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Managing Health and Wellbeing at Work

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Introduction

This guide has been developed to support managers to proactively manage health issues at work.

It contains practical steps and links to additional resources.

All employees are encouraged to use this guide however this does include specific advice just for managers.

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Wellbeing

The role of managers

Generally being in work is good for physical and mental health and wellbeing. We recognise however, that everyday pressures in our work and personal lives will contribute to our overall state of wellbeing and be factors in our fitness for work.

Managers are key to improving health and wellbeing in their teams. As a manager it is important that you:

- **are supportive** – work towards creating an open, supportive and inclusive environment
- **are aware of the warning signs** – spot the symptoms that might challenge wellbeing, like stress
- **are proactive** – make use of Occupational Health, Employee Assistance Programmes and HR policies like flexible working and special leave
- **use data and feedback** – use absence data, the People Survey and other information to identify and address underlying issues
- **role model good behaviours** – be mindful of your own well-being and work-life balance
- **seek support** on complex cases as necessary
- **understand** and act on your health and safety duties. This may include carrying out risk assessments.

Our Approach

- Promote physical and mental health and well-being for all staff in-line with our Health and Wellbeing Strategy by making the management of health and wellbeing part of our daily routine
- Create and maintain a culture that promotes and supports the physical and mental health of employees, in which managers can hold productive conversations with employees to find the best ways to support them and make early interventions.

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Wellbeing

Wellbeing discussions should form part of your regular check-ins with your employees to help identify and minimise the impact of ill-health or personal circumstances on attendance or performance. You don't have to have all the answers, but knowing what support is available will help you and/or your employee consider the options which are right for them. During wellbeing check-ins with your employee consider the 4 As.

A – Assistance

The Employee Assistance Programme is provided via a free, confidential helpline available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Additionally, the Charity for Civil Servants offers practical, financial and emotional support

for civil servants and Mental Health Allies are ONS volunteers who provide support to staff who may be experiencing mental health problems.

A – Adjustments

Workplace adjustments can range from physical changes to equipment, to working patterns, and job design. If the request is reasonable and you can implement it, then do it!

A – Assessment

Risk assessments should be undertaken when an employee informs you of stress, pregnancy, or any other factor which may impact upon their ability to safely perform their duties. Specialist assessments may also be required as part of exploring required adjustments for individual employees.

A – Advice

Specialist advice from **Occupational Health** can help identify support and adjustments to help employees stay in or return to work. **Employment Relations** can provide advice on the application of a wide range of employment policies to help manage issues affecting attendance and or performance.

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The [Charity for Civil Servants](#) has a Wellbeing Hub available online with resources on Stress, Anxiety, Depressions and Resilience. There is guidance available for managers as well as individuals and a wide range of services available from support for carers to financial assistance.

Through Vita staff have access to clinical and professional expertise which gives them a chance to talk about all kinds of work and personal issues as a Manager you can arrange the initial conversation on behalf of your member of staff by phoning 0800 111 6385 and providing the employee details. You will, however, need to discuss with your member of staff prior to arranging the appointment to seek their consent. Alternatively, they can of course contact the service themselves using the same 0800 111 6387. The service is completely confidential and staffed by experienced and professional advisors who are there 24 hours a day to answer their call.

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The ONS Health and Wellbeing Group

is a team of highly motivated volunteers from Newport, Titchfield and London plus representation from our Field Interviewers. The group aims to bring all aspects of health and wellbeing to the benefit of all staff in ONS. Further information about the ONS Health and Wellbeing Group can be found on Reggie. They can be contacted via health.wellbeing@ons.gov.uk

Mental Health Allies provide support to staff who may be experiencing mental health problems. To contact a Mental Health Ally office based staff should search Skype to call Mental Health Allies and then select the appropriate site. (Please note if a London contact is not available you will be forwarded to a Titchfield contact). Field and IPS staff should call 0300 0671540. Further information can be found on Reggie.

