services.

3. Legislative Influence

There is no specific law for the control of stress at work, however broad health and safety legislation applies:

- Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the University has a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all staff.
- Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the University has a duty to assess the health and safety risks to which staff are exposed at work. Such assessment must include evaluation of risks to the health of staff that can be caused by stress at work.
- All University staff have an individual responsibility to minimise the risk of any kind of harm to themselves and their colleagues and to co-operate with the University in its efforts to manage work-related stress.

- Case law (Sutherland v Hatton, 2002) has established that, unless an employer knows otherwise, it can be assumed that staff are mentally capable of withstanding reasonable pressure from work, however staff are encouraged to inform managers and colleagues of personal vulnerabilities that may impact on this assumption.
- Employers are not under a legal duty to prevent ill-health caused by stress due to problems outside of work, e.g. financial or domestic worries. However, non-work pressures can make it difficult for staff to cope with work and, consequently, their performance at work might suffer. Being understanding to staff in this position and supporting personal wellbeing is in the University's best interest.

4. Definitions

4.1. Stress

The HSE define stress as *'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'*. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be positive if managed correctly, and stress, which is likely to be detrimental to physical or mental health if it is prolonged. The point at which workplace pressures become excessive will vary with individual levels of tolerance and with levels of pressure in other areas of life at particular times.

Stress affects people differently, and what stresses one person may not affect another. Staff may experience periods of pressure at work that are not necessarily of concern, it is the risk from sustained and or excessive pressure, without the opportunity to recover, that must be assessed with actions and measures put in place to control the risk of adverse effects.

4.2. Stress Risk Factors/Stressors

An event or condition that results in physical or emotional stress. Within the University work environment this may include one or more of the following: Demands, control, relationships, role, change, or management or peer support. Outside of work this can include personal and family issues, bereavement and relationship stressors.

4.3. HSE Management Standards

The HSE has developed the 'Management Standards' approach to identify workplace stressors and help employers manage the causes of work-related stress. The standards refer to six areas of work that can lead to stress and related ill-health if not properly managed. The University has adopted the management standards in this Code of Practice and as the structure for conducting risk assessment for stress and wellbeing.

4.4. Recognising Signs of Stress

There are many signs to identify stress as becoming a problem for individual staff and within school/departmental teams. Some signs might be obvious but often these are subtle, and the level of engagement between managers and staff will affect whether these are recognised and addressed. Line Managers should proactively seek out signs of stress to address the issue effectively. More information on the signs of stress is provided in the [managers guidance to completing a school/departmental stress risk assessment](#).

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. University Executive Board (UEB) will:

- be aware of information on the significant risks from stress facing the University.
- seek assurance that statutory requirements are met in identifying and managing work-related stress.
- seek assurance that all health and safety arrangements for managing work-related stress are adequately resourced.
- ensure that those with risk management and assessment responsibilities for work-related stress are adequately informed in the procedure.
- be provided with information on monitoring and review of arrangements for the management of work-related stress.
- seek assurance that University level, School/Departmental work-related stress action plans are in place and adequately monitored.
- seek assurance that competent health and safety advice is available to support University departments in managing risks of work-related stress.
- be notified of any significant incident or enforcement action in relation to work-related stress.

5.2. Health and Safety Committee will:

- seek assurance from the Director of People Services and Health and Safety Advisor, in so far as the requirements of this Code of Practice is being met.
- take account of results of audits, surveys and views of staff in relation to the management of work-related stress.
- promote good practice among University staff in relation to the management of work-related stress.
- be notified of any significant incident or enforcement action and ensure appropriate action is taken.
- Receive regular reports of audits and/or assurance monitoring from the Health and Safety Advisor.

5.3. University People Services will:

- Ensure appropriate oversight for compliance with this Code of Practice.
- In company with the Health and Safety Advisor, provide competent advice on implementing this Code of Practice to the University community.
- Monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating relevant data and providing to the Health and Safety Advisor and relevant departments. (e.g., absence records, occupational health, employee assistance program, engagement surveys and stress survey results).
- Provide continuing support to managers and staff in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational health where appropriate.
- Provide training/coaching in good management practices relating to work-related stress for Executive Deans, Directors, Heads of Department, Line Managers, and staff with management/supervisory responsibilities.
- Support managers and staff in implementing both School/Departmental and individual stress risk assessments and action plans.

