

Liverpool Hope University



WORK RELATED STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE NOTES

These notes provide advice and guidance on how to complete the Work Related Stress Risk Assessment.

PART 1: WORK STRESSORS IDENTIFICATION

This section of the Work Related Stress Risk Assessment is to be completed by the employee or groups of employees.

The form should be used to help you focus on specific aspects of your work that may be causing you stress and may be helpful in preparing for discussions with your manager.

Please complete Part 1 of the 'Work Related Stress Risk Assessment' form prior to meeting with your manager to complete a work –related stress risk assessment.

The form is split into six sections based on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)'s categories of work pressures. You should think about each category and write down any pressures that you may have in relation to that category. It is likely that some categories have no source of pressure and where this is the case you can leave that section blank.

The HSE Management Standards divide pressures into 6 categories:

- Demands
- Control
- Support
- Relationships
- Role
- Change

It is important to clarify what each one means, so you can complete that section appropriately.

Demands. 'Demands' covers a number of potential sources of pressure at work. Having too much to do (overload) or too little to do (underload) are both examples of demands. Having too much work that is boring, repetitive and lacking in challenge is another example. So is work that is too hard or complex, and/or work that an employee hasn't been trained for where they don't feel competent.

Shift-work may be demanding, depending on shift patterns and the ability to cope with them. There could also be demands in (physical) working environment, such as noise, lack of space, cold/damp or a dry atmosphere. Risk of aggression or violence is another example of a demand.

Are any pressures related to demands at work?

Control. A feeling of not having control at work can cause stress for people, particularly if they already feel under pressure. Examples of 'lack of control' pressures include not feeling involved in decisions, not having a say or that your opinion doesn't count. Another example would relate to lack of flexibility. Pressure can increase if people feel that they don't have choices, for example, over when to take breaks or the way work is scheduled and organised.

Do any of the pressures relate to feelings of a lack of control?

Support. When people don't feel supported this can add to pressure at work. Support comes in different forms. For example, support from other people is often referred to as 'social support'. Another form of support is 'practical support', such as having the right resources or equipment. Training is an example of practical support and is very important as it provides the skills needed to do the job. Support can come from different sources e.g. colleagues or manager.

Do any of the pressures relate to (a lack of) social support or (a lack of) practical support?

Relationships. Poor working relationships can be a significant pressure at work, particularly when they are associated with conflict or negative behaviours such as bullying or harassment.

Are there specific pressures relating to relationships at work?

Role. There are sometimes specific pressures associated with the role. For example, sometimes people aren't clear about what they should be doing, or who they are answerable to. This is called 'role ambiguity' and can be a cause of stress. Another problem associated with the role is where people feel that they are 'wearing too many hats'. This results in 'role conflict' where people find it difficult to prioritise. This is an example of what is often called 'role conflict'.

Do any of the pressures relate to role ambiguity or role conflict?

Change. Change at work can increase the pressure on people, particularly if it is not managed well. Poorly managed change can make people feel uncertain, anxious and insecure. What can add to pressure is where people don't feel consulted or involved, and where communication has been poor.

Do any of the pressures relate to change management?

Once completed please sign the form or list the group of staff that the information relates to and then send the form onto your line manager in advance of meeting to complete a work related stress risk assessment.

PART 2: WORK RELATED STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

This section is to be completed by the Manager.

In the 'Managers notes' section document anything prior or during the work related stress risk assessment that you feel is relevant. Areas to consider are:

Is there anything giving you cause for concern that the employee or group of employees may be experiencing stress?

You should consider three sources of data to consider the stress risk for an individual or a group of employees:

1. **Observable negative changes:** consider whether you have noticed any sustained negative changes in an employee or group of employees, for example in their behaviour, health, performance, attitudes, mood or appearance.
2. **Objective, quantitative data (quantifiable, measurable):** review your management data relating to an employee or group of employees, for example, their levels of sickness absence, performance indicators, accidents or complaints. Do any of these data give cause for concern about an employee/group of employees?
3. **Subjective, qualitative information (the ways people describe experience in their own words):** consider your interactions with an employee or group of employees (e.g. from team meetings, informal chats, one-to-ones, return to work interviews) as a means of identifying whether there are any particular stress-related problems or sources of pressure in their current work situation. Also, have others' comments about an employee or group of employees given you cause for concern?

Are there issues unrelated to work that are making the employee or group of employees more vulnerable to stress at this time?

As a result of your discussions, have you become aware that an employee or group of employees has/have issues outside of work that are contributing to stress levels?

Answer Yes or No.

Please note that it is not necessary to record issues personal to the employee or groups of employees that are not work related unless those issues are having an

impact on work. Being aware of the 'circumstances' outside of the workplace enables you to take account of any increased vulnerability and make appropriate adjustments and provide support where required.

Action Planning: What could you, as manager, and/or the employee or group of employees do to minimise stress risk associated with pressures identified?

After reviewing and discussing with the employee or group of employees the work related pressures (identified via the Work Stressors Identification process) please summarise any agreed actions here. Please make sure you are specific about what will be done, when, and who is responsible. Include all actions designed to minimise risk. Make sure you list actions you will take as a manager, for example:

- Any adjustments that will be made e.g. flexible working, changes to working patterns or hours, phased return, working from home, changes to tasks/roles etc
- Any supports put in place e.g. referral to occupational health, employee assistance programme (counselling); additional management support of supervision, additional resources etc.
- Any training interventions agreed.

Please take into account reasonable practicability and the implications for other team members when developing action plans. Agree with the employee or group of employees how and when action plans will be monitored and reviewed.

Action Plan evaluation/review. Have implemented actions minimised or reduced the risk?

This question is to be answered on the review date agreed at section 5.

The main purpose of the review meeting is evaluation. Has the action plan you implemented been successful from both your and the employee's or group of employees perspective? Has the risk to well-being (stress) been reduced? Please record a summary of this evaluation.

If the implemented action have been only partially successful, or not successful, consider and discuss with the employee any further steps or adjustments that are required. Write down agreed steps or adjustments in the space provided.

If further steps are required, make sure that you record when they will be implemented and who is responsible, along with the relevant HSE category (are new adjustments related to demands, support etc?).

You will need to agree another evaluation and review date if further steps or adjustments have been planned. Otherwise, the risk assessment process is now complete.