Respect Contacts are volunteers who provide support to staff who feel they may be affected by bullying, harassment, and discrimination and can be contacted via respect@ons.gov.uk

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Workplace Adjustments

Employers are obliged to provide “reasonable adjustments” under the Equality Act 2010 to employees with a disability. However aside from the legal requirement, it is also good practice to consider a workplace adjustment for any employee who experiences a barrier or difficulty at work.

Workplace adjustments are used to remove barriers, or a disadvantage, for people enabling them to develop and fulfill their potential. This could be a change to a policy, working arrangement or providing equipment. Many adjustments don't require a physical change. For this reason, we refer to workplace adjustments as the steps taken to remove, reduce or prevent the obstacles faced by all employees.

It is important to remember everyone is different and that adjustments need to be considered on an individual, case by case basis.

The first thing to consider when you receive a request is:

- Is the adjustment reasonable

- can it be made by the line manager without further consultation

IF YES – JUST DO

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Workplace Adjustments

- All employees who need an adjustment should have one wherever possible. Many adjustments are simple, do not have a monetary cost attached and can be implemented quickly.
- Physical barriers – could be steps in a building, adapted furniture or an alarm that is just a sound but does not have a visual way of alerting people.
- There are many different barriers that staff might face and many types of adjustments to help break these down. It's important to remember that adjustments need to be considered on an individual basis.
- Signs that someone is experiencing difficulties and require an adjustment could be performance at work has changed, behaviour or interactions with colleagues has changed, or attendance has deteriorated.
- Organisational barriers – could be a policy or working practice that excludes or is a barrier to an employee with a disability.

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Workplace Adjustments

At all steps:

- engage with the employee
- take account of their views
- explain that you will be proactive in arranging workplace adjustments.

Confidentiality

Any information disclosed by the employee should be treated as sensitive personal information, given to you in confidence and will be covered under the Data Protection Act.

It may be necessary to share some information with Employment Relations, Occupational Health or the Employee Assistance programme; this will need to be explained to the employee.

Step 1

Identify requirements

Step 2

Consult with experts

Step 3

Decision making

Step 4

Implementation

Step 5

Appeals

Step 6

Examples of workplace Adjustments

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Workplace Adjustments

Identifying the requirements (Step 1)

The identifying and/or investigating of suitable workplace adjustments are the joint responsibility of the member of staff and their line manager.

Managing the procurement, where applicable, and implementation of workplace adjustments are the responsibility of the line manager.

What do I need to do?

- Treat each employee as an individual: an adjustment which is appropriate for one person may not be appropriate for someone else with the same condition
- Have a discussion with the person needing the adjustment. They may be able to suggest a solution but don't expect them to be an expert. They may still be learning to live with a condition or disability or it may not be diagnosed yet.
- Ask if they would like a union rep or colleague with them.
- Ask them if they would like to discuss it with their doctor or other medical adviser.
- Consider a referral to Occupational Health for specialist advice
- Agree the next steps and record the actions. The workplace adjustment passport should be encouraged for use.

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Workplace Adjustments

Consult with experts (Step 2)

Depending on the difficulties or barriers, you may be able to implement some adjustments yourself straightaway.

For others you may need to consult with an expert, this could be:

- Occupational Health
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Business Disability Forum
- Employment Relations Casework Team

In some cases you will need to consult with specialist advisers. You may be able to get advice on adjustments from a specialist occupational adviser for the particular condition.

It can take time to arrange an expert assessment and so you need to make sure you keep your employee informed.

If you are unsure where to access specialist advice, raise a call to Employment Relations to be allocated a caseworker for support.

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Workplace Adjustments

Decision Marking (Step 3)

The first thing to consider when you receive a request is: *Is the adjustment reasonable and can it be made by the line manager without further consultation?*

IF YES – JUST DO IT!

What is a 'reasonable' workplace adjustment cannot be precisely defined and will very much depend on individual circumstances. All requests must be given thorough consideration and alternative adjustments considered if the original request is deemed impractical. Consideration may include the recommendations of external experts e.g. Occupational Health.

the practicality of the requested adjustment and how it can be adapted, any adverse impact on the health and safety, and working environment of other staff and how these can be overcome.

