



DEVELOPING A STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY SECTION 2





2.0 DEVELOPING A STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

2.1 Introduction

This section considers the development of a stress policy to provide a framework for combating stress at both organisational and individual level. There are various approaches, for example developing a specific stress policy or incorporating the management of stress into general health safety and well-being strategies, for example, initiatives such as Employer for Choice, Work Positive etc.

The purpose of a stress policy will be to provide a clear statement of the council's commitment to preventing stress at work and to help and support staff at all levels, to manage stress both in themselves and in those they manage.

As identified within Managing Stress at Work, The Employers Organisation for Local Government 2004, when developing a policy the following elements will need to be considered:

- Clarification on the purpose of the policy.
- Management roles and responsibilities.
- Employee roles and responsibilities.
- An agreed working definition of stress.
- That the policy is fully endorsed by senior management and elected members.
- How the policy will fit with the council's overall people management strategy and human resources policies such as occupational health, equal opportunities, sickness absence, grievance and disciplinary procedures in order to ensure a holistic approach.
- How management, trade unions and staff will be involved in the development and operation of the policy.
- The need for confidentiality and how this will be maintained.
- How best to communicate the new policy to managers, trade unions and staff (including future managers and staff).
- Whether any additional information and training will be required for managers and staff.
- What sources of support will be available to employees and managers, such as counselling or occupational health services.
- How success of the policy will be evaluated.
- When the policy will be reviewed.



2.2 An example of a stress policy (adapted from HSE)

The HSE have produced an example stress policy which is included in this section and is also available to download at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/pdfs/examplepolicy.pdf>

Introduction

We are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

This policy will apply to everyone in the company. Managers are responsible for implementation and the company is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

Definition of stress

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

Policy

- The company will identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- The company will consult with Trade Union Safety Representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress.
- The company will provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.
- The company will provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
- The company will provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the company’s agreed stress management strategy.

Responsibilities

Managers

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking. Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.

Occupational health and safety staff



- Provide specialist advice and awareness training on stress.
- Train and support managers in implementing stress risk assessments.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- Inform the employer and the health and safety committee of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.

Human resources

- Give guidance to managers on the stress policy.
- Help monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- Advise managers and individuals on training requirements.
- Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational workplace counsellors where appropriate.

Employees

- Raise issues of concern with your Safety Representative, line manager or occupational health.
- Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.

Safety representatives

- Safety Representatives must be meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress.
- Safety Representatives must be able to consult with members on the issue of stress including conducting any workplace surveys.
- Safety Representatives must be meaningfully involved in the risk assessment process.
- Safety Representatives should be allowed access to collective and anonymous data from HR.
- Safety Representatives should be provided with paid time away from normal duties to attend any Trade Union training relating to workplace stress.
- Safety Representatives should conduct joint inspections of the workplace at least every 3 months to ensure that environmental stressors are properly controlled.

Safety Committee

- The joint Safety Committee will perform a pivotal role in ensuring that this policy is implemented.
- The Safety Committee will oversee monitoring of the efficacy of the policy and other measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and safety.

Signed by

Managing Director: Date:

Employee Representative Date:



2.3 An example of a stress policy (HSENI)

Introduction

HSENI as an organisation values all of its employees and the contribution each of them makes to its overall success. It strives to create and maintain a working environment in which communication, support and mutual respect are the norms.

HSENI is committed to improving and safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of its employees and in that regard recognises the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

To that end it will adopt and implement the following policy which has the full commitment and support of the HSENI Board and Senior Management Team.

This policy will apply to everyone within HSENI.

Aim

HSENI's aim is to create a working environment where the mental health and well being of all its staff is paramount and where colleagues feel valued and protected.

In doing so it:-

- will seek to identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate the causes of stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be reviewed regularly;
- will consult with NIPSA Representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress;
- will identify and provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices. In addition all staff will be educated about stress and the importance of recognising and dealing with stress in the workplace;
- will continue to provide confidential counselling for all staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors and
- will provide subject to budgetary constraints adequate resources to enable managers to implement this stress policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone in HSENI has a role to play in ensuring that we create the right working environment. So no matter where you find yourself in the organisation you can and should make a contribution.

HSENI Board and Senior Management Team will:-

- ensure that this policy is implemented;
- oversee the monitoring of the effectiveness of the policy and of the other measures put in place to eliminate or reduce stress and to generally promote workplace health and safety;
- promote health related programmes for staff;
- ensure that staff are meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress and
- ensure staff are meaningfully involved in the risk assessment process.

Line Managers will:-

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risk assessments within their areas of responsibility and encourage staff to participate in the process.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes or other emerging issues which may lead to stress.



- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful development opportunities.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking.
- Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation and if appropriate consider what flexibility can reasonably be offered to alleviate the effects.

Employees will:-

- Recognise their own training needs and responsibility for well being and development within the job.
- Raise issues of concern promptly with your line manager or Personnel Branch so they can be addressed at an early stage.
- Recognise their shared responsibility to identify stress in themselves and others at an early stage.
- Contribute to the organisational risk assessment process e.g. through questionnaires or attending focus groups.
- Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended or work in partnership with their line manager or HSENI's Personnel Unit to identify other appropriate assistance.

In taking forward our roles and responsibilities we will be supported by our colleagues in HSENI's Personnel Unit who will:-

- Give advice to managers on the stress policy.
- Assist in the monitoring and review of the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress e.g. by collating sickness absence statistics.
- Advise managers and individuals on training requirements e.g. task related training, time management training, interpersonal skills, specialist advice and awareness training on stress.
- Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required through the Northern Ireland Civil Service Occupational Health Service.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their managers on a structured framework for their planned return to work.
- Inform the Senior Management Team of any changes and developments in the management of stress at work.

The Continuous Improvement Team performs a key role in ensuring that this policy is implemented by:

- Overseeing the completion of regular stress surveys, benchmarking results, identifying priorities, securing resources, monitoring the effectiveness of the measures put in place to eliminate the causes of stress or control the risks from stress and communicating the process to all staff.

Jim Keyes

Jim Keyes

Chief Executive December 2011



2.4 Mental wellbeing code of practice

This document contains information on risk assessment for both organisational and individual risk assessments. HSENI view the anonymised organisational risk assessment as fulfilling the legal requirement for addressing work-related stress in the workplace. Individual risk assessments or self assessments may be carried out in addition and may benefit the individuals involved.

The following document was produced in 2006 and refers to strategies and policies which may no longer be in operation.

**SAMPLE CODE OF
PRACTICE MENTAL
WELL-BEING AT WORK
DATED AUGUST 2006**

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1.0 Introduction

This Code of Practice has been produced to help **Any District Council** promote mental well-being at work. Mental well-being is more than just the absence of mental illness; it encourages employees to live a balanced life while taking a constructive role at work and in society.

It has also been compiled to help ensure both **Any District Council** and its employees meet their legal duties, and to reflect current best practice. In particular it has drawn upon the following three Health and Safety initiatives:

- a. Working for Health: A Long-Term Workplace Health Strategy for Northern Ireland (*HSENI March 2003*) which identified 5 key areas for action, these being support, awareness, compliance, rehabilitation and intelligence.
- b. Working for Health Action Plan 2004-2007 (*HSENI 2004*) which is a three year workplace health action plan designed to implement the NI strategy, and which has as its vision “A work culture that protects, promotes and supports health and wellbeing”.
- c. Management Standards for Tackling Work-Related Stress (*HSE Nov 2004*) which were produced to assist organisations in ensuring they were addressing work-related stress.