- Support staff who have been off sick with work-related stress and advise them and their line manager on return-to-work plans; refer to Occupational Health and Counselling as required.
- Consult with trade union representatives on any changes to work practices or work design that could lead to or increase work-related stress.

5.4. Health and Safety Advisor will:

- Ensure appropriate oversight for compliance with this Code of Practice and provide reports to University Health and Safety Committee and UEB.
- Ensure any statutory requirements for work-related stress are met.
- Provide competent advice and support on work-related stress to the University.
- In company with People Services, ensure appropriate training is made available to managers and staff.
- In company with People Services, provide competent advice on implementing this Code of Practice and support on work-related stress to the University.
- Lead on and coordinate visits by external agencies, including the Health and Safety Executive.
- Receive relevant data from People Services regarding the effectiveness of measures to reduce work-related stress.

5.5. Executive Deans and Directors of Professional Services will:

- Ensure that local management of work-related stress meets the requirements as set out in University Code of Practice and associated guidance.
- Ensure that a School/Departmental level work-related stress action plan is completed, and actions are implemented in a timely manner.
- Undertake training, as required, in good leadership and management practices relating to work-related stress.
- Receive relevant data from People Services regarding the effectiveness of measures to reduce work-related stress.

5.6. Heads of School, Departments will:

- Ensure that local management of work-related stress meets the requirements as set out in University Policy Statement and Code of Practice, and associated Managers Guidance.
- Identify foreseeable and known workplace stressors within School/Department of responsibility.
- Ensure that a School/Departmental stress risk assessment is conducted by relevant designated staff and action plan produced to identify, mitigate and control risks from work-related stress.
- Undertake training, as required, in good management practices relating to work-related stress.
- Receive relevant data from People Services regarding the effectiveness of measures to reduce work-related stress.

5.7. Line Managers will:

- Support Heads of School/Department in local management of work-related stress.
- Support Heads of School/Department with School/Departmental stress risk assessment management and action plans.
- Conduct Individual Stress Risk Assessments as appropriate, to identify, mitigate and control risks from work-related stress in individuals/groups.
- Implement actions and recommendations from work-related stress risk assessments.
- Considering modifying hours, workload, duties and responsibilities for those vulnerable to, suffering from or being rehabilitated back to work following stress.
- Undertake training, as required, in good management practices relating to work-related stress.
- Support and provide direction for staff through performance review and supervision.
- Encourage effective time management by monitoring working hours, overtime, workloads and travel schedules of team members and ensure use of holiday entitlements.
- Encouraging referral to the Occupational Health Services and Counselling through the People Services Office where staff are experiencing stress-related health problems.

5.8. Wellbeing Champions and Health and Safety Coordinators will:

- Provide support to line managers in the implementation of this Code of Practice and School/Departmental risk assessment.
- Provide assurance, to People Services Wellbeing Lead and Health and Safety Advisor or where applicable, directly to senior management, that this Code of Practice is being appropriately implemented in their area.
- Undertake relevant work-related wellbeing and stress training.
- Promote training opportunities in work-related stress awareness and signpost sources of help and support to staff.
- Promote Wellbeing in local area of responsibility and University wide.

5.9. Staff (Individuals) will:

- Take an active part in the process of assessing the risk, e.g., completing surveys, taking part in discussion groups and providing honest feedback when requested.
- Undertake training, as requested, in work-related stress awareness.
- Accept opportunities for counselling or support when recommended.
- Raise issues of concern with their line manager, People Services, Wellbeing Champion or area Health and Safety Coordinator at an early stage and seek constructive solutions.
- Ensure good communication with colleagues and line manager.
- Seek and make use of the appropriate advice, support and training resources available.
- Comply with employment and other People Services and Health and Safety policies.

6. Risk Assessment

The University will take a proactive and preventative approach to managing work-related stress and will follow the HSE's Management Standards Approach. Procedures in using overarching school/departmental stress risk assessments will help to proactively identify and manage stress at university, faculty, school, department and team level. What is a source of work-related stress for an individual may not be a source of stress for another and at different times individual staff may feel they are not able to cope with the pressures of work. In such cases, an individual stress risk assessment is designed to be used alongside the overarching school/departmental stress risk assessment.