If, following investigation, you decide that you are unable to meet the request; you should meet with your member of staff to explain your

reasons. They may choose to accept this decision but they do have the right to appeal. Alternatively, if all possible workplace adjustments have been considered unsuitable, it may be appropriate to arrange for the member of staff to move to an alternative, more suitable post.

Employment Relations will advise on this.

Once any recommendations are made the individual must accept or decline the options

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Workplace Adjustments

Implementation (Step 4)

As the line manager it is your responsibility to implement all agreed/recommended adjustments. This includes:

- sourcing equipment
- raising purchase orders
- raising Service calls and ensuring that they are priority 1
- monitoring progress
- assuring that the adjustment is fit for purpose

You should **aim** to have all the adjustments in place within 1 month for existing staff or before a new entrant takes up post. If you are unsure how to implement an adjustment, raise a call to Employment Relations for advice from a case worker. Examples of some of the common adjustments and how to implement them can be found here.

It is the responsibility of the relevant business area to fund all workplace adjustments. If you have any queries about funding, please contact the Employment Relations team through the Service Desk.

The tool for recording discussions and agreed actions is the Workplace Adjustments Passport. Fusion must be updated to record where adjustments have been agreed.

Review Adjustments regularly

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Workplace Adjustments

Appeals (Step 5)

ONS should be able to accommodate all requests for a workplace adjustment. However, on the rare occasion that a line manager feels a particular adjustment is unreasonable the employees can raise concerns through the Resolution Policy.

However, raising a concern through the Resolution Policy should be the exception as there is an expectation that all requests will be thoroughly considered, and the vast majority will be implemented.

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Workplace Adjustments

Common Workplace Adjustments (Step 6)

Adjustment	Where to go
Flexible working Disability special leave Tailored objectives Specific training and/or support Modifying procedures for assessing performance Modifying the post	Manager action
Keyboard Mouse Wrist support Document stand Coloured paper Foot rest	Stationary order
Laptop Mobile phone Monitor	Service desk call
Software incl. licences Mobility scooters	Procurement via service desk
Auxiliary heating or lighting Specialist chair 'Disabled' parking space Adjustments to fixtures & fittings	Facilities management

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Disability Special Leave

Disability special leave is a form of leave with pay to enable employees with disabilities to undertake assessment, treatment or rehabilitation related to their disability.

It is for a fixed or fixed periods of time that are known in advance and is also suitable for absence required on a short-term, regular basis. The Business Disability Forum states that the predictable and fixed nature of disability leave distinguishes it from disability-related sickness absence which is unpredictable and for unknown periods of time.

Because the effect of an impairment depends on the individual concerned, disability leave could range from a few hours planned in advance for treatment or assessment, or a longer period of time for rehabilitation. The exact amount of leave will vary from person to person according to individual circumstances. Each application for leave should be considered by the line manager:
according to what is reasonable for the employee with the disability, and for the area in which they work

Types of disability special leave are Assessment, Treatment and Rehabilitation

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Disability Special Leave

Disability special leave is separate to sickness absence and should not be used to cover long term absence

Assessment

A person with cystic fibrosis needs three days off each year to attend a specialist centre for a check-up. Disability leave may cover the absence

A person has just been diagnosed as having dyslexia. Disability leave may be granted to cover the person's absence for an assessment by a recognised professional body or individual to identify their specific work needs

Treatment

An employee with Parkinson's disease requires a course of physiotherapy for one day per week for a period of six weeks. Disability leave may be granted to cover the person's absence

An employee requires lifesaving treatment on a regular basis, for example kidney dialysis

Rehabilitation

A person who is visually impaired needs training to use a new guide dog. The course lasts for 3 weeks. Disability leave may be granted to cover the three-week absence

Disability Special leave is separate to sickness absence and should not be used to cover long term absence.

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Disability Special Leave

Disability leave will not be necessary for many disabled employees, but it is one of a range of 'reasonable adjustments' that might be appropriate.