Mental well-being can be affected by factors both inside and outside of work, though the effects from either can be displayed in the workplace, so it is essential that all employees and line managers are aware of mental well-being issues and can recognise signs and symptoms. It is also essential that the organisation has open lines of communication and provides adequate support mechanisms for anyone with concerns and/or experiencing problems.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 Work-Related Stress:

Work-related stress is defined as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”. However pressure itself is not necessarily bad and most people need some level of pressure in order to function. It is when the pressure experienced is perceived as excessive by an individual that ill-health can result. It is important to note that there is no such thing as “positive stress”, and that “stress” itself can depend upon individual perceptions.

2.2 Who Can Experience Work-Related Stress?

Anyone can experience work-related stress when they feel that they cannot cope. Some groups are considered to be at a higher risk, including the young (movement into long term employment), single parents, elderly workers, the disabled, etc. but it is important to recognise that no-one is immune, and that external factors beyond the employers control can contribute to stress manifesting itself in the workplace.

2.3 Is It An Illness?

Stress is not an illness in itself but it can lead to ill-health, or exacerbate existing health problems, if it is prolonged or particularly intense, including heart disease, back pain, anxiety and depression. It can also contribute to unhealthy practices such as drinking too much



caffeine and/or alcohol, taking drugs (prescribed and/or non-prescribed), and/or smoking tobacco.

3.0 Why Manage Mental Well-Being?

There are very clear reasons for managing mental well-being at work, from both business and ethical perspectives.

3.1 The Business Case: Tackling Stress Brings Benefits:

Research has shown work-related stress to have adverse effects for organisations in terms of:

- Employee commitment to work.
- Staff performance and productivity.
- Staff turnover and intention to leave.
- Attendance levels.
- Staff recruitment and retention.
- Customer satisfaction.
- Organisational image and reputation.
- Potential litigation.
- Capacity to cope with change.

3.2 The Moral/Ethical Case:

As well as a legal duty **of** care the Council has a moral duty **to** care for its employees, just as each employee has a legal duty to comply with reasonable policies and procedures and the same moral duty **to** care about their colleagues in the workplace.

Thus the effective management of mental well-being at work clearly requires a partnership approach by all Council employers and employees and a shared commitment to promoting and maintaining a positive, motivated, satisfied and psychologically healthy working environment.

4.0 Legislation

Health and safety legislation applies as much to the mental well-being of employees as it does to their physical health, safety and welfare. The primary applicable legislation being:

- The Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000.

The Health and Safety at Work Order states that employers (including line managers) have a duty, so far as is reasonably practicable, to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees, and that employees have a duty to co-operate with reasonable policies and procedures. This includes taking steps to address the potential for stress-related illness as a result of the workplace. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations place a duty on employers to assess all significant risks from work, including those associated with stress related ill-health, and to ensure appropriate control measures are identified and implemented.



4.1 The HSE Management Standards:

In November 2004 the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) introduced management standards for tackling work-related stress. These standards are based on research into those aspects of

management of work directly linked to mental ill-health, including factors concerned with the design, organisation and management of work, and advise on the 6 main areas identified as having the potential to contribute to workplace stress. These are demands, control, support, relationships, role and change, all of which are addressed in more detail in section 7.1, whilst annex E, "The Management Standards: Are you doing enough?" provides guidance on meeting the standards.

Whilst the management standards do not impose a strict statutory duty they would be admissible as evidence in any civil and/or common law proceedings.

5.0 Duties Of Employers

Employers, including Line Managers, have a duty to:

- Carry out risk assessments to identify potential workplace stressors, and identify and implement appropriate control measures. Such assessments must be reviewed on a regular basis and/or whenever there is any reason to suspect they are no longer valid.
- Ensure there is due consultation where appropriate, i.e. during organisational and/or procedural changes, and that relevant representatives, such as Trade Union Safety Reps, Employee Representatives, etc. are consulted as appropriate.
- Ensure that effective, two-way, lines of communication are maintained at all times, and that all employees know how to report any concerns, and who to report them to.
- Ensure that all employees, at all levels, including themselves, are suitably trained to discharge their duties, and that there are reasonable opportunities for development.
- Ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that workloads are not excessive, and that individuals are not being required to involuntarily work excessively long hours and/or forego leave entitlements (flexi or annual).
- Ensure that other relevant Council policies and procedures, such as those addressing the working time directive, bullying and harassment, etc. are all effectively applied and appropriately communicated.

In addition Employers should actively promote a positive culture of inspiration, co-operation and support.

6.0 Duties Of Employees

Health and Safety legislation places a duty on all employees to comply with reasonable policies and procedures, which will apply to this Code of Practice, but the very individual nature of mental well-being inherently places an even greater responsibility on individual employees to raise any concerns they may have, and to raise them in a timely manner.

Employee duties include:

- Complying with the **Any District Council** Mental Well-being Code of Practice.



- Raising any concerns they have with their Line Managers, Safety Representatives, Employee Representatives, Occupational Health and/or Employee Counselling at the first practical opportunity *Amend as required*.
- Utilising and accepting appropriate Council support and intervention mechanisms, and working with the Council to seek agreed actions and solutions.

7.0 Risk Assessment

The traditional health and safety risk assessment process comprises 5 steps:

1. Identify the hazards.
2. Decide who might be harmed and how.
3. Evaluate the risk by identifying what action is already being taken, deciding whether or not it is enough and, if not, deciding what more needs to be done.
4. Record the significant findings.
5. Review the assessment at appropriate intervals.

The HSE have applied this process to mental well-being via the stress management standards, and it certainly has a role to play. However, the very unique and individual nature of mental well-being means that it can only be applied to certain workplace aspects, and with limited levels of effectiveness, and it must be acknowledged that there is significant responsibility at individual level for assessing individual risks.

Each of the 5 steps in the risk assessment process will now be addressed in more detail.

7.1 Identify The Hazards:

As stated the HSE Management Standards lists six main issues identified as the primary workplace factors with the potential to contribute to work-related stress, these being demands, control, support, relationships, role and change.

When identifying hazards in relation to a risk assessment particular attention should be paid to these 6 factors and how they relate to the workplace and/or individuals in question.

Each is identified in the following table along with a description, the recommended standard, and the states to be achieved:

ISSUES	STANDARD	STATES TO BE ACHIEVED
Demands		
Work-load, work patterns, and the work environment	<p>Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs</p> <p>Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work. 2. People's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands. 3. Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees. 4. Employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed.



ISSUES	STANDARD	STATES TO BE ACHIEVED
Control		
<p>How much say the person has in the way they do their work</p>	<p>Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work</p> <p>Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work. 2. Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work. 3. Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work. 4. The organisation encourages employees to develop their skills. 5. Employees have a say over when breaks can be taken. 6. Employees are consulted over their work patterns.
Support		
<p>Encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues</p>	<p>Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors</p> <p>Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support employees. 2. Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff. 3. Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues. 4. Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it. 5. Employees know how to access the required resources to do their job. 6. Employees receive regular and
Relationships		
<p>Promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour</p>	<p>Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours (e.g. bullying) at work</p> <p>Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness. 2. Employees share information relevant to their work. 3. The organisation has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour. 4. Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
Role		
<p>Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles</p>	<p>Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities</p> <p>Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible. 2. The organisation provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities. 3. The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon employees are clear. 4. Systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.