6.1. School/Departmental Stress Risk Assessment

The purpose of carrying out a school/departmental stress risk assessment is to proactively and collectively identify and control potential causes of work-related stress, rather than deal with issues once they have occurred. Actions should be identified and prioritised in order to eliminate or reduce risks and promote wellbeing. Heads of School, or Department must ensure that an overarching stress risk assessment is completed for their area, with oversight from Executive Deans and Directors. Staff such as Line Managers may be nominated to lead the assessment with consideration of issues across the whole school or department. On occasions where roles differ greatly, or significant issues have been identified through other data (for a particular group of staff, or team), a separate risk assessment should be completed for this group.

There must be representation for input into the stress risk assessment process from across the school or department, e.g. all staff, grades, functions and wellbeing champion. Roles outside of the school or department, particularly the Health and Safety Advisor, People Services through HRM's, and Union representatives may also support this process. Risk assessments must be reviewed annually or when there is a significant change in circumstances (such as changes to the department structure, introduction of a new system, significant increase in workload).

6.2. Undertaking a School/Departmental Stress Risk Assessment:



Identify the stress risk factors (Stressors)

This approach identifies six 'Management Standards' that represent a set of conditions, that if managed well reflect high levels of health wellbeing and organisational performance.

These standards provide a practical framework to minimise the impact of work-related stress. In summary the standards are concerned with:

- **Demands:** e.g. workload, work patterns, and the work environment.
- **Support:** The encouragement, support and resources provided by the organisation, line managers and colleagues.
- **Role:** Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.
- **Control:** How much say a person has in the way they do their work.
- **Relationships:** Promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Change:** How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated.

The above standards often combine, overlap and interact; they are not necessarily standalone.

Decide who might be harmed and how

Schools and Departments should use data to identify adverse stressors through absence reports, staff engagement surveys, staff turnover, exit interviews, return to work interviews, complaints, grievances, concerns raised by Trade Unions, team meetings, occupational health referrals and other relevant measures.

At regular intervals (minimum every 2 years, maximum every 5 years), a University wide Stress Indicator Tool (SIT) survey will be undertaken with all staff as a measure of psychological hazard (job stressor) exposure and individual and organisational harms. Data from survey will help to establish whether there are links between job stressor exposures and damage to individuals' mental wellbeing as well as the health (worker engagement) of the organisation. Data must be used to inform and reflect on the departmental stress risk assessment.

Evaluate the Risks

Evaluate the level of risk, assess adequacy of measures already in place and decide what else needs to be done. Discuss the results of gathered data using a representative sample of staff. Meetings representing the school/department should be convened to confirm findings, explore what this means and discuss possible solutions.

Record your Findings and Create an Action Plan

Where areas of concern are identified either through the risk assessment process or following a University-wide work-related stress survey, the school/departmental stress risk assessment must be completed and/or updated to identify preventative measures and plan actions for implementation. The school/departmental risk assessment includes university level control measures but requires that local preventative measures and significant local actions be recorded. Where actions are identified at a strategic/university level, these must be raised and monitored through the management levels indicated in the table below by means of action plan.

Develop Action Plans

School/departmental action plan. Action plans are a key part of the risk assessment process and must:

- identify an order of priority
- have sufficient resources allocated to them
- be assigned to an individual or function
- have agreed timescales for completion.

Responsibilities for Setting and Managing Stress and Wellbeing Actions			
Management Level	Stress Risk Assessment	Action Plan	How recorded and communicated
UEB	An overarching University stress RA will be produced. To be provided with an annual report from H&S on university wide risk assessment	To take note of all actions beyond local level. To be provided with report from H&S of Faculty/Professional Services action plans to address common themes university wide	Formal report to UEB.
Faculty/Professional Services	Not applicable	Yes – compilation of School/departmental action plans into a Faculty/Professional Services action plan to address common themes. With actions outside of remit raised to UEB	Communicated at Faculty/Professional Services level
School/Department	Yes - Mandatory using school/departmental stress RA as template	Yes – with actions outside of remit raised to Faculty or Professional Services	Communicated locally and records as per Risk Assessment Policy
Individual Group/Team	Yes - Optional (where need identified above or specific issues reported), use school/departmental stress RA	Yes – with actions outside of remit raised to school/department	Communicated locally and records as per Risk Assessment Policy
Individual	Yes - Mandatory when need identified as per policy or when an individual return from a period of stress-related absence	Yes – relevant to individual circumstances	Reviewed by Line Manager and Individual (People Services involved as required)