It is important that disabled employees are made aware of their right to Disability Leave, as simply knowing that it is there if they need it will reassure them of your commitment to their welfare, and so boost morale and reduce stress levels.

Refer to the Leave Framework for further information

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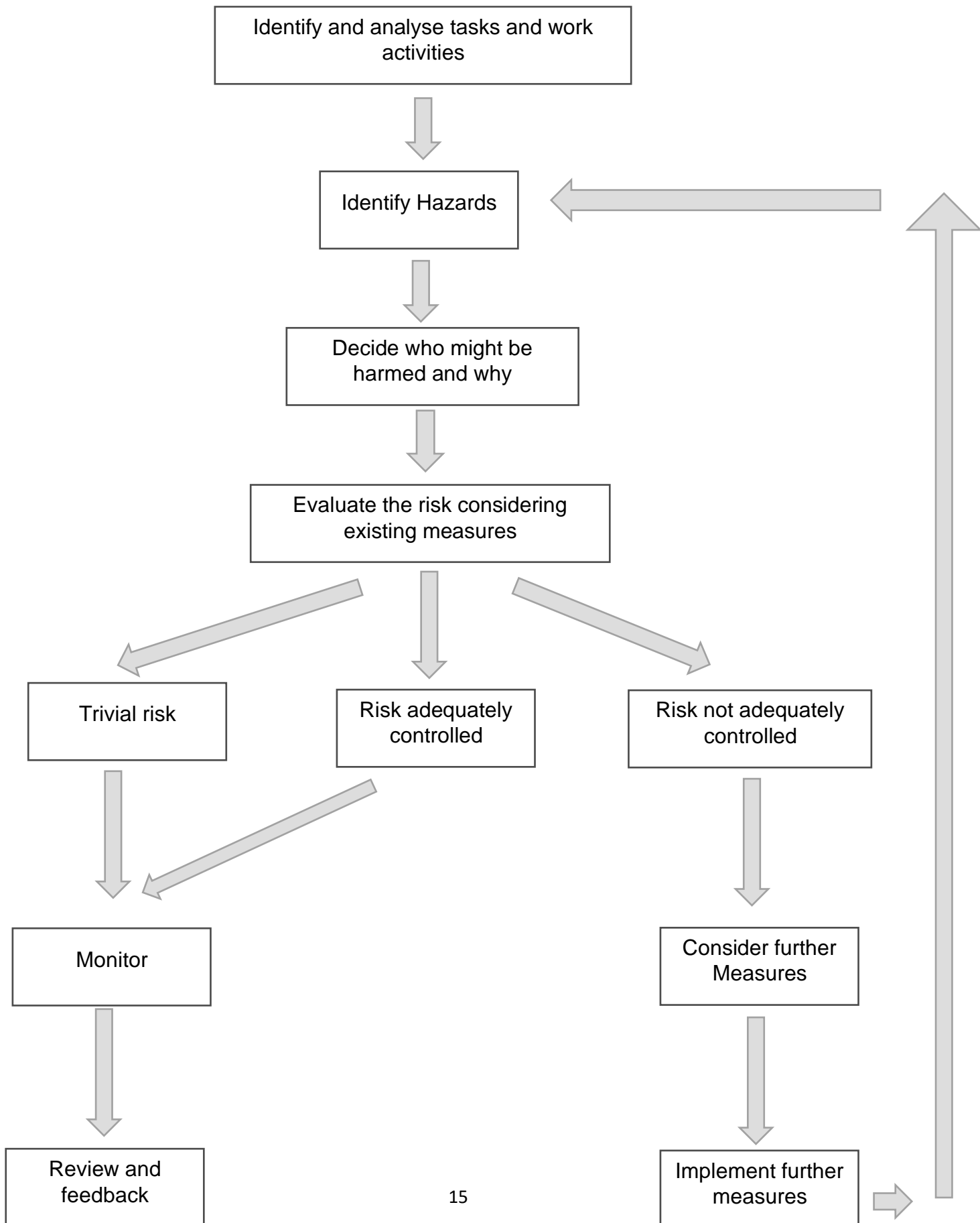
Under UK law, employers have a 'duty of care' to protect the health, safety and welfare of all employees while at work. They also have to assess the risks arising from hazards at work.