ISSUES	STANDARD	STATES TO BE ACHIEVED
Change		
How organisational change is managed and communicated in the organisation	<p>Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change</p> <p>Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes. 2. The organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals. 3. Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs. 4. Employees are aware of timetables for changes. 5. Employees have access to relevant support during changes.

Particular attention should be paid to identifying mental well-being hazards when considering structural, procedural and/or physical workplace changes, when introducing new initiatives, strategies, etc. when new projects are proposed, and/or when other relevant factors, such as a reduced workforce due to absence and/or holidays, are present.

Consideration must also be given to the possibility of external factors, which can take many forms, and may well be personal, but which can still impact on the workplace. Whilst it is not reasonable to expect line managers to identify such factors, they must remain alert to potential individual signs and symptoms, such as irritability, poor time keeping, etc., must ensure open lines of communication are maintained, and should encourage employees to seek support and advice where appropriate.

Note that other factors which should be considered are provided for information at Annex C, Part 1 of which addresses “Aspects of work that may give rise to stress”, and Part 2 of which lists the “Life Events Scale”.

7.2 Decide Who Might Be Harmed And How:

Research indicates that around 1 in 5 adults suffer from mental ill-health at any given time, and it must be emphasised that it can affect anyone at anytime, as a result of a very wide range of potential causal factors and/or origins, very differing levels of tolerance, and very different types of perception. Thus accurately assessing who might be harmed, and how, can be very difficult, may only ever be partially accurate, and again emphasises the need for personal responsibility in reporting issues/concerns.

However, considering who will be affected, and how, when introducing workplace changes, etc. is not only possible, but essential, and each of the 6 management standard factors should be assessed as a basic measure.



7.3 Evaluate the Risk and Initiate Action as Appropriate:

Evaluating the risk is again a challenge with regards to mental well-being as individuals will have different thresholds, personalities, concerns, perceptions, etc. and single evaluation methods will rarely be suitable, or should be relied upon.

When evaluating the risks and initiating action consider the following 3 areas:

- Data/information gathering.
- Linking potential problems to possible solutions.
- Communicating results and agreed solutions/actions to employees.

When compiling data try not to rely on one source of information where possible. Use Department, Section, Unit and/or working group meetings (consider including mental well-being as an agenda item during management team meetings, etc.), team meetings, focus groups, etc. to gather information on general issues; review existing data such as sickness absence data, return to work interviews, output levels, employee turnover, etc. for additional information, and consider feedback from training courses, employee counselling, etc. For specific cases it may be necessary to speak to individuals and/or employee counsellors, (subject to the maintenance of due confidentiality).

Consider any potential problems identified in relation to the 6 key issues identified by the management standards, and consider how such can be amended and/or improved upon to address any such problems at source to prevent recurrence, as well as ensuring any relevant individuals concerns are addressed.

Some problems will be beyond direct workplace control i.e. personal, financial, marital problems, etc. However, in such circumstances the workplace issue of support will still be applicable, line managers should provide such support so far as is reasonable, and mechanisms such as the Employee Counselling service should be utilised, who can refer to specialists if required.

It is important that there is effective communication throughout the relevant Department, Section and/or Unit, that all are kept informed of what services and support are available and/or being implemented, and that timely feedback is provided where general workplace problems are identified and/or concerns are raised.

7.3.1 Individual Concerns:

Information (hazard identification) gathering, employees themselves, and/or line managers, may identify that particular individuals are experiencing problems that the majority of employees are not, whilst some solutions developed for the majority of employees may not address some individual problems. There is still a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect the health and well-being of such individuals, but they must also take reasonable responsibility for their own welfare and must raise concerns/issues so that they can be effectively addressed. Employers must facilitate such by:

- Creating an environment where employees are encouraged to talk, both formally and informally to their line managers, employee representatives or **employee counselling**.



- Reminding employees that they can also speak to trade union representatives, health and safety representatives, and/or anyone in Health and Safety/Human Resources.
- Ensuring that employees raising personal concerns and/or issues are guaranteed due confidentiality.

7.4 Record The Significant Findings And Associated Action Plans:

Where risk assessments identify significant organisational mental well-being issues i.e. at corporate, department, section and or unit levels, the findings must be recorded and control measures identified, agreed and initiated.

One formal method of achieving this is to write and disseminate an action plan, with the following template provided as an example:

Standard Area	Desired State	Current State	Practical Solutions	Who will Take the work Forward	When?	How will Staff Receive Feedback	Action Completed

Note that when recording risk assessment findings, and/or compiling action plans, it is essential that individual confidentiality is maintained.

7.5 Monitor And Review The Assessment:

Risk assessments are living entities that must be subject to regular review (at least annually), and/or whenever there is any reason to suspect they are no longer valid, whilst action plans must be followed up to ensure all recommended actions are completed, and that any control measures introduced are proving effective.

The ongoing aim must be one of continual improvement and the ongoing review and monitoring of risk assessments and action plans should reflect such.

8.0 Generic Risk Assessment (GRA) Format

A generic risk assessment format for stress produced by the Local Authority Safety Advisor Network (LASAN) and is attached at annex A.

The front identifies the main hazards associated with stress, which line managers can use to evaluate issues in their areas, and also common control measures which can be checked off as applicable, whilst the back provides for site/activity specific input and due ownership.

This has been produced for the benefit of line managers as a user friendly aid, but will only be effective if properly completed and used to identify and implement practical measures. If used to simply provide paperwork evidence they will serve no real purpose.



9.0 Self-Assessment

The very individual nature of work-related stress, and the accompanying need for individuals to take a reasonable degree of personal responsibility, has been referred to several times.

In order to assist individuals in meeting this responsibility a self assessment toolkit has been produced, as attached at annex B, which is based upon the HSE management standards and associated toolkit. This can be freely reproduced as a hard copy, or can be **downloaded from the Any District Council Intranet**, for use whenever required i.e. whenever any individual has any reason to suspect they may be feeling the effects of stress.

It is designed to be easy to use. Individuals simply work through the questionnaire section by section, responding to each question by circling the answer they feel is applicable, and then adding up the scores to achieve a section total.

The section total is then compared against the ratings table at the bottom of each page, which is based on the traffic light system whereby the score will equate to one of 3 colours, green, amber or red, which in turn will equate to recommendations as follows:

Score	Colour	What Next?
32-40	GREEN	Indicates there are no significant issues requiring immediate action. However, consider individual options, and/or consult line management, with the aim of continual improvement, and continue to monitor the situation for relevant changes
17-31	AMBER	Indicates potential for improvement. Consider what can be done individually; discuss any issues/concerns identified with line manager(s), and/or other employee representative(s), and/or seek advice from employee counselling/health and safety
8-16	RED	Indicates action required. Look at what needs to be done individually, consult with line managers as appropriate, and/or make an appointment with Employee Counselling . Use the self-assessment questionnaire as evidence of potential problem areas

It must be emphasised that the self-assessment tool is provided purely as an aid and is not definitive. It is aimed at facilitating the identification of individually perceived workplace issues/concerns and encouraging relevant individuals to make their line managers aware of any concerns and/or to seek support from the likes of Employee Counselling.

It should also be noted that Departments, Sections and/or Units can use the assessment tool to run their own surveys, though they are advised to contact the Health and Safety Team if they plan to do so as there is a slightly different version of the same system that is more suitable for survey purposes in that it facilitates group analysis of the results.

10.0 Employee Counselling Services

Any District Council provides the following Employee Counselling Services/Employee Assistance Programme – enter details as appropriate.



Details of both contact and/or referral procedures should be entered in this section. Below are some sample options based on a Council that has a contracted in Employee Counselling service, including production of statistics, confidentiality issues, etc.