Monitor and Review

The relevant school/departmental level stress risk assessment lead will monitor and record progress against the produced action plan to ensure that agreed actions are progressed to completion. The stress risk assessment lead will evaluate the effectiveness of measures implemented and decide further actions or data gathering through ongoing management.

The stress risk assessment lead will periodically check that agreed actions are being undertaken and ensure that continuous improvement is made by working with staff, Wellbeing Champions and other staff representatives to identify and address problems in the workplace that could lead to stress and ill-health adversely affecting the performance of the University. Progress should be reported to Executive Deans and Directors.

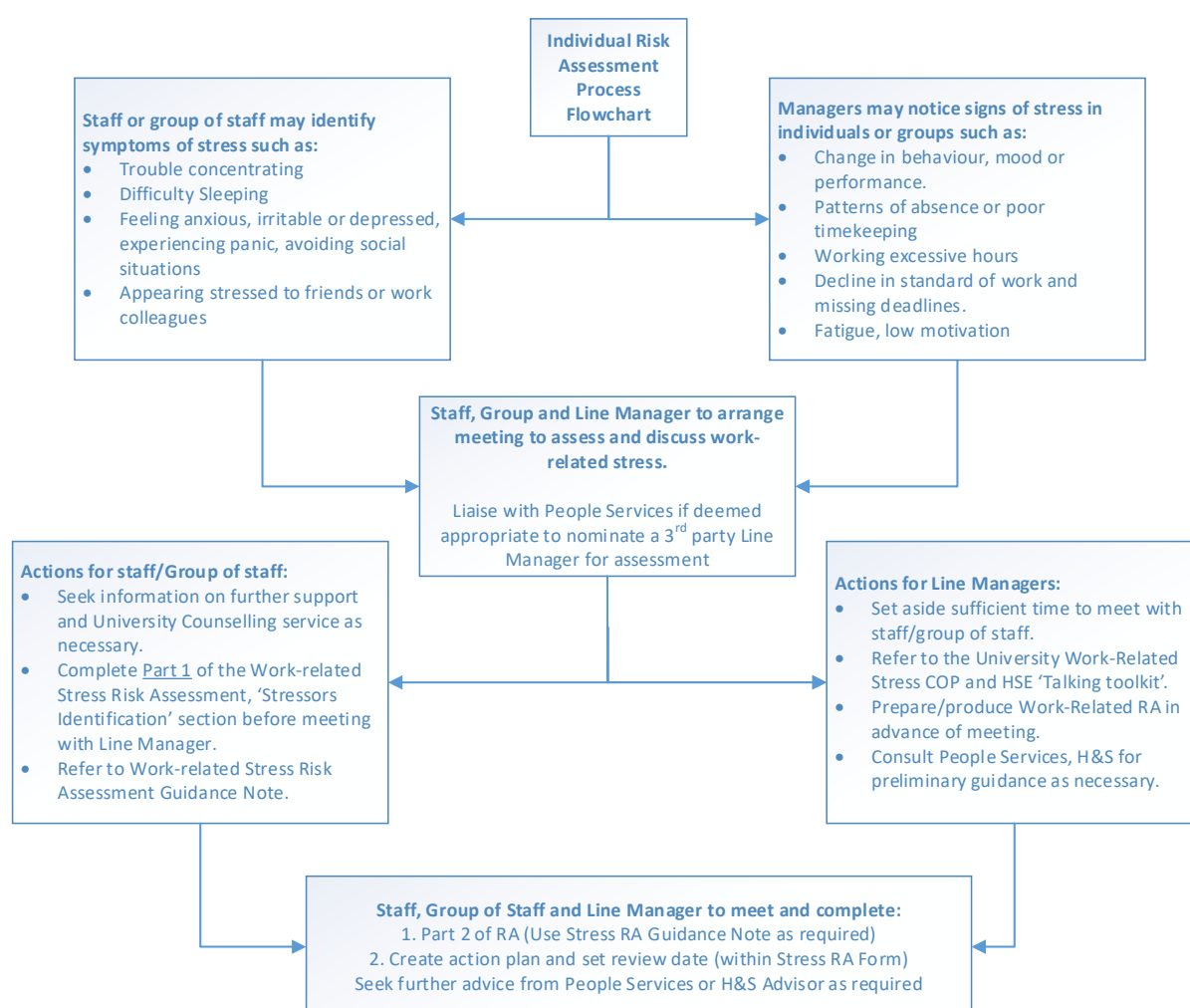
6.3. Individual Stress Risk Assessment

On occasions where a manager becomes aware that an individual or group is suffering stress or has returned from a period of stress-related absence, the manager, with the individual or group, must complete the Individual Stress Risk Assessment. The risk assessment template is designed to help Line Managers in determining the nature of the of the individual's issues in relation to the HSE Stress Management Standards and has been developed using the [HSE's Talking Toolkit](#), to support the identification of any reasonable measures that may help.

The process for completing the individual stress risk assessment will vary depending on individual circumstances, for example, whether the individual is at work or absent from work. Completion of the assessment may require support from People Services and in cases where there is an underlying or long-term condition, advice can be sought from Occupational Health through the referral process.

On occasions where relationships with a line manager is considered by the staff member to be part of the reason for the work-related stress, the line manager's manager can nominate an alternative manager to conduct the individual stress risk assessment.

Individual Work-Related Risk Assessment Flow Chart



7. Training

People Services, with the University Staff Development Advisor and Health and Safety Advisor, will ensure that appropriate training is available to managers and staff.

7.1. Managers

Line Managers will lead on assessing, minimising, and managing the risk of work-related stress. All managers will be required to undertake training to provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the University's Code of Practice on stress and Wellbeing. Training will cover statutory requirements, risk assessment process and will focus on stress prevention and proactive approaches through HSE Management Standards. Emphasis will be on managing teams to encourage resilience and positive mental health and well-being rather than merely to address problems. It is a mandatory requirement for line managers to complete training and learning on HSE's Management Standards no less than a period of 3 academic years.