The purpose of a risk assessment is to identify and prioritise risks arising from workplace duties and to put practical measures in place to eliminate or reduce identified risks. For most staff, it's only the general site risk assessment and DSE risk assessment that are needed.

A further risk assessment is required for those working in a specialist working environment and staff who may be particularly vulnerable or at risk, e.g. new and expectant mums, staff who are aged between 16 and 18, and staff with special/particular needs.

Further information can be found in the Health and Safety Policy, and Reggie guidance pages. The following pages of this toolkit gives additional guidance specific to Stress Risk Assessments.

Risk Assessment procedure



Step 1:

Identify and analyse tasks and work activities

Step 2:

Identify Hazards

Step 3:

Decide who might be harmed and why

Step 4:

Evaluate the risk considering existing measures

Trivial Risk go to Step 5 and then 6 only

Risk Adequately controlled go to Step 5 and then 6 only

Risk not adequately controlled go to Step 7 and then Step 8

Step 5:

Monitor

Step 6:

Review and Feedback

Step 7:

Consider further measures

Step 8:

Implement further measures

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Stress

There is a difference between stress and pressure. We all experience pressure on a daily basis and need it to motivate us and enable us to perform at our best.

It's when we experience too much pressure without the opportunity to recover that we start to experience stress.

The HSE definition of stress is 'the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them'.

A full copy of the Stress Policy can be found [here](#).

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Knowing how to recognise the symptoms of stress will allow you to discuss any support or adjustments required to help alleviate pressure or demands

Physical signs of stress

- headaches, breathlessness, palpitations
- upset digestive system
- over/under eating
- backache, muscle strain, eyestrain
- nausea
- sleep problems, tiredness, lethargy,
- high blood pressure
- skin irritations

Emotional signs of stress

- irritability, tearfulness, depression, low self-esteem
- impaired judgement, poor/hasty decisions, indecision
- lack of concentration, forgetfulness
- anxiety, unable to relax irrational and/or persistent negative thoughts or feelings of fearfulness less sensitive, less intuitive
- apathy, cynicism, alienation

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Stress Risk Assessment

To help employers understand how to do a risk assessment for work-related stress, the Health and Safety Executive has identified six key areas (or 'risk factors') that can be causes of work-related stress. These are:

- the demands of your job
- your control over your work
- the support you receive from managers and colleagues
- your relationships at work
- your role in the organization
- change and how it's managed

The HSE has developed a **Talking Toolkit** which has six templates for the six different conversations designed to get line managers and employees talking about issues which may be causing or have the potential to cause work-related stress.

It's important to remember that it's not an employer's or a line manager's job to diagnose or treat stress, whatever its cause. If an employee is having problems, it's important that they get help as soon as possible. However, starting the conversation is an important first step towards preventing work-related stress and developing the actions and stress risk assessment we need to comply with the law.

Could the **HSE Talking Toolkit** help you to start the conversation

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Stress Risk Assessment

Individual Risk Assessment form

Areas Examined	Main Issues Identified	Impact on Individual	Practical Solutions and action agreed	Responsibility	Review date
Demands					
Control					
Role					
Relationship					
Support					
Change					

Manager to complete

You should consider each of the areas but if you and the member of staff agree there are no particular concerns under any category, you should record accordingly

In order to ensure the assessment process is effective, you must review all agreed actions and record progress on page 3

Signature.....

Employee

Signature.....

Manager

You should talk to the individual explaining what you may have observed and express any concerns, seeking to establish the possible work-related or external source of stress and the impact it's having on them at work. It may be that some reasonable adjustments can be made to get them over the stressful period, or they may want to contact the EAP on 0800 111 6387

There is guidance available for managers when completing the Stress Risk Assessment, as well as points for the individual to consider prior to the conversation available [here](#)

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Stress Risk Assessment

The Health and Safety Executive have produced a self-assessment tool for managers to understand how effective they are at preventing and reducing stress in their staff.

It works by self-assessing whether you currently have the behaviours identified as effective for preventing and reducing stress at work; its aim is to help managers reflect on their behaviour and management style.

The Stress Management competency indicator tool can be found here:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/mcit.pdf>

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Occupational Health

Occupational Health is a source of expert advice regarding the impact of the work environment offering a range of service to help ONS improve the overall health and wellbeing of staff. When deciding whether an OH referral would be beneficial and completing the referral there are a number of points to consider:

- Do I have consent for the referral?
- What do I already know?
- What is the purpose of my referral?
- Is OH the best source of advice in this situation?
- What is covered in every referral?
- What additional questions do I need to ask?
- What does OH need from me?

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Occupational Health

Before making a referral

Consider what you already know to decide if now is the right time to undertake a referral. For example if they have a pending appointment with a specialist will a referral now add any useful advice? Or if they are absent due to stress, have you identified the stressors via a stress risk assessment to make your referral more adjustment specific?

Proceeding with a referral

Talk to your member of staff about why you would like to refer them and provide them with reassurance about the process, and confidentiality. You must seek informed consent to the referral before proceeding. 'Health Partners' is the current electronic referral system there are guides available here to help with how to submit a referral.

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Occupational Health

Key areas where managers find the service of benefit are through the clear unambiguous advice that is useable and valued, addressing:

- Concerns regarding underlying medical condition that may affect the ability to perform or sustain normal role requirements
- Concerns around work related stress and general mental wellbeing
- Concerns regarding health related to workplace hazards
- Concerns regarding working environment
- Concerns over absence levels (short or continuous)

OH Reports will cover all of the following:

- Background to the referral & current issues
- The prognosis for their condition
- The likely return to work date or return to full duties
- Advice on current functional ability. If work is affected, whether this is likely to be short term, long term or permanent.
- A rehabilitation plan, with advice on adjustments where appropriate, with clear timescales.
- Advice on disability in accordance with the relevant UK legislation if relevant

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Occupational Health

A good Occupational Health referral should:

- focus on what the employee can do, or could do with help, rather than any negative, limiting effects of the illness or condition
- seek advice on any practical steps which might help them back to work following a sickness absence
- ask questions which help you understand what is preventing the employee from coming to work or carrying out their normal duties.

Does the employee have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities?

Is the employee fit to participate in a meeting to discuss their capability to continue in their current role if not, are there any adjustments which would enable the employee to participate in a discussion about their capability?

Should the employee be considered for ill-health retirement?

Is the employee taking any medication which may affect their ability to safely carry out the duties of their role?

Is redeployment on medical grounds required, and if so what type of role should be considered?

Remember to tailor your questions to the circumstances

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Occupational Health

Top tips

Be transparent

Be clear with the individual about why you are making the referral, and inform them of what you will be including in their referral. Where the individual refuses to provide consent seek to reassure them of the benefit of the referral and the confidentiality requirements.

Be specific

Make sure you understand the purpose of your referral, ask the appropriate questions, and challenge any report which does not meet your needs.

Be comprehensive

Include all relevant information within your referral. This should include a job description, details of any adjustments already in place, and information from stress risk assessments

Be informed

Use the guides available on the OH website to understand how to complete and submit a referral and access the online portal for health information

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Additional Resources

The Business Disability Forum provides pragmatic support by sharing expertise, giving advice, providing training and facilitating networking opportunities. To access BDF's line manager guides, mental health guidance, and other useful resources, firstly you will have to register on the member hub using your ons.gsi.gov.uk email address. You'll then be sent login details for the members hub which will give you access to all the resources you need.

Employment Relations – raise a call via the service desk to be allocated a caseworker

ONS guide to Wellbeing

Civil Service Learning

Employment Policy database – Relevant policies include Stress, Flexible working Framework, Attendance and Wellbeing, Workplace Adjustments and Leave Framework