10.1 Referrals to Employee Counselling:

There are several options for referral to Employee Counselling:

- Line Management referral
- Self-referral (normal)
- Self-referral (restricted)
- Occupational Health referral
- Sickness Absence referral
- Emergency referral

10.1.1 Line Management Referrals:

Where Line Managers wish to refer an employee directly to Employee Counselling they must have the consent/agreement of the individual concerned. The Receptionist should then be contacted who will make an appointment and confirm the relevant date and time.

It should be noted that it will be the relevant Line Managers responsibility to advise the individual concerned of the appointment details, to facilitate release from work as required, and to ensure, so far as is practicable, that the individual attends the appointment. Failure by an individual to attend a Line Management referral will still result in the relevant department/section being charged for the session.

10.1.2 Self-Referral (Normal):

Individuals may self-refer to Employee Counselling by contacting the WHU Receptionist directly, who will make an appointment, and confirm the date and time with both the individual concerned and their relevant Business Support Officer. Business Support Officers are advised so as to facilitate release from work to attend the appointment, and to meet the employers Duty of Care requirements.

It is important to note that the Business Support Personnel will only be advised that an appointment has been made for that individual, including the date and time. All other aspects of the referral will remain strictly confidential.

10.1.3 Self-Referral (Restricted):

Where an individual wishes to self-refer to Employee Counselling, but does not want their line management informed, they should contact the Receptionist, ensuring they clearly state that line management are not to be informed. The Receptionist will pass any such requests directly to Employee Counselling who will contact the relevant individual personally to arrange an appointment outside of working hours (this can include lunchtimes). No other parties will then be informed.

The reason such requests are addressed outside of working hours is that this allows an appointment to be made without advising line managers, who do not then have to facilitate release, or apply duty of care levels applicable during working hours.



Individuals self-referring, whether normal or restricted, should note that responsibility for attendance rests entirely with them, and that abuse of this service could result in it being withdrawn from them as individuals.

10.1.4 Occupational Health Referrals:

Where an Occupational Health Physician makes a professional assessment that a referral to Employee Counselling is appropriate the individual will be advised at the earliest opportunity, and an appointment will be initiated via the Receptionist, who will also advise the relevant Business Support Personnel. As with self-referrals (normal) the Business Support Personnel will only be advised that an appointment has been made for that individual, including the date and time. All other Employee Counselling aspects will remain confidential.

Where Line Managers believe an Employee Counselling referral would benefit an individual employee, but the relevant employee does not agree/consent to an appointment being made, a referral can be made to the Occupational Health Physician for a medical opinion (note that Line Managers can refer individuals to Occupational Health without the individuals consent/agreement), who can in turn refer to Employee Counselling based on professional medical assessment.

10.1.5 Sickness Absence Referrals:

Where an individual submits a GP's certificate, or self-certificates, for sickness absence where "stress" is listed as the cause, then the Council has a responsibility to investigate in order to identify any work-related issues, to ensure no others are at risk, and to ensure individuals are offered support at the earliest opportunity. Accordingly such individuals can be referred directly to Employee Counselling without their consent.

Relevant Business Support staff must inform Employee Counselling as soon as practicable when "stress-related absence" is identified, and provide relevant contact details. Employee Counselling will then make contact with the individual concerned to offer and facilitate support as appropriate, and to try and identify any workplace issues that need to be addressed.

All employees have a moral duty to assist with such in order to help protect their colleagues and other Council employees where there is the potential for a work-related issue that can impact on others, and a legal duty to comply with all reasonable procedures.



Note: “Stress” itself is not an illness (see para. 2.3) and therefore technically does not, on its own, constitute a valid reason for sickness absence. Where “stress” is listed as a reason it should be supplemented by diagnosis of any associated ill-health i.e. depression, anxiety, etc. which can assist in identifying any potential workplace stressors/factors.

10.1.6 Emergency Referrals:

The Employee Counselling Team is available on a call out basis in the event of genuine emergencies whereby the protocols listed above may be overridden. In such circumstances confidentiality will still be maintained, so far as is practicable, and providing such does not place the individual, or any others, at risk.

10.2 Employee Counselling Statistics:

Employee Counselling statistics play an important part in identifying potential corporate and/or department issues and in providing feedback for line managers, both of which contribute to identifying potential areas for improvement. However, such statistics have to be carefully compiled and presented so as to ensure due levels of confidentiality are maintained.

Responsibility for the production of statistics rests with Employee Counselling who will produce them on a regular basis, with relevant information therein being disseminated by the Health and Safety/HR Manager, as appropriate, across the organisation, whilst ensuring relevant individual confidentiality is maintained.

Where Employee Counsellors identify issues/concerns within a particular department, section and/or unit, they may, at their own discretion, make contact with the relevant line manager directly so as to advise of the issues and provide support and advice on possible remediation options.

10.3 Confidentiality:

Members of the Employee Counselling Team, including the Receptionist, are all professionals, who are duty bound by a strict code of confidentiality and neutrality, and every reasonable effort will be made to protect the confidential rights of the individual(s).

However, it must be noted that where circumstances dictate, such as where an employee or others may be put at risk, the service reserves the right to inform management of pertinent issues.

11.0 Stress Training And Workshops

This section should be used to detail stress-related training provisions available from Any District Council. The following are examples from a Council with a contracted-in Employee Counsellor service:

11.1 Stress Awareness Workshops:

The Workplace Health Unit can provide stress awareness workshops on demand. These comprise a joint approach with the Health and Safety Team presenting on the technical aspects of stress awareness and management, and the Employee Counselling Team facilitating practical workshops. Each session lasts approximately 2 hours.



These are suitable for all employees and are designed to be delivered to specific departments, sections and/or units to facilitate the identification of relevant issues/concerns, which are then fed back to relevant line managers via post course letters outlining the points raised whilst maintaining individual confidentiality.

11.2 Stress Management Training:

The Workplace Health Unit will provide periodic Stress Management Training days aimed at any personnel with management responsibilities, including team leaders, supervisors, etc.

These are 1 day courses and go into more detail on the physiology and management of stress than the workshops, though also include a workshop element, are jointly delivered between Health and Safety and Employee Counselling, and concentrate on practical aspects.

To enquire about and/or arrange a stress awareness workshop or management training day contact the Health and Safety Team.

12.0 Culture

Potentially the most effective tool for promoting mental well-being, and the best defence against work-related stress at source, is a positive culture and attitude, which can only thrive if it permeates throughout the organisation with everyone actively contributing.

Consider how you might contribute to the following, both as individuals and as part of a team:

- A blame free culture where accountability is encouraged, not feared.
- An honest culture where failings are recognised, acknowledged, and addressed with the aim of continually improving.
- A culture of respect where people are recognised and acknowledged for their input and contribution at all levels.
- A culture of openness and approachability that encourages good communication and co-operation.
- A culture of pride in the organisation and in the services it provides to the community.
- A culture that both encourages and inspires innovation and progress.
- A culture of corporate identity where the ever changing demands are viewed as opportunities to make us even better, both as individuals and as an organisation.

Everyone has a part to play – a healthy workplace requires a teamwork approach.

13.0 Communications

Effective communications are essential to healthy mental well-being at work, and will present a challenge in any large organisation.

Partnership working must be applied, and advantage taken of all forms communication. Consider how mental well-being can be promoted via the following:

- Department, Section and/or Unit meetings i.e. can be made standard agenda items, if addressed at senior management team level it inherently demonstrates senior commitment, whilst team meetings facilitate open discussion, and all meetings should encourage feedback.



- **Workplace Health/Health and Safety Committee** meetings are an obvious forum, provide a clear line of communications between employers and employees, **and the Council system ensures that employees from all sections and departments have access to such a committee, which in turn has access to the Central Workplace Health Committee.**
- One to one meetings, personal development interviews, return to work interviews, etc. all provide an excellent opportunity to ask for individual perceptions/opinions in a suitably confidential environment.
- Notice boards, minutes, etc. can all be utilised, even if only to advertise the employee counselling service, or guidance documents.
- Partnerships with Trade Unions, etc. should be explored to provide a joined up and holistic approach to workplace health and mental well-being, including the setting up of alternative reporting lines where individuals may feel uncomfortable talking to line managers.

14.0 Caring For Those With Work-Related Stress

14.1 Recognising Signs Of Stress:

The following may be signs of work-related stress:

- Changes in mood or behaviour.
- Deteriorating relationships with colleagues.
- Loss of interest in work.
- Irritability/short temper.
- Indecisiveness/reduced concentration.
- Absenteeism, poor time keeping or reduced performance.
- Delayed recovery and return to work from illness.
- Excessive smoking, drinking or use of drugs.
- Complaints about health (headaches etc.).

14.2 Helping Employees Suffering From Work-Related Stress:

Line managers must develop the skills necessary to deal with stressed and distressed employees. They should not be panicked by emotion and should be calm and reassuring. Consider the following:

- Do not penalise employees for feeling the effects of too much pressure.
- Encourage staff to manage their own well-being.
- Provide them with support.
- Respond helpfully to employees who are going through stressful times.
- Ask people how they can help instead of making assumptions.
- Make notes of agreed action points.
- Explain the type of support available in Belfast City Council.
- Discuss possible changes in workload and/or workplace procedures.
- Offer any resources available to help – employee counselling, use of flexible working hours etc.
- Try to create a culture and structure where staff can seek help and manage and support their needs.

See Annex D For Practical Ways of Reducing Stress.

It is important to accept that there is a problem if there is one, and not ignore it. It is a problem for the organisation not just the individual and must be taken seriously.



14.3 Rehabilitation:

When persons suffering from work-related stress return to work the following arrangements should be made:

- Ensure there are arrangements for a return to work interview and during the interview focus on the person, not the problem.
- Make sure the person feels welcomed back.
- Ensure the person is not placed in a situation which contains the same factors which led to stress in the first place.
- If their work was part of the cause, the problems should have been addressed and alterations made.
- Take care not to make the person feel as if they are being singled out.

14.4 Stress Summary:

A number of 'things to do'

- Show that stress will be taken seriously and that line management will understand.
- Encourage open and understanding attitudes.
- Look for signs of stress in employees.
- Ensure all employees have the training and skills necessary/organise training as required.
- Ensure employees understand the requirements of their job, including any changes.
- Where practicable provide scope for varying working conditions.
- Ensure people are treated fairly and consistently.
- Ensure two-way communication.
- Don't be afraid to listen/talk to someone.

15.0 What Can Employees Do To Help Themselves?

15.1 Things To Do At Work:

- Talk to line managers. If they don't know the problem they cannot help. If you can't talk directly to your line manager ask a Trade Union or other employee representative to raise the issue on your behalf.
- Support other colleagues who may be experiencing work related stress. Encourage them to talk to their line manager.
- Use the services provided such as the employee counsellors.
- Speak to Occupational Health or your GP if you are worried about your health.
- Be realistic, if your job is causing you distress and/or making you ill it is a problem that needs to be resolved.
- Try to channel your energy into solving the problem rather than just worrying about it.

15.2 Things To Do Out Of Work:



- Eat healthily.
- Stop smoking – it doesn't help even if you think it does.
- Try to keep within government recommendations for alcohol – alcohol is a depressant, it will not help you tackle the problem.
- Watch your caffeine intake.
- Be physically active/take exercise – it stimulates you and gives you more energy.
- Learn relaxation techniques – they can help cope with pressures in the short term.
- Talk to friends and family about what you are feeling – they may be able to help.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE AND/OR ADVICE

For further assistance and/or advice, including the provision of training, contact:

Enter relevant contact details here

All enquiries/requests for assistance will be treated in due confidence.



ANNEX A: GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT - WORK-RELATED STRESS

ACTIVITY COVERED:	WORK RELATED STRESS		
Reference No:	085	Version:	3.0

GENERAL HAZARDS	Risk Rating			HSE Mgmt Standards
	Low	Med	High	Applicable categories
Organisational change				Change & Role
Inadequate training and/or support				Support & Demands
Leadership issues/poor management skills				Support, Role & Demand
Work overload/under load				Demands, Support & Control
Lack of control of work				Control & Support
Interpersonal conflict/relationships				Relationships & Support
Bullying, harassment and/or victimisation				Relationships & Support
Poorly defined roles and/or responsibilities				Role & Demands
Shift work				Demands and Role
Threat of violence/threat to personal safety				Role & Support
Poor physical work environment				Demand & Support

PRIMARY LEGISLATION/REFERENCES:

Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 Working Time Regulations (NI) 1998
 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regs. (NI) 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 HSG218 Tackling work-related stress – a managers' guide. Published by HSE Books

CONTROL MEASURES	Check
PLANNING:	
Formulate a stress policy, ensuring it is effectively communicated throughout the org	
Procedures for harassment, violence at work, occupational health, health and safety	
During periods of organisational change, ensure communication to operational level	
Ensure procedures in place for reporting stressors, use of occupational health, employee counselling, etc.	
Ensure working environment is suitable and sufficient – welfare facilities etc.	
Personal safety policy / conflict resolution / harmonious workplace.	
Ensure procedures in place for reporting / resolving workload issues	
PHYSICAL:	
Establish environmental standards for work places i.e. noise levels, temperature, work space, fumes, smells, ventilation, lighting, maintenance, etc.	
Be aware of reporting procedures for problems and use them accordingly	
Use the occupational health/counselling provision/talk to line management/family	
Adhere to personal safety training/advice	
Adhere to government advice on levels of alcohol, smoking/caffeine/drugs	
Eat healthily, be active, learn relaxation techniques, be tolerant/considerate of others	
Refrain from acting aggressively, do not retaliate to others	
MANAGERIAL/SUPERVISORY:	
Undertake job specific stress risk assessments as required i.e. workload changes, etc	
Ensure all employees have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities	
Regular face to face communications with employees, reducing long working hours	
Provide access to counselling and/or other support	
Analyse sickness absence records, staff turnover, return to work interviews, exit interviews etc for indications of stress and stressors, family friendly working practices	
TRAINING:	
Induction training for all new starts, refresher training annually	
Training for employees who are promoted, transferred, or assume new responsibilities	
Training for managers in developing skills and competencies to manage staff	
Stress awareness training for staff and managers	
Workplace health promotion activities/access to leisure facilities	
Provide literature on stress, stress management, and avoiding stress	
Training for employees who are likely to encounter work-related violence/aggression	



SITE/TASK SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENT

On each site the generic risk assessment must be validated by reviewing the specific aspects/circumstances

SITE LOCATION/SPECIFIC TASK:	
Max number of people involved in activity:	
Frequency and duration of activity:	

Additional hazards identified (whether site or activity orientated):

Additional control measures required:	Who to action and by when:

Assessment of remaining risks:	Low	Medium	High

Circumstances which may require additional information:

Circulation of risk assessment:			
Operative:	Manager/Supervisor:	Other:	Other:

Assessment completed by:			
Name:	Date:	Signature:	

Review record:			
Next review due:	Reviewed by:	Date:	
Next review due:	Reviewed by:	Date:	
Next review due:	Reviewed by:	Date:	



ANNEX B: MENTAL WELL-BEING AT WORK CODE OF PRACTICE SELF- ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

This self-assessment toolkit has been compiled as part of Belfast City Councils' drive towards continually improving health and mental well-being at work.

The Belfast City Council Code of Practice entitled '**Mental Well-Being at Work**' was written in August 2003 by the Health and Safety Team, and updated in November 2004 to reflect the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance and direction on work-related stress.

HSE research has identified that poor management of the following areas can increase the risk of work related stress:

1. Demands.
2. Control.
3. Support.
4. Relationships.
5. Role.
6. Change.

They have made recommendations on the standards to be achieved in the six areas and called them the 'Management Standards'.

How to Use the Self Analysis Toolkit:

This toolkit contains a questionnaire based on the six areas in the 'Management Standards' and a scoring system to enable you determine any potential areas of risk.

1. Work through each question in turn.
2. Answer every question by circling the response you feel is most applicable.
3. Add up the score for each section.
4. Check the total against the table and identify the relevant "what next" box.
5. Follow the instructions on what to do next!

Remember that you must analyse your OWN responses in this questionnaire and that you must take action where scores indicate any areas of concern!



DEMANDS

	Demands	Answer				
		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	Different groups at work demand things from me that are hard to combine.	5	4	3	2	1
2	I have unachievable deadlines.	5	4	3	2	1
3	I have to work very intensively.	5	4	3	2	1
4	I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do.	5	4	3	2	
5	I am unable to take sufficient breaks.	5	4	3	2	1
6	I am pressured to work long hours.	5	4	3	2	1
7	I have to work very fast.	5	4	3	2	1
8	I have unrealistic time pressures.	5	4	3	2	1

My Score for Demands

Score	Colour	What Next?
32-40	GREEN	Indicates there are no significant issues requiring immediate Action. However, consider individual options, and/or consult line management, with the aim of continual improvement, and continue to monitor the situation for relevant changes.
17-31	AMBER	Indicates potential for improvement. Consider what can be done individually; discuss any issues/concerns identified with line manager(s), and/or other employee representative(s), and/or seek advice from employee counselling/health and safety.
8-16	RED	Indicates action required. Look at what needs to be done individually, consult with line managers as appropriate, and/or make an appointment with Employee Counselling. Use the self-assessment questionnaire as evidence of potential problem areas.



CONTROL

	Control	Answer				
		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I can decide when to take a break.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I have a say in my own work speed.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I have a choice in deciding how I do my work.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I have a choice in deciding what I do at work.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I have some say over the way I work.	1	2	3	4	5
6	My working time can be flexible.	1	2	3	4	5

My Score for Control

Score	Colour	What Next?
32-40	GREEN	Indicates there are no significant issues requiring immediate Action. However, consider individual options, and/or consult line management, with the aim of continual improvement, and continue to monitor the situation for relevant changes.
17-31	AMBER	Indicates potential for improvement. Consider what can be done individually; discuss any issues/concerns identified with line manager(s), and/or other employee representative(s), and/or seek advice from employee counselling/health and safety.
8-16	RED	Indicates action required. Look at what needs to be done individually, consult with line managers as appropriate, and/or make an appointment with Employee Counselling. Use the self-assessment questionnaire as evidence of potential problem areas.



MANAGER'S SUPPORT

	Manager's Support	Answer				
		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I am given supportive feedback on the work I do.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I can rely on my line manager to help me out with a work problem.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am supported through emotionally demanding work.	1	2	3	4	5
5	My line manager encourages me at work.	1	2	3	4	5

My Score for Manager's Support

Score	Colour	What Next?
20-25	GREEN	Indicates there are no significant issues requiring immediate Action. However, consider individual options, and/or consult line management, with the aim of continual improvement, and continue to monitor the situation for relevant changes.
11-19	AMBER	Indicates potential for improvement. Consider what can be done individually; discuss any issues/concerns identified with line manager(s), and/or other employee representative(s), and/or seek advice from employee counselling/health and safety.
5-10	RED	Indicates action required. Look at what needs to be done individually, consult with line managers as appropriate, and/or make an appointment with Employee Counselling. Use the self-assessment questionnaire as evidence of potential problem areas.



PEER SUPPORT

	Peer Support	Answer				
		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	If work gets difficult, my colleagues will help me.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I get help and support I need from colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I receive the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
4	My colleagues are willing to listen to my work related concerns.	1	2	3	4	5

My Score for Peer Support

Score	Colour	What Next?
16-20	GREEN	Indicates there are no significant issues requiring immediate Action. However, consider individual options, and/or consult line management, with the aim of continual improvement, and continue to monitor the situation for relevant changes.
9-15	AMBER	Indicates potential for improvement. Consider what can be done individually; discuss any issues/concerns identified with line manager(s), and/or other employee representative(s), and/or seek advice from employee counselling/health and safety.
4-8	RED	Indicates action required. Look at what needs to be done individually, consult with line managers as appropriate, and/or make an appointment with Employee Counselling. Use the self-assessment questionnaire as evidence of potential problem areas.



RELATIONSHIPS

	Relationships	Answer				
		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I am subject to personal harassment* in the form of unkind words or behaviour.	5	4	3	2	1
2	There is friction or anger between colleagues.	5	4	3	2	1
3	I am subject to bullying* at work.	5	4	3	2	1
4	Relationships at work are strained.	5	4	3	2	1

My Score for Relationships

Score	Colour	What Next?
16-20	GREEN	Indicates there are no significant issues requiring immediate Action. However, consider individual options, and/or consult line management, with the aim of continual improvement, and continue to monitor the situation for relevant changes.
9-15	AMBER	Indicates potential for improvement. Consider what can be done individually; discuss any issues/concerns identified with line manager(s), and/or other employee representative(s), and/or seek advice from employee counselling/health and safety.
4-8	RED	Indicates action required. Look at what needs to be done individually, consult with line managers as appropriate, and/or make an appointment with Employee Counselling. Use the self-assessment questionnaire as evidence of potential problem areas.

Important:

*-Harassment/Bullying

It is Any District Council's policy to provide employment equality to all as set out in its **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**. This policy states that "..... all complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially". "Complaints of discrimination" includes any forms of harassment, bullying and/or victimisation.

Where any individual feels that they are being "bullied and/or harassed" they should report such to relevant line management as soon as is practicable, regardless of any score achieved in this self-assessment, who should in turn initiate due process (note that due process is detailed in the Council's "Guidance notes for managers in respect of the procedure for dealing with complaints of harassment, discrimination and/or victimisation").



ROLE

	Role	Answer				
		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I am clear what is expected of me at work.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I know how to go about getting my job done.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am clear about the goals and objectives for my department.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I understand how my work fits into the overall aim of the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5

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My Score for Role

Score	Colour	What Next?
20-25	GREEN	Indicates there are no significant issues requiring immediate Action. However, consider individual options, and/or consult line management, with the aim of continual improvement, and continue to monitor the situation for relevant changes.
11-19	AMBER	Indicates potential for improvement. Consider what can be done individually; discuss any issues/concerns identified with line manager(s), and/or other employee representative(s), and/or seek advice from employee counselling/health and safety.
5-10	RED	Indicates action required. Look at what needs to be done individually, consult with line managers as appropriate, and/or make an appointment with Employee Counselling. Use the self-assessment questionnaire as evidence of potential problem areas.



CHANGE

	Change	Answer				
		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I have sufficient opportunities to question managers about change at work.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Staff are always consulted about change at work.	1	2	3	4	5
3	When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will affect me.	1	2	3	4	5

My Score for Change

Score	Colour	What Next?
12-15	GREEN	Indicates there are no significant issues requiring immediate Action. However, consider individual options, and/or consult line management, with the aim of continual improvement, and continue to monitor the situation for relevant changes.
7-11	AMBER	Indicates potential for improvement. Consider what can be done individually; discuss any issues/concerns identified with line manager(s), and/or other employee representative(s), and/or seek advice from employee counselling/health and safety.
3-6	RED	Indicates action required. Look at what needs to be done individually, consult with line managers as appropriate, and/or make an appointment with Employee Counselling. Use the self-assessment questionnaire as evidence of potential problem areas.



Part 1: ASPECTS OF WORK WHICH MAY GIVE RISE TO STRESS

General management and culture of the organisation	<p>Lack of clear company objectives and values.</p> <p>Poor communication.</p> <p>Lack of employee consultation/involvement during periods of organisational change.</p> <p>Lack of management support and development for staff.</p>
Role in organisation	<p>Employee's roles within the organisation unclear.</p> <p>Conflicting objectives and priorities.</p> <p>High level of responsibility for people.</p>
Career development	<p>Career uncertainty.</p> <p>Career stagnation.</p> <p>Poor status.</p> <p>Job insecurity or redundancy.</p>
Decision making / control	<p>Low participation in decision-making.</p> <p>Lack of control over work.</p> <p>Little decision making in work.</p>
Relationships at work	<p>Social or physical isolation.</p> <p>Poor relationship with superiors.</p> <p>Interpersonal conflict, including bullying, violence and sexual or racial harassment.</p>
Home / work issues	<p>Conflicting demands of work and home.</p> <p>Low levels of support at home.</p> <p>Dual career problems.</p>
Job design	<p>Ill-defined work.</p> <p>High uncertainty in work.</p> <p>Lack of variety or short work cycles.</p> <p>Fragmented or meaningless work.</p> <p>Under-use of skill.</p> <p>Constant exposure to client/customer groups.</p>
Workload / work pace	<p>Lack of control/over pacing.</p> <p>Work overload or under-load.</p> <p>High levels of pacing or time pressure.</p>
Work schedule	<p>Shift working.</p> <p>Inflexible/over-burdensome work schedule.</p> <p>Unpredictable work hours.</p> <p>Unsocial working hours.</p>



Part 2: LIFE EVENTS SCALE

The following list of common stressors, which have been ranked according to scale of impact, is adapted from the social readjustment rating scale developed by Holmes and Rahe in 1967:

Rank	Life Event	Life Crisis Unit Score
1	Death of wife or husband.	100
2	Divorce.	73
3	Marital separation.	65
4=	Detention in jail or other institution.	63
4=	Death of a close family member.	63
6	Major personal injury or illness.	53
7	Marriage.	50
8	Being fired at work.	47
9=	Marital reconciliation.	45
9=	Retirement from work.	45
11	Major change in health or behaviour of a family member.	44
12	Pregnancy.	40
13=	Sexual difficulties.	39
13=	Gaining a new family member e.g. birth/adoption.	39
13=	Major business problems e.g. bankruptcy, can include reorganisation, merger, etc.	39
16	Significant change in financial state.	38
17	Death of a close friend.	37
18	Changing to a different line of work.	36
19	Change in living arrangements with wife/husband (increased arguments).	35
20	Taking on a large mortgage, or a similar financial	31
21	Foreclosure on mortgage or loan.	30
22=	Significant change in responsibilities at work e.g. demotion, promotion, etc.	29
22=	Son or daughter leaving home.	29
22=	Trouble with in-laws.	29
25	Outstanding personal achievement.	28
26=	Wife starts/stops work.	26
26=	Starting or leaving school.	26
28	Change in living conditions.	25
29	Revision of personal habits.	24
30	Trouble with the boss.	23
31=	Change in working hours or conditions.	20
31=	Change in residence.	20
31=	Change of school.	20
34=	Change in recreation.	19
34=	Change in church activities.	19
36	Change in social activity.	18
37	Taking on a bank loan or HP debt.	17
38	Change in sleeping habits.	16
39=	Change in number of family reunions.	15
39=	Change in eating habits.	15
41	Vacation.	13
42	Christmas.	12
43	Minor violation of the law.	11



Clearly only a limited number of these are directly attributable to the workplace in relation to cause, but it must be emphasised that stress itself can impact on individual workplace performance regardless of the cause.



ANNEX D: PRACTICAL WAYS OF REDUCING STRESS

Practical Ways of Reducing Stress

- Improve the physical environment.
- Redesign jobs and introduce variety.
- Give workers more control over production processes.
- Create formal support structures such as annual appraisals.
- Involve employees in decisions about their work.
- Assess and/or modify management styles where appropriate.
- Clarify job descriptions and review periodically.
- Ensure managers are trained in interpersonal relationships.
- Develop appropriate personnel policies.
- Prepare for planned changes and develop strategies for crises.
- Help individuals cope with stress by providing counselling or other support systems.



ANNEX E: THE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS – ARE YOU DOING ENOUGH?

The following guidance has been reproduced from HSE guidance compiled to accompany the management standards. Much of it is already in place within Belfast City Council but all of it is still relevant, and all should consider how the points listed may apply, or could be applied, with the aim of continually improving levels of mental well-being across the Council.

Demands: Are You Doing Enough?

How much work is there?

- Ensure there are sufficient resources to do the work allocated:
 - If there are insufficient resources seek guidance from management about priorities.
 - Support your staff by helping them prioritise or renegotiate deadlines.
 - Cover workloads during staff absences.
 - Adjust work patterns to cope with peaks (needs to be fair and agreed with employees).
- If people are under loaded, think about giving them more responsibility, but make sure that they have been adequately trained.
- Strike a balance between ensuring that employees are interested and busy, but not under loaded, overloaded, or confused about the job.
- Develop personal work plans to ensure staff know what their job involves.

Are staff able to do the job?

Training and development:

- Train staff so they are able to do their jobs.
- Implement personal development/training plans which require individuals to identify development/training opportunities which can then be discussed with management.
- Devise systems to keep training records up to date to ensure employees are competent and comfortable in undertaking the core functions of their job.

Communication:

- Encourage staff to talk to you at an early stage if they feel as though they cannot cope.
- Develop a system to notify employees of unplanned tight deadlines and any exceptional need to work long hours.
- Talk to your team regularly about what needs to be done. This can:
 - Help you understand the challenges the team are currently facing and any pressures they are under;
 - Find ways of sharing the work sensibly and agreeing the way forward with the team;
 - Gain team cohesion and commitment to the work you have planned. The team is likely to be more responsive if it understands what needs to happen and by when. Allocating more work to an already stretched team without explanation is unhelpful;
 - Ensure shift work systems are agreed with employees and their representatives and that the shifts are fair in terms of workload;
 - Gain understanding and commitment to unplanned tight deadlines and any exceptional need for long hours;
 - Help manage any unexpected absences or losses to the team – everyone knows the key stages of the project and what each other's role is.
- Lead by example.



How good is the work environment?

- Have a suitable and sufficient risk assessment to control physical hazards.
- Assess the risk of physical violence and verbal abuse. Take steps to deal with this in consultation with employees and others who can help (e.g. the police, charities).
- Change start and finish times to help employees cope with pressures external to the organisation (e.g. child care, poor commuting routes).
- Ensure your risk assessments for physical hazards and risks are up to date.
- Provide training to help staff deal with and defuse difficult situations (e.g. difficult phone calls, aggressive members of the public).

Control: Are You Doing Enough?

Are you enabling staff to have their say?

- Where practicable give more control to staff by enabling them to plan their own work, make decisions about how that work should be completed, and how problems should be tackled (e.g. through project meetings, one-to-ones, performance reviews etc).
 - Allocate responsibility to teams to take projects forward:
 - Discuss and define teams at the start of the project.
 - Agree objectives and goals.
 - Agree team roles.
 - Agree timescales.
 - Agree the provision of managerial support (e.g. through regular progress meetings).
- Talk about the way decisions are made within the unit – is there scope for more team involvement?

Are you making full use of employees' skills and abilities?

- Enrich jobs by ensuring that staff are able to use various skills to get tasks completed, and that staff can understand how their work fits into the wider aims of the unit.
- Talk about the skills people have and if they believe they are able to use them to good effect. How else would they like to use their skills?

How much supervision is actually needed?

- Only monitor employees output if this is essential. Regular meetings with staff could be arranged to see how things are going. At these meetings managers could provide advice and support where necessary and ensure that staff are coping.

A supportive environment is crucial. Staff need to know that managers will support them, even if things go wrong or if they find that they are unable to cope with added pressures.



Support: Are You Doing Enough?

How supportive are you?

- Give support and encouragement to staff, even when things go wrong.
- Encourage staff to share their concerns about work-related stress at an early stage.
- Hold regular liaison/team meetings to discuss unit pressures.
- Hold regular one-to-ones to talk about any emerging issues or pressures.
- Value diversity – don't discriminate against people on grounds of race, sex or disability or other irrelevant reasons.
- Seek examples of how the team would like to, or have, received good support from managers or colleagues – can these be adopted across the unit?
- Ask how employees would like to access managerial support – 'open-door' policies, agreed times when managers are able to discuss emerging pressures etc.

How do you manage your team's time?

- Encourage a healthy work-life balance.
- Encourage staff to take their annual leave entitlement and their meal breaks.
- Include 'work-related stress/emerging pressures' as a standing item of staff meetings and/or performance reviews.
- Introduce flexibility in work schedules (where practicable) to enable staff to cope with domestic commitments.

How well do you listen?

- Listen to your staff and agree a course of action for tackling any problems – it is important for staff to feel that the contribution they make at work is valued.
- Involve your staff – they need to do their bit to identify problems and work towards agreed solutions.
- Talk about ways the organisation could provide support if someone is experiencing problems outside work.
- Disseminate information on other areas of support (human resources department, occupational health, trained counsellors, charities).

How do you meet the needs of the team?

- Provide your staff with suitable and sufficient training to do their jobs.
- Give new staff a proper induction into your team and the organisation.
- Take account that people's skills and the way they approach the work will differ.
- Develop individual or unit training arrangements and refresher sessions to ensure training and competencies are up to date and appropriate for the core functions of their job.
- Offer training in basic counselling skills/access to counsellors.
- Ensure staff know how to prioritise, or how to seek help if they have conflicting priorities.
- Provide training on time management, prioritisation, assertiveness etc.



How well do you deal with unacceptable behaviours?

- Work in partnership with staff to ensure that bullying and harassment never emerge as an issue. One way of doing this is by having procedures in place, such as disciplinary and grievance procedures, to deal with instances of unacceptable behaviour.
- In consultation with staff and their representatives, draw up effective policies to reduce or eliminate harassment and bullying.
- Agree and implement procedures to prevent, or quickly resolve, conflict at work – communicate these to employees.
- Agree and implement a confidential reporting system to enable the reporting of unacceptable behaviour.
- Communicate the policies and make it clear that senior management fully support them.
- Communicate the consequences of breaching the policies.

Do you work for a caring organisation?

- Create a culture where members of the team trust each other and can be themselves while they are at work.
- Encourage your staff to recognise the individual contributions of other team members and the benefits of the whole team pulling together.
- Encourage good communication and provide appropriate training to aid skill development (e.g. listening skills, confidence building etc).

How well do you build teams?

- Select or build teams which have the right blend of expertise and experience for new projects.
- Provide training to help staff deal with and defuse difficult situations.
- Discuss how individuals work together and how they can build positive relationships.
- Identify ways to celebrate success (e.g. informal lunches/wash-up meetings at the end of projects).

Role: Are You Doing Enough?

How clear are employees about their role?

- Make sure your staff have a clearly defined role, e.g. through a personal work plan which enables them to understand exactly what their roles and responsibilities are.
- Encourage your staff to talk to you at an early stage if they are not clear about priorities or the nature of the task to be undertaken.
- Talk to all your staff regularly to make sure that they are clear about their current job, what it entails, what you expect of them and what they can expect from you.
- Hold team meetings to enable team members to clarify their role and discuss any possible role conflict.
- Display team/department targets and objectives to help clarify the role of the unit and the individual.



How well do you manage new recruits

- Make sure that new members of staff receive a comprehensive induction into your organisation. If this is not arranged centrally, you should do it locally.
- If your organisation has gone through change, check with members of your team to make sure they understand their new roles and are comfortable with them.
- Develop suitable induction arrangements for new staff – make sure all members of the team understand the role and responsibilities of the new recruit.

Do employees understand what you expect from them?

- Agree specific standards of performance for jobs and individual tasks, and review periodically.
- Introduce personal work plans which are aligned to the outputs of the unit.
- Introduce or revise job descriptions to help ensure that the core functions and priorities of the post are clear.
- Hold regular one-to-one meetings to ensure that individuals are clear about their role and know what is planned for the coming months.

Change: Are You Doing Enough?

Do employees understand the reasons for change?

- Ensure all staff are aware of why the change is happening – agree and implement a system for doing this.
- Explain what the organisation wants to achieve and why it is essential that the change takes place – explain the timetable for action and what the first steps are going to be. Talk about what the change will mean in terms of day-to-day activity and discuss whether there are any new training needs.
- Communicate new developments quickly to avoid the spread of rumours in the organisation. If the organisation is planning a major change your staff are likely to be discussing job security, whether they will need to relocate, and whether their terms and conditions will change.
- Face-to-face communication is generally best so that people have the opportunity to ask questions and say what they feel, but any means (e.g. paper, electronic) would be helpful.
- Have an open-door policy where staff can talk to you about their concerns or any suggestions they have for improving the way change is managed.

Have staff been involved in the changes?

- Provide a confidential system to enable staff to comment and ask questions before, during and after the change.
- Involve staff in discussions about how jobs might be developed and changed and in generating ways of solving problems.
- Supporting your staff is essential during a change.
- Involve staff in discussions about how jobs might be developed and changed.
- Have an 'open-door' policy to help staff who want to talk to their managers about their concerns.



How can you help staff adversely affected by change?

- Ensure that staff are aware of the impact of the change on their jobs.
- Help staff who are to be made redundant by the change by giving them the skills they need to find a new job, for example by helping them to write a CV and prepare for interviews.
- After the change think about revising work objectives to avoid role conflict and role ambiguity.
- Revise your risk assessment/action plans to see if any changes, for example a decrease in staff numbers, have resulted in increased hazards to staff.
- Remember that social changes (e.g. if staff are now working with a completely different group of people) may have more of an impact on the individual than technological or geographical changes.