7.2. Individuals

Training and information will be available to all staff in support of:

- raising their awareness of the University's Management of Work-Related Stress and Wellbeing Code of Practice.
- ensuring their improved knowledge and information on causes of work-related stress.
- informing them of internal and external resources and support they can access to self-manage.
- providing an understanding of management responsibilities and how to report issues.
- having an awareness and understanding of the signs and symptoms of stress.

8. Implementation and Monitoring

The Health and Safety Advisor, in association with the People Services Wellbeing Lead, will be responsible for the monitoring and review of the effectiveness of this Code of Practice through monitoring of KPI's, absence records, occupational health, employee assistance program, engagement survey's, stress survey results and health and safety audits. This will be reported on to the University Health and Safety Committee.

9. Incident Reporting

Where an individual believes that work-related stress has caused them to take time off work, this must be reported through University Cipher absence management reporting system and the appropriate level of investigation carried out by the relevant HRM consistent with People Services arrangements.

10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The University will apply this Code of Practice to all staff and ensure that it does not cause detrimental effects to those with protected characteristics.

11. Supporting Information

Further support can be found to assist with the implementation of this Code of Practice in the following areas:

11.1. Sources of Internal Support

- [People Services Team](#)
- [Staff Wellbeing](#)
- [Health and Safety](#)
- [Employee Benefits](#)
- [Staff Development](#)
- [Equality Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [Staff Absence](#)
- [Staff Counselling Service](#)
- [Staff Mental Health Support - Togetherall](#)
- [Staff Occupational Health Services](#)
- [Dignity at Work](#)
- [Chaplaincy and faith Support](#)

11.2. Sources of External Support

- [HSE Stress Management Standards](#)
- [HSE Talking Toolkit \(essential for managers\)](#)
- [Line Manager Competency Indicator Tool](#)
- [CIPD Stress Factsheets](#)
- [WHO: Mental Health at Work - Policy Brief](#)
- [Mind - Wellness Action Plans](